

**“THE IMPACT OF TELEWORK ON FEMALE EMPLOYMENT: CASES OF
PORTUGAL AND SPAIN”**

**The Doctoral Thesis of the PhD Programme Human Rights: Rights: Ethical,
Social and Political Challenges**

PhD candidate

Ekaterina Reznikova

Supervisors

**Dra. Laura Gomez Urquijo
Dra. Marta Enciso Santocildes**

Bilbao, 25/03/2024

Acknowledgements

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my thesis supervisors, Dra Laura Gomez Urquijo and Dra Marta Enciso Santocildes, for their help and support through this extensive research work. Their comments and criticism offered me the opportunity requested to tackle many challenges I have met during my research journey. I am indeed extremely fortunate to have had supervisors who could spur me into independent critical thinking and also provide enough comfort for continued effort.

For the research to be possible, I should also thank Cofund for the support that was extended to this research. This has been important in enabling me to manage my studies and fulfil my academic aspirations without being shackled by financial needs.

I must express my gratitude to Dra Thais Franca for her kindness and hospitality in Lisbon. Her decision to include me in her professional network and enable me to internationalise my thesis was very appealing. Such an event has enabled me to widen my scope and improve the quality of research.

It is with great pleasure that I thank Dr. Alberto Riesco for his understanding and guidance while I was a visiting researcher at the Complutense University of Madrid. The endorsement he gave me to join the research stay and help me in my practical work has positively complemented my academic life.

I owe a special gratitude to my son, whose eternal inquisitiveness and support motivate me on a daily basis, and to my mother, who has been a pillar of strength, wisdom and love for me all through this journey, I dedicate this work. This achievement has been made possible thanks to their encouragement.

Acknowledgements.....	2
List of abbreviations.....	7
List of tables and graphs.....	8
Tables.....	8
Code Maps.....	8
Abstract.....	9
Introduction.....	11
Organization of the thesis.....	14
The motivation behind the research.....	15
Main research questions and purpose of the study.....	17
CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	19
1.1. Gender and labor economics: understanding the intersectional dynamics.....	19
1.2. Future inflation of female talent.....	20
1.3. Human capital theory and segregation.....	23
1.3.1. Neoliberalism and neoliberal division of labor.....	25
1.4. Traditional female jobs and social construction of work.....	26
1.5. Occupational segregation: causes and consequences.....	27
1.5.1. Occupational segregation and digitalization: interplay and implications.	30
1.6. Workplace discrimination: understanding the dynamics and implications...	31
1.7. Household work: a critical examination of its economic dimensions.....	34
1.8. Productive and reproductive labor in the digital age.....	37
1.9. Gender gap and its outcome for the economics.....	38
1.9.1. Gender pay gap: unravelling the factors and dynamics.....	41
1.10. Digitalization and gender inequality.....	42
1.11. Advanced technologies, telework and female employment.....	43
1.12. Telework: conceptualization, dimensions, and implications in contemporary work settings.....	45
1.13. Theoretical foundations: Beck, Butler, and Bauman on telework and female employment.....	47
1.14. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market: a gender perspective.....	50
1.15. Feminist collective action and gendered power dynamics in telework.....	52
1.16. Envisioning the future of telework.....	53
1.17. Contemporary trends in telework research.....	54

CHAPTER II: FEMALE LABOR PARTICIPATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC: CASES OF PORTUGAL AND SPAIN.....	57
2.1. Introduction.....	57
2.2. Case of Portugal.....	58
2.2.1. The employment landscape of women in Portugal during the 20th century and nowadays.....	58
2.2.2. Gender equality advocacy and labor force participation in Portugal...	61
2.2.3. The catalysts for women's engagement in the labor force in Portugal	64
2.2.4. Pandemic and the economic conditions of employment in Portugal...	67
2.2.5. Impact of the COVID - 19 on female employment in Portugal.....	69
2.2.6. Telework and digitalization in Portugal and its relation to female employment.....	72
2.2.7. Barriers to gender equality and women's roles in Portugal.....	74
2.3. Case of Spain.....	77
2.3.1. The employment landscape of women in Spain during the 20-21th century.....	77
2.3.2. Gender equality advocacy and labor force participation in Spain.....	81
2.3.3. The catalysts for women's engagement in the labor force in Spain....	83
2.3.4. Economic conditions of labor market and employment in Spain.....	85
2.3.5. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on female employment in Spain..	87
2.3.6. Digitalization, labor market and the pandemics.....	89
2.3.7. Barriers to female employment in Spain.....	91
CHAPTER III: LABOR POLICIES AND GENDER IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL... 	97
3.1. Introduction.....	97
3.2. Evolution of equality legislation in the European Union.....	98
3.3. Case of Portugal.....	100
3.3.1. Evolution of labour relations and legal framework in Portugal.....	100
3.3.2. Gender roles and legal perspectives on women's employment in Portugal.....	103
3.3.3. Labour legislation and gender equality measures in Portugal nowadays.....	106
3.3.4. National plans for equal opportunities.....	110
3.3.5. Imbalances of equality policies in Portugal.....	112
3.3.6. Gender mainstreaming in Portugal.....	114
3.3.7. Evolving landscape of law and employment in Portugal.....	116
3.4. Case of Spain.....	118
3.4.1. Historical overview of the labour policies in Spain from the late 19th century to the modern time century.....	118
3.4.2. The position of women in legislation in 20th-century Spain.....	121
3.4.3. From constitutional foundations to legislative advancements: the evolution of gender equality in Spain.....	123
3.4.4. Strategic plans for equal opportunities.....	127

3.4.5. Economic constraints and gender equality in Spain.....	130
3.4.6. Public policies and gender mainstreaming.....	132
3.4.7. Specific characteristics of Spanish gender laws.....	135
CHAPTER IV: ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE: TRANSFORMATION THROUGH TELEWORK IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.....	138
4.1. Introduction.....	138
4.2. Effects of telework on work-life balance in Portugal and Spain.....	139
4.3. Telework and economic transformation from a gender perspective.....	142
4.4. Gender disparities and the digital economy.....	144
4.5. She - cession and its implications in Portugal and Spain.....	147
4.6. Legal transformation on telework and gendered implications.....	150
4.7. Telework and workers' mobility.....	155
4.8. Societal challenges of telework on gender equality.....	158
CHAPTER V: FIELDWORK AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.....	162
5.1. Conceptual notes.....	162
5.2. Discussion of method.....	162
5.3. Case study.....	164
5.4. Data collection.....	166
5.4.1. On demographic profile of female workers - respondents.....	168
5.4.2. Ethical considerations.....	170
5.5. Sample and procedure.....	171
5.6. Data analysis.....	173
5.7. Assessments and perceptions of specialists.....	174
5.7.1. Theme 1. Abrupt change of the conditions of work.....	174
5.7.2. Theme 2. Women and organisation of telework.....	179
5.7.3. Theme 3. Legal regime of telework.....	186
5.7.4. Theme 4. Feminization of telework.....	190
5.7.5. Theme 5. Future of telework.....	194
5.7.6. Specialists reflections: results.....	200
5.8. Assessments and perceptions of female workers.....	205
5.8.1. Theme 1. Abrupt change of the conditions of work.....	206
5.8.2. Theme 2. Women and organisation of telework.....	211
5.8.3. Theme 3. Legal regime of telework.....	216
5.7.4. Theme 4. Feminization of telework.....	220
5.8.5. Theme 5. Future of telework.....	225
5.8.6. Female workers reflections: results.....	230
5.9. Observations.....	232
CONCLUSIONS.....	235
On educational track.....	235
On labor market transformation through telework.....	236
On employers' responses and facilitation of telework.....	237

On implication of telework for women.....	238
On flexibility and telework as a conciliation measure.....	239
On legislative trends.....	239
On feminization of telework.....	241
On the dual-valuation system for telework.....	242
On future Implications and specific recommendations.....	243
FUTURE RESEARCH.....	245
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	249
ANNEX 1. Questionario para a entrevista com o especialista.....	311
ANNEX 2. Cuestionario para la entrevista con el especialista.....	315
ANNEX 3. Questionario para a entrevista com o trabalhador.....	318
ANNEX 4. Cuestionario para la entrevista con trabajadoras.....	321
ANNEX 5. The list of the developed codes.....	324

List of abbreviations

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIDM: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres (Commission for Equality and Women's Rights)

CIG: Comissão para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Género (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality)

CIMH: Comissão para a Igualdade entre Mulheres e Homens (Commission for Equality between Women and Men)

CITE: Commission for Equality in the Workplace and Employment

DGERT: Direcção-Geral do Emprego e das Relações de Trabalho (Directorate-General for Employment and Labour Relations)

EFAT: European Framework Agreement on Telework

EIGE: European Institute for Gender Equality

ETUI: European Trade Union Institute

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IEFP: Institute for Employment and Vocational Training

ILO: International Labour Organization

NIE: National Institute of Education

NIS: National Institute of Statistics

NISS: National Institute of Statistics Spain

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ONTSI: Observatorio Nacional de Tecnología y Sociedad (National Observatory of Technology and Society)

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

WTTC: World Travel & Tourism Council

List of tables and graphs

Tables

1. Table 1: Specialists Reflections On Abrupt Change of the Conditions of Work
2. Table 2: Specialists Reflections On Women and Organisation of Work
3. Table 3: Specialists Reflections On Legal Regime of Telework
4. Table 4: Specialists Reflections On Feminization of Telework
5. Table 5: Specialists Reflections On Future of Telework
6. Table 6: Female Workers Reflections On Abrupt Change of the Conditions of Work
7. Table 7: Female Workers Reflections On Women and Organisation of Work
8. Table 8: Female Workers Reflections On Legal Regime of Telework
9. Table 9: Female Workers Reflections On Feminization of Telework
10. Table 10: Female Workers Reflections On Future of Telework

Code Maps

1. Code Map 1: Specialists Reflections On Abrupt Change of Working Conditions
2. Code Map 2: Specialists Reflections On Women and Organisation of Work
3. Code Map 3: Specialists Reflections On Legal Regime of Telework
4. Code Map 4: Specialists Reflections On Feminization of Telework
5. Code Map 5: Specialists Reflections On Future of Telework
6. Code Map 6: Female Workers Reflections On Abrupt Change of Working Conditions
7. Code Map 7: Female Workers Reflections On Women and Organisation of Work
8. Code Map 8: Female Workers Reflections On Legal Regime of Telework
9. Code Map 9: Female Workers Reflections On Feminization of Telework
10. Code Map 10: Female Workers Reflections On Future of Telework

Graphs

- Graph 1: Demographic profile of female workers - respondent

Abstract

The current thesis conducts a comparative study of employment conditions faced by female teleworkers in Portugal and Spain in the course and after the pandemic embracing the time period of 2020-2023. It scrutinises how gender intersects with labor market transformation, focusing on structural and pandemic-driven aspects that catalyse and reinforce women's employment challenges in both countries as well as consequences for the labor force and markets as a whole. Using a qualitative approach, this research examines historical discourse, legislative frameworks, and socio-economic trends to reveal the state of gender inequalities in the labor markets of Portugal and Spain. By conducting the exploratory interviews aimed at analysing the situation with women teleworkers in both countries via expert opinions, the study highlights the gaps and progress in achieving equitable employment conditions for women who face the implication of technological advancement at their workplace.

Portugal and Spain were chosen for this comparative study on the impact of telework on female employment due to their shared socio-economic and legislative characteristics, which make them truly comparable. First, both countries are geographically close, situated in Southern Europe, and they share similar historical and cultural backgrounds. This proximity results in comparable social norms and traditional gender roles, which play a significant role in how telework affects female workforce participation. Second, Portugal and Spain have experienced similar economic transitions, particularly as a consequence of the financial crisis of 2008 and the more recent COVID-19 pandemic. The shift towards telework during the pandemic notably affected both countries, providing a relevant context for exploring its impact on women's employment. Additionally, both nations have implemented legislative frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality, such as policies to reduce pay gaps and tackle occupational segregation based on gender. However, despite these efforts, challenges like income inequality and the digital divide persist, offering a basis for comparison in terms of policy effectiveness. Moreover, the research identifies the trend of feminization of telework in both countries, with women disproportionately engaging in remote work. This trend is critical for

comprehension of the broader implications of telework on gender roles and employment conditions in Portugal and Spain.

The findings indicate that even though legislative efforts and socio-economic advancements such as state programs to combat different kinds of gender gaps including a pay gap and a digital divide gap were made, female teleworkers in both Portugal and Spain continue to face higher levels of job insecurity compared to their male counterparts. Factors such as income inequality, occupational segregation, and the burden of unpaid care work significantly contribute to this disparity. The thesis underscores the ongoing process of feminization of telework and the importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches in labor policies towards this new form of employment in order to effectively address the unique challenges faced by women and avoid further aggravation of gender asymmetries among the growing cohort of teleworkers.

By aligning the analysis with the UN SDGs and Agenda 2030, this thesis contributes to the global discourse on gender equality and sustainable development. It provides valuable insights for policymakers, stakeholders, and researchers aiming to create more equitable and resilient labor markets for teleworkers and female teleworkers in particular. Based on the results of the practical work, the study concludes with recommendations for future research to further explore the nuances of gender and employment in technologically changeable contexts and to develop innovative policy, legal and soft law solutions for overcoming the entrenched barriers to women's full labor involvement and decent conditions of work.

Keywords: telework, gender inequality, labor market transformation, Portugal and Spain, pandemic impact.

Introduction

The transformation of labor markets serves as a key catalyst for economic change, shaping the structure, productivity, and sustainability of economies globally. As contemporary societies transition from industrial-based to service-oriented economic models, the implications for long-term economic growth are becoming increasingly critical (Giarini, 1992). The movement toward service-based economic structures is widely regarded as having significant implications for sustained long-term economic growth (Gonzalez-Diez and Moral-Benito, 2019). As service is mostly a feminine sector in the sense that a majority of employees are women (Polic and Holy, 2021), the ongoing transition has a strong connection to a female labor force which character nowadays also is going through a radical transformation due to rapid technological advancement and an inevitable diversification of the service sector due to the continuing globalisation and business development processes.

Moreover, within the named transitions, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a global shift in work culture, prompting a reconsideration of traditional office settings and fostering the adoption of mass hybrid and remote work regimes. The pandemic-induced changes in attitudes toward physical presence in the office have had far-reaching effects on both employees and employers (Dietrich and Hansen, 2022). In traditionally office-centric cultures such as Spain and Portugal, this shift has been especially notable. Despite a historically strong culture of on-site work in these countries (Salavisa et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Cifuentes et al., 2020), a significant proportion of workers now prefer hybrid or fully remote work modes. In Spain, 46,59% of workers opt for some days of telework during the week, while 11,61% prefer to work entirely remotely (Statista, 2023). In Portugal, 71% of respondents favour remote or hybrid work arrangements over presential work (BCG, 2023). Personal preferences of employees are also supported by management and owners of enterprises who are more favourable towards a remote mode regime due to obvious opportunities of saving function costs as well as after the pandemic having certain security that operation remotely does not mean losing productivity (Delfino and Van del Kolk, 2021).

By and large, the large-scale adoption of telework brought consequences to labor market dynamics, affecting both demand and supply. Workers with sufficient qualifications do not just prefer but increasingly seek remote or hybrid work opportunities, and companies aiming to minimise costs are creating fully or partially virtual offices (Andres-Sanchez et al., 2023). Such a shift has also given rise to a new cohort of workers known as digital nomads—professionals who perform their work online, enabling a lifestyle of continuous travel and living abroad (Schlagwein, 2018). Another vivid trend is a growing number of women in remote work - feminization of telework - as women opt more and more frequently for teleworking positions, considering them an option for work-life conflict conciliation (Soubelet-Fagoaga et al, 2021). These trends underscore the need to examine the detailed implications of telework on labor markets and economic structures.

Meanwhile, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the European Commission, in its 2020 report, highlighted new demands for gender equality policies in the evolving labor market. The report notes that while the gig economy may increase women's participation in the labor market, it also brings blurring and eludes the already gained positions of a more gender equal society (ACEOWM, 2020). Supporting this concern, the Institution of Women in Spain (2020) emphasised the difficulties of integrating telework into the labor market and addressing gender issues during the first year of the pandemic (Casa Quesada, 2021). Telework can pose physical risks and increase gender violence, potentially leading to the fragilization of female employment through the growth of part-time positions, which can act as a transmission mechanism for traditional gender norms that position women as secondary workers (Insarauto, 2021). The scope of the issue is also illustrative: before the COVID-19 crisis, in Europe 64% of women had never teleworked compared to 57% of men, but during the pandemic, 39% of women began teleworking compared to 35% of men, with the figure rising to 46% for women with young children (Mascherini and Bisello, 2020). As this data underscores the critical impact of telework on a significant number of employees, particularly women, it also has a greater propensity to develop new tendencies for the labor force as well as destroy or modify those that already exist.

Despite these concerns and opportunities for the labor market and female employment in particular, existing practical and theoretical studies on telework often overlook the gender dimension. Many of them like Sostero et al. (2020) and Vargas

Llave et al. (2020) provide extensive overviews of telework during the sanitary emergency but do not specifically address women's telework and its societal implications. Similarly, in-depth studies on telework in Spain, such as those by Adams-Prassl et al. (2020) and Arroyo-Abad (2021), either do not consider female employment or do so insufficiently. While Adams-Prassl et al. discuss the impacts of individual characteristics on distant work, and Arroyo-Abad examines the changeover of labor and digital progress, neither fully addresses the unique challenges faced by women. Likewise, in terms of legal science, few studies provide detailed analyses of the legal novelties related to telework. Most studies, such as Sanz de Miguel et al. (2021), offer descriptive accounts without projecting the potential impacts on the labor market and female employment.

In Portugal, recent studies have focused on telework and job satisfaction (Sousa-Uva et al., 2021), the shift in the economy and society due to telework (Rebelo et al., 2020), the benefits and downsides of telework post-pandemic (Salavisa et al., 2021), and the influence of telework on work-related conflict (Andrade and Lousa, 2021). Tavares et al. (2020) characterise the Portuguese teleworking community during the sanitary emergency and discuss policy implications but do not emphasise the gendered aspects of telework. Santos et al. (2021) studied gender roles during COVID-19 in Portugal, finding an unequal distribution of household tasks, with women bearing the majority of the burden.

The new legislation in both Portugal and Spain is still in the adaptation stage, with discussions focusing on issues such as the right to disconnect and the taxation of telework expenses (Maritsa and Martins, 2022). Figueredo et al. (2021) analyse the evolution of telework jurisprudence, discussing the risks and benefits for both employees and employers but do not mention and consider gender as a specific factor. This is a commonplace of most studies, although research that does focus on gender dimension coupled with labour market issues is extremely important for exploring the future perspectives for prosperity and policy discourse.

Considering the above, this thesis aims to fill named gaps by providing an extensive analysis of labor transformation, focusing on the impact of telework on gender labor dynamics in Spain and Portugal. By scrutinizing the intersection of economic structures, labor market dynamics, and gender roles, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the ongoing shifts in labor markets and their broader economic and social implications. Through this analysis, the aim is to

shed light on the opportunities and difficulties presented by telework, particularly in the context of asymmetrical gender dynamics, and to inform policy interventions that promote equitable and sustainable economic growth.

Organization of the thesis

Chapter 1 lays the theoretical groundwork, exploring social theories and concepts related to gender equality, human resource management and labor market trends. It examines the intersectional connection of gender and labor economics, highlighting how gender dynamics influence economic outcomes. The chapter also overviews the discourse of unpaid household work, its connection with the gender gap and its implications for future economic growth, as well as the loss of female talent due to low labor market participation. Furthermore, it considers the core studies related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market from a gender perspective, workplace discrimination, the social construction of '*female*' jobs, and the causes and consequences of occupational segregation by gender for a society. The chapter concludes with an examination of the role of digitalization and technological advancement in either bridging or widening the gender gap in employment.

Chapter 2 provides an empirical overview of the labor markets in Portugal and Spain, focusing on female labor participation in general and lately in telework before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis begins with a comprehensive examination of female labor participation rates, highlighting key trends and changes. It includes a historical overview of women's employment in both countries, discussing key milestones and shifts that occurred within labor market participation history. The role of gender equality advocacy in promoting women's participation in the labor force is explored, along with the main factors driving increased female engagement in the labor markets. The chapter also examines the economic conditions of employment during the pandemic, the rise of telework and digitalization, and the ongoing challenges related to gender equality and so-called traditional women's roles.

Chapter 3 continues the discovery course and explores labor policies promoting gender equality in Spain and Portugal. It begins with a discussion of the

significance of gender equality in the labor market, highlighting its social and economic impacts and prospects. An overview of gender equality policies is provided, followed by a historical look at the evolution of labor laws in the 20th century. Legal hurdles and challenges in implementing gender equality policies as well as the perception of gendered legislation on female employment patterns are analysed. State programs to boost women's labor participation are reviewed for their effectiveness. Finally, the chapter addresses notable issues faced by female workers under current labor laws and policies in Spain and Portugal.

Chapter 4 explores the sides transformation of labor through telework and digitalization, focusing on gender implications. It examines whether recent telework-related legal developments are gendered and their contact with the labor market gender gap. The role of women in the expanding digital economy is discussed, highlighting opportunities and difficult issues. The increasing prevalence of telework among women and its probable consequences for gender equality are explored. The relationship between telework and mobility is debated, focusing on women's ability to balance work and personal responsibilities. The potential of telework to promote labor market equality and the related difficulties that need to be addressed are also discussed.

The final chapter presents a comparative analysis of the fieldwork findings. It includes a detailed analysis of the expert and female teleworkers interviews conducted as part of the research, offering a detailed examination of the data collected. The chapter describes the methodology, ethical and relevant conceptual issues, outlining the sample selection process and detailing the research methods for data collection and analysis. The techniques used to assess the research variables are described, followed by the main findings of the research, highlighting key trends and patterns.

The motivation behind the research

The motivation behind researching labor policies, telework, and gender implications is deeply rooted in the transformative vectors observed by the author during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the global shift towards remote work. This essential change, while providing various prospects,

also affects and amplifies pre-existing gender disparities, causing a need for a comprehensive and scientific examination of how labor policies are developed and interact with telework and gender dynamics. The COVID-19 pandemic has catalysed an unprecedented increase in telework adoption, fundamentally altering labor markets worldwide and understanding of labor routines. Telework has shown beneficial sides such as: enhancing productivity, improving work-life balance, and decreasing commuting time and costs (Eurofound, 2020). However, these advantages are unevenly distributed among the population, influenced by gender, occupation, and domestic responsibilities. Research indicates that while telework has potential pros, such as flexibility and reduced commuting, it also reveals disparities that may worsen existing inequalities. For instance, women are disproportionately burdened with household and caregiving responsibilities, which can diminish the potential gains of telework and contribute to increased stress, lower productivity and slow or stagnated career growth (Alon et al., 2020; Hupkau and Petrongolo, 2020).

Women are more likely to be employed in roles that can be performed remotely due to sectoral segregation. Despite this, their eternal burden of both professional and domestic responsibilities can level out the advantages of telework. This discrepancy requires a closer examination of how telework practices impact women in contexts where on-site work has traditionally been prevalent.

As for labor policies, they have historically evolved to address various social and economic challenges, including gender equality. However, the effectiveness of these policies, particularly in the context of telework, remains an area requiring further investigation. Policies that have traditionally focused on on-site work may not fully address the nuances of telework, leading to potential gaps in support for workers who work remotely (Kramer and Kramer, 2020). In Spain and Portugal, labor policies have undergone several changes to address gender disparities. However, the rapid shift to telework poses new demands and opportunities for these policies. This research aims to overview and consider the historical development and current state of labor policies in these countries, highlighting the lacuna in addressing gender disparities in the context of telework.

For analysing these issues, the United Nations' Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development provides a critical framework for Goal 5 of the Agenda which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. This global Goal

implies the importance of addressing gender disparities across various dimensions of work, including the evolving landscape of telework (UN, 2015). By aligning this research with Agenda 2030, the objective is to contribute to a broader understanding of what kind of labor policies, of what character and vector, can be adapted to promote gender equality in the context of telework. This involves identifying existing practices, potential policy improvements, and recommendations on how to mitigate the negative impacts of the dual burden faced by many women.

In summary, the motivation behind this research is to address the intersection of labor policies, telework, and gender dynamics in the post-pandemic context based on two cases that are vivid and comparable. By examining the dynamics and impacts of telework on women and track of existing labor policies, the research aims to offer original and actionable insights and recommendations. This work not only contributes to a deeper understanding of gender disparities in telework but also fulfills the gap created by the pool of studies on the emerging mode of work during and after the pandemic that does not consider problems and situations from the perspective of gender.

Main research questions and purpose of the study

The central research question of this thesis seeks to examine the extent to which the accelerated shift from office-based, onsite work to telework, driven by COVID-19 restrictions, has yielded positive outcomes for female employment in Portugal and Spain. This question is rooted in the broader context of labor market transformation and aims to understand the specific implications for women in the workforce.

To facilitate a comprehensive exploration of this central question, several subsidiary questions have been formulated. Firstly, the research investigates whether the pandemic has stimulated economic and legal mechanisms that could lead to substantive improvements in the quality of female telework. Secondly, it examines how the ongoing evolution of labor markets, precipitated by the widespread adoption of telework, influences female employment in both countries.

The primary objective of this thesis is to compare the perspectives of Spain and Portugal regarding female teleworking post-pandemic. This comparative analysis

aims to elucidate the varying impacts and responses in these two countries. In order to reach the primary objective, the following specific objectives were figured out. The thesis aims to analyse how the abrupt transformation from onsite work to a digital workplace has affected labor markets in both Spain and Portugal. This analysis will be grounded in key descriptive statistics and their interpretation, providing a quantitative statistical basis for understanding the scale and nature of these changes. The research seeks to compare the labor policies adopted in Spain and Portugal from the onset of the pandemic, with a particular focus on the implications for gender issues. This comparison will shed light on the effectiveness and inclusivity of policy responses in addressing the needs of female teleworkers. A comprehensive examination of the legal novelties and legal doctrine introduced to regulate distant work in both countries will be conducted. This analysis will assess the scope, intent, and potential impact of these legal frameworks on female telework, considering both immediate and long-term implications. The study intends to verify the attitudes of various experts, including trade unionists, feminist activists, and governmental officials, towards the evolution of female telework during the sanitary crisis in Spain and Portugal. This will be achieved through a series of expert interviews, providing qualitative insights that complement the quantitative data and policy analysis.

This multifaceted approach aims to provide a thorough and nuanced understanding of the impact of telework on female employment in Spain and Portugal, considering both statistical data and expert perspectives. By integrating these different dimensions, the research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on labor market transformations and gender equality in the context of telework.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Gender and labor economics: understanding the intersectional dynamics

The interconnection between economics, gender, and labor is fundamental to understand the dynamics of any economy. Labor, representing both genders, plays a crucial role in the production of goods and services. However, this interconnection is complex, as the inclusion of both genders into labor markets has historically been uneven and continues to evolve. Comprehending the synergy between economics and labor reveals how labor markets function for both men and women, influencing other markets (such as financial, goods, and services) and impacting the broader economy, with particular implications for women.

Long before gender studies emerged as a distinct academic discipline, feminist perspectives on economic issues highlighted that women's status and empowerment are closely tied to their economic independence. Since the 1990s, there has been growing concern about women's economic interests, leading to extensive research in several key areas: unequal access to the market, disparate treatment in the labor market, control and ownership of productive resources (e.g., land, credit, technology), the undervaluation of women's work, inequitable work burdens, the relationship between paid and unpaid labor, the invisibility of female workers, resource distribution within households, and the lack of focus on women in national policies. Despite considerable quantitative and statistical data available on how labor markets integrate female labor across different regions, the academic and policy discourse has yet to fully address the conceptual framework necessary to manage and mitigate economic inequalities effectively.

Gender is a social construct that organizes societies based on identified and perceived differences between men and women, influencing expectations, roles, development and power structures (Connell, 2009; West and Zimmerman, 1987). It is distinct from biological sex and is continuously shaped by cultural, historical, and political contexts. Gender not only dictates how individuals behave but also structures institutional norms and labor market outcomes. Gender issues encompass the disparities and social norms between genders that influence opportunities, rights, and expectations based on gender identity. These issues

manifest in multiple areas, including economic participation, wage gaps, occupational segregation, unpaid labor, and career advancement disparities (Walby, 1990; Acker, 1990). Gender roles are further reinforced through social institutions, which can either challenge or perpetuate existing inequalities. A key concept in gender studies is “doing gender,” introduced by West and Zimmerman (1987), which argues that gender is not an inherent trait but a continuous performance shaped by social interactions. This perspective is crucial in understanding why gender inequalities persist despite formal legal protections. Similarly, patriarchy—a system in which men hold primary power and dominate economic, political, and social institutions—continues to shape labor markets and economic policies (Walby, 1990).

The relationship between economics, labor, and gender remains underexplored, with a significant gap between current knowledge and what needs to be understood to address these issues comprehensively. Stevenson and Zlotnick (2018) after an extensive study of the introductory economics textbooks made a conclusion that roughly three-quarters (77%) of the individuals referenced in the books, whether real or fictional, are male. Approximately 18% are female, while 5% are gender-neutral. This way, one can see that the gap starts from the very basics of the instruction of those who are supposed to bring progress to the economic systems. As we live in an era of fast political, economic and military disruptions and speedy technological transformations, whether at the local or global level, such a gap in knowledge, research and understanding of the noted triad has profound and unexpected effects on economic structures and gender equality. Implications of economics coupled with labor and gender require further investigation to develop effective strategies and policies for achieving gender equity in the labor market.

1.2. Future inflation of female talent

The term “talent” can be conceptualized in various ways, mostly accurate as innate ability, developed skill, or strategic human capital (Gallardo-Gallardo et al, 2013). In labor studies, it often pertains to skilled workers and their role in economic competitiveness. The concept of future inflation of talent can be understood by drawing from labor economics, human capital theory, and talent management literature. In economic terms, inflation typically refers to the general rise in price

levels over time, reducing purchasing power (Friedman, 1968). When applied to talent, this notion suggests an increasing supply of highly educated or skilled workers, a potential devaluation of certain qualifications, and an intensified competition for high-tier talent (Goldin and Katz, 2008). One dimension of talent inflation is credential inflation, whereby degrees and certifications that were once considered prestigious become a baseline requirement for employment. As more individuals attain higher education and specialized skills, their competitive advantage in the labor market diminishes, requiring further credential accumulation to maintain employability (Collins, 2019). This trend is particularly evident in knowledge-intensive sectors, where rapid technological advancements continuously shift the demand for specific qualifications.

However, the inflation of talent does not necessarily imply an equilibrium between supply and demand. In some industries, there is an oversupply of highly skilled professionals, leading to downward pressure on wages and job security (Brown et al, 2011). Conversely, other sectors, particularly those requiring advanced digital or technical competencies, experience acute skill shortages, resulting in wage growth and increased competition for a limited talent pool (Autor, 2015). This paradox underscores the uneven distribution of talent across labor markets, challenging assumptions that higher education guarantees economic stability.

From a neoliberal labor market perspective, the precarization of highly skilled jobs has become increasingly prominent despite the growing importance of human capital (Fraser, 2009). The push for labor market flexibility, alongside global competition, has led to a scenario where even highly qualified professionals face job insecurity, short-term unstable employment, and the need for constant skill advancement and adaptation. In this sense, the inflation of talent is not merely about an increase in the number of skilled workers but also about the structural transformation of employment conditions in response to evolving economic demands. Thus, the future inflation of talent encapsulates the tension between increasing educational attainment, the evolving requirements of the labor market, and the uncertain returns on human capital investment. This phenomenon raises critical questions about the sustainability of current workforce development strategies and the policies needed to address the growing mismatch between qualifications and job opportunities.

The future inflation is also called the gender expectation gap and refers to the difference between the expectations and aspirations that society has for both genders. This gap has a significant impact on future talent development, individual careers and, eventually, life choices, and, hence, on the economy. The gender expectation gap limits the potential of individual workers and it leads to the limitation of the workforce as a whole. The vivid example is a quite poor number of women in professions related to STEM (here and then - science, technology, engineering and mathematics sector) as women are frequently discouraged from pursuing certain careers or even may face discrimination related to their choice of profession. Ortiz-Martinez et al (2023) analysed the retention of women in higher education and figured out that only 17% of women choose a STEM-wise career. To grasp the extent of the difference, imagine randomly selecting pairs of individuals, one man and one woman. In these pairs, the man would be more oriented towards career development than the woman approximately 75% of the time (Stewart-Williams and Halsey, 2021). Women in STEM fields often have lower social capital, such as weaker support networks, which restricts their opportunities to secure tenure and stable tracks (Casad et al, 2021). Such factors restrict career advancement and earning potential. Future inflation works towards both genders as men can be dispirited from participation in traditionally female occupations such as education, and care work so that the pool of masculine talent in these fields will be diminished.

Nagy et al (2023) draw on what talent actually is and who can be considered as one. They conclude that it is not a static notion and now upon the pandemic talents have become strongly connected with technological advancement. In other words, if a talent has no link to STEM at all, it is a competitive disadvantage, which based on the statistics above is mostly actual for females.

Fernandez-Mateo et al (2022) made a formal analysis of the talent pipelines and how they work for men and women and found out that since the rejection rate generally is higher for females, it makes them give up on future proceedings and this way female talents tend to be underrepresented.

To address the gender expectation gap is crucial not only for promoting greater equality in education, work and society in general but to challenge the solidified gender stereotypes. This can involve policies and initiatives with a special focus on gender equality and changing attitudes and beliefs about gender roles and expectations. The reduction of gender expectation gap will ensure that individuals

are able to reach their full potential, regardless of their gender (Bayeh, 2016). D'Acunto et al (2020) studied exposure of gender roles to different economic signals i.e. information which allows people to optimise their decision-making process and make comparatively better decisions economically and followed gender economic expectations and how they can affect economic choices and found out that even participation in a daily chores like shopping for household items actually has an impact on gender expectation gap.

Moreover, women and men expect systematically different levels of future career development and life satisfaction and success (Huang, 2006). This expectation gap can be detrimental to women's life and economic choice as it is based on the normalisation of non-beneficial gender attitudes and prospectively can lead to weaker economic and social policies that will aim to strengthen women's inclusion into the labor market, society activities and talent development.

1.3. Human capital theory and segregation

Human capital theory is used widely to explain talent development, segregation and the pay gap. The theory considers that general work experience motivates learning and, consequently, leads to increased productivity, and this is the explanation of the pay divide. This way the human capital theory is based on clearly neoliberal ideas. Economists (Becker, 1975; Schultz, 1961; Brown et al, 2020) appeal to pay tracks, productivity and reward experience. For instance, there is a belief that if employees are paid less during training, they stay longer at work in order to earn income "lost" during the time of training. However, there is a trend that companies try to get rid of workers who are "overpaid" (Lazear, 1991), so the theory presents some intrinsic contradictions.

Within the theory there is an institutional model, according to which paying by seniority and experience is a recognition of status and is not connected to productivity. Considering that managerial positions and seniority are male-dominated (Abalkhail, 2020), such a concept highlights segregation and the pay gap from this perspective.

Another theoretical concept states that an employee that has more capacity and availability will produce more than another one who is not only career-driven. Since frequently all care work is labelled for women, it leads to a situation that once a

couple goes a traditional way meaning carework for a woman and a breadwinning for a man, the later change or exchange is unlikely from the perspective of the theory (Fraser, 1994; Chesley, 2011).

Economists tend to consider norms and institutions to exist since they are allegedly effective (Sugden, 2021). At the same time, economic sociologists deem to be ambiguous that the notion of efficiency in the labor market is always the first one to consider. Alvarez-Perez et al. (2020) pointed out the dilogy of family-work life where altruism identifies household work and efficiency is connected with market work. This way, the theory supports segregation even though it should focus on personal talent and abilities in order to form valuable human capital. Whatever the causes of segregation, if we base the considerations on ideas of human capital, it will inevitably lead to predominantly female jobs and less payment than, on average, predominantly male jobs.

The theory also considers education credits and abilities. From this perspective, the reason why female jobs are, for example, paid less can seem mysterious since female jobs require educational and cognitive excellence. One of the reasons is the character of male jobs: they involve authority over coworkers much more frequently than female ones meaning that being boss seems to be a male predominant (England et al, 2002). As well, female employment is based on lower-paying service positions, in the public sector and part-time mode jobs (Senden et al, 2019). This inevitably leads to an impoverished human capital.

The traditional gender division of labor clearly disadvantages women in decision-making power, and more generally in the distribution of resources, materials and to a certain extent in marriage. From the perspective of human capital theory, the labor market is constantly losing female talents who could contribute dramatically to the development of science, technology and business. The modern studies provide an overview of the issues that are considered to be crucial by the theory: Abdurakhmanova et al (2020) offer a model of the market of human capital development within the digital economy that includes vocational training and vacancy awareness, however, does not try to solve any gender problem; Torre (2019) analyses structural and individual determinants of sex segregation in blue-collar occupations. The study says that to run desegregation is necessary to adopt a policy that would address the prior mechanism of segregation. Sachdeva et al (2021) provide an overview of more articles on occupational segregation and

human capital theory, written over the last 50 years, explaining that even so there was extensive research on segregation but a few studies were made from a gender perspective.

1.3.1. Neoliberalism and neoliberal division of labor

Neoliberalism is a dominant economic and political ideology that promotes free markets, deregulation, privatization, and a reduced role for the state in economic affairs (Harvey, 2005; Brown, 2015). It emerged in the late 20th century as a response to Keynesian economic policies and has since shaped global labor markets, economic governance, and social policies. Neoliberalism asserts that market competition is the most efficient mechanism for resource allocation, leading to an emphasis on individual responsibility, entrepreneurship, and the minimization of state intervention (Foucault, 2008). In the context of labor and gender, neoliberalism has had ambiguous and often contradictory effects. On one hand, it has facilitated the integration of women into labor markets by promoting economic participation and emphasizing meritocratic ideals. On the other hand, neoliberal labor policies have reinforced gender inequalities by prioritizing flexible, precarious employment arrangements, weakening labor protections, and devaluing social reproduction work, which disproportionately falls on women (Fraser, 2009; McRobbie, 2009). The shift towards individualized responsibility in employment—where workers must continually adapt, reskill, and navigate insecure job markets—has further exacerbated gender disparities, particularly for those balancing paid and unpaid labor (Bakker, 2007).

Neoliberal restructuring has also influenced discourses around gender equality, often reframing feminist struggles within market-driven frameworks (Eisenstein, 2009). This is evident in the promotion of "neoliberal feminism," which focuses on individual empowerment and success within existing economic structures rather than addressing systemic inequalities (Rottenberg, 2018). Such an approach tends to ignore the structural constraints that limit women's economic opportunities and makes it difficult to challenge the gendered division of labor in both paid and unpaid work.

1.4. Traditional female jobs and social construction of work

One of the consequences of segregation is traditional female jobs that are also called female-dominated occupations. Three decades ago Acker (1990) noticed that there are expectations that a male worker can devote himself fully to productivity since there is a woman at home who takes care of all matters outside of work. Acker considers that there are solid beliefs concerning the organisation of life and work. Several feminist scholars stress that for workers with children, it is more difficult to be successful at work and in life (Williams, 2001; Segal, 2003). Following the consideration, it can be concluded that since women mostly take care of minors and seniors and men “outsource” their part of domestic work to women, success at work for women with family responsibilities is even more difficult to reach than for men who share such responsibilities due to the modern social construction of work.

There is no exhaustive list of female-dominated occupations but women are heavily concentrated in the following occupations: secretaries, primary school teachers, nurses and home helpers (OECD, 1998; Williams, 2023). The data, provided by the OECD more than twenty years ago, is still current. These jobs are the core of female employment now and are the core of service, education and administrative sectors.

The recent research looks for mechanisms of how women choose jobs and which jobs they identify with, including the issue of applying for managerial positions (Barbulescu and Bidwell, 2013), looks at female employment in different countries of Europe reconsidering a relationship between gender, work and care (Basant, 2016), analyse trends of creating new jobs opportunities for women due to technological, productivity and demand change in the recent decades (Barba and Iraizoz, 2020), discuss a connection between rising educational attainment and stagnation of female employment trends (Assaad et al, 2020). Price (2016) points out that choosing a non-traditional female job is one of the ways for women to raise their standard of living. However, it is not an easy destination due to the fact that women were long excluded from better-paid male-dominated sectors and positions.

The social construction of work is a number of cultural artefacts and beliefs that being mixed and coupled, shape the notion of work, expose certain boundaries and reproduce ideas relevant to elements of work such as gender structure of work, the

proper timing of labor journey, a proper payment for a certain type of work and others. Pfau-Effinger (2022) works in this dimension and states that not only differences in welfare-state family and gender policies but also differences in the gender culture itself contribute to the explanation of employment rates for men and women and occupational segregation. Gender arrangements conceptualise the way how labor and gender interact and solidify the ideas of traditional male or female employment. Jayahandran (2020) adds that gender norms that influence the relationship between economic development and female employment vary substantially across societies. It supports the idea Karl Polanyi discussed above on great transformation (1957). For this reason, case studies on female employment are beneficial: the social construction being verified in all countries may vary when it comes to particular problems like labor participation of women or the exact pay gap in each country.

1.5. Occupational segregation: causes and consequences

Gender segregation at work can be characterised as “separate but equal” or “inefficient and unfair” (McGrew, 2016). It becomes separate but equal from the perspective of studies that consider that the social roles of women and men are essentially different and present the expectation that productivity will grow in this perspective (Senden et al, 2019, Sunstein, 1991). The opposing studies consider that continuous desegregation will make the market more efficient, stimulate labor participation of women and finally will impact more positively on the productivity and economy (Lagarde and Ostry, 2018; Pimkina and Flor, 2020). Furthermore, desegregation has the capacity to level out the distortion of labor markets, depressing wages, and hurting business innovation and productivity. In the structure of occupational segregation, it is important to consider such elements as the gender wage gap, decisions to invest in skills, the composition of employment and unemployment, and long-run growth (Zveglic and Rodgers, 2004).

Despite obvious improvements in gender structure of education and skills, gender disparities in labor market opportunities and outcomes are still extremely common in both developed and developing worlds. In almost all countries the rate of female workers participating in the labor force is lower than that of men and what's more, when women do participate, they are more frequently involved in a

part-time job, precarious employment, and low-skilled temporary work (Duman, 2020). Duman (2020) also points out that working women in the world are more likely than men to be in vulnerable forms of employment meaning those who provide a disproportionate amount of unpaid care and household work (family workers).

The neoclassical theory considers inequality and discrimination at work a natural consequence of a competition (El Morally, 2020). Neoclassical economists view the employer as a final participant in the market who pays the price for discrimination. Since women are usually not offered masculine jobs (Williams, 2023) which are better paid (Clarke, 2020), they have to apply for less-paid jobs and this becomes a never-ending discriminating circle. This is seen as a long-term process (Sunstein, 1991). However, Dalingwater (2018) sees the neoliberal shift from a different perspective and characterises it through the massive inclusion of women in the labor force and the globalisation of labor markets. Nevertheless, both elements of the neoliberal shift do not positively impact occupational segregation, meaning that those jobs that new female employees can get now will be of the traditional pool and, most likely, traditional career subordinate positioning, even if women go global for a new job. There is virtually no place where women wouldn't meet occupational segregation as it is an intrinsic element of the industrial relations structure.

There are actions that encourage segregation according to the neoclassical model. Labor policies that always seek more productive workers are one of them. Considering only the indicator of productivity implies no consideration of gender (Reskin, 2002). This way, policies are extremely important and can make a difference in the gendered structure of labor.

Speaking about the attitude to female work, the most vivid example of the deprecation of it is the ignoring of care work (child care, teaching, health care service provision, counselling) (Folbre and Nelson, 2000). The care work is seen by the existing cultural paradigm as something given for granted and thus is not really valuable. Coming back to the point of Reskin, it might be one of the dimensions of state labor policies: encouraging and valorizing care work which is, no doubt, extremely important for any society. From the perspective of sociology, it is also interesting how beliefs encourage women to feel more responsibility for household work and shorter labor shifts in order to cope with everything (Collins, 2020).

Occupational segregation can be horizontal and vertical. Gender segregation in the labor market is highly interrelated with the processes of 'doing gender' (Das and Koticula, 2019). Horizontal segregation explains the fact that women mostly participate in clerical work and are underrepresented in manufacturing labor (Meulders et al, 2010). Horizontal segregation causes female jobs to be less paid and tend to be precarious and with no social protection (Duman, 2020). Even though women exercise the same amount of working duties as men, they are unfairly compensated (Son Hing, 2023). 'Vertical segregation refers to inequality concerning positions at the same work meaning that men occupy higher, managerial positions' (Meulders et al, 2010).

In the neoliberal model, vertical segregation is intrinsically connected and mixed with horizontal one (Kabeer, 2016). The cultural belief of belonging women entirely to reproduction and childbearing once again slows down the process of equalising, and balancing men and women in the labor market. The patriarchy-driven idea that women are obliged to exercise unpaid house - and carework makes the belief that men are breadwinners solid enough to exist in a capitalistic society, which is normally supposed to be based on a pure competitiveness of skills and competencies. Curiously the structure and the situation in the labor market reflect the society in general and attitudes: women are underrepresented at top positions and traditionally occupy assistant positions and those in service, facing a glass ceiling and sticky floor in case they would like to change this situation (Keane et al, 2017). The formal barriers disappear fully or particularly in companies where there is special attention to gender equality and diversity; however, inequality persists in informal structures at work which are difficult to follow and correct (Riegraf and Weber, 2017). This way, not only state policies but also internal standards of companies can make a difference concerning the segregation of labor. For example, during the hiring process, the specialists tend to believe that women generally have less technical capacity and their features are less valuable than the same but male (Bertogg et al, 2020). If there is an internal standard or quota on female workers taken for technical or any other traditionally male position, it will slowly start changing the social construction of work and culture-gendered norms (Seibel, 2022).

Occupational segregation is a social phenomenon that is capable of causing different consequences not only in the labor market. Friesen et al (2021) made a

far-going assumption explaining that the inequality in the labor market influences the accessibility to technology and, consequently, interest in politics. Since traditional female jobs are care-oriented (Narciso, 2021), it means less personal Internet time, which causes unawareness of many issues including politics. It is a vivid example of how intersectoral connection works in society.

Studies on occupational segregation have shown that special anti-discrimination policies are to prevent masculinization or feminization in the workplace and have the capacity to promote equality and allow female talents to enter the labor market (Das and Kotikula, 2019). The important point is that such policies are more effective if they aim at subsidising women's training (Kring, 2017).

The economic crisis caused by the sanitary crisis that happened in 2020-2021 hit the labor market and consequently influenced labor patterns. It didn't happen before that such a high volume of workers could be flexible and were able to work without commuting to the actual workplace (Kossek et al, 2021). However, due to the absence of childcare and increased parent involvement, a substantial and persistent drop in employment and labor force participation for women has occurred. Typically, women have been less affected by recessions than men (Alon et al, 2020). As for the impact of the pandemics on the segregation of labor, Kabeer et al (2021), for instance, stress that female intense sectors were hardest hit by the pandemics.

1.5.1. Occupational segregation and digitalization: interplay and implications

Digitalization can give a certain reinforcement of gender inequalities and speed up a “do gender” process at work. The typical service work which women are engaged in widely will be poorly affected by digitalization whereas typical male jobs might be devalued due to automatization (Kohlrausch and Weber, 2021). Consequently, it might lead to less inequality, however, it won't solve the problem of occupational segregation and, on the contrary, it might bring a new variation of it which is the feminization of labor and, particularly, digital work meaning all those posts that are done by means of the digital workplace.

Digital work has a capacity to both equalise genders and segregate them or it can happen simultaneously depending on the dimension. Digital work creates new forms of work that can inherit all the disadvantages of onsite work. Gender

stereotypes become relatively invisible and get incorporated into digital labor. Dengler and Tisch (2020) examine the relationship between digitalization and the quality of work in gender-specific occupations concluding that there will be a certain decline in male-dominated occupations requiring physical activity as a duty. However, there is no clear answer to whether it will relieve or diminish the social inequality between men and women in the course of digital transformation. Fossen and Sorgner (2018) analyse the impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on individual transition in the labor market and come to the conclusion that there are significant gender differences. Moreover, the effects of digitalization are already seen in the fields that are male-dense (manufacturing, mostly), however, Fossen and Sorgner do not anticipate skyrocketing male unemployment as digitalization is an ongoing process without a predictable speed. This way, it is to notice that due to occupational segregation, men are more at risk due to the digitalization since they tend to work in fields that require physical skills.

Kashyap (2021) explores whether technological advancement including digitalization addresses the gender gap and segregation in the workplace and questions whether the future of labor without gender inequality is possible. The key takeaway is that the core element of solving segregation at work issues is companies and the way they apply new technological solutions: the digitalization and mass introduction of telework can both worsen or improve gender segregation at work.

Initial studies on teleworkers suggest that only highly skilled workers with special qualifications (predominantly males) can be continuous teleworkers. Jürgens and Krzywdzinski (2019) argue that digital employment influences the sphere of labor individually and depends entirely on what kind of resources an employee or a company have. But as telework has a great propensity to be flexible and part-time employment, it leads to the situation that it gets to be feminised, and popular among women (Abendroth and Reimann, 2018).

1.6. Workplace discrimination: understanding the dynamics and implications

Gender is not merely a social construct but a historically and structurally embedded mechanism that organizes labor markets and economic systems. It serves as a key axis of stratification, influencing access to employment,

remuneration, and working conditions. The gendered division of labor, as observed in Portugal and Spain, is not incidental but rather the product of systemic material interests that benefit certain social actors. Employers, for instance, may derive economic advantages from occupational segregation by maintaining wage differentials and concentrating women in low-paid, precarious, or flexible jobs. Similarly, the organization of remote work can be shaped by corporate strategies aimed at reducing operational costs while capitalizing on unpaid domestic labor performed by women. Drawing from feminist political economy, scholars such as Nancy Fraser (2013) and Silvia Federici (2004) have demonstrated how capitalism has historically relied on gendered labor divisions to sustain both production and social reproduction. Federici, in particular, underscores how unpaid domestic labor, primarily performed by women, has been systematically devalued despite being indispensable to economic systems. In the context of telework, this dynamic is exacerbated, as the spatial integration of productive and reproductive labor can reinforce traditional gender roles, making it even more challenging for women to delineate boundaries between paid and unpaid work. Moreover, the mechanisms through which gender itself is constituted in the labor market—through legal frameworks, cultural ideologies, corporate policies, and individual agency—remain underexplored in the current analysis and warrant further investigation.

Inequalities in the labor market are not static, nor are they easily observable phenomena. Instead, they manifest as cumulative, multidimensional processes that interact with broader economic, political, and cultural structures over an individual's life course. These inequalities intersect with other forms of stratification, including class, ethnicity, and migration status, leading to varying labor market outcomes (McDowell, 2015).

Inequality at work begins as soon as women enter the labor market since most of them occupy so-called feminine professions (Reskin, 1993). The labor market has been intrinsically sex-segregated, with men disproportionately represented in strategic and high-wage sectors such as finance, engineering, and technology, while women are concentrated in lower-paid, care-oriented professions (Wilcox et al., 2022). Segregation is particularly evident in Portugal and Spain, where persistent gender norms influence both occupational aspirations and hiring practices. Women tend to choose professions associated with care, such as nursing and teaching (Manuyka et al., 2017). Even in STEM fields, women gravitate

toward disciplines that incorporate social and communicative dimensions, such as bioinformatics, environmental sciences, and human-computer interaction (Corbett and Hill, 2015). Meanwhile, men continue to dominate core technical fields, including software engineering, robotics, and artificial intelligence. This phenomenon is often framed as a matter of individual preference, yet empirical research indicates that these choices are significantly shaped by early socialization, educational structures, and institutional biases.

The persistence of occupational segregation raises critical questions about the role of both formal and informal mechanisms in reinforcing gendered employment patterns. Research suggests that recruitment and hiring practices are often guided by implicit biases that categorize certain professions as either 'male' or 'female,' perpetuating systemic barriers to gender diversity in various sectors (Foley et al., 2020). For example, women are less likely to be hired for leadership positions in STEM and finance, even when possessing equivalent qualifications to their male counterparts (He et al., 2019). These findings align with gender queueing theory, which posits that employers sort candidates into job roles based on pre-existing gendered expectations rather than objective meritocratic criteria (Reskin and Roos, 1990).

Cultural explanations of segregation at work often rely on arguments related to socialization, institutional reinforcement, and the evolution of gender norms. The process of cultural evolution has influenced occupational choices among males and females (Creanza et al., 2017). Over time, this has led to differing career trajectories. However, recent research challenges deterministic views of gender-based job preferences, emphasizing the fluidity of occupational choices and the impact of shifting social norms (Marini and Fan, 1997; Sloane et al., 2021). While there is a tendency for males and females to prefer different occupations from an early age, these differences are not inherent but are largely shaped by societal expectations and the gendered structuring of education and work.

Jacobs (2001) argued that social forces, rather than intrinsic preferences, are responsible for sustaining gendered job divisions. He observed that occupational choices are not static but evolve over time, influenced by policy interventions, market demands, and sociocultural transformations. This perspective aligns with the broader literature on gendered labor market dynamics, which suggests that employment structures are not neutral but are shaped by institutionalized

discrimination, economic incentives, and power relations. For instance, despite policy efforts to promote gender equality in Portugal and Spain, women continue to encounter structural barriers, including unequal access to leadership roles and persistent gender pay gaps (Rubery and Fagan, 2019).

Gender-related cultural norms strongly shape employment structures. These norms reinforce the belief that certain professions are inherently male or female, impacting both hiring practices and job aspirations (Foley et al., 2020). Employers often believe that care workers should be female or that construction workers should be male due to the nature of the work. Such gendered beliefs shape employment hierarchies and labor markets, affecting not only individual career trajectories but also the overall quality of work-life balance for both genders. Furthermore, these beliefs extend beyond individual biases and become embedded in corporate policies and labor laws, affecting job allocation, promotion opportunities, and wage structures.

Recent studies have explored not only the persistent causes of discrimination and segregation in the labor market but also how technological advancements are reshaping gendered employment structures. While automation and digitalization have created new opportunities for workforce participation, they have also reinforced existing inequalities, particularly for women in precarious, platform-based employment (Coyle, 2020). In Portugal and Spain, the increasing prevalence of telework presents both opportunities and risks for gender equality. On one hand, remote work can offer greater flexibility and work-life balance; on the other, it can exacerbate unpaid labor burdens and limit career progression, particularly in male-dominated sectors (Adams-Prassl et al., 2022).

The interplay between material interests, cultural norms, and institutional structures highlights the complexity of gender inequality in contemporary labor markets. Rather than being a static phenomenon, occupational segregation evolves in response to socio-economic transformations, policy interventions, and shifting cultural values.

1.7. Household work: a critical examination of its economic dimensions

Considering once again the triad of economics, gender and labor, the first issue to consider is household work and employment outside of the household. Three

decades ago Milkman and Townsley (1994) stated that “economic life is organised around gender in all known human societies. Despite this fact, conventional economic analysis characteristically excludes women and their activities from serious research and inquiry”. Since then, the situation has changed, however, there is still both a shortage of gender-aggregated data and an underestimation of household chores which is traditionally prescribed for women (Parnell and Plant, 2024). The reasons why it happens are numerous but the most vivid is the relatively low inclusion of women into the labor market compared to men (Cortes and Pan, 2023), the high percentage of participation of women in the informal economy (Bonnet, Vanek, Chen, 2019) and the slow transition from a patriarchal point of view (Donahue, 2007) to the one who would consider and accept both genders as equal ones. This way many women are excluded from the official account and can be called “invisible” (Daniels, 1987).

Daniels (1987) discussed the limitations of the present concept of work which includes two elements: work must be paid and should be made for society. Any labor which is out of this categorization is undervalued (Honneth, 2022). Hatton (2017) discusses mechanisms of invisibility and argues that any of them simply obscures the fact that the work is something that is performed and includes house care as well as, for instance, volunteer work. Lavee and Kaplan (2022) come to the conclusion that invisibility works in three dimensions: within the society, within the organisation and within the self. The invisibility within the society leads to ineffective political decisions and the maintenance of non-inclusive policies. The high rotation of employees and the biased politics of promotions within the company is the result of the organisational invisibility. The last dimension contributes to accepting and normalising the invisibility of work on a personal level. The invisibility and underestimation of household work remain vital and reproduce despite all attempts to change the situation.

Karl Polanyi (1957) introduced the concept of embeddedness, which suggests that preferences and situations can be interpreted only from the perspective of relational, institutional, and cultural contexts. As discussed above, economics remains a discipline that has yet to be fully coupled with the gender dimension, despite the undeniable impact of this dimension on the economy. Consequently, most economists need to consider integrating gender concerns into their analyses. For instance, Zelizer (2012) argues that economics still operates with a limited

gender perspective, emphasising that gender bias often leads to the exclusion of the household from the discipline's framework. Similarly, Portes (1994), in his analysis of the informal economy, excludes housework and child-rearing at home from both formal and informal economies. This exclusion arises because his definition of the informal economy as activity outside established institutional rules considers domestic care work as non-infringing on any regulations.

In contrast, feminist economist Nelson (1993) opens her essay on gender and economics by questioning whether economics is limited to goods, services, and mathematical models, or whether it extends to encompass the organisation of life within households. Aligning with this feminist perspective, Becker (1991) recognizes that women's unpaid work in the household constitutes "production" and is undeniably part of the economy. Recalling Polanyi's idea of embeddedness, it can be argued that all issues, including gender, should be examined within specific contexts. Consequently, there are studies that analyse gender dynamics across various types of societies. For example, Canzio (2021) concludes that even though women in couples are often more educated, the gendered division of household chores remains skewed against them due to traditional perceptions that caregiving and housework are inherently women's responsibilities. Therefore, it becomes evident that gender issues must be addressed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of economic systems.

Comparative studies are of extreme importance. Zhang and Farley (1995) draw a comparison on the distribution of housework in China and the United States concluding that even though historical and cultural differences and reasons for the distribution of household duties are so different, the burden of housework generally is on females in both countries. Going through an array of studies that represent findings on the issue in different countries, the idea of exact cultural impact on the organisation of household is solid and proven as women in several regions (Asian, African) are more expected to take care of unpaid responsibilities than in others (Europe, North America, Australia (Antonopoulos, 2008)). However, it is important to note that discrepancies in the division of housework persist in each country. This suggests that the roots of such inequalities lie in the patriarchal model of society, which continues to be reproduced successfully, thereby hindering progress toward a more gender-equal distribution of labor. As a result, the labor distribution remains characterised by a significant gender gap.

1.8. Productive and reproductive labor in the digital age

New digital strategies on the labor market increasingly focus on new employees who can work distantly without the loss of productivity as well as on how more and more jobs can be digitised and in perspective can become those which can be done from any place where the Internet is available. The digital organisation and regulation of work are extremely significant to gender relations, and society at large. Scholars in the field of industrial relations and digital economy point out the enormous impact digitalization has on the position of productive and reproductive labor (Huws, 2014; Staab and Nachtwey, 2016).

Digitalisation influences the established relationship between paid and unpaid labor, which are connected with the gendered division of work, and this might change gendered work patterns. Becker-Schmidt (2007) explains that the relationship between reproductive and productive labor and paid and unpaid labor, is crucial for the neoliberal model, and is intrinsically linked to the gender structure. Some studies of digital capitalism (for example, Grau-Sarabia and Fuster-Morrell, 2021) show that the relationship between genders in the labor market is in the process of reconfiguration by the digital economy and work. The most vivid example of the shift is a new discussion on reproductive and care labor that are historically associated with unpaid concepts but nowadays there are more and more scholar discussions about the valorization of the house - and childcare.

Dengler and Matthes (2018) consider that digitalisation at work implies a revaluation of tasks, and competencies, as tasks that were formerly done only in the office could be done from any place where a stable connection is available. It can indirectly lead to a revalorization of traditional female work and homecare through the modification of values and employment patterns. Poutanen and Kovalainen (2023) add to this point of view: the existence and accessibility of telework explains a decline in traditional employment arrangements and an increase in the precariousness of work, which has highly gendered implications not only for paid work but likewise for reproductive labor. The wide acceptance of telework changes traditional work relationships and may have the potential to destroy, reproduce, shift, or negotiate “doing gender” (Lodovici et al, 2021).

The digital economy provides jobs across the globe non-stop. It gives opportunities to get an income for vulnerable people, such as low-skilled or untrained women (Wood et al, 2019). For those who think that unpaid work and reproduction are their only opportunity, telework can be a window to the labor market, since it gives flexibility. There are discussions as to whether it could improve the private and working life balance, especially for working mothers (Jurgens and Krzywdzinski, 2019). It is necessary to notice a gender bias because the task of balancing between paid and unpaid labor is prescribed only for women by many studies (for example, Carstensen, 2019).

There is a point of view that flexible mode of work models (including telework) becomes a reason for individual or private conflicts at home, which obviously ends up finally being the disadvantage of women, especially to those who have working responsibilities (Hochschild and Machung, 2012).

There is a high risk that the old modes of discrimination will persist in a new digital form applied to telework (Lodovoci, 2021). Telework has been shaping a new segment of the labor market for all employees and women in particular and how eventually it will modify a labor reality and the attitude to paid and unpaid work is unclear. Kohlraush and Weber (2021) described the main requirements for a more gender-balancing digitalisation process. Female workers should look to gain more bargaining power, control over their conditions of work, and new tools of solidarity and unity being teleworkers. Then, gender-equal access to education and the consequent development of skills are necessary for gender-equal telework and promotion in IT. This is the only way to change cultural patterns and valorize women's occupations, both paid and unpaid.

1.9. Gender gap and its outcome for the economics

According to the official data of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the gender gap in formal sector jobs is large: in 2022, the share of men and women in wage and paid employment was 62.8 per cent for men and 54 per cent for women in the world (ILO, 2022). As for unemployment, women in the labor force face it at twice the rate of men, with the average female unemployment rate reaching approximately 20%, compared to 9.5% for men, resulting in a 10.5 percentage point

disparity (Agenor, et al, 2018). At the same time, gender disparities, indicators and precise numbers in employment and unemployment do not encompass the situation and fully reflect the extent of the labor market disadvantages and challenges that women face, elsewhere: these disparities are numerous and also relate to remuneration, across all levels of occupation and sectors. In many countries, the gender gap in hourly wages remains extremely large, even though the legislation incorporated equal pay regulations; but the dynamics towards an equal pay is still very slow (ILO, 2016).

Upon the gender gap the differences in economic outcomes between men and women is considered, including differences in income, wealth, education, and employment. These discrepancies have an essential influence not only on personal lives and consuming abilities but on the economy as a whole, as well as on human development and emotional and general well-being. The gender gap in income and employment can limit women's ability to participate fully in the labor market and achieve their full economic potential. This can result in reduced economic growth and lower productivity (Bertay et al, 2020). Generally speaking, those women who earn significantly less than men and have fewer opportunities for employment, career progression, and advancement may also have reduced financial security and independence, which can affect their ability to support themselves and their families (Dabla-Norris et al, 2019).

In addition to these direct economic impacts, the gender gap can also have indirect effects on economic development and growth. For example, gender disparities in education and employment can limit the human capital and eventually reduce the efficiency of the labor market (Abdulkadri et al, 2022). When women are underrepresented in certain industries or occupations as it is widely happening now (Begeny et al, 2020), it can also lead to underdevelopment, unreasonable stagnation of the labor market and progressive loss of diversity and innovation in terms of crisis as it has happened during the pandemic (Tokbaeva and Achtenhagen, 2023).

Recent decades have been the most flourishing concerning the studies that consider the gender gap and its impact on the economy. Blau and Kahn (2016) provide an overview of the gender gap and its causes and discuss the implications of the gap for the economy and for individual women and men. Guvenen et al (2014) examine the gender gap in earnings among high-rank employees during

three decades and explore the role of discrimination, work-family conflicts, human capital and other factors in a way that could contribute to the gender pay gap. As the gender gap has many dimensions, there are studies examining its outcome in particular situations, for instance, in pensions wealth and consequent lifestyle including access to a health service (Cordova et al, 2022). The study also discusses the role of career interruptions and differences in earning at different stages of the career as the gender gap becomes more vivid while moving up the career ladder and facing “sticky floors” and “glass ceiling”¹ meaning difficulties of females to proceed with their career.

There have been several recent studies on the impact of the gender gap on the economy in Spain. Hupkau and Ruiz-Valenzuela (2022) provide a detailed report of gender pay gap evolution, focusing as well on factors that contribute to the gap. Rivera-Garrido (2019) discusses the evolution of the arbitrary gender pay gap in Spain and its tendency to decrease for newcomers to the market and young workers. Barcela-Martin et al (2019) also focuses on factors of impact adding parenthood as an important element of influence on inequality as rearing children is a traditional female duty.

Several studies focus on the meaning of the pandemic for the gender gap. For example, Lariau and Liu (2022) discuss the role of programs aimed at mitigating the impact of the pandemic on women in the Spanish labor market. Barcena-Martin et al (2021) draw attention to how Covid-19 hit on employment and inequalities discussing the course of gender issues in Spain during the sanitary crisis.

In Portugal, there are studies that provide valuable insights into the nature of the gender gap and its direct or indirect intervention into the economy. Serra Sala (2018) gives an overview of the systematic gender pay gap, picking up the traditional mentality as the most important reason for the pay gap in Portugal. Amancio and Santos (2021) expanded the scope of work and provided a study on how the economic crisis reshaped the labor market and worsened inequalities in the Portuguese labor market including for the highly-qualified specialists. Campos Lima and Perista (2018) investigate the role of the financial crisis on the gender pay gap in Portugal and later Campos Lima et al (2021) examine the evolution of the gender pay gap and its causes including the gap in leadership positions.

¹ Social norms, gender stereotyping, and discrimination contribute to 40% of the gender wage gap due to “sticky floors,” whereas the “glass ceiling,” influenced by the motherhood penalty, is responsible for approximately 60% (Ciminelli et al, 2021)

1.9.1. Gender pay gap: unravelling the factors and dynamics

The sociologists explain the pay gap from the cultural and institutional perspective. Cultural ideas consider work done by women to be of lower value than a male one (Leuze and Strauss, 2016). Beliefs lead to the idea that female jobs do not contribute to productivity as much as male jobs. There is the power of inertia meaning that once a discriminative wage scale is created and has a pay gap for men and women, later on, it will get to be a solid and institutionalised one.

There are some explanations of the pay gap given by economists and based on the content of employment. One of them is frequently called “compensating differentials.” Jacobs and Steinberg (1990) explain that the payment for work is divided into two parts: material (wage) and nonmaterial compensation, which is job satisfaction or feeling useful. There is a belief that positions with more comfortable and flexible conditions (such as telework, for example) can be paid less. Society shares a point of view that women care more about a non-material part of reward avoiding harmful conditions of work or sharing a mother-friendly environment than men who are pure breadwinners (Glass and Camarigg, 1992). Non-mothers do earn more than mothers (Budig and England, 2001; Kelley et al, 2020). However the notion of mother-friendly characteristics of a job, “female-friendly employment” is still unclear. Budig and England (2001) found only one characteristic which is being able to work part-time which consequently impacts the gender pay gap. Another economic reason for female jobs consists in the number of candidates for a position. Bergmann (1986) pointed out that female employment is paid worse because it is “crowded.” The intrinsic reason for this is the discrimination during job application which finally causes a greater supply of female workers in traditional women’s occupations and, consequently, lower pay. Notably, studies find that both men and women earn less when in a more “female” occupation (England et al, 2002). Leuze and Strauss (2016) share findings that there is a net negative effect on both men’s and women’s wages of the percent female in their occupation. So, more women in a profession means a lower payment.

Cukrowska-Torzewscka and Matysiak (2020) attribute the gender pay gap to two primary factors: the maternity penalty, which leads to an experience gap caused by maternity leave and childcare responsibilities, and the concentration of

women in lower-paying occupations. Under typical circumstances, the motherhood penalty in the labor market arises when pregnant women and mothers of young children reduce their workforce participation for pregnancy and childcare responsibilities at a higher rate compared to fathers and other women (Heggeness and Suri, 2021). A wealth of research has shown how labor market exits reduce current and future expected earnings, sending many women on an entirely different lifetime earnings trajectory (Chung, 2019).

Speaking about the motherhood penalty, the additional one has been introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic where the absence of childcare and virtual schooling led to the juxtaposition of childcare and regular work.

Parents have been in the same situation, but research shows that mothers still participated more in childcare and housework duties than fathers (Collins, 2020; Zamarro and Prados, 2021). The important point that obviously adds to post-pandemic segregation of labor is that mothers had to disengage with the labor market for childcare responsibilities much more frequently, which has an impact on occupational segregation.

The experience gap is an interesting concept that can be measured by indicators that follow the same people through their life course and thus provide a quite full employment history (Katzmayr, 2020). However, so far it has not been used widely for segregation studies due to the difficulty of applying it for many years.

1.10. Digitalization and gender inequality

The job creation trends go hand in hand with current gender patterns in the global workforce, sharing them, continuing or diminishing. Concerning new technologies, it is important to make a clear division between jobs which aim to create new technologies (engineering careers) and those that are done by means of ICT (go far beyond technology and new solutions) (Hegewisch et al, 2019).

Nowadays women are still underrepresented in fields experiencing job growth, such as engineering and information and communications technology, which leaves women at a high risk of displacement by technology (Dabla-Norris and Kochhar, 2018). The report of the UN “On the Role of Women in Economic Development” in the context of globalisation, already in 2014, six years before the outbreak of the

pandemic and “flare-up” of teleworkers due to this, concluded that the gender implications of the speedy digitalization are unavoidable. Therefore it can be assumed that there is a trend of digitalization coupled with feminization and masculinisation of jobs.

Recent research on digitalization and gender inequality highlights significant gender gaps in digital inclusion and opportunities for transforming women's subjectivity. However, there is limited empirical evidence on the impact of digitalization on time use from a gender perspective (Arroyo, 2020). Two trends can be discovered in research devoted to the issue: case and sectoral studies. This way, there is an encompassing study on G20 countries done by Sorgner et al (2017) in a pre-pandemic period that allows us to assess the situation just before the boom of telework happened in 2020 and the effects of digitalization on gender equality during this period in the region. Lopez - Martinez et al (2021) provided an overview of digital gender divide and convergence in the European Union countries in the course of the pandemics. Moreover, there are quite many case studies in different regions. Concerning the case of Spain and Portugal, there are sectoral studies: on socio-educational gender gap due to digitalization and its consequence in STEM employment (Vidal and Barujel, 2021), analysis of digital transition in small- and medium-sized companies in Spain (Jarvi, 2022), the study on polarisation of labor market and jobs at risk due to the digitalization in Spain (Bрана, 2019). Portuguese scholarship reflects on the evolution of a traditional gendered occupational segmentation applied to highly qualified workers (Amancio and Santos, 2021), on how telework reflects on health behaviour changes (Forte, 2021), occupational gender disparities of Portuguese tourist sector (Costa et al, 2023).

Gender inequality is a complex unstill phenomenon, the exponential increase in utilisation of information technology, the introduction of new technologies, the capacity to operate and analyse big data are the elements that change the structure of inequalities and attract the attention of scholarship. However, it is a phenomenon that is not investigated well intersectorally in connection to other new phenomena like digitalization, platform economy and digitalization.

1.11. Advanced technologies, telework and female employment

New technologies, telework and employment are intrinsically connected and influence each other qualitatively at a growing speed. Advanced automatization, new technologies, digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI) offer enlargement of the labor market with absolutely new job positions and space for economic development, but in this new world of digital highly-technological employment women face new challenges as well. Between 40 million and 160 million women globally may need to transition between occupations by 2030, often into higher-skilled roles with technological requirements (Madgavkar et al, 2019). To face this transition both women and men should ramp up new skills and competencies, however, women constantly meet more obstacles to strengthening their profile as an employee due to traditional reasons of patriarchal society and emerging ones, the most challenging one is a digital gender gap (Babaeva et al, 2021).

Innovations in digital technology change our society to a great extent including gender roles and these changes can create new opportunities to reform existing work patterns which nowadays are so far from being favourable to a woman throughout her life cycle (Sorgner, 2019). The question is what kind of capacity digitalization has to transform established patriarchal roles and which direction digitalization of work should move towards in order to reorganise gendered work relations (Kohlrausch and Weber, 2021). The crucial element for comprehension is to understand in-depth the relationship between telework and female employment as well as the mutual dynamics between new technologies and the labor market.

The studies on the issue of telework originated around 50 years ago from the first scholar interest in telework that considered it quite simplistically and tried to define telework and to give a certain classification to the emerging mode of work (e.g. Nilles, 1975). There was a rise of interest in the issue from the 2000s based on the growing role of ICT in society and the organisation of work that ended up in the explosion of studies due to the onset of the pandemic and the consequent increase of teleworkers (Athanasiodou and Theriou, 2021). The scholarship indicates problems and transformations within society and responds to its necessities and for this reason, there are intersectoral and interdisciplinary studies that emerged from the beginning of the pandemic and discuss digitalization coupled with different elements, events and institutions of society, including gender and labor.

1.12. Telework: conceptualization, dimensions, and implications in contemporary work settings

The definitions of telework are manifold. Initially, telework was described by Nilles (1975) as an activity which “includes all work-related substitutions of telecommunications and related information technologies for travel”. Nilles considered telework to be a form of distributed work which can be benevolent for both business and environment.

There are entire studies devoted to the definitions of telework, for example, done by Lamond et al. (1997): “Defining telework: what is it exactly?”. The study states that from the initial interest in telework in the 1970s and by the end of the 20th century there was a division between home-based telework, ICT-based mobile work, teleworking from remote offices and mobile telework. This division led authors to the conclusion that telework is always a working activity that is necessarily out of the official place of work meaning a centralised place aimed to focus only on working duties (Lamond et al, 1997).

The latest studies done during the pandemic specify that telework can happen sometimes or usually throughout the working activity (Adascalitei et al, 2022), drawing on the difference between full teleworkers and those who work non-full day teleworking or non-full week (Rubino et al, 2024), call it “flexible working” (Canibano and Avgoustaki, 2022), indicate it as “a conscious arrangement between home and work” (Lagutina, 2022) and even foresee that “teleworking will be central for the future of jobs” (Hajal, 2022).

There are notions of telework, telecommuting, virtual work, work done from home, mobile teleworking, and remote work (Bailey and Kurland, 2002), and the fact that there are so many concepts that can be applied to similar organizations of work, makes it complicated to find one encompassing definition to the characterization of telework. For Nakrosiene et al (2019), the concept of telework is based on the intensity of the telework meaning the proportion of the remote mode to the onsite one. This way the schedule of work is one of the most important elements, together with working hours and telework location. Within the concept of telework, the intensity of teleworking should be taken into account, whether it is

full-time or part-time telework. Systematizing, full-time telework occurs when a teleworker works from home (or in a place other than the organisation's physical space), using information technologies. Part-time teleworking happens when a teleworker works half-day or several days a week and, this way can be called an "occasional teleworker" (Lopez-Igual and Rodriguez-Modrono, 2020). Such telecommuting is also called "ad-hoc telecommuting" (Allen et al, 2015). Beauregard et al (2019) believe that the core characteristic of telework is its flexibility meaning mutual arrangements between employers and employees, arrangements that vary according to the hours and places of work, aiming to reach the equilibrium between family life and work. However, the concept of flexibility is not a clearly defined characteristic of full-time telework since authors consider part-time work also to be flexible (Beauregard et al, 2019).

Nakrosiene et al (2019) present an idea, according to which teleworking is a complex phenomenon with no unified definition. Some scholars define it quite simplistically presenting it as an alternative organisation of work (Golden and Elia, 2017; Nakrosiene et al, 2020).

Golden and Elia (2017) describe telework as a de-standardized working arrangement that can be conceptualised through the contract to traditional employment which tends to happen in a fixed place with a fixed schedule. For Golden and Elia (2017), the concept of telework doesn't fit into the understanding of conventional employment and is rather an alternative work that should be considered along with part-time and platform work. For some scholars (for example, Roberto et al, 2023), remote work is mostly devoted to solving problems with transportation, especially in bigger cities.

Coming to the definition of teleworker, Golden and Elia (2017) refer to the idea that the employee exercises the same duties being remote as he or she would have been in the same place of work every day. Vyas (2022) considers a remote worker as being employed traditionally but outside of a conventional office environment, under a labor contract. Lopez-Igual and Rodrigues-Modrono (2020) notice that teleworkers are all those who exercise ICT-based mobile work and are divided into occasional, highly mobile and home-based teleworkers. Concerning the gender division, most men belong to the first and second groups and are usually managers of different levels and technicians; home-based workers are mostly women with clerical duties (Lopez-Igual and Rodrigues-Modrono, 2020).

There is no unified idea about what kind of remote work should be described as telework and whether it is possible to deem that these two concepts are synonymous with each other along with telecommuting, working from home or even “working from anywhere” since all these definitions have a different core element. Telework is not a homogeneous entity (Athaniadiou and Theriou, 2021).

1.13. Theoretical foundations: Beck, Butler, and Bauman on telework and female employment

The transformation-driven character of labor markets, particularly in the context of telework and female employment in Spain and Portugal, requires a nuanced theoretical framework that incorporates sociological, economic, and philosophical perspectives. The works of Ulrich Beck, Judith Butler, and Zygmunt Bauman provide critical insights into the precarization of labor, the performativity of gender in employment structures, and the increasing fluidity and insecurity of work arrangements in the digital age. Their theories, when applied to the gendered dynamics of telework, help contextualize the persistence of inequalities, the institutionalization of flexible labor, and the challenges women face in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities.

Ulrich Beck's concept of the "risk society" (Beck, 1992) is particularly relevant to understanding the precarization of female teleworkers in Spain and Portugal. Beck argues that in late modernity, traditional structures—such as stable employment, welfare protections, and gender roles—have been destabilized by economic globalization, technological advancements, and deregulated labor markets. He contends that risk and insecurity have become defining features of work, particularly for marginalized groups, including women. This theoretical framework is crucial in explaining why women in telework frequently face precarious contracts, low wages, and lack of career progression. The individualization of risk, a key element in Beck's theory, suggests that teleworkers are increasingly responsible for their own job security, career mobility, and work-life balance without institutional support, further exacerbating gender inequalities. Additionally, Beck's globalization thesis explains how transnational economic shifts have led to the feminization of flexible labor, where telework is marketed as an opportunity for women to achieve

professional autonomy but, in reality, reinforces gendered divisions of labor. Despite its strengths, Beck's theory has notable limitations. It does not explicitly account for how risk is differentially experienced by men and women in telework, requiring integration with feminist labor theories. Furthermore, while Beck emphasizes the erosion of stable employment, his framework understates the role of structural inequalities—such as employer biases and the unequal division of unpaid labor—in shaping women's telework experiences. Nonetheless, his analysis is highly relevant to Spain and Portugal, where women in telework are disproportionately engaged in precarious and low-paid remote jobs under the guise of flexibility. Beck's framework provides a valuable lens for understanding why telework, despite its promise of autonomy, often results in heightened economic insecurity for women.

While Beck's theory explains the structural risks associated with telework, Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity (Butler, 1990) provides a deeper understanding of how telework reinforces traditional gender roles. Butler argues that gender is not an innate identity but a performative act continuously produced and reinforced through social norms, discourse, and institutional practices. This is particularly relevant to female teleworkers, as their ability to work remotely is often conditioned by pre-existing gendered expectations around care work and household labor. The normalization of telework as a strategy for work-life balance implicitly assumes that women are responsible for managing both professional and domestic responsibilities, reinforcing rather than challenging traditional gender norms. One of the strengths of Butler's theory is that it reveals the persistence of gendered labor divisions even in ostensibly progressive work arrangements. The idea that telework allows women to balance professional and domestic roles is not an inherent truth but a discursive construct that perpetuates gendered expectations. Butler's critique of hegemonic gender norms is particularly relevant in understanding why women in Spain and Portugal frequently "choose" telework, despite its disadvantages—often due to implicit societal pressures rather than genuine autonomy. Moreover, her framework helps explain why telework does not necessarily lead to gender equality, as it reproduces the invisibilization of unpaid labor and reinforces the economic marginalization of female workers. However, Butler's theory also has limitations. While it provides a compelling analysis of gender as a social construct, it does not sufficiently engage with the material economic realities of labor markets. In the context of telework, the financial

precarity of female workers cannot be explained solely through discursive practices but must also be examined through the lens of economic structures and labor policies. Additionally, Butler's work offers little guidance on how institutional interventions might reshape gendered employment patterns in telework. Nevertheless, her theory remains invaluable in highlighting how telework, rather than liberating women from workplace discrimination, often exacerbates their dependence on precarious, gendered labor arrangements.

Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2000) further contextualizes the instability of telework by describing how work, social structures, and identities have become increasingly flexible and insecure. Bauman argues that in late modernity, the stability that characterized traditional labor markets has dissolved, giving rise to precarious and individualized employment arrangements. His theory is particularly useful in explaining why telework has not resulted in genuine empowerment for women but has instead exacerbated economic and social uncertainties. In Bauman's framework, telework epitomizes the "liquefaction" of stable employment structures, where workers are expected to be constantly adaptable, self-reliant, and available, without long-term security or institutional protections. Bauman's theory provides a critical lens through which to analyze the rise of precarious labor in telework. His work helps explain why female teleworkers in Spain and Portugal frequently face temporary contracts, low wages, and limited career mobility. Moreover, his notion of "liquid labor" is particularly relevant in examining how telework blurs the boundaries between professional and personal life, leading to heightened stress and increased unpaid labor burdens for women. The illusion of autonomy in telework aligns with Bauman's argument that late modern employment structures demand constant flexibility while providing minimal stability. While Bauman's theory effectively captures the shifting nature of employment, it does not explicitly address gender as a key axis of labor market inequality. Additionally, Bauman focuses heavily on flexibility and fluidity but does not fully account for how legal frameworks, employer policies, and social norms structure telework inequalities. Despite these limitations, his work remains highly applicable in understanding why telework has not translated into meaningful employment security for women in Spain and Portugal. His theory highlights the inherent instability of remote work, where women are expected to be continuously

adaptable without institutional safeguards, exacerbating their economic vulnerability.

By combining Beck's risk society, Butler's gender performativity, and Bauman's liquid modernity, we gain a multidimensional understanding of how telework affects female employment in Spain and Portugal. Beck's analysis explains the precarization of female teleworkers, Butler's framework reveals how telework reinforces gender norms, and Bauman's theory situates these changes within a broader context of labor flexibility and insecurity. Together, their theories illustrate why telework, while seemingly offering new opportunities for women, often reproduces economic and gendered inequalities in new forms. This theoretical foundation provides the necessary tools to critically assess how telework functions as both an enabler and a barrier to gender equality in the Spanish and Portuguese labor markets, reinforcing the need for structural policy interventions that address both economic precarity and entrenched gender norms.

1.14. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market: a gender perspective

Pre-existing gender-related disparities were aggravated by the sanitary crisis, and it brought to the table of global politics and economy new issues and changed the relatively stable dynamics of the labor market. The shock of the pandemic has become a heavy stone, a burden for employment and economic opportunities of individuals that has highlighted the existing gender gaps and underscored the urgent need for more inclusive policies to support women's participation and inclusion in the labor force. The pandemic has a different impact on men and women due to the different societal and economic roles so the response to crisis and difficulties differs as well (Masherini and Nivakoski, 2021). The pandemic played a huge role in bringing the development of women's rights decades back (Reyes, 2020).

Most of the scholarly contributions that investigate a combination of the pandemic and gender are devoted to a certain set of issues connected to inequality in access to resources and participation, such as the impact of gender pay gap, the

changed labour market structure, emerging forms of work as telework and platform work and the inclusion of women in new forms. Also, due to the accelerated technological advancement, scholarship seeks to understand how it has changed gender dynamics and how it can prospectively change issues of feminization and defeminization of certain sectors of the economy (UN ESCAP, 2021; Tejani and Kucera, 2021).

The disruption created by COVID-19 accelerated the digitalisation and platformization of the economy, transforming the entire economic model of the present. Moreover, it brought such consequences as an increasing number of those who work remotely including whole companies that do not obtain physical offices anymore as well as the growing precarization of those who work either under civil law contracts instead of labor contracts or simply doing one-time services with no contract at all. Due to this, they are almost excluded from the social security system and labor law protection. The latest most interesting studies devoted to this dynamics and its impact on gender issues investigate the digital gap issue and how it is connected with gender inequality (Longoria et al, 2022; Mathrani et al, 2022), explore the use of ICT reaching the goal of gender-sensitive policies (Vyas - Doorgapersad, 2022) and diverse leadership (Weber-Leverenz and Vasiliu-Feltes, 2022; Karyotaki et al, 2022).

Digital platform economy and platformization of work is an emerging issue and within it following topics are raised and discussed: assessment of gender inequalities in worker's participation, earnings and retention (Rodriguez - Modrono et al, 2022), report on the dynamics of the old inequalities within a new form of work (Gerber, 2022), noticing new precarity and invisibility of female work on microtasking platforms (Tubaro et al, 2022), the failure of algorithmic mechanisms and its impact on gender issue (Grohmann et al, 2022).

As for telework and its impact on the world of work, the research done recently focuses on the transformation of gender roles due to telework (Gonzalez Ramos and Garcia-de-Diego, 2022), how telework influences women's well-being and perspective of their efficiency (Lu and Zhuang, 2023), the capacity of telework to trigger the transition in work and social arrangements which could be beneficial for women (Vayre et al, 2022).

1.15. Feminist collective action and gendered power dynamics in telework

Feminist collective action in telework and remote work organizations has evolved in response to both persistent gender inequalities and the structural transformations of digital labor markets. Historically, women's labor movements have fought for better wages, maternity protections, and anti-discrimination policies (Milkman, 2016), but the shift toward decentralized and individualized work environments has complicated traditional unionization efforts (Crain, 2018). In response, new forms of collective action have emerged, including online organizing, virtual unions, and advocacy networks such as the Remote Workers' Union and Women Who Code movement, which provide platforms for addressing precarious employment conditions and advocating for equitable workplace policies. However, structural barriers continue to hinder feminist organizing in telework, as the lack of shared physical spaces limits solidarity-building, and employers often frame flexibility as a privilege rather than a right (Folbre, 2021). Women teleworkers leverage legal, economic, and social strategies to contest workplace discrimination, yet each method presents challenges: legal actions can be costly and time-consuming (Williams and Dempsey, 2014), economic leverage is weakened by the dispersed nature of telework (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2018), and social movements, while powerful, risk corporate co-optation and backlash (Givan et al., 2010). Additionally, the relationship between male and female teleworkers varies, with some fostering solidarity over shared concerns such as job insecurity (Acker, 2006), while others experience heightened competition due to visibility biases that favor men in promotion processes (Hupkau and Petrongolo, 2020). The disproportionate representation of women in telework is often misinterpreted as a matter of individual choice, overlooking the economic constraints, gendered caregiving responsibilities, and institutional barriers that push women into remote work as a necessity rather than an option (Folbre, 2021). In light of these dynamics, women teleworkers prioritize work-life balance, equitable career advancement opportunities, stronger legal protections, and recognition of telework as a legitimate form of professional labor, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive policies to prevent the entrenchment of existing inequalities in digital labor markets.

1.16. Envisioning the future of telework

The mere digitalisation of the already existing labor processes may not have the capacity to create a trend for more sustainable working conditions but even to worsen the quality of labor for all and for women particularly through precarious, invisible and undervalued telework (Lagutina, 2022).

A systematic, socio-technical perspective for a resilient and benevolent digitalisation should be considered separately within each state: they offer different social conditions of life for citizens and women in particular as well as they articulate different legal frameworks and policies. These differences require a particular look in each case through the legal system of hard and soft law. However, so far there are no case studies on the future of telework.

Many studies nowadays repeat that telework is here to stay (Hajal, 2022, Lagutina, 2022, Sanhokwe, 2022). Several studies offer consideration for the future of gendered telework. Galvez et al (2020) discuss how to balance home-based telework and family in order to keep both productivities. Khan and Umer (2021) present policy lessons for the sustainable future of female telework: enhanced communication between teleworkers and upskilling are among the policy dimensions that employers should undertake in order to secure the productivity and satisfaction of employees, especially women. Stoian et al (2022) conducted a study with a complex methodology that considers factors undermining the sustainability of telework. Among them are: slow knowledge exchange, poor work-life balance and professional isolation as elements that should be deemed and modified in order to provide benevolent telework and increase productivity in the future. Weber-Lewerenz and Vasiliu-Feltes (2022) are concerned with the analysis of the implications of the pandemics and digitalization for the future of labor. The study searches the relationships between the context of home-based teleworking during the pandemic (pandemic-teleworking conditions), productivity perceptions during home-based teleworking, and employees' future teleworking inclinations beyond the pandemic.

It is quite complicated to indicate future implications that new technologies and telework will have for gender inequalities and female employment based on current literature since the studies are few and most of them don't give a future perspective but recommendations for policies.

1.17. Contemporary trends in telework research

The emergence and fast and forced introduction of telework due to the pandemics have far-reaching consequences for the conventional structure of work and definitely for the idea of the employment itself, how we understand it, even though telework is essentially a mode of work, not its content (Montgomery and Baglioni, 2022). However, some scholars (for example, Kovalainen et al, 2020) consider telework as an essential change because it separates work from traditional institutional norms and takes a working place out of an office.

There is a new direction of studies devoted to the issue of the digital gender gap. Palomares-Ruiz et al (2021) investigate the digital gender gap in university education and find out that interventions in the system of education are necessary not only at the university level but throughout the lifecycle for women to obtain digital skills and be able to be included fully in the current labor market. Musizvingoza et al (2021) connect the digital gender gap and health inequalities explaining that the digital gap precipitates intersectional inequalities and hinders women from getting proper health care even nowadays. Schmidt and Shephard (2021) consider the digital gender gap the biggest challenge of the new time and the main element of what actually makes digitalization disruptive. Moreover, they point out that the response to such a disruption should be given by society and at first by governments and states through laws and policies that would support women obtaining ICT skills and professions. Thus, the closure of the digital gender gap is one of the trends of both digitalization and gender and labor policies.

The studies that draw on trends of teleworking define that the main direction is an expansion of telework that will bring challenges to the world of labor (Stoian et al, 2022) and lessen running fees and boom profitability (Moberg and Schattenberg, 2020), meaning expenses and efficiency of businesses. The connected trend is a *geographical disturbance* meaning that telework will become more and more international and will cause a wave of digital nomads (Reichenberger, 2017).

Trends of telework are also connected to health: telework is able to cause not only a boom of productivity but also a new wave of mental diseases and the solid collective feeling of solitude, connected with the necessity to work from home (Mendonça et al, 2022). Telework in the pandemic has been like a coin with two

sides: employees who could telework, didn't lose their jobs due to reductions in the demand for labor, but most experienced extreme shifts in their work environments. This mass transition to remote work meant work lives were no longer clearly divided from personal ones, instead, they were juxtaposed to unite in an extremely short period of time (sometimes, immediately) (Lopez-Igual and Rodrigues-Modrono, 2020). Single employees were reporting psychological problems up to depression. Those who have family obligations and no childcare available were thrown to cope both with family and working duties simultaneously (Schmitz et al., 2023). This trend and situation are crucial from the point of female employment since it was hit more by pandemics than male ones: women had to quit their jobs in order to take care of their family members during curfews (Dugarova, 2023).

Another line of research on the issue considers teleworkers to slowly become invisible workforce (Clar-Novak, 2024), meaning unseeable for colleagues and management. This problem is becoming so essential that companies even issue recommendations on how to lead a team which cannot be physically seen and accessible (Kalmar et al, 2022). The ILO (2021) issued a report on telework which shows a clear concern that working from home is not in sight and therefore holds a high risk of becoming precarious and underestimated.

The importance of management for the organisation of telework is likewise a direction of modern research. The pre-pandemic study by Beauregard et al (2019) draws on outcomes of telework discussing the prerequisites that form a base for the benevolence of the remote work experience, encompassing features of work, employee and subordination. One such prerequisite is professional human resource management which has certain criteria for the employment of teleworkers. Decision on a mode of work is also an important part of human resource management. Mayrhofer et al (2019) go back to the 1970s, explaining that human resource management appeared as an understanding of the importance of employee profiles for the success of organisations. This way, the study considers that HR management can frequently decide on the mode of work and nowadays can offer an employee a presential, hybrid or telework mode. Haque (2014) points out the human resources strategy is devoted to the improvement of attitudes towards work and, consequently, creating a fertile soil for the growing effectiveness of any mode of work including a remote one. Based on the idea of the traditional organisation of work meaning office-centralised employment, human resource management went a

long way from organising mostly craftwork and mechanised work to platform workers and digital nomads who work from any place.

Another interesting dimension of research is devoted to telework and commuting patterns, with employees avoiding going to work at all or having flexible hours for that. Some scholars unite telework and their impact on transportation (Asmussen et al, 2024). There are country cases: Netherlands (Ton et al, 2022), Japan (Kikuchi and Fukuda, 2022), Australia (Guerin, 2021) and others. Teleworkers have an opportunity to change the place where they live and if it's going to be a mass trend during the next decades travel behaviour and work habits will be transformed even more (Ton et al, 2022) However, its influence on female telework is not that obvious since, considering that women are still the most frequent providers of home- and childcare, they do depend on social services like schools and kindergartens. This way, the transformation in commuting patterns will be one-sided and actual for males and singles, but not for people with family duties and mostly women.

Speaking about trends of research in telework and female employment, it is important to point out that the majority of studies are not gendered and consider employment to be quite homogenous. In other words, the gendering of research on remote work is rare, non-exhaustive and needs additional scientific attention and work in-depth.

CHAPTER II: FEMALE LABOR PARTICIPATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC: CASES OF PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

2.1. Introduction

The 21st century has brought massive changes into the global environment that have caused consequences in the world of work. Among the transformative forces, the disruptive and far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are comparable to those of no other catastrophe but the virulent disaster of the bubonic plague in human history (McNeely, 2021). The pandemic hit at a crucial moment when the historic moment, certain cultural freedom, and technological progress were meeting in the employment and labor markets of Portugal and Spain.

This chapter aims to delve into female labor participation in Portugal and Spain. Specific attention will be paid to the periods preceding revealing the historical discourse of Portuguese women in labor until the pandemics and the turn to the massive digitalization of the labor processes. In both Iberic countries' rich tapestry of societal evolution, we encounter a complex interplay of historical legacies, modern economic dynamics, and the necessity of a fast adaptation of the market to digital transformations.

The historical backdrop offers valuable context, tracing the origins of gender roles in both countries and how they have evolved over the years. From the traditional roles of women in agrarian communities to the challenges and opportunities brought forth by urbanisation and globalisation, each period has contributed to shaping the status of women in the workforce.

As we journey into the present and post-pandemic landscape, we explore the interconnected challenges faced by women thriving for professional independence in Portugal's labor market. The chapter will illuminate the multifaceted dimensions of female labor participation in Portugal and Spain. We will scrutinise the impacts of different events on female employment, examine the experiences of different

generations of women, and contemplate the role of profeminist organisations that can empower women in the evolving world of work.

2.2. Case of Portugal

2.2.1. The employment landscape of women in Portugal during the 20th century and nowadays

The 20th century marked a gradual yet compelling and full of difficult issues in the participation of women in the Portuguese workforce. This transformation was influenced by an ample combination of various historical and political events such as the partly absence of women's rights, extensive military dictatorship, and economic decline and negative economic prognosis. From a general perspective the previous century was characterised by a prolonged period of cultural inactivity, political authoritarianism, and economic poverty under a dictatorship that spanned from 1926 to 1974. This time was followed by subsequent not always linear and successful political and socio-economic changes aimed at modernising and accelerating a nation that had long been "culturally stagnant and socially underdeveloped" (Pinto, 1998).

Before the 20th century, traditional gender roles in Portugal were deeply entrenched and largely reinforced by societal norms and state authorities. While instances of gender norm contestation existed, particularly in socio-economic and religious contexts (Federici, 2004; Lerner, 1986), these challenges did not significantly alter mainstream perceptions. At the outset of the 20th century, like in many other countries, Portugal remained predominantly rural and agricultural, with women primarily engaged in simple agricultural labor, such as harvest collection and domestic chores, while having limited or no access to education and formal employment opportunities.

The authoritarian New State regime years that started two decades after the beginning of the new century, led by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, did not revolutionize the image of women and the paradigm based on the traditional gender norms prevalent at the century's dawn. Women's involvement in the formal labor market remained restricted, with an emphasis on domestic roles. The regime also severely curtailed women's civil rights, as exemplified by the Constitution, adopted

in 1933, which explicitly excluded women from sections pertaining to equal rights, relegating them to their designated 'roles' within the family (Beleza, 2015). This exclusionary ideology extended beyond legislation, permeating society's fabric through the promotion of patriarchal principles of deference and subservience, exemplified in the dictator's speeches and educational materials, all influenced by fascist ideals (Pimentel, 2000).

Education suffered mostly from the underdevelopment that was brought about and kept by the authoritarian regime. In the 1960s, more than 40% of the population was illiterate, and a mere 0.6% had attained higher education. Regrettably, the educational improvements introduced by the democratic government failed to bridge the gender gap in literacy. Even three decades later according to the data of the census that occurred in 1991, women's illiteracy rate (76%) remained 10 % lower than that of men (86%) which is an extreme disparity (Barreto, 1996).

In the post-World War II era, demographic dynamics began to shift, as the colonial war (1961–1974) prompted the conscription of young men for extended military service in Africa. This conflict resulted in numerous casualties, disrupted family structures, and increased rural-to-urban migration, culminating in significant emigration, predominantly involving men, peaking in the 1960s (Torres et al., 2004). The absence of men, in turn, compelled women to take on a new role as paid workers to support their families. Consequently, there was an unprecedented surge in female labor force participation in Portugal. Nonetheless, as of 1970, the female labor force participation rate was still below 20%, with women primarily engaged in factories or working as domestic servants in urban centres, apparently continuing the vector, prescribed to them by traditional norms (Silva, 1983).

The Carnation Revolution of 1974, following the armed invasions, resulted in the fall of the New State regime and the establishment of democracy. This marked a turning point towards more freedoms and greater gender equality, with the granting of improved legal rights, enhanced access to education and employment, and, consequently, to economic independence of Portuguese women. They were granted full legal equality with men by the Constitution adopted in 1976, effectively abolishing the legal framework of the authoritarian regime based on gender discrimination and undervaluing women. This event opened the way for extensive legislative reforms aimed at dismantling gender-based discrimination and giving women all possible freedom in deciding whether to follow the traditional path under

the law. The democratic regime was no longer supporting the patriarchal values officially as it was during Salazar's time. After this change of state attitude towards women, within one decade from 1970 to 1980 Portugal's female labor force participation transitioned from being one of the lowest in Europe to one of the highest (Ferreira, 1993), and this transformation appeared to be stable as it has continued to the present day.

Such a significant shift brought several consequences in Portugal's demographic landscape, reflecting trends observed in other Western countries. Birth and marriage rates declined, households became smaller, and a growing number of people chose to live independently. These changes coincided with Portugal's entry into the European Union (then the European Economic Community) in 1986, accompanied by economic reforms and modernization. Women continued to join the formal workforce in increasing numbers, contributing to economic growth. These developments brought about a notable transformation in the structure of female employment, with more women with family responsibilities entering the labor force. This shift also influenced the relationship between paid and unpaid work, women's activity, fertility rates, and societal values and attitudes concerning work and family life (Torres, 2009).

In summary, there was the demand for comprehensive modernization in the sphere of labor precipitated by specific historical events and buttressed by the transition to democracy (Amancio and Santos, 2021). It reinforced the significance of both legal and political conditions within the context of historical circumstances, which converged to position women as a substantial force within the active population, with women representing 49.7% of the population in 2022 (Pordata, 2023).

In the 21st century, difficulties caused by professional activity and related to poor work-life balance, wage disparities, and inability to reach leadership positions were confronted by Portuguese women (Amancio and Santos, 2021). Meanwhile, Portugal has faced significant economic turbulence in the 21st century, being harmed by the global financial crisis and the European debt crisis. These crises had notable implications for women's employment. The 2008 crisis resulted in economic upheaval, leading to the exacerbation of existing inequalities rather than the emergence of new ones (Gonzalez, 2014). Male-dominated sectors experienced substantial job losses, leading to greater income equality through wage reductions

and the influx of highly qualified female workers (Santos and Amancio, 2016). Moreover, austerity measures further limited new hiring in traditionally female-dominated public service sectors like education and healthcare (Pedroso, 2014). Wage cuts for public employees disproportionately impacted women, while restrictions on income introduced added inflexibility into the work-life balance. As a consequence of these negative changes, involving traditionally feminine sectors, women withdrew from the labor market, with the unemployment rate increasing twice from 7.7% to 15.7% in 2012 (INE, 2012).

Later on, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was based on the consequences of the previous crises of female employment mentioned above, hitting sectors with a high prevalence of female workers, particularly such as healthcare and education. It also highlighted the critical importance of essential workers, a significant proportion of whom were women. Unlike the 2008 crisis, this time mostly female-dominated sectors were hit by curfews and virus-related restrictions.

The comprehensive historical overview depicts an over than century-long shift from traditional gender roles towards greater female workforce participation in Portugal. This journey towards gender equality in the labor market has been shaped by a complex interplay of events, societal transformations, and policy initiatives. Moreover, it is an ongoing process that extends into the 21st century, reflecting Portugal's vector towards achieving greater gender balance and inclusivity in the workforce.

2.2.2. Gender equality advocacy and labor force participation in Portugal

The consideration of feminist movements and women's rights advocacy plays an important role in raising awareness about gender inequality, facilitating efforts to enhance women's participation in the labor force and reflecting the state of the nation concerning related issues. The interplay between women's movements and institutions gives an additional perspective on the gender dynamics and official mechanisms employed to promote gender equality and their acceptance by society (Monteiro and Ferreira, 2016).

The development of women's movements and feminist organisations advocating for equal opportunities and rights in Portugal has been a noteworthy and

evolving process. The initial wave, spanning from the mid-19th century to the 1930s, was characterised by Portuguese women's requests for fundamental rights such as the right to work and suffrage (Baptista and Alves, 2022). During this period, Portuguese feminism adhered to a more conventional trajectory. The focal point here is the Congress that occurred in 1924, which holds a crucial place in the history of the feminist movement. This event, coordinated by the National Council of Portuguese Women, established in 1914, brought attention to the key issues and aspirations of Portuguese women during that period, including the attainment of voting rights (which was only achieved in full 50 years after in 1974) and the recognition of their social and legal rights (Goellner and Jaegita, 2007).

The second wave of feminism in Portugal, spanning from the 1960s to the 1990s, witnessed the emergence of scholars who authored numerous books and articles critiquing patriarchy and discussing and reflecting on various women's issues (Ferreira, 1993). This phase also encompassed the rise of discussions on women's reproductive rights and unpaid labor as well as the tendency of Portuguese legislation to institutionalise issues of gender inequality via suspending guarantees, limiting rights and preventing young females from entering the labor market (Goellner and Jaegita, 2007). The essential change happened within the attitudes of women towards themselves: hegemonic and patriarchal opinions that primarily see a woman as a mother were widely questioned (Silva, 1983).

In any case, regarding the reflections on the role of women by activists, it should be emphasized that for a long time within the previous century feminist thought was forbidden. Indeed, before the Carnation Revolution in 1974, the so-called New State regime prevented the realization of political opposition through parties, including feminist ones. However, there were influential activists in the feminist movement. Maria Lamas and Maria Isabel Barreno challenged societal norms and created a stable base for Portuguese feminist thought in Portugal. Notably, Lamas examined the transformation of labor perspectives of Portuguese women before and during the Salazarian state. She described the gender dynamic as one of "civil equality" from the proclamation of the Portuguese Republic in 1910 until the onset of the authoritarian regime (Lamas, 1952). The core concern of feminist thought during this period revolved around the socio-economic conditions and dependency from men, fathers or husbands, of Portuguese women. Lamas compared women's position in the labor market to being "a prisoner inside herself,"

reflecting the inability of female workers to express and develop their professional talents under the Salazarian paradigm (Lamas, 1948).

The Carnation Revolution was a special moment and a turning point, creating an environment and opportunity for increased political freedom and change of paradigm, allowing women's movements to emerge, to act openly without oppression, and to advocate for gender equality. After the Revolution, in the 1970s, the Women's Liberation Movement came forward in public to fight for equality between genders and reproductive rights. The overarching goal was to combat all forms of gender-based oppression and discrimination. Activists within this movement addressed issues such as labor discrimination, domestic duties, and the influence of patriarchal discourse on Portuguese women's lives. The first brochure in 1975 called for the revision of the Civil Code, subsequent equal pay, recognition of domestic work, and free childcare for women as essential conditions for professional development (Pena, 2008).

The feminist movement in Portugal followed the historical course and, this way, the agenda has been changing and transforming through the last century. Ferreira (2003) reflects that the feminist movement, considering female work both in the sphere of production and reproduction, was thinking of it as something “precarious” and frequently related to the service area. In other words, a woman turned from surviving within her household to providing services out of it. Torres (2007) notes that from the 1960s on there was always an expectation of the feminist movement that women's integration into the workforce would represent a crucial milestone for their autonomy and financial independence, ultimately leading to a more equal sharing of domestic duties and childcare responsibilities between genders. The modern feminist discussion shares this concern and questions also why labor generally gets to be feminised but domestic work in the 21st century has not become masculinized even upon a certain democratisation within Portuguese households (Torres et al, 2004).

The examination of the feminist movement and salient employment-related issues is of paramount significance, as it underscores the intricate interplay between the feminist movement and the realm of academia. This dynamic interconnection serves as a reflective and analytical lens through which the ongoing societal transformations are critically assessed and reevaluated.

Since the 1990s, the feminist theory of the third wave has been under development and continues to evolve to the present day (Khvan, 2020). Modern feminism in Portugal turned into not just a personal mindset held by a few women but into a collective movement aimed at transforming society (Amancia and Santos, 2021). The main concern of the movement now is the empowerment of women and concern to ensure that the political priorities in Portugal promote gender equality as a fundamental right, devoid of any negative repercussions or advantages (Almeida, 1998). Tavares (2017) points out that nowadays issues of female employment are discussed as being intrinsically connected to the globalisation of economies, productive restructuring involving the introduction of new technologies and work organisation, the strengthening of capital and financial speculation at the expense of productive activity, deregulation of markets and labor, all based on neoliberal governance perspectives.

The feminist movement in Portugal, which has steadily gained momentum over the course of the preceding century, despite facing instances of prohibition and suppression, has consistently placed a focal emphasis on matters pertaining to female employment (Ferreira, 1993). This emphasis underscores the fundamental role of female employment in fostering individual professional autonomy and in cultivating a society that adheres to the principles of democratic governance.

2.2.3. The catalysts for women's engagement in the labor force in Portugal

The historical discourse on female labor participation in Portugal highlights several critical factors driving changes over the past decades. The gradual shift from rural to urban living, initiated in the early 20th century and accelerated by industrialization, military events, and democratisation in the second part of the 20th century, led to significant transformations in women's roles.

Urbanisation has generally enhanced women's lives by providing access to varied, ample, and more decent employment opportunities than they could find living out of cities. However, the issues of rural-urban migration and gender selectivity in this process remain crucial (Tacoli, 2012). Urbanization's potential to foster sustainable development of female labor participation hinges on recognizing the significant role of unpaid caregiving. Traditionally, caregiving responsibilities, such as home chores and childcare, have been predominantly associated with

women in Portuguese society. Although there is a slow shift, these tasks remain largely viewed as female responsibilities even now (Wall and Leitaó, 2016). Moreover, women play a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being of older adults and individuals who are ill or disabled, providing necessary care and support (Costa et al., 2023). Acknowledging the impact of unpaid caregiving on female professional activity is essential for adjusting labor market policies to meet the needs of all residents even in highly urbanised areas.

The urbanisation process attracted more women to cities, where employment opportunities in factories, offices, and service industries increased. From 1960 to 2022, the urban population in Portugal nearly doubled, from 34.96% to 67.31%, with an annual growth trend of approximately 1% over recent decades (Macrotrends, 2024). Urban areas typically offer greater access to education and formal employment. The significant advancement of women in formal education became evident in the 1991 population census, showing that women comprised 48% of those holding higher education qualifications and the majority of graduate students (53.9%) (Nogueira et al, 1995). Improved access to education for girls and women played a crucial role. As more women received education, they gained the skills and qualifications needed to enter diverse professions and industries. Recent European statistics indicate that women form the majority of PhD holders, with Portugal surpassing the EU average in this indicator (European Commission, 2019).

In the professional sphere, gender-related expectations of Portuguese population create strong beliefs that often lead to perceptions of men as more knowledgeable, agile and competent in specific fields such as engineering (Teixeira and Casaca, 2020), politics (Santos and Amancio, 2016), and medicine (Santos and Carvalho, 2015). On the other hand, women are often viewed as creative and those who master soft skills, and, consequently, are better suited for roles in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (Saavedra et al., 2013). These expectations are influenced by stereotypical views of the Portuguese population, associating men with traits like logical reasoning, impartiality, objectivity, technical aptitude, and innovation, while linking women to attributes such as caregiving, emotional management, and interpersonal skills (Mario et al, 2023). This leads to doubts about women's abilities in traditionally male-dominated professions (Santos and Amancio, 2016). For instance, female medical specialists in Portugal often face

scrutiny and doubt regarding their skills, unlike their male counterparts (Santos and Carvalho, 2015). It is important to note that traditional family roles continue to influence women's professional lives, presenting challenges during the recruitment process and later in their careers as working mothers or caregivers (Teixeira and Casaca, 2020). Despite academic merit and intellectual abilities being recognized in the educational system, career advancement can be hindered by caregiving responsibilities, even in a country that has made significant legislative strides in gender equality (Santos and Amancio, 2016).

From the perspective of economic development, restructuring, and modernization in Portugal, these processes expanded opportunities beyond agriculture and traditional roles. The transition that happened from an agrarian to an industrial and service-oriented type of economy was benevolent and beneficial for women as it created more accessible jobs. In 1960, only 13% of women were economically active, rising to 29% in 1981 and reaching 41% in 1991 (Almeida, 1998). By 2021, the share of employed women was 50.6% (Pordata, 2021).

The Carnation Revolution and subsequent democratisation, along with European integration, were pivotal in advancing gender equality. Portugal's entry into the European Union in 1986 brought about economic and social reforms, aligning the country with EU standards on gender equality and labor rights. European integration also influenced educational opportunities in an international scope, allowing Portuguese women to enhance their qualifications within the broader European community. For example, in France, Portuguese foreign students comprise up to 2% of those seeking higher education, with females being almost half of the total (Wit et al., 2015). The Single Market facilitated trade exchanges and labor market adjustments, although the gender gap persisted (ILO, 2000).

Globalisation further contributed to economic development and labor market expansion, attracting foreign investment and creating new job opportunities in various sectors. According to the OECD (2023), foreign-owned firms, representing only about 2% of all firms in Portugal in 2020, employed 18% of the domestic workforce. These firms tend to hire a larger proportion of highly qualified professionals and offer higher compensation to female employees compared to domestic firms. In 2020, the median monthly salary for women employed by foreign companies was 22% higher than that offered by local firms (OECD, 2023).

As it is seen, numerous historic events contributed to the growing labor inclusion of women, creating necessary moments and catalysts for a rise of female participation and opposing existing barriers based on traditional understanding of women's role in Portuguese society.

2.2.4. Pandemic and the economic conditions of employment in Portugal

We will scrutinize the effect that the sanitary crisis had on the economy of Portugal. The Portuguese labor market exhibits a dual structure, characterised by a significant number of workers, employed temporarily, those who are unemployed for a long time, and, eventually, those who are out of the labor market for a very extensive period (Silva et al, 2020). The average duration of unemployment is twice as long as the average for EU countries for those who look for a position - 22 months (Duarte, 2023). Such a situation characterises the labor market as highly fragile and difficult to re-enter, resulting in substantial job losses during the crisis.

The analysis of the labor market of Portugal by Lima (2021) depicts a set of indicators to explain the situation that Portugal faced during the recent global sanitary crisis. Throughout 2020, in the first year of the pandemic, the nationally estimated unemployment rate developed radically from 6.9% at the beginning of the year, to its peak, reaching 8.1%, before finishing with a soft decline. In 2021, however, the second year of the crisis saw a surprise return to pre-pandemic levels at 6.8%. During the first two months of curfews in 2020, unemployment increased from approximately 316000 to 392000 showing a rise of almost +25% reflecting an extremely difficult and unexpected situation faced by social security authorities and the country in general. (INE, 2021). However, it is important to note that the numbers do not reflect structural or sectoral shifts that occurred.

As the Portuguese labor market tends to solve problems via temporary and shift employment, it was also the case and, the reduction of labour hours also happened in a dramatic way: an essential decline of almost 15% in hours worked during the two years of the pandemic (Ando et al.,2022). The dual structure of labour market gives it a significant flexibility and provides a wide range of job opportunities of different character, however, it diminishes in a way a quality of these opportunities, resulting eventually in a lower volume of work for a lower payment as well as in a reduced or absent social security for Portuguese and those who work in Portugal.

The underutilization of work also showed a significant increase during the first year of the pandemic. On average, it encompassed 761 thousand people, representing an 11.7% rise in 2020 compared to 2019. For understanding a general scope the share of the population that was underutilized due to the pandemic was approximately 17% of the active population in the country (Dolado et al., 2021).

Considering an income rate as an instrument to reflect the pandemic situation, the average monthly gross compensation per worker increased by 3.2% in the first year of the pandemic². This mostly reflects the consequences of job losses and successful new inclusion into the labor market after the pandemic-related loss of jobs, particularly in lower-paid positions, and shifts that happened in the labor market structure due to the destruction of hospitality-related positions (Duraó, 2021).

As for the gender gap, according to data provided by the public employment service³, the effect of the pandemic on employment in Portugal has shown gender disparities (IEFP, 2021). During 2020, the increase in unemployment affected women more than men, as well as youth workers - those under the age of 25 more than older workers. Furthermore, workers with secondary education and with the lowest lower secondary education were more affected compared to those with other levels of school qualification (Mamede et al., 2020).

Prior to the pandemic, the female labor participation rate in Portugal, based on data from the World Bank, was 9.4% lower than the male rate (55% versus 64.4%) (World Bank, 2024). As a result of the onset of Covid-19, the labor participation of Portuguese women lowered by 1.9% in 2020 compared to the time before the sanitary crisis. Moreover, 90% of the jobs lost in the first two months of the pandemic (March and April 2020) were those that had been employing women (European Parliament, 2020). The decrease in working hours for women in 2020 was 6.7% compared to 2019 (Eurostat, 2021). Additionally, there was an increase in female participation in part-time employment, with 33% of total female employment before the pandemic rising 6% more in 2020, explaining a shift of female workers from lost full-time positions to those with a reduced schedule (World Bank, 2023).

² These results correspond to the total economy and concern about 4.1 million posts of work, reflecting beneficiaries of the biggest Portuguese bank (Social Security and Caixa Geral de pensions)

³ IEFP - Institute for Employment and Vocational Training

Surprisingly, the following period in 2021-2022 revealed a higher number of economically active women available for work compared to men, with 2.6 million women and 2.3 million men. Among the EU-27 countries, it is a unique case as all other countries reflect a mirror dynamics after the crisis: there are more men looking for employment actively or working than women (Caetano, 2022). However, despite the higher number of economically active women, the share of employed women was lower than that of men, with 60.5% of women employed compared to 67.2% of men. The unemployment rate among women in 2021-2022 also remained higher, with 6.4% compared to 5% among men (INE, 2024). Crepaldi and Pereira (2022) point out some concurrent difficulties in the Portuguese labor market, including the presence of people being within the labor age but not actively looking for a job, special difficulties of the youth in finding a proper position, and discrepancies according to regional peculiarities of work. Elderly women were particularly affected by the negative effects of the pandemic with an extended time of job search.

To manage the presented situation of disruption, telework, during and after the pandemic, emerged as a solution. The number of teleworkers in Portugal increased by 23.1% in the second semester of 2020, exceeding one million employees, which accounted for 21.3% of the total employed population in Portugal (Tavares et al., 2020).

2.2.5. Impact of the COVID - 19 on female employment in Portugal

It is, therefore, no surprise that at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, destructive damage occurred in employment, notably in traditionally female-dominated industries, which include hospitality, retail, and tourism sectors that recorded severe losses. Therefore, women who are employed in those sectors had to deal with massive layoffs or transition to part-time contracts due to lockdowns and curfews. The share of the tourism sector in the economy of Portugal is extensive, for instance, in 2018, the country hosted 22.8 million tourists, that is why a significant share of Portuguese are employed in sectors that are directly or indirectly connected to touristic management (UNWTO, 2019). Thereupon, the contraction and even a short-term temporary closure of hospitality activities caused certain losses not only to the economy but also to the job market and female labor.

Economically, Portugal was highly dependent on the tourism sector, constituting 16.5% of the GDP a year prior to the pandemic (WTTC, 2020). The growth in tourism employment, including functions in accommodation, catering, and travel agencies, has been happening during the last decade and the growing intensity of tourism, so that in 2019 the share employed in hospitality in a general sense, including all connected services, accounting for 6.9% of national employment, totalling 336.8 thousand jobs. Compared to that, tourism-related activities in Portugal created 328.5 thousand jobs in 2018, up by 3% (Reznikova et al, 2024).

The other female traditional labour-intensive industries, such as administrative services and garment making, were also badly affected, where unemployment stood at 41.2 and 33.6 percent, respectively, in a general context of 27.5 percent for all significant sectors in April 2020 (Tavares et al, 2020).

With schools and childcare facilities shut during the pandemic, women were disproportionately burdened with caregiving responsibilities, which added to the already existing challenge of balancing work and caregiving. The recession associated with COVID-19 is colloquially referred to as "She-or Momsession," underlining that care responsibilities fell disproportionately on women and added constraints to labor supply (OECD, 2021). One major factor in reducing work hours for parents, mainly women, was the closure of schools and childcare centers (Alon et al, 2021). Aside from economic factors, one main cause of the decrease in women's employment, participation in the labor force, and hours worked during the pandemic was the unequal sharing of additional, unpaid childcare responsibilities. This was particularly high for mothers compared to fathers and childless individuals, considered in detail by the study by Del Boca et al. (2020). Indeed, EIGE's report (2020) states that women were "much more likely than men to spend at least an hour every day on cooking and housework, although this gender gap is among the widest in the EU and has remained so in the last decade". The pandemic did not improve this status, therefore raising the amount of time given to taking care of the children, especially females who already spent more than male household workers. Almost 50 % of Portuguese females spent more than four hours a day caring for a person and doing tasks connected with that care (Curington, 2024).

Regarding males, there has been an increase in taking up one to four hours every day to care for their child(ren) (Aguar et al., 2021) Notably, the task in which men and women shared a more similar attitude to parenting was playing games

and engaging in activities with children. Managing the child's agenda stood out, with women primarily responsible for this task, and during the pandemic, it exhibited the most significant increase in responsibilities (Januario et al, 2023). The online survey of the European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender equality and socio-economic consequences of COVID-19", conducted for Portugal, reflected some trends in the organization of unpaid work. The survey demonstrated that women still remained mainly responsible for care and household activities. The pandemic contributed to a slight increase in the proportion of men who take on the main responsibility for certain activities, namely school and caregiving (Amancio and Santos, 2021). The fact that men were responsible for less cooking and cleaning during the pandemic period has been studied: Alon et al (2021) state that, in many cases, this is a burden for the wives.

Professionally, the pandemic made things worse in terms of increasing gender pay gaps, where females are more likely to fall into low-wage and part-time jobs, making them vulnerable to losses in their income. Andrade and Loisa (2021) note that gender pay disparities are still present in Portugal, where women make 28%, 30%, and 25% less than men among individuals who have low, medium, and high levels of education respectively. There are various causes of the gender pay gap in Portugal. Casaca (2022) identified horizontal gender segregation, or the unequal presence of men and women in different professions, types of jobs, and sectors, as one of the causes at the root of pay inequalities between genders. Card and Cardoso (2015) established two different sources of the gender pay gap: the first related to the low presence of women in high-paying companies, while the second one is related to the presence of negotiation processes in companies that give bonuses over and above monthly salaries upon personal decisions of management. In summary, women working full-time in Portugal receive lower median salaries compared to their male counterparts in similar positions, which can be partly attributed to women's underrepresentation in sectors with higher average monthly earnings and their continuous underevaluation (Januario et al, 2023).

The highly informal labor market in Portugal, with a large share of part-time and undeclared work, has left many women in a precarious situation throughout the pandemic period. In 2020, it was estimated that the unemployed population reached 373.2 thousand people, and labor underutilization covered 750.3 thousand people. The activity rate for men (63.7%) was higher than that of women (54.3%),

with both rates having decreased compared to the same quarter of the previous year. The employment rate for men is higher (59.4%), compared to that for women, standing at 50.2%, while both rates are on the increase compared to the 3rd quarter of 2020 (INE, 2021). During the second half of 2020, precarious employment did increase, though it didn't reach the pre-pandemic levels. The major driver in this growth has been spurious self-employment but also forms of work more precarious than fixed-term contracts, for which growth is significantly higher-38.5%, 23.4% rise among women employees (Tavares et al, 2021). Precarious employment of females in various sub-sectors including administrative and support services which consists of temporary work as well as call centres; accommodation as well as food services, agriculture, etc., as well as most service-oriented activities were recorded as consequences of the pandemic hit. Aside from the instability these employments bring about in the workplace and their consequences on workers' personal and family lives, they yield salaries that are 20% to 30% lower compared to what permanent employees enjoy (Roque et al, 2022). These contract types are the more frequent means employers utilize to increase exploitation, minimize labor costs, frequently at the expense of the social security, make dismissals at any moment, and exert influence over workers.

2.2.6. Telework and digitalization in Portugal and its relation to female employment

Prior to the sanitary crisis, Portugal reached a share of 6.5% of those who telework, surprisingly surpassing the European Union's average of 5.4% (DGERT, 2020). The pandemic created conditions and a historic moment that intensified and increased the motivation to adopt telework. During the second quarter of 2020, characterised by widespread closures and a peak in telecommuting, over 60% of employees continued working at physical workplaces (Tavares et al., 2020). For female workers, this percentage was only marginally lower (Lima, 2021). Data from the "Working from Home" module of the Employment Survey, performed by the National Institute of Statistics, reached a maximum in the second quarter of 2020, with 21.1% of people telecommuting, to decrease later to 17.8% in the first quarter of 2021 (INE, 2020). In the last quarter of 2021, the percentage of teleworkers fell back to 7.3%, its minimum since the beginning of the pandemic.

Two-thirds of the teleworkers held higher education, while 85% of them concentrated in the service area. For the last quarter of 2021, approximately one-third of teleworkers were self-employed, and the remaining for the employers. Bank of Portugal, 2021). Telework was most prevalent in the service sector, particularly in areas such as information, communication, finance, insurance, consulting, scientific, technical, administrative activities, and support services (Teixeira and Casaca, 2020). However, Andrade and Lousa (2021) highlighted that telework was associated with increased workloads, technology use after hours, and low job autonomy, all of which contributed to work–family conflict.

Prior to the public health crisis, telework represented a significant shift in labor dynamics. Women demonstrated a greater inclination and suitability for teleworking compared to men (Amancio and Santos, 2021). This trend was driven by women's higher representation in jobs that could be performed remotely and their need to manage household responsibilities (Teixeira and Casaca, 2020).

The proportion of women in remote roles fluctuated between half and more than half of the remote workforce, depending on whether schools were open or closed (Tavares et al., 2020). This variance was attributed to the significant presence of women in teaching and school support roles, as well as the fact that women often worked from home while simultaneously caring for their children during school closures (CIMH, 2021). Inadequate government support for workers with young children exacerbated this situation.

The existing digital gender gap in Portugal also presents a certain characteristic. Surprisingly, Portuguese women's representation in the ICT-related workforce decreased from 24% in 2005 to 22% in 2020 (Monteiro and Lopes, 2022). There are various factors contributing to the persistence of the gender gap in ICT and the broader technology sector. These include stereotypes, biases, the absence of female role models, low enrollment of women in technology-related fields, cultural backgrounds, personality traits, family obligations, limited opportunities, and disparities in leadership roles (Lim and Wang, 2015). Monteiro and Lopes (2022) refer to the underrepresentation of women in the ICTs of Portugal as a systematic issue that calls for attention at the national policy level. Despite numerous measures to involve women in IT-related fields, the digital gender gap is very real and technology is perceived as a man's world by many (Silva, 2020),

which contributes to the outcome that the teleworking jobs occupied by women tend to be of lower status than the ones occupied by men.

Tavares et al. (2020) observed that while transitioning to telework during the health crisis was relatively straightforward, balancing work responsibilities with caregiving obligations for dependents and household tasks posed significant challenges. This situation, while providing additional opportunities and flexibility for women, also created certain difficulties and perpetuated inequalities, particularly for women who faced a dual burden of unpaid domestic work (Silva et al., 2020).

2.2.7. Barriers to gender equality and women's roles in Portugal

The relatively recent influx of Portuguese women into traditionally male-dominated professions, often as a result of their successful educational journeys, tends to reinforce the notion of individual achievement and the personal strategies required for inclusion and combating discrimination apart from collective temptation (Amancio and Santos, 2021). Faced with the dual pressures of conforming to the masculine ideals within their professions and societal expectations of femininity (Amancio, 1995), women often adopt what Nogueira (2009) terms essentialist discourses. These discourses emphasise personal accomplishments and frequently involve the denial of structural discrimination. In a study involving interviews with influential Portuguese women, including parliament members, judges, a union president, corporate board members, and research leaders, two predominant narrative types regarding their personal and professional journeys were identified, focused on personal attributes and achievements in overcoming obstacles while downplaying the existence of gender-based discrimination. Conversely, the resistance discourse, which acknowledged the presence of gender discrimination and viewed it as a source of experiential learning to combat such bias, was a less common perspective (Nogueira, 2009). In other words, the culture of accepting gender biases is way more solid than an open dissent to them even among those Portuguese women who supposedly perceive the serious necessity to struggle with traditional norms intrinsically bringing discrimination.

Within family dynamics, a deeply rooted traditional division of household labor persists, disproportionately burdening women, particularly in couples where both

partners pursue careers (Wall et al., 2001). This curiously coexists with non-traditional attitudes and tolerance towards diverse views on marriage, divorce, and sexuality in Portuguese society (Torres et al., 2013). Concerning the distribution of household chores, Perista et al (2016) found significant disparities in the weekly time devoted to household tasks by Portuguese women and men, with women dedicating significantly more hours than men. This trend was consistent across the gap observed in the hours contributed by Portuguese women (26 hours weekly) and men (7 hours weekly). For dual-career couples, Portuguese women spent roughly double the number of hours per week on household chores compared to men, a stark contrast to more substantial reductions in the time allocated to such tasks by working women in other countries.

In 2018, Portugal ranked 7th lowest among EU countries in terms of its gender pay gap, which stood at 16% (European Commission, 2019). According to the European Institute for Gender Equality in 2019, despite the overall trend toward reduction, the gender pay gap in Portugal had actually increased by over 3% since 2007. Saavedra and Araujo's (2015) research, involving interviews with over a hundred Portuguese women, including secondary school and university students, as well as young and senior professionals, revealed that secondary school girls expressed concerns about potential discrimination in recruitment and payment, primarily related to future maternity prospects. To counter this, they focused on excelling academically. University students and young professionals, however, downplayed discrimination, attributing it to women's behaviour. The study suggested that only a minority of participants were well aware of discrimination and existing gender gaps within the country.

These disparities were also observed and mirrored in the study conducted by Santos and Amancio (2016), illustrating how gender plays a role in shaping the dynamics within professional settings in Portugal and contributes to the privileges enjoyed by men over women, even when women are in a significant minority. The enduring struggle to balance work and family responsibilities, and the challenges associated with reconciling these difficulties, are especially felt by women even when it comes to the time allocation among men and women. Women frequently reported a shortage of free time, whether for leisure or other pursuits and conveyed "feelings of guilt and anxiety for not being able to meet the expectations imposed on

them by external sources or those they place on themselves" (Perista et al. 2016:45).

The advent of democracy in Portugal ushered in a significant increase in female workforce participation. However, despite this progress, the essential need for gender equality remains unmet till now. The rise of women in the labor market, regardless of family circumstances or the number of children they have, does not inherently signify gender equality (Ferreira, 1998). Persistent issues such as gender-based job segregation, entrenched discriminatory attitudes, and misogynistic practices continue to characterise the employment structure.

Despite women achieving higher educational qualifications, the gender pay gap remains a significant barrier and a non-motivation factor. As Beleza (2015) highlights, "the enduring impact of discriminatory legal measures extends far beyond their official repeal." The context of the COVID-19 pandemic further underscores these challenges. Traditional gender roles were largely reinforced, with women maintaining primary responsibility for household care while men predominantly handled purchasing and administrative tasks. This temporary shift did not represent a meaningful redistribution of unpaid work (Amancio and Santos, 2021).

Even as Portugal has made strides in public policies and legal reforms aimed at advancing gender equality, these changes have not always translated into shifts in deeply embedded societal attitudes. Women from the transformative generation, despite benefiting from educational and legislative advances, often denied the existence of discrimination in professional contexts. They navigated environments dominated by hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) without explicitly challenging gender norms or asserting their identities.

The persistence of gender-based inequalities in labor markets has often been attributed to patriarchal structures that shape workplace dynamics, career progression, and occupational segregation. Patriarchy, as conceptualized by Lerner (1986) and Walby (1990), refers to a system of social structures in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women through institutional, economic, and ideological mechanisms. In Portugal, this manifests in gendered labor division, wage disparities, and the invisibility of women's unpaid labor (Amaral, 2005; Tavares, 2000).

While patriarchal attitudes are a significant determinant of labor market inequalities, empirical evidence is needed to substantiate this claim. Research has documented how gender stereotypes and male-dominated corporate cultures hinder women's career advancement, particularly in high-status professions (Silva, 2018). Furthermore, studies on workplace discrimination and gender pay gaps (European Commission, 2022) indicate that while legislative frameworks promote formal equality, structural barriers continue to reinforce disparities.

Additionally, the non-recognition of gender discrimination by some women further complicates efforts to address these inequalities. This reluctance to acknowledge workplace discrimination aligns with research on internalized sexism and postfeminist narratives, which suggest that women may view career success as an individual achievement rather than a product of systemic structures (McRobbie, 2009). Thus, addressing gender inequality in Portugal requires not only legal and policy interventions but also a cultural shift that challenges patriarchal assumptions within workplaces and society at large.

2.3. Case of Spain

2.3.1. The employment landscape of women in Spain during the 20-21th century

The narrative of female employment in Spain throughout the 20th century reflects substantial social, political, and economic shifts. Women's involvement in the Spanish workforce underwent remarkable changes during this era.

At the turn of the century, Spain was predominantly agrarian and traditional, offering limited opportunities for women in the labor force (Torns et al, 2013). Traditional roles assigned women the responsibility of caring for the family and contributing to sustenance, primarily engaged in tasks that integrated both productive and reproductive activities on farms (Escurriol et al, 2014). The discrimination faced by rural women, compounded by the absence of gender equality ideas comprehension as well as, subsequently, any legislation regarding the topic, and such a situation marked a milestone in the history of low female labor participation in Spain. This discrimination extended to various resources and

services, impacting land, livestock, labor, education, extension services, and financial assistance. The resulting gender gap imposed costs on the agricultural sector, the economy, society and its development, and women themselves (FAO, 2007).

The period between 1931 and 1936 saw significant strides, with parliaments granting women voting rights, custody over children, workplace equality, mutual consent for divorce, and a groundbreaking abortion law. Unfortunately, these gains were rescinded after the Civil War (Threlfall, 2022). The Spanish Civil War brought disruption to the economy, profoundly affecting women's lives as they became involved in supporting the war effort and filling roles left vacant by men. Often underestimated, women's labor associated with combat was primarily domestic and auxiliary (Lines, 2009).

During General Francisco Franco's regime, women were once again encouraged to prioritise traditional roles as wives and mothers. Female employment faced discouragement in many sectors, and access to education and certain professions was restricted (Otero-Gonzalez, 2020). The Feminine Section⁴, a women's organisation under the regime, actively promoted domesticity and traditional values (Ofer, 2009). Throughout the Francoist period from 1939 to the 1970s, the *Sección Femenina* became the most intrusive presence in Spanish women's lives. Its influence continued to rise, primarily controlling women's education and media, with mandatory enrollment of young women in their Volunteer Service programs (Reeser, 2019).

After Franco's death in 1975 and the subsequent transition to democracy, Spain witnessed significant social and economic transformations. The 1978 Spanish Constitution acknowledged gender equality and women's rights, leading to an increased influx of women into the labor force, particularly in service sectors and light industry (Millan et al, 2021). The 1990s brought substantial economic growth, creating numerous opportunities for women across various industries, including finance, technology, and education (Romero-Portillo and Bono, 2020). This period of progress and modernization expanded the Spanish labor market, offering new employment opportunities.

⁴ Seccion Femenina

In that respect, the introduction of laws and policies for gender equality tried to provide a way for closing the gap in pay and work-life balance. Yet, even as important gains were made at the leadership levels, obstacles such as pay and work-life balance remained intractable into modern labor history, according to Moreno (2010). The opportunity to develop one's path became very important. From the 1940s until the advent of democracy in 1975, only a few women were employed outside the home. Marital status played a crucial role, with over 80% of working women during these decades being single. Upon marriage, particularly those from middle- and upper-class backgrounds, the vast majority would abandon their jobs and professional pursuits to assume the roles of wife and mother, prioritising familial responsibilities over personal fulfilment (Casanova and Andres, 2012). For years, married women were either barred from working or needed their husband's permission, sometimes by choice but frequently due to enforcement or lack of awareness of this requirement (Mill, 2020).

The 20th century saw a transformative shift in female roles: from traditional domestic responsibilities to a growing interest in professional careers and increased workforce participation, contributing to the ongoing fight for gender equality (Morero-Minguez and Ortega-Gaspar, 2021). This transformative progress continues to shape the contemporary landscape of female employment in Spain. Women pursued higher education in larger numbers, leading to increased representation in various professions. The expansion of the European Union in 1986 further contributed to job opportunities for Spanish women, integrating the country into the European economy and common labor market (Hupkau and Ruiz-Valenzuela, 2022). Spanish women gained the right to pursue European careers under the condition of having sufficient qualifications, significantly enhancing their chances to transition from traditional roles to independent professionals (Millan et al, 2021).

The female employment rate in Spain has noticeably improved during the first two decades from 38% in 1989 to approximately 53% by the end of 2019. The growth in employment shows that the change in labor force dynamics has indeed been immense and recent, showing more recognition and acceptance of women as vital participants in the Spanish economy. In 2020, women comprised about 58% of part-time workers in Spain, evidencing overrepresentation in part-time work.

Women are overrepresented in industries such as hospitality and retail, which generally have lower wages. For example, in 2019, women made up 68% of employees in the accommodation and food service activities sector (Farre and Gonzalez, 2023).

The evolution of female workers' profiles is marked by changes in the public and private sectors. From 1982, 29.2% up to 2020, it grew to 55.4%. In the private sector, wage-earning women went from 25.80% to 43.50%. On the contrary, executive posts remain highly masculine: among the directors or managers of firms, only 30.6% of them are women (Herrerias, 2021). Nowadays a significant majority, 70% of Spanish female workers, are concentrated in civil service, corporate roles, domestic work, non-qualified industrial jobs, education, and health professions. Consequently, there is a notable scarcity of Spanish women pursuing careers in industries or scientific fields. Moreover, in the management teams of the top 1000 companies in Spain, only 3.25% of the positions are occupied by women (Millan et al., 2021).

Despite certain positive dynamics, gender disparities persisted in the Spanish labor market. Women still faced challenges such as being more likely to work in low-paying jobs. Women with children under 16 are much more likely to be unemployed, work part-time or on temporary contracts than men (Lafuente et al, 2021), limited access to high-level positions compared to men, have higher rates of temporary employment, and have wage gaps. In 2019 the share of women - professionals in Spain out of all employed was 13.8% compared to 24.7% of male professionals. As for elementary occupations, women were represented by a share of 16% while men - only 9.8% (Hupkau, 2022). A substantial portion of women earned less than their male counterparts for the same work, highlighting the need for further progress in achieving gender parity.

It is important to reflect that a female employee depending on her family status participates in labor activity in Spain in a different way. Spanish mothers of children aged 0-15 tend to participate less in labor activity, they experience more difficulties finding a suitable place to work, so that the unemployment rates for mothers are higher as well as the percentage of those with family duties in temporary and part-time jobs are higher than of females with no children (Hupkau and Ruiz-Valenzuela, 2022).

Since 2017, Spain has risen by four positions in the Gender Equity Index, securing the sixth spot in Europe and the seventeenth globally, establishing itself as a leader in gender equality (EIGE, 2021). This advancement primarily results from increased female representation in governing bodies and public roles, as well as enhanced equal employment opportunities. However, Spain lags behind the European average concerning women's economic capacity and equitable distribution of time.

2.3.2. Gender equality advocacy and labor force participation in Spain

The rise of the movements and feminist organizations for equal opportunities and rights in Spain was an important means toward gender equality, challenging discrimination and gender-based violence. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pioneering figures like Concepcion Arenal and Clara Campoamor were very significant to the claims of women's rights and education. Concepcion Arenal, particularly in the late 19th century, criticised the Spanish educational system for perpetuating women as "eternal children" and hindering their professional advancement (Madden, 2018). Clara Campoamor, in the pre-dictatorship era, sought full civil and economic rights for women, attributing the absence of these rights to inhumane treatment (Tolliver, 2011).

The Second Republic introduced some advancements in women's rights, including the right to vote. Dictatorial regimes, characterised by religious customs and low literacy levels, naturally inhibited the emergence of women's activism (Webster, 2022). An existing proto-fascist women's organisation persisted from the Civil War era, offering mandatory social services that reinforced traditional feminine stereotypes. In this conservative, paternalistic, and Catholic milieu, women were allowed to formally establish housewives associations (Threlfall, 2022). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, advocates of women's rights associated with underground left-wing parties, notably the Communist Party of Spain, either infiltrated or covertly established these associations.

During the Franco regime, feminist activity operated discreetly and faced constraints, but a tentative emergence occurred after 1970, influenced by global developments. Subsequently, numerous groups and movements have emerged, evolved, and at times, fragmented into new factions with divergent ideologies and

priorities (Jose and Arias, 1981). Women opposing the regime, such as the *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) movement, worked underground to advance feminist principles. Overlooked factors contributing to the development of women's movements in Spain include internal migration, Catholic internationalism, and industrial unrest (Webster, 2022). However, it is important to note the existence of the Feminine Section and its reformist legislative agenda. Since the 1950s, the organisation had fought for the expansion of women's economic freedoms and ability to participate in the labor market, an achievement crystallised with the passage of the Law of Political, Professional, and Labor Rights in 1961 (Ofer, 2009).

Spain's belated participation in European feminism is primarily attributed to the autocratic dictatorship that governed the country until the 1977 elections. The commonly acknowledged initiation of this participation is 1975, as the UN's recognition of International Women's Year provided all legal, tolerated, and prohibited women's organisations with an opportunity to express themselves amid the global attention on women's rights (Threlfall, 2022). Generally, the history of feminism in 20th-century Spain has focused on working-class women and overlooked rural women with limited education and connections to the church (Webster, 2022). This development of Spanish feminism is commonly portrayed as having grown within groups based in universities or major urban centres in the mid-1970s onward (Blanco, 2020).

The number of organizations that focused on issues such as women's equality, the fight against gender violence, and reproductive rights came out from the rise of feminist movement that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. Its establishment of the Women's Institute (*Instituto de las Mujeres*) in 1983 was an important step taken by Spain in dealing with gender discrimination and the fight for equality. Now operating under the Spanish Ministry of Equality, it is responsible for designing and implementing policies and programs to advance the cause of gender equality in its struggle against discrimination. Notable among these have been the Equal Opportunities Plan, an effort to eradicate gender discrimination within numerous fields such as job hiring, and the National Plan for Equality - a comprehensive strategy that works for gender-based discrimination on numerous levels (Webster, 2022) and will be discussed additionally in the following chapter III.

2.3.3. The catalysts for women's engagement in the labor force in Spain

The reasons that stimulated female labor participation within the 20th century are pretty much the same as in Portugal, although dynamics and vectors obtain other peculiarities. Urbanisation and industrialization in Spain created a demand for labor in urban areas, leading to rural-to-urban migration and women's entry into the formal workforce. Casanova and Andres (2012) note that the process of urbanisation in Spain was late, considering that in the early 20th century, Spain was predominantly rural. Morata Lujan (2019) states that the process of urbanisation influences production in a generic manner: agricultural production by women diminishes, while non-agricultural production grows. This transformation of production types leads to an intrinsic change in female workers' skills and their eventual ability to participate in labor activity in a broader and more effective way.

Likewise, demographic shifts during the 20th century brought changes in family structures and a decrease in birth rates, contributing to a partial reevaluation of traditional gender roles (Sentis et al, 2023). This encouraged more women to join the workforce, even if they still desired to pursue a traditional path of motherhood and housecare. There was an idea that they could combine a professional role with the role of mother and wife (Hupkau and Ruiz-Valenzuela, 2021). This notion has become prevalent in Spanish society, observed through greater rates of women employed in temporary and part-time work. In other words, females are double-driven, while males are professionally focused, with an introduction of responsibility for household chores (Conde-Ruiz, 2016). Considering cultural and social shifts, it's important to mention that new evolving societal attitudes towards gender roles and expectations played a significant role in encouraging women to pursue careers outside the home.

Educational attainment has been a catalyst for increased female participation in the Spanish labor market. Over the 20th century, more women pursued both professional and higher education, providing them with expanded opportunities in various professional fields. In the mid-1980s, about 24% of women aged 16 and older hadn't completed elementary education, with a third of them being illiterate. Only 6% held tertiary degrees during that period. By the end of the 2000s, there was a significant transformation: the proportion of women with low-level education shrank to 3%, while those with high levels of education constituted 16% of the total.

Among younger cohorts of women, the percentage with tertiary education surged to over 30%, surpassing corresponding percentages for men (Salido and Moreno, 2010). Examining unemployment rates based on educational attainment, it's noteworthy that as Spanish women achieve higher academic qualifications relative to men, their employment rates are higher, revealing a gap of 2.748% in higher education (Millan et al, 2021).

Choi et al. (2018) indicate that the inequalities in educational attainment, driven by socio-economic circumstances, gender, and place of birth, start at the lowest levels of education in Spain. During the last decades, the number of female students attending higher education increased dramatically, and nowadays they are more than half of university students. However, according to the Statistics of University Teaching in Spain, published by the INE, women are still a minority in technical colleges, mainly in engineering and technology studies (Palomares-Ruiz et al., 2021)

Currently, 45.6% of the workforce in Spain has a university education (over 8 million individuals as of the third quarter of 2020), and within this cohort, women make up 51.8% (4.5 million compared to 4.2 million men) (Millan et al, 2021). Progress has been made to eliminate gender-based discrimination in schools, fostering inclusive environments. Notably, women's participation in higher education has risen, with a majority of university students being women, particularly in humanities, social sciences, and health sciences (Gil, 2017). Despite these advancements, challenges persist, especially in STEM fields dominated by men. Ongoing efforts aim to encourage girls and women to pursue these areas, recognizing that education and addressing the digital divide are crucial in dismantling prevailing social inequalities (Montenegro et al., 2020).

The question arises as to whether their job positions align with their qualifications. Despite women achieving better results in education, with higher percentages in high-level studies and lower ratios in low levels, this does not necessarily translate into an improved labor situation as Spanish women are still more prevalent in short-term unemployment, and there is a higher proportion of women with temporary contracts compared to men (Sentis et al, 2023). In other words, the catalysts of female labor participation in Spain become weakened due to the strength of patriarchal paradigm.

2.3.4. Economic conditions of labor market and employment in Spain

In the past four decades, the Spanish labor market has exhibited persistent dysfunctions, a cause for ongoing concern for governing bodies. Most notably, Spain has seen a considerably higher and more volatile unemployment rate than most developed economies. For the past three decades, the average unemployment rate in Spain has been 17.3%, compared to 7.6% for the EU-8 and 5.2% for the US. The standard deviation of Spain's unemployment rate is twice as large, or three times that of the EU-8, reaching over 20% on several occasions in 12 of the last 30 years (Dolado et al, 2020).

Efforts to address unemployment have primarily focused on passive measures like unemployment insurance and support, resulting in the limited effectiveness of active labor market policies (Pignatti and van Belle, 2018). This has contributed to high structural unemployment, particularly during significant job reshuffling periods, such as the early 1980s and post-Great Recession of 2008, marked by downsizing in several sectors, for example, construction (Dolado et al, 2021).

Spanish labour markets are also highly dualistic, with most notably, an extremely high incidence of temporary employment: 33 percent of the employed had temporary contracts before the Great Recession of 2008, a share decreased to 25 per cent by 2019 (Dolado et al., 2020). Despite various reforms, the disparity in employment protection legislation between open-ended and temporary contracts persists, with temporary contracts often used more for cost reduction than as a screening mechanism for workers' skills (Auciello-Estevez et al, 2023). Unfortunately, women are disproportionately affected, perceiving these contracts as a compromise between work and family conflicts. Consequently, the need to balance professional and domestic responsibilities leads female workers to accept less favourable employment conditions than their male counterparts (Maestriperi and Leon, 2019). The growth in both full-time and part-time permanent contracts, excluding permanent seasonal ones, has been paralleled by a rise, though starting from a low level, in the rate at which these roles are being terminated. The average daily rate of workers being removed from permanent contracts stood at 0.14% from 2015 to 2019. However, post-reform, this figure had doubled to 0.28% by September, 2023 (Bank of Spain, 2023).

Wage flexibility has been a longstanding issue in Spain, particularly before the 2012 labor market reform. During economic downturns, labor market adjustments primarily occurred through rising unemployment rather than wage modifications (Lafuente et al., 2021). This dynamic was influenced by the collective bargaining system, predominantly organised at sectoral and provincial levels—a structure inherited from the democratic transition period. This system exerted upward pressure on wage mark-ups, benefiting permanent workers while leaving temporary workers with comparatively poorer working conditions (Millan et al., 2021).

Institutions within the labor market have contributed to Spain's poor productivity dynamics, experiencing negative growth rates in much of the 2000s (Dolado et al, 2020). The productivity gap between newly established companies and established firms is higher compared to other countries, resulting in an abundance of small, unproductive firms and the precariousness of their workers. Excessive labor market segmentation impedes the on-the-job training of temporary workers, leading to a shortage of human capital and hindering productivity growth (Stepanyan and Salas, 2020). Although permanent jobs provide a stable foundation for positive labor market dynamics, this does not align with the current Spanish employment landscape.

In summary, the Spanish labor market has grappled with persistent issues, including high unemployment, dualism in employment contracts, wage inflexibility, and productivity challenges, shaping its performance over several decades. In contemporary Spain, a stable pattern of precarious employment, or a higher level of labor market flexibility, has solidified (Morero-Minguez and Ortega-Gaspar, 2022). According to recent statistics, 93% of men have permanent working contracts compared to 77.7% of women, with the highest incidence of part-time work found among women in the services sector (23%) (Millan et al, 2021). This employment model is distinguished by its temporary nature, involuntary part-time arrangements, overqualification, and low wage levels (Lopez-Roldan and Fachelli, 2021).

Nowadays Spain's demographic landscape, home to over 23.6 million women, intricately shapes its labor dynamics. The gender distribution (2021), with approximately 1.03 women for every man, underscores the prominence of women in the population. Of this demographic, 14% are under 16, 21% are over 65, and around 15.3 million fall within the working-age category (Crotti et al, 2021). Currently, the labor force participation rate is at its peak, with 66% of the

working-age population, exceeding the forecasted 50% for 2050 (Conde-Ruiz, 2016).

Women's prevalence in specific sectors reveals distinct gender-based roles. They outnumber men in domestic roles, education, and the health sector: 2.3% as compared to 0.6% of men employed in domestic roles, 8.1% of employed women as compared to 3.8% of men in education, and 13.6% of employed women in health-related jobs compared to 3.6% men. On the other side, men dominate construction (10.6% men are employed in construction against 1.1% of women) and the manufacturing industry: 15.3% as compared to 6.8% of women. This points to pronounced employment segregation (Cabases and Lopez, 2022).

2.3.5. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on female employment in Spain

According to Nefesh-Clarke et al. (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified structural gender differences, impeding progress towards gender equality and hindering social and economic development, thus having a serious impact on adherence to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The economic state of the female labor market in Spain by the beginning of the pandemic was not bad, showing an upward trend until the time the COVID-19 pandemic set in. During the preceding decades, the number of women in the labor market gradually increased, reflecting progress in achieving gender equality. In 2019, the estimated female employment rate in Spain was about 50%, with a share of temporary jobs 27.5% (25.5% for men) and part-time jobs (23.2% for women and 7.3% for men) (Hupkau, 2022), which indicates that Spanish labor market is inclusive for women but with specific traits.

Despite the increase in women's participation in economic life, over the last six years before the pandemic, Spain still has a relatively low rate: from 53.8% in July 2014 to 55.7% in July 2020, compared with 66% for men. The effects of COVID-19 on the Spanish labour market have been among the most severe in the world, as happened in previous economic crises. However, the difference this time was that it primarily affected traditionally female service sectors, and measures taken in response to the pandemic resulted in significant declines in labor demand across various sectors due to associated curfews (Conde-Ruiz and Fotreza, 2023).

While the percentage of employed women in Spain with temporary contracts stood at 26.3% by the beginning of the pandemic, that of employed men was 20.6% (Sentis et al, 2023) and only 35.2% of managers were women in 2020 in Spain; it stipulates underrepresentation in higher ranks. Some industries depict a more serious gap. Women were 29.5% in the financial and insurance activities sector in the group of managers in 2020. The implication of this, on a larger scale, is that temporary employment mostly offers lower job security with fewer benefits compared to permanent ones. For instance, it was estimated that in 2020, women in Spain would receive 21% less salary than their male counterparts on average, which means wage disparity between them still prevails across every level, from high to low-educated employees, and all occupational categories.

Many sectors, like non-essential retail, hospitality, and leisure, inevitably went bankrupt or were closed at some point during the sanitary crisis. Other sectors, such as air travel, were brought to a virtual standstill by the imposed restrictions. These sectors together employed more than 6.3 million workers in Spain, accounting for more than 30% of the total employment landscape (Lafuente et al, 2021).

The situation of female employment in modern-day Spain reflects the strong bearing of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been causing a number of problems and inequalities. The service sector, traditionally dominated by female workers, suffered disproportionately greater job losses as the pandemic led to an acute economic downturn, especially hitting those industries where women are most overrepresented, such as tourism, hospitality, and retail industries (Sentis et al., 2023).

Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and social distancing measures resulted in the loss of jobs and reduction of working hours in these industries. Female workers, particularly those in informal and low-paid jobs, faced increased job instability during the pandemic, impacting young Spanish women who generally face structural job insecurity (Cabases and Lopez, 2022). Various studies (Sevilla and Smith, 2020, Farre et al., 2020) have consistently shown that women have taken on a greater share of the increased childcare and/or household responsibilities brought about by the pandemic. Mothers were primarily responsible for childcare before 2020, spending an average of 28 hours per week compared to fathers' 19 hours: women took on nearly 60% of the childcare responsibilities. The pandemic

increased overall childcare hours by 25% (Morero-Minguez and Ortega-Gaspar, 2022).

As schools and childcare facilities closed or operated at reduced capacity during curfews, many women were forced to take on additional caregiving responsibilities, resulting in a higher proportion of women being unemployed than men (Dolado et al, 2021). Balancing work and caregiving became especially challenging for women. Many had to juggle professional responsibilities with childcare and eldercare duties, leading to burnout and increased stress. The blurring of boundaries between work and home life, particularly for those working remotely, made it even more difficult for women to manage their time effectively. Ma et al. (2020) emphasised the significant impact of school closures on parental decisions regarding the labor market, as there is a decreased likelihood of parents returning to work when workplaces are operational but schools remain closed.

The pandemic's confinement measures also contributed to an increase in gender-based violence, posing additional challenges for women in maintaining employment or seeking assistance (Rodríguez-Jimenez et al., 2020).

Likewise, the pandemic widened the gender gap in paid work hours in Spain, as there was a tendency to fall back on traditional family-gendered patterns to manage the work–life balance, especially in male-headed households with young children present (Blazquez et al., 2022), despite the 2008 financial crisis leading to an increase in female work hours (Sahin et al., 2010). Social norms, particularly prevalent in Mediterranean countries, suggest that women are expected to bear a larger share of the additional unpaid work generated by the pandemic (EIGE, 2021). As we can see, the outcome of the sanitary crisis has been quite similar to the situation that Portuguese women were exposed to.

2.3.6. Digitalization, labor market and the pandemics

According to the OECD (2017), the impact of digitalization and digital transformation is not just on new employment opportunities arising but also on the welfare of the citizens. And this influence became quite marked during the pandemic, under curfews and restrictions, the consistent use of digital technologies became a turning point for many enterprises and employees. These infrastructures of telecommunications in Spain, during several months, could manage

unprecedentedly high levels of connectivity because of the sanitary crisis. A comparison with the same traffic reports for 2019 made by Kemp (2023), revealed that for most cases, significant increases stood for a 50% surge in fixed-line voice traffic and in mobile data traffic, an increase of 30% and of about 20% on mobile voice traffic and fixed line, correspondingly. Basically, work and life shifted to a digital paradigm and changed the experience for employees who could work from home.

The labor market has seen an increase in the adoption of telework arrangements not only within service-oriented sectors but across various areas of work, certainly, those that are digitalized. According to Hickman and Saad (2020), the crisis and the necessity to overcome this situation made enterprises more adaptive towards telework conditions and accelerated this tendency. This shift prompted companies to recognize the benefits of remote work. Analysing industries heavily reliant on digital technologies, BBVA (2020) observed that women had a lower representation in the digital economy compared to the overall demographic in Spain at the onset of the sanitary crisis (42.7% vs. 46.3%). While making direct country-to-country comparisons is challenging, the Commission estimates that digital specialists constitute 3.9% of all employment in the EU and 3.2% in Spain (Kemp, 2023).

In May of 2022, during the downturn of the pandemic, around 30% of men and 33% of women, who have children under the age of 17, engaged in remote work for at least one day per week. Similarly, among individuals without children, both men and women, the percentage is 26%. In both scenarios, respondents concur that the primary advantage of remote work is its ability to enhance the balance between family and professional life (Farre and Gonzalez, 2023). This way a telework mode is a way to manage complexities of work-family conflict in Spanish households.

Being already in the realm of telework, Spanish women (38 percent) anticipate having a greater ability to work remotely compared to men (32 percent). Despite three-quarters of women considering flexible working hours as effective in advancing gender equity, they express having less autonomy in determining their schedules. Only 39 percent of women believe they have the opportunity to dictate their schedules, whereas this figure is 51 percent for men. Conversely, men view the availability of more flexible working hours as less crucial to professional development compared to women, with percentages at 12 percent versus 23

percent, respectively (McKinsey, 2023). Thus, digitalization bringing up a remote work mode also raises issues of how this remote work is actually organised and whether such an organisation can be implemented successfully within the life of workers and their families.

Looking ahead, the Digital Spain 2025 Agenda aims to enhance digital competencies, targeting 80% of individuals with fundamental digital skills by 2025, with a focus on ensuring 50% of this demographic consists of women (Enciso-Santocildes et al., 2021). It is strongly connected that in Spain, the challenge of finding qualified IT specialists persists, with around 46% of companies facing difficulties attracting talents with the necessary skills in 2021. Current statistics from Kemp (2023) indicate that 42% of people lack basic digital skills in the European Union, and the figure is slightly higher at 43% in Spain. The longstanding absence of women in technical professions has created a demand for new specialists to bridge the existing digital skill gap. State programs in Spain are now actively attracting women to educational programs aimed at discovering and developing their talents in STEM fields.

2.3.7. Barriers to female employment in Spain

There is still unequal access to the labor market. Even though women have a higher level of education than men in Spain as discussed before, their access to the job market remains unequal. In 2021, the employment rate gender gap exceeded 11%, with just over 62% of women employed compared to 73% of men. This trend is similar across Europe, with almost an 11 percentage point gap in 2021, having men at 78% and women at 67% (Eurostat, 2021). Women are also overrepresented among part-time workers, comprising around 22%, while just 6.5% of men are on part-time contracts (NIS, 2021). While the majority of Spanish women between the ages of 25 and 49 were in employment in 2021, the male labor market still showed higher overall employment rates. Besides, there is a considerable gap in the employment rate between men and women, taking into consideration those with children. It is even larger when comparing men and women with three or more children (NIS 2021). Spanish mothers with children under 15 years are seven times more likely than Spanish fathers to work on part-time contracts, twice as likely to be

unemployed, and 20 percent more likely to have a temporary contract (McKinsey, 2023).

One of the actual problems and barriers to labor participation in Spain as well is an involvement of females into STEM specialities. Even though as it was mentioned before Spain promotes state programs for women's acquisition of technical skills, women still tend to go for studies and occupations connected with gender stereotypes and somehow care-driven (Farre and Gonzalez, 2023). Spanish women constitute only a quarter of students in engineering and architecture studies, and these fields have experienced a 33 percent decline in enrollments from 2010 to 2020 (Bolio and Martinez Marquez, 2023).

Likewise, Spanish women face difficulty in reaching top positions and it is caused not only by the “glass ceiling” and “sticky floors” but also by the absence of motivation: 43 percent of Spanish men are keen to take on positions of high responsibility, but only 36 percent of Spanish women feel the same (McKinsey, 2023). As women take a lion's share of home chores, they simply feel demotivated as they might not manage both professional and household tasks. Female leadership is a serious issue in Spain and it could be managed if the positions were more flexible. This way, in individuals under the age of 40, 39 percent of women, as opposed to 32 percent of men, express a higher interest in progressing to senior positions if these roles offer increased flexibility (McKinsey, 2023).

The digital revolution creates new challenges for employers and employees, both in terms of the creation of new jobs and the transformation and loss of existing jobs. The adoption of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and robotics, is driving the automation of tasks and processes in various sectors with the consequent substitution effect of the human factor (Conde-Ruiz and Forteza, 2023). Telework and digital platforms have become the central elements of the new technological change. It is something radically new but already well-established and widely used by employers and employees, nevertheless, it does need an additional adjustment as flexible work can be not that flexible for all and unintentionally may contribute to the structure of inequalities, expanding them or solidifying, and becoming a new barrier to decent work for women (Nefesh-Clarke et al, 2020).

Issues of mental health are also challenging for Spanish society and the economy. Women consistently report significantly higher levels of burnout at work than men: 45% of women feel almost always or often burnt out, compared to 33%

of men. This increased workload prompts senior women to seek professional pathways and organisational models that offer greater time flexibility and reduced travel demands to accommodate family responsibilities. Additionally, a higher proportion of women opt for reduced working hours, with 20% of women in senior management choosing this option compared to 16% of men (McKinsey, 2023).

The gender pay gap in Spain has shrunk and is currently the eighth smallest in the EU. In 2017, women were expected to earn less than their male counterparts compared to what had been projected in 2020. However, the evaluation of pay gaps is a very complex affair, and the percentage of the gap has no direct correlation with the level of wealth of a country (Ortiz-Espina et al, 2024). The gender pay gap remains evident, as women continue to earn less than men for performing comparable work.

Challenges and issues associated with female employment are inherent, as the labor market operates initially with a specific set of inequalities. The dynamics of the labor market can exacerbate gender disparities, especially during unexpected events such as pandemics or financial crises. These disruptions bring about turbulence in markets, prompting intrinsic changes. Consequently, previous difficulties are subjected to reevaluation in light of the altered market conditions.

Following the short historical overview, Spain has gone through a difficult period of stagnation for female employment imposed by the dictatorship, an indoctrination-focused educational system perpetuated the regime's values, particularly emphasising distinct roles for men and women. Men were groomed for professions sustaining the family, while women's education centred on household tasks, reinforcing a patriarchal system (Lazaro and Sanchez, 1993).

These structural continuities contributed to the persistence of unequal power relations, reinforcing a dichotomy between two "gender natures" (Webster, 2022). This binary understanding placed men in privileged positions within the public sphere, while women were confined to the private sphere. That is how the core of the unequal labor market was created and solidified by attitudes adopted by Franco's regime.

High and volatile unemployment, a focus on passive measures, dualism in employment contracts, lack of wage flexibility, and productivity challenges collectively depict the precarity experienced by women in Spain nowadays. Examining these challenges through a historical and gendered lens requires

acknowledging the enduring impact of structures such as care and reproductive work, and traditional views on them in Spain, persisting despite changes in recent decades (Conde-Ruiz and Forteza, 2023).

Nowadays, the short-term consequences of the sanitary crisis on society are evident, with the pandemic significantly impacting female employment and exacerbating existing gender disparities in Spain (McKinsey, 2023). The inequalities amplified by the pandemic have persisted, particularly for women in sectors where remote work is feasible, leading to a higher preference for remote work among women compared to men.

However, this practice has introduced a dual challenge, offering better work-life balance and flexibility while exacerbating household inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as women have shouldered a greater family burden and experienced heightened exhaustion and stress (European Parliament, 2021). Prior to COVID-19, women in Spain dedicated an average of 39.9 hours per week to housework and childcare. This figure increased to 48.8 hours in 2020. In contrast, men spent 26 hours per week on unpaid domestic responsibilities before the pandemic, and this rose to 33.6 hours in 2020 (Farre et al, 2020). Although, Farre and González (2023) state that two years post the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the disparity in the overall weekly working hours, encompassing both compensated and uncompensated activities - in other words, paid and unpaid labor, has diminished, owing to increased male involvement in unpaid tasks: now Spanish men, on average, allocate an additional 3 hours per week to childcare, while women spend 3 hours less on this responsibility. This way the structure of paid and unpaid work has changed.

Some women experienced reduced working hours during the pandemic, which could have long-term economic consequences, affecting their earning potential and career progression. The proportion of men working after 5 p.m. has decreased by 9%—from 71% to 62% for those with children and from 73% to 64% for those without. Similarly, women experienced a 6% decline in the after-5 p.m. work percentage among those with children (from 61% to 55%) and a 9% reduction among those without children (from 73% to 64%) (Farre and Gonzalez, 2023). The growth in total employment, measured in actual hours worked, has been less significant than the increase in the number of individuals employed (Bank of Spain, 2023). In other words, the average working day decreased all over Spain.

Cuadrado (2022) associated such aftermath with other factors apart from the inclusion of men into house chores - such as technological advancements and other structural influences, such as the increasing significance of the services sectors, elevated female engagement in the labor market, and a higher prevalence of part-time employment, have played key roles.

Several studies suggest a quite surprising resilience of employment in Spain as an attribute of the labor market which has not been considered before the pandemic (Bank of Spain, 2023). Despite a significant decrease in economic activity in 2020, employment rates experienced a less substantial decline than anticipated, considering the scenarios given previously (Farre and Gonzalez, 2023). This way, the dual structure of the market which brings a certain kind of precarity and introduced job retention schemes led to such a saving effect. However, such resilience was not a stable indicator for all sectors: since the end of 2019, employment has shown a relatively swifter growth in the public sector compared to the private sector, with its proportion of total employment reaching 16.6% in the third quarter of 2023. Notably, this disparity is more pronounced in Spain compared to the broader euro area (Bank of Spain, 2023). This is positive particularly for women as the share of women in the public sector is traditionally higher than for men.

Labor market participation rates rebounded in 2023, following a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic (Albanesi et al, 2023). Nevertheless, the participation rate does not reflect the structure of the labor market which has obviously and specifically changed during the last three years due to all the transformation caused by urgent measures associated with Covid-19: the changing sectoral and occupational composition of labor demand (Sentis et al, 2023).

The pandemic highlighted the labor shortage that exists in Spain. As it was mentioned before, there is a vivid lack of IT specialists but not only. Based on the findings from the most recent Bank of Spain Business Activity Survey, approximately 40% of the surveyed companies indicated that a shortage of labor is a constraint affecting their operations (Cerezo and Izquierdo, 2023). The absence of suitably qualified workers is the direct consequence of unwise politics towards talent discovery and has to do with the gender issue: women's talent is undervalued on a general level.

Speaking about the structural changes in the labor market, after the pandemic a notable decrease in temporary contracts was observed, which has an impact on female employment as most women were employed on a temporary basis in Spain. The decline in temporary employment has been coupled with a notable surge in permanent seasonal contracts. As per the most recent Social Security registration data, these contracts contribute to nearly 25% of the reduction in temporary employment. Additionally, around 25% can be attributed to permanent part-time contracts, while the remaining 50% is accounted for by permanent full-time contracts. It's important to note that although these permanent seasonal contracts are classified as permanent, they are characterised by frequent rotations between periods of employment and inactivity throughout the year (Bank of Spain, 2023).

The outlined consequences offer a comprehensive view of the transformed labor market, revealing a degree of resilience during the crisis. However, it remains evident that the restructured landscape perpetuates precarious conditions for female workers. Persistent inequalities serve as potent barriers, hindering the entry and career progression of women in Spain.

The recent crisis changed the existing order of the Spanish labor market as it was totally unexpected and lasting. Surprisingly, the market showed a certain resistance but even though most hit were sectors that are traditionally feminine. These structural influences manifest diversely in people's lives and depend on certain factors such as marital and parent status, capacity to work remotely, and seniority of the occupied position. Spanish women are still driven by traditional roles and are the main householders as well as those who preferably choose professions associated with care even though they are technical ones.

Within this framework and overview, the profile of Spanish female workers contending with challenges like "double presence" becomes apparent.

CHAPTER III: LABOR POLICIES AND GENDER IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

3.1. Introduction

Labor policies in Portugal and Spain are a feature in this chapter, followed by the analysis in the previous chapter that was going into detail on comparing female labor participation before and during the pandemic in the respective countries. As discussed in the last chapter, both countries have shared a history of labor market inequalities, shaped by both countries' agrarian and dictatorial past and post-dictatorship democratization processes.

Both the Spanish and Portuguese labor markets, however, have experienced radical changes in the last decades, especially regarding their approach toward the equality of gender. This chapter explores the intricate relationship between labor policies and gender in these two Iberian nations and the ways in which historical and political processes have interacted to produce the present landscape of gender relations at work.

Both Spain and Portugal lived under dictatorial regimes during the 20th century, which had significant reverberations on their labor markets. The transition of Spain to democracy after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, and that of Portugal after the Carnation Revolution of 1974, signals a new era in the field of labor policy almost within the same historical moment, toward greater respect for human rights, including equality between sexes. These political changes paved the way for further labor reforms to better incorporate women into the labor market.

The implementation of the 1980 Workers' Statute in Spain became a milestone in the national labor laws, establishing the minimum rights for workers and therefore opening the door to more inclusive labor policies. However, the continued prevalence of temporary contracts and precarious working conditions- especially among women- underline some of the persistent challenges that substantive gender equality faces as we have seen in Chapter II. In Portugal, labor policies similarly evolved to include gender considerations, especially due to European Union directives that emphasize anti-discrimination and gender mainstreaming. Yet,

neither has fully succeeded in translating them into reality, and hence both still grapple with problems related to wage disparities, occupational segregation, and underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions.

Chapter III compares the labour policies in Spain and Portugal, with a focus on how each country has tackled the issue of gender and labor. The chapter seeks to highlight the broader implications that these policy successes and limitations have for gender equality in the labour markets of Southern Europe. With both countries further stepping into the complication of globalization, economic crisis, and social change, the pursuit of gender equality in labor policy has become a very relevant part of their development processes.

3.2. Evolution of equality legislation in the European Union

The evolution of equality legislation in the European Union can be delineated into four key stages. The initial phase, occurring in the 80s and 90s, was characterised by the advent of liberal anti-discrimination legislation, coinciding with the flexibilization of the labour market in several countries, including Portugal and Spain (Portugal et al., 1998). Rooted in the concept of equal treatment and introduced initially by adopting democratic Constitutions in both countries (Spain in 1978 and Portugal in 1976), these policies primarily aimed at safeguarding against inequality in the public sector. This approach was driven by the recognition that neoliberalism, with its emphasis on competition policy and profit maximisation, intrinsically contributes to inequality, necessitating the promotion of anti-discrimination policies (Thornton, 2021).

Legal advancements were bit by bit updating norms aimed to tackle the inequality process in society and in labor markets in particular. The Amsterdam treaty, adopted in 1997, added new provisions to combat discrimination, including on grounds of race and ethnicity, religion, handicap, age and sexual orientation (Article 13 EC Treaty). A directive combating all forms of discrimination in employment (directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000) was adopted and, subsequently, anti-discrimination norms evolved into national legislation favouring equal opportunities in the late 90s - beginning of the new century, now focusing not only on building barriers for equality asymmetries but considering and addressing directly cases of inequality, particularly in the workplace. During this phase,

fundamental norms were established to ensure the basic necessities of workers and markets: equal access to the labour market, accompanied by affirmative actions such as parental leave provisions, significantly impacting female labour force participation (White, 2011).

The following stage witnessed a certain qualitative evolution towards understanding the values of gender equality. The legislation promoting gender mainstreaming was adopted, striving to integrate considerations of gender equality into various applicable policy areas. This approach was a great step forward as it recognizes the roots of gender discrimination in all social processes and aims to produce gender-sensitive legislation that positively promotes equality across society as a whole (Mousmouti, 2022). When gender mainstreaming began to be implemented in the EU around 1996, legislative inquiries concentrated on how the EU could help bridge the divide between formal, documented and substantive, real equality (Lomazzi and Crespi, 2019).

The most advanced phase, which is ongoing, involves legislation on gender equality and diverse intersectionality, emphasising laws that address gender equality with a focus on recognizing and accounting for the numerous experiences of women and various factors influencing equality (Bodelon, 2010). Currently, many European countries, including Spain and Portugal, find themselves in the transition to this phase, which, in practice, remains incomplete and unsatisfactory (Tascon, 2000).

It is necessary to point out that gender mainstreaming, when applied to the legislative process, surpasses being a mere cross-cutting approach. It involves making gender equality the primary method in all public policies, aligning with the Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing as well as the Beijing Declaration in 1995 (Roberts, 1996). This implies integrating the gender concept as an analytical tool at every stage of policy development—design, implementation, and evaluation (Sauer, 2018). Furthermore, it requires the involvement of adequately trained individuals, considering it an essential and obligatory aspect rather than a simple recommendation subject to political discretion. Achieving the goals of gender mainstreaming demands significant, albeit gradual, changes, including a thorough reassessment of management policies and a sincere commitment to effective gender equality training for all involved staff (Gil Ruiz, 2012).

3.3. Case of Portugal

3.3.1. Evolution of labour relations and legal framework in Portugal

Initially, labour relations in Portugal were regulated from the perspective of civilists. The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 was not the first legal document dealing with the employment contract issue. The Commercial Code dated 1833, preceding the Civil Code of 1867, had already regulated certain aspects of the employment contract and labour relations. However, these provisions were quite limited and did not form a systematic part of the code. The Civil Code of 1867 was relevant for the regulation of the subordinate employment contract in Portugal, but its approach was indeed more tied to civil law logic, as mentioned, as labor law logic was not developed that time (Cardoso, 2014). Nevertheless, over time, labour legislation evolved to recognize the need for protecting workers' rights and balancing relations between employers and employees in a specific way. Therefore, while the Civil Code of 1867 marked an initial step in regulating employment contracts in Portugal, subsequent developments in labour legislation brought significant changes to better address labour issues and protect workers' rights. At that time, public social protection was limited in various domains, particularly concerning unemployment, with no provision, for example, for the granting of any subsidy or other social benefit in the event of unemployment (Pereira, 2024).

At the same time, the legal framework for employment contracts, outlined by the Civil Code of 1867, was sufficient to an extent that remained unchanged until it was replaced only by Law, adopted in 1937. Inspired by the 1933 Constitution and its corporatist inclination, this new law systematically and elaborately defined the bases to which the individual employment contract should adhere (Carvalho and Goncalves, 2017). The importance of mentioning this law belongs to recognizing the fact that the nature of labour contacts has a social and legal difference from those which are regulated by civil legal norms. The main concern at that time was the proper termination of contracts and the absence of any social security in the country.

It was only in the 1930s that the first labor law-like measures were approved in the Portuguese context with the aim of dealing with and resolving the problems

posed by growing unemployment as a consequence of the economic crisis of that period. To solve this situation, the specific position of the Unemployment Commissioner was created, tasked with managing the unemployment fund, which originated from a co-participation system in the salaries of workers hired by private or public companies, as well as promoting the placement of the unemployed (Fiala, 2019). This way, the early bird of the future social security in Portugal is seen, however, the Decree that established the position and the fund did not mention anything about an opportunity to support unemployed women or pay maternity leave. Until the 1960s, there were no significant changes in the social protection of unemployment. Notable during this period was the approval of a law in 1945⁵, which, while promulgating the foundations for the ongoing promotion and reorganisation of industry, established temporary unemployment benefits for certain situations of job loss (Campos, 2020). However, from 1962 onward, amidst intense transformation in the national productive landscape, several legislative acts addressing labor issues were published with a tendency to progressively protect employees including female workers, but mostly after the Carnation Revolution of 1975.

Nonetheless, the Decree⁶ of 1962, which, in addition to granting a set of pensions and subsidies to personnel laid off due to industrial reorganisation (firstly touching upon the concept of collective dismissals), also established the Labor Development Fund (Costa, 2021). The primary objective of this fund was to provide temporary unemployment benefits to workers until they were admitted to reorganised companies or new industries. It was the moment when the concept of collective dismissals was introduced, it was important due to the growing number of employees employed in production lines.

In the 60s labour relations were still primarily regulated by civil codes and the entry into force of the new Civil Code in 1966 did not add anything to the regulation of employment contracts. The new Code merely introduced the concept of an employment contract, deferring to special legislation for further details (Carvalho e Goncalves, 2017). In other words, it was a simple model legal norm requiring legislators for further exploration.

⁵ 14/3/1945

⁶ 10/8/1962

Starting from the mid-1970s, labour law predominantly followed the "*favour laboratoris*" principle, interpreted in a traditional manner. Under this approach, collective agreements that encompassed most categories of workers of both genders were seen as tools primarily intended to enhance legal provisions established as the minimum standard for labour protection. A legal norm in effect could only be superseded by a more advantageous one, and as a result, soft law and agreements tended to offer greater protection than statutory law and maintained their validity for extended periods (Palma Ramalho, 2011).

In the transformative momentum, the National Employment Service was established in 1965. This service had the mission of studying and organising the functioning of the employment market, with tasks including framing the emigration policy within the national employment policy, developing the National Catalog of Professions, and organising Placement and Career Guidance Services. Then, in 1966, the approval of the new legal regulation for individual employment contracts by Decree-Law No. 47032 was noteworthy, in particular, it introduced notions of overtime work, explained regimes of vacations and holidays and paid special attention to the work of women, with guarantees of equality of conditions and remuneration, and regulations regarding the work of minors (Costa, 2021).

In 1969 the principle of equal pay for all was established by Decree-Law No. 49408 following the ratification, in 1966, of ILO Convention N 100⁷. However, this principle, rooted in the genealogy of equality in labour and employment since the end of the New State⁸, was consistently overlooked in collective labour agreements (Fiala, 2019).

In the 70s, the proposal for Regulation of Female Labor (Order No. 193/73, dated March 13) after a challenging and prolonged journey marked by resistance and adverse reactions underwent more than 12 revisions, with only one of its points eventually being enacted into legislation concerning restricted work for female workers. The aim was to review the jobs prohibited for women previously⁹, particularly those in activities considered dangerous or unhealthy for female workers. The revision took into account the outdated nature of the list adopted by the Decree issued in 1934 due to advancements in production techniques, jobs

⁷ C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

⁸ Here and after the New State ("Estado Novo") is the regime imposed by Antonio Oliveira Salazar, existed from 1933-1974

⁹ listed in the 1927 Decree-Law

equally hazardous for men, and new risks associated with productive modernization concerning women and their genetic function (Pimentel, 2001)¹⁰.

The April Revolution¹¹ in 1974 and its democratic project already represented a real break with the previous society and legal framework, well in advance of the 1976 Constitution. The period between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s saw deep legislative changes. These alterations not only aimed at removing explicit discrimination present in the legislation of the New State but also involved the incorporation of progressive perspectives and proposals in certain legislated areas including labour law (Costa, 2021). In 1975, in accordance with the democratic and progressive spirit of the revolution, the new legal framework for dismissals (with the exception of rules regarding collective dismissals) was approved (by Decree-Law No. 372-A/75 (16/7)), decisively enshrining the general principle of prohibiting dismissals without just cause (Carvalho and Goncalves, 2017). This represented a radical departure from the dismissal regime under the New State law, which allowed unjustified dismissals.

Moreover, the Constitution included provisions affirming the right to equality between women and men¹², the right to work¹³, and the freedom to choose a profession and type of work, ensuring that access to any positions, jobs, or professional categories would not be denied or limited based on gender. It also established principles such as equal pay for equal work and the protection of women workers during pregnancy and postpartum. The constitutional recognition of these rights prompted a need to review Codes or specific legislation in areas like Civil Law, Criminal Law, and Labor Law that contradicted the equality principles outlined in the Constitution (Costa, 2021).

3.3.2. Gender roles and legal perspectives on women's employment in Portugal

During Salazar's regime in the realm of labour and employment, conceptions about the role and place of women in society, morality, and the social good, as well

¹⁰ amended in 1973 by Decree 183/73, dated March 13, proposed by the Working Group for the Definition of a Comprehensive National Policy on Women (GTDPNGM)

¹¹ Same as the Carnation Revolution

¹² Article 13

¹³ Article 58

as arguments related to protecting the biological function of motherhood, supported the subordinate status of women that has persistently existed in the society even prior to the dictatorship time (Silva et al, 2022). This manifested in prohibitions and constraints on the practice of certain professions, low and medium wages for females and occupational discrimination, among other issues. Women were restricted from pursuing careers in diplomatic service, the judiciary, and holding leadership positions in local administration. Primary school teachers faced limitations on their right to marriage, requiring authorization from the Ministry of National Education (Araujo, 1990). Hospital nurses and air hostesses were even forbidden from getting married: here a woman had to virtually choose between profession and private life. Until 1967, married women needed their husband's permission to enter into employment relations, as happened in Spain as well. Despite the removal of this requirement, husbands retained the power to annul such contracts at any time without women's consent. In the industrial sector and in many collective labour agreements, women were prohibited from working in certain specialised professional categories, limiting them to undifferentiated and poorly paid tasks (Pimentel, 2001). From the beginning of the 20th century and up to the Carnation revolution the role of women in Portuguese society was considered only in an extremely traditional way, inferior and dependent on men and their decisions.

Following ILO Convention N 89¹⁴, night work for women in the industry was prohibited. Certain jobs in construction and underground work in mines were also forbidden, narrowing the labour scene of female workers (Baprista, 2014).

Up to the 70s, the highest levels of female workforce participation were observed in very young age brackets (15-19 years), suggesting that older women were leaving the labour market, possibly due to family responsibilities and early exits from education. Women were predominantly engaged in unskilled labour, with a strong focus on traditional industry sectors like textiles, clothing, footwear, and food, characterised by limited technological innovation (Monteiro, 2010).

With the legislation of the New State, nature was used to justify differences in treatment between men and women. With the laws of democracy, this justification is no longer held. It wasn't nature that changed the attitude to gender roles but rather the law, which refused to recognize the power of nature to hierarchize human

¹⁴ Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89) - ILO

beings based on gender and instead "constructed" their equal social dignity (Pimentel, 2001). Under the legislation of the New State, the concept of the common good, a vaguely defined idea subject to interpretation by the judiciary, justified restrictions on women's access to paid employment at a time when the law explicitly barred women from the judiciary. In contrast, with the laws of democracy, it is the State's responsibility to actively ensure the equal freedom of men and women in the choice and practice of any profession (do Ceu da Cunha Rego, 2010).

During the height of the revolutionary fervour, the first provisional government¹⁵, outlined in its programmatic foundations for social policy the "definition of a policy for the protection of maternity and early childhood" and "measures to protect all forms of female labour" (Silva et al, 2022). The need to establish a policy for the protection of maternity and early childhood was thus linked to the goal of defending the interests of the working classes. Maternity was already emphasised as a social function to be undertaken collectively, as later enshrined in the 1976 Constitution and the special Decree-Law¹⁶, devoted to these issues.

The acknowledgement of women's oppression in legislation created an opportunity for addressing issues of gender-based discrimination within the context of democratic modernization and the regaining of international respect (Monteiro, 2010). The "Equality Law"¹⁷, adopted in 1979, had a direct impact on the increase of female employment, such as the establishment of the minimum wage, unemployment benefits, and 90-day maternity leave with other rights related to pregnancy, maternity, and family assistance (Silva et al, 2022). Among these rights, it is important to highlight the following: during pregnancy — leave from work without loss of benefits or pay to attend medical appointments; during maternity — a 14-week maternity leave without loss of service time, earnings, and subsidies; for the care of children and other dependents — leave for medical appointments during pregnancy, two one-hour breaks per day during breastfeeding, up to 30 days off per year to provide care in case of a child's illness, or even a two-year special leave without pay.

The development of a legal and institutional framework for gender equality was surprisingly early, innovative, and progressive (Monteiro, 2010). Notably, the

¹⁵ led by Palma Carlos

¹⁶ No. 112/76, dated February 7

¹⁷ Law No. 392/79

"Equality Law" emerged as a groundbreaking piece of legislation, following a decade-long preparatory effort led by a group of women committed to public service and women's emancipation. This progress was further catalysed by historical circumstances, such as the need to harmonise the national legal framework with the requirements of the European Economic Community. At that time, the Community had introduced two key directives on gender equality in employment: Directive 75/117/EEC concerning equal pay and Directive 76/207/EEC on equal treatment between men and women regarding access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (Campos, 2020), as previously mentioned.

Building on this foundation, the introduction of the Commission for Equality in the Workplace and Employment (CITE) in 1979 marked another milestone in the legal framework for gender equality. This innovative mechanism featured a tripartite composition, including representatives from the government, employers, and trade unions, all of whom were also represented in the Economic and Social Council. Its primary mandate was to address gender-based discrimination in the labor market, with a specific focus on promoting "real equality between men and women concerning all material conditions associated with the performance of work" (Palma Ramalho, 2013).

These advancements, combined with significant historical and legislative developments, gradually transformed societal perceptions of women's roles. Over time, these shifts allowed women increased access to professional development, signalling slow but important progress in the pursuit of gender equality.

3.3.3. Labour legislation and gender equality measures in Portugal nowadays

From the 1990s through the initial years of the twenty-first century, a notable change has transpired. It commenced with the enactment of specialised laws addressing particular concerns and later solidified with the endorsement of the inaugural Labour Code in 2003¹⁸. This progression was further reinforced in the subsequent iteration of the Labour Code in 2009 and 2019¹⁹ and remains the prevailing labour legislation in effect today in the country.

¹⁸ LC of 2003, sanctioned by Law No. 99/2003, dated 27 August 2003

¹⁹ validated by Law No. 7/2009, dated 12 February 2009

During the period of liberalisation from 1980 on that ensued after the revolution time and till now, Portugal adopted a political strategy emphasising job protection, with a primary focus on sustaining high employment levels for both men and women. This strategy involved making trade-offs, including accepting relatively high inflation, limited protection against unemployment, lower wages, and occurrences of wage arrears (Fishman, 2010). In this course of the Portuguese state, there was even a moment when the position of the Minister for Equality was established in 1999 (by Decree-Law No. 474-A/99), and the mentioned Commission for Equality in the Workplace began to operate under its control. However, The Commission returned to the Ministry of Labor with the abolition of the Minister for Equality position next year (by Decree-Law No. 267-A/2000).

In 2000, looking to provide more protection for workers, the special system of financial support enhancements outlined in the employment policy measures for professions significantly affected by gender discrimination was established by Ordinance No. 1212/2000. The term "financial support enhancements" implies the introduction of mechanisms or incentives aimed at providing additional financial assistance to individuals working in professions where gender discrimination is prevalent. This approach aligns with broader scientific and policy efforts to mitigate gender-based inequalities in the labour market by implementing targeted measures within the framework of employment policies (Das and Koticula, 2019).

One year later, another step was done: the requirement to produce an annual state report on equal opportunities between men and women, instituted in 2001²⁰, underscores a deliberate and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating gender dynamics within the societal framework. This mandate reflects the acknowledgement of the importance of gender equality as a fundamental societal goal. In a scientific context, such reporting mechanisms contribute to evidence-based policymaking, providing a data-driven foundation for understanding the progress, challenges, and trends related to gender equality. Moreover, such reporting is raising awareness on the issue, making those who are involved or aware about reporting to question values on which situations of discrimination and unequal treatment are based. Such systematic reporting fosters transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making, aligning with scholarly approaches

²⁰ Law No. 10/2001, dated May 21

that emphasise empirical analysis and evaluation in the pursuit of social equity and justice.

The introduction of the Labor Code in Portugal in 2003 has consolidated a more comprehensive and modern labour law. This code established specific rules for employment contracts and strengthened the protection of workers' rights, acknowledging their more vulnerable position in the employment relationship. In the following years, several reforms were implemented in the unemployment protection system in Portugal. In 2006 significant changes were introduced by Decree-Law No. 220/2006 (3/11) to the regulations, including modifications to the calculation criteria for the amounts to be granted that provide a more transparent procedure against pay gaps.

In 2007, following the course, the special Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 49/2007 approved the principles of good governance for state-owned enterprises, providing specific guidelines for those held by the State. The ninth principle emphasises the need for these enterprises to adopt equality plans, following a diagnostic assessment, to achieve effective equal treatment and opportunities for men and women, eliminating discrimination, and enabling the reconciliation of personal, family, and professional life (Ferreira and Monteiro, 2012). Issues of investment incentive systems for companies were addressed by Decree-Law No. 287/2007, and it was also stipulated that supported investment projects should include the development of dynamic competitiveness factors, such as the implementation of equality plans that effectively contribute to the reconciliation of professional, family, and personal life. The so-called Incentive System for Qualification and Internationalisation, established by Portaria No. 1463/2007, emphasizes equality of opportunity as an eligible type of investment to stimulate the definition and implementation of equality plans that contribute effectively to reconciling professional, family, and personal life, to facilitating an inclusive labour market (Santos, 2019).

In 2008 the strategic guidelines of the State for the entirety of the state business sector were approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 70/2008: public companies within the state business sector must be socially responsible. Upon the new regulation they should seek social and environmental ends through their activities, ensure market competitiveness, protection for consumers, invest in professional and personal development, promotion of equality, protect the

environment, and respect ethical principles. Under the policy of human resources and promotion of equality, these companies are expected to conceive and implement human resources policies aimed at valuing individuals, strengthening motivation, and stimulating increased employee productivity. This should be done within a framework of balanced and rigorous control of the associated costs, compatible with the size and economic and financial situation of the company. Moreover, these companies are urged to design and implement equality plans aiming to promote equal treatment and opportunities between men and women, eliminate discrimination, and enable the reconciliation of personal, family, and professional life (Belo, 2017).

Lately in 2018, addressing gender pay equality mechanisms to promote equal pay for equivalent work were introduced by Law 60/2018, established on August 21, emphasising transparent pay policies, gender-neutral job evaluations, enhanced national data on the gender pay gap, and strengthened roles for the Labour Inspectorate and the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment to address and rectify instances of pay disparities amounting to discrimination (Santos, 2019).

As for specific requirements, the minimum gender representation requirements for boards of public and listed companies was established in 2017 (Law 62/2017, enacted on August 1), mandating that boards comprise at least 33% women and men by 2018, with an increase to 20% for listed companies by the same date and a subsequent rise to 33% by 2020. The implementation of this law has yielded positive outcomes within 1.5 years, notably increasing the presence of women on the boards of listed companies from 12% to 18%, in state companies from 28% to 32%, and in local public companies from 20% to 32%. In terms of political engagement, the minimum threshold for women and men in electoral lists for national and European parliament, municipal elective bodies, and Parish Councils was efficiently elevated from 33% to 40% by Law 1/2019, enacted on March 29. Furthermore, the law sets a 40% minimum representation threshold for women and men among top civil servants in public administration, public higher education institutions, and associations (Law 26/2019, dated March 28) (Ferreira, 2022).

The overview of equality measures allows us to see that gender equality is taken into consideration as an important issue by the Portuguese government, and

measures try to address different aspects of inequality that citizens meet in a day to day life. National plans are also one of such instruments.

3.3.4. National plans for equal opportunities

As it was already mentioned the concern on equal opportunities was recognized and the legal provision prescribing annual reports on equality in 2001. However, the first plan was adopted even before the legal provision in 1997. For equality promotion and citizenship, a total of five national plans were put into work in the period between the years of 1997-2017: Global Plan for Equal Opportunities, (1997-1999), II National Plan for Equality (2003-2006), III National Plan for Equality - Civil Citizenship and Gender (2007-2010), IV Equality Plan for Opportunities between Men and Women, Civil Citizenship and no Discrimination (2011-2013), V Equality Plan: Gender and no Discrimination (2014-2017). Currently, the Portuguese government has certified the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 under the denomination of Portugal + Equality. This strategy, for multiple national plans, is the first comprehensive approach to fight and promote equality and non-discrimination within the country.

National equality plans serve as policy instruments through which governments express their dedication to gender equality and the inclusion of other marginalised groups (Ferreira and Monteiro, 2012). In the International Plan for Equal Opportunities established by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 49/97, the Portuguese government acknowledges its dedication to international bodies such as the European Union and the United Nations, emphasising the necessity of implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy across diverse sectors of society (Subtil and Silveirinha, 2017).

The Third Plan for Equality – Citizenship and Gender 2007-2010 demonstrated a commitment to comprehensiveness, as well as a concern for consistency through the allocation of significant amounts of national and community public funds for its implementation. In fact, gender equality benefitted from a political priority, visibility, and financial expression that it had never experienced in previous years. This allowed for the strengthening of research and experimentation in this domain, more assertive interventions by non-governmental organisations, and an expansion of

interest in the subject to entities and sectors that had not previously recognized it (Medina et al, 2020).

The Fourth National Plan for Equality - Citizenship, Gender, and Non-discrimination (2011-2013) served as a pivotal instrument in the realm of public policies aimed at advancing Gender Equality²¹. This plan established a framework to ensure Portugal's adherence to international commitments, particularly those made in the United Nations, Council of Europe, and European Union forums. It delineated 14 Strategic Intervention Areas, encompassing critical domains including gender mainstreaming for good governance, economic independence, labour market and the conciliation of professional, family, and personal life.

The Fifth National Plan (2014-2017) sought to fortify efforts in promoting gender equality across various sectors of governance by emphasising the integration of gender considerations in all ministries. This served as a means for coordinating policies that advocate for gender equality and non-discrimination based on gender. The plan aimed to enhance interventions in education, health, and the labour market, recognizing these domains as deserving of heightened investment to broaden and intensify respective measures (Santos, 2019).

Pinto et al (2013) argue that Plans were devoted to addressing inequality in Portugal from different angles. For example, the Forth National Plan was vastly focused on the identification and eradication of inequalities in the educational system of Portugal. However, there is a criticism of Plans. This way, for instance, Amaral et al (2018) state that National plans for inequality are not very effective for older women as the analysis of five plans show the rare and vague attitude to problems that ageing Portuguese women can face in different areas of life.

Notably, for its capacity to induce change, the encouragement for the development of equality plans on a lower level, in organisations, and its binding nature for the public sector are highlighted. Furthermore, the adoption of a regime of positive actions that encourage more active labor participation and entrepreneurship among women is important not only for diversifying innovation, creativity, and income-generating opportunities but also, notably through support for the creation of networks of female workers, as a reinforcement of women's empowerment in economic decision-making, where their position is significantly

²¹ Published in the Diário da República (Official Gazette) - I Série, Nº 12 - 18/01/2011

asymmetrical compared to that of men (Ceudecunha Rego, 2010). National Plans on a state level are an instrument that allows to encompass issues of agenda nowadays but it needs additional steps such as municipal and company plans to implement more actions and address already existing imbalances of equality policies.

3.3.5. Imbalances of equality policies in Portugal

Human development indicators objectively highlight structural imbalances in the situation between men and women in Portugal, stemming from the persistent unequal social roles assigned based on one's gender at birth (Amancio and Santos, 2021). This disparity is further exacerbated by the inconsistency in education and societal pressure to adhere to these roles (Ceudecunha Rego, 2010). As gender inequality ideas are educated from the very childhood, the legislator faces an intrinsic difficulty in applying a gender mainstreaming approach to a legislative process: he or she is biased on the level of basic values (Nunes, 2020).

There are institutions whose objective was to promote parity in accessing professions, qualifications, and compensation levels, providing a mechanism for advancing the rights of both women and men, for instance, as already mentioned prior, the Commission for Equality in Labor and Employment. The initial aim of the Portuguese legislator was to create such an entity that would enhance the formulation of the legal framework, drawing inspiration from the Swedish model of an Ombudsman for equal opportunities. This rationale justified adopting the terminology of "equality of opportunities" between women and men, unlike its counterpart, the Commission on Women's Status, which explicitly indicated a gender-specific focus on women (Monteiro, 2010). But if we consider equality for all, the focus is different and it encompasses other inequalities and vulnerabilities: migrant, youth employment and others, basically distracting from issues of gender inequality.

Contemporary Portuguese social policies are geared towards addressing the emerging risks in post-industrial society, encompassing challenges associated with atypical employment, persistent long-term unemployment, working poverty, family instability, and limited opportunities for labour market participation due to caregiving responsibilities or outdated skills (Cardoso and Branco, 2017). These measures are

strategically designed to prioritise employability, activation, and needs-based social protection. The objective is to extend coverage to new risk groups that were overlooked by the traditional male breadwinner model and who face difficulties in securing their social protection solely through employment (Hausermann, 2012). The objective of Portuguese legislators hasn't changed from the beginning of the liberalisation period after the fall of Salazar's regime: a high rate of employment at the expense of quality of employment.

However, the most effective path towards the objective would be a police striving for the shift of traditional values. There were attempts made to change stereotypical views towards unpaid work and the burden of home shores, to shift from clear and expressed concepts of the Constitution, such as "maternity" and "paternity" – which correspond to rights and responsibilities sometimes assigned to mothers and other times to fathers – has been proposed (Santos, 2019). The idea is to replace these concepts with "parenthood," a term that may be useful in the next Civil Code to mitigate the patriarchal connotations of the so-called "paternal power." However, in Labor Law, this shift is seen as a step backwards by resorting to a pseudo-neutral term that immediately distances "paternity" from the workplace. Such an ambiguous attitude to inequality-related situations brings imbalances to policies that on paper are supposed to lead to essential changes while, in fact, face hurdles in the minds of legislators and the population.

There is a growing body of research that problematizes men as "gendered" subjects. This has made male power and authority, social practices, and the "way of being" of men more problematic. Results of such a research helps policies to formulate a more scrutinised attitude to a multifaceted inequality. According to research, the first form of masculinity tends to dominate, at least ideologically, organisations and power hierarchies (Santos, 2010). But, in Portugal, encompassing studies on masculinities in specific work or management contexts are still lacking. However, there is a significant line of knowledge emerging in adjacent scientific domains such as social psychology and sociology of work (conducted, for example, extensively by CoLABOR²²). Studies investigating certain issues of inequality related to labour relations would bring a solid understanding of what kind of policy could be of better use in Portuguese reality.

²² The CoLABOR is the Collaborative Laboratory to deepen knowledge around Labor, Employment, and Social Protection.

The core of imbalances is an unclear understanding of a problem. To eliminate it and to create a stable comprehension of why and how inequality proliferates in Portuguese society, there is a need for a specific perspective of studies. Another issue that lacks understanding but it is a mandatory feature of a balanced equality policy is gender mainstreaming.

3.3.6. Gender mainstreaming in Portugal

The Council of Europe defines gender mainstreaming as the reorganization, enhancement, development, and assessment of decision-making processes to ensure that a gender equality perspective is integrated into all policies, across all levels, and at every stage, by the actors typically involved in political decision-making (CIDM, 1999).

The 1976 Constitution in Portugal rendered social norms and their roles of inequality between men and women illegal. However, despite being mitigated or less obvious, this social normativity resists and persists (Ceú da Cunha Rego, 2010).

Portugal first integrated a gender mainstreaming approach into its legal framework with the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1977²³. This structure included a consultative council with both a non-governmental section and an inter-ministerial section, aiming to integrate gender equality into all policy areas (Monteiro, 2016). Portugal also has specific legal obligations related to gender mainstreaming. In 2008, the Council of Ministers established²⁴ measures to promote gender mainstreaming in the central public administration and approved the statute of ministerial equality counsellors and members of the equality interdepartmental teams (Casaca and Lortie, 2017)

While Portugal lacks a comprehensive law exclusively focused on gender equality, the principle of gender equality is explicitly stated in the Portuguese Constitution, and it extends to the entire legal system. Various laws cover different aspects of gender equality and non-discrimination, addressing issues such as parental leave, unpaid care work and labour, representation in politics and decision-making, access to goods and services, employment, and equal pay.

²³ as outlined in Decree-Law No. 485/77

²⁴ By the Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 161/2008

Portugal has a history of implementing action plans and strategies on gender equality, with the current National Strategy on Equality and Non-discrimination²⁵ being in effect since 2018 and set to continue until 2030. The Strategy has been closely aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasising a long-term perspective and seeking the active participation of nearly all ministries. The Strategy embraces a dual and complementary approach to gender mainstreaming: systematic consideration of gender-specific conditions, situations, and needs of women and men, along with the underlying gender relations, throughout the entire process from planning to execution, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies (Santos, 2019). Moreover, such an approach implies an execution of specific temporary actions: these actions are designed to rectify structural gender gaps.

During the initial four years of the Strategy (2018-2030), three action plans were implemented, focusing on key areas such as equality between women and men, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual characteristics, as well as combating violence against women and domestic violence. The action plan on equality between women and men²⁶ was budgeted for the specified period, featuring seven strategic objectives encompassing 53 quantitative impact indicators (Ferreira, 2022).

In 2018, Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 61/2018 established a legal obligation for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, along with its three action plans. However, this resolution lacks provisions for the enforcement of sanctions. The Government of Portugal allocates a specific budget for gender equality and mainstreaming. Since 2017, the state budget has included a dedicated heading for policies addressing the prevention and combat of gender violence. Funds under this heading are allocated to various governmental areas, including the presidency of the Council of Ministers, home affairs, and justice (Jorge et al, 2023). Additionally, although not explicitly listed under this heading, the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security maintains a specific budget for gender-related initiatives, continuing until 2024.

Ferreira (2000) argues that the mainstreaming strategy, essentially as a form of state reformism, is the most appropriate approach for instigating changes in

²⁵ Estratégia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Não Discriminação 2018-2030 "Portugal + Igual"

²⁶ "Plano de Ação para a Igualdade entre Mulheres e Homens"

organisational cultures and individual mindsets. This strategy necessitates changes in terms of state actions and encompasses tools like promoting new human resources practices (attuned to gender equality policies), conducting training and awareness programs on equal opportunities, revising institutional procedures, and developing and disseminating manuals of best practices.

Portuguese legislators see a challenge in identifying who, within the state, is the subject of such a reformist drive. Based on evaluated experiences, difficulties in implementing mainstreaming policies include the resistance of bureaucratic organisations to change, rooted in the compartmentalization of organisations hindering collaboration between departments and agencies for common purposes, resulting in an ineffective use of resources; the decentralisation of powers, which, by assigning responsibility for the implementation of gender equality policies to institutions and organisations, further delays the journey to effective gender equality since local structures lack the training (or effective political will) to apply and monitor decisions and policies defined at higher levels; and, finally, the rarity of women constituting a mobilised and demanding group at the national level (Casaca and Lortie, 2017). Therefore, the risk that the state and its agents face by not fulfilling their promises is minimal, as there is an absence of women demanding the fulfilment of these promises. In order to change the situation and to make gender mainstreaming an applicable instrument, Portuguese women receive access to political institutions and assert their role as catalysts for change and the mainstreaming strategy (Gaio Santos, 2010).

3.3.7. Evolving landscape of law and employment in Portugal

The changing landscape of work in Portugal indicates the large move into a female-dominated employment environment, along with legislative and practical challenges. An increase in women's participation in the labor market is concurrent with several global trends: economic globalization, interlinkage between companies, and project societies (Tavares et al., 2021). These factors create a whole new paradigm in methods of employment, emphasizing a new focus on the participation of females in the workforce (Ferreira, 2022).

Economic globalization has transformed the Portuguese labor market, leading to increased flexibility in production lines and work organization methods. The

interdependence of organizations has created a need for a more versatile and diverse labor force, which means that more women should be involved and have a greater variety of skills. Individualization and project employment have also enhanced this trend as women seek and change occupations that fit the new conditions of their life. Precarious work, as described by temporary contracts and part-time jobs, has also become more common and women are the main subjects and victims of this type of work, according to Fischman (2010).

Likewise, technological changes have brought new forms of control and accountability, emphasizing efficiency and self-exploitation. These have indeed opened up more avenues for women's entry into sectors requiring technological proficiency and adjustment in case they obtain certain skills. Market imperatives of high productivity and competitiveness have reinforced these tendencies of reskilling need and its popularity and, thus, raised the attractiveness of highly technological sectors and accelerated women's integration into areas that were earlier the preserve of male-dominated sectors.

Changes in the labor market are supposed to be mirrored by legislative advancements but despite being one of pioneers in creating legislation for gender equality, Portugal faces significant challenges in translating these laws into effective action. Implementation difficulties arise from the lack of institutional, material, and human resources necessary to fulfil the mandates of gender equality policies. This issue is compounded by delays and obstacles in practical application, leading to a disconnect between legislative intentions and real-world life and outcomes (Monteiro, 2010). Nicholls (2007) describes a form of legalism prevalent in Portugal, where the existence of legal norms is perceived as a solution to gender inequality: this belief, often expressed by those in political positions, assumes that "equality exists because it is in the law." However, this legalistic approach fails to address the complexities of gender disparities in the workplace and overlooks the need for comprehensive and actionable strategies to enforce these laws. The legal structure of employment contracts in Portugal has traditionally adhered to the paradigm of the "typical labor relation" prevalent in the industrial sector. This framework established protective and inflexible regulations concerning job specifications, workplace conditions, working hours, salary structures, and safeguards against termination. As a result, the legislation initially exhibited limited receptiveness to atypical forms of employment, such as fixed-term and temporary agency work

contracts (Tavora and Gonzalez, 2016). Recent legislative efforts have, therefore, tried to overcome these limitations by introducing more flexible regulations that can adapt to the various needs of the modern workforce. Such initiatives include measures to safeguard the rights of temporary and part-time workers and ensure that they are treated fairly and have equal opportunities, whatever their contract type may be. According to Paloma Ramalho (2011), in practice, these reforms face an uphill task in actual implementation as the legal system is still adapting to the changing dynamics of the labor market.

The tendency of feminization of the labor market in Portugal initially and in the course of it has been favored by the various combined effects of economic globalization, technological development, and the evolution of social values. It is important to understand that under conditions of the shortage of labor force and its ageing, the inclusion of women is a necessity (Marek et al, 2020). With such a perspective, women have taken an increasingly important place in traditionally male-dominated sectors, contributing to a more balanced and diversified structure of labor skilling and labor market in general. Considering that more people have entered a certain sector, the situation becomes more stable as employees who would like to change their positions can be replaced by those who already obtain certain skills, education, and motivation to execute such a labor function. This change reflects broader trends toward gender equality and recognition of women's contributions to economic growth and development.

However, substantial differences still persist in employment conditions, career advancement, and wage equality. These are issues that demand holistic approaches to policy changes, legislative reforms, corporate practices, and societal initiatives for gender equality in the workplace. It is essential to engage gender experts and stakeholders both in the design of appropriate policies and in ensuring successful implementation.

3.4. Case of Spain

3.4.1. Historical overview of the labour policies in Spain from the late 19th century to the modern time century

The historical trajectory of labor policies in Spain, unfolding from the late 19th to early 20th century, is marked by the establishment of laws addressing workers' rights and conditions (Tascon, 2000). Trade unions, as the primary representatives of the workforce, sought state recognition as protectors of workers' rights during this period. The movement resulted in the passing of the Association Law in 1887, which guaranteed the freedom of professional associations until 1931 (Felipe-Redondo, 2014). This paved the way for the birth of large labor unions like the Main Trade Union of Workers, UGT (*Union General de Trabajadores*), in 1888, and the General Workers Confederacy, CGT (*Confederacion General del Trabajo*), in 1910, which significantly changed the labor market landscape (Tavera, 2012).

In the context of very limited labor regulation, trade unions were not only protectors of workers' rights but also drivers of changing labor policies. In 1900 the International Association for Labor Legislation was created and helped, after World War I, in 1919, the formalisation of labor laws at the Treaty of Versailles promoted the birth of the International Labour Organization. Even though in 1902 there was the establishment of the Labor Institute (*Instituto del Trabajo*), its intervention did not mark Spanish labor history. It was disbanded, giving way to the Institution of Social Reforms (*Instituto de Reformas Sociales*) in 1903, which aimed to enhance the well-being of the working classes (Smith, 2007).

The interwar period witnessed the culmination of efforts for labor market modernization, with state intervention becoming crucial. The Ministry of Labour (*Ministerio del Trabajo*), instituted in 1920, reflected a commitment to market organisation changes observed during the republican era. Regulations on employment contracts, introduced in 1926, persisted until the early years of the Second Republic in 1931 (Alarcon et al., 2022).

By the 1930s, Spain had modern labor laws comparable to those in other European countries such as France, the UK, and Belgium, providing workers with representation in negotiation bodies (Tascon, 2000). However, the victory of right-wing parties in the 1933 elections halted modernization efforts, culminating in the Statute of Workers in 1938, marking the onset of Franco's guardianship (Linz et al., 2003). The Second Republic's initiatives in labor dispute legislation in 1931 were disrupted by the 1934 strike and subsequent war, further impeded by the Charter of Labour in 1938 (*Fuero del Trabajo*, 1938). It then took 42 more years for a genuine new Statute of Workers (*Estatuto de los Trabajadores*) to be established

in 1980, highlighting the stark vision of the labor market under Franco's regime (Tascon, 2000).

The 1932 law shaping labor markets continued to influence the compilation of unemployment statistics, with the law of November 21, 1931, representing a cornerstone in labor contracts (Alarcon et al., 2022). Two significant constitutional norms regarding labor during Franco's time were the Labor Charter (1938) and the "Charter of the Spanish People" (1945). The underlying model was authoritarian, based on a communitarian conception of companies. The approved norms were not democratic, and there was no real separation of powers. Furthermore, these norms lacked direct applicability since they did not recognize true subjective rights (Diaz, 2020).

From the 1950s onwards, socio-political and economic changes spurred the need to amend certain aspects of existing legislation. This culminated in the adoption of the "Political, Professional, and Labor Rights of Women" law in 1961 (Franco, 1995). Sanchez (1990) notes that while new opportunities were opened for women at that time, there were still significant gaps: "Nevertheless, the exceptions and gaps were so numerous that it was not until 1976, with the approval of the Labor Relations Law, that the last discriminations disappeared."

During Franco's era, labor policies were authoritarian, controlling labor unions and limiting workers' rights. Decrees issued in 1938 formed the core of subsequent social legislation, leading to a rigid employment structure that hindered modernization efforts, including those that could control or resist inequalities in the labor market (Tamames, 1981). The Charter of Labour outlined decentralised collective bargaining, the absence of independent trade unions, the prohibition of strikes, and the imposition of contracts. Even the shift to collective bargaining in 1958 retained heavy state influence (Tascon, 2000).

Efforts to establish a single-party system extended to labor with the Law of Unity of Trade Unions, forming the Vertical Syndicate to suppress the class struggle. Attempts at democratization in 1971 failed to meet ILO recommendations, and discussions about potential reform emerged only a year before the regime ended (Tascon, 2000). State control led to mechanisms bypassing regulations, such as over eighty remuneration items constituting wage packages. With the transition to democracy and the adoption of the Spanish Constitution, article 14 proclaimed the right to equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of sex. Labor policies

aimed at inclusivity and rights-based approaches culminated in the 1980 Statute of Workers (Chislett, 2018).

The transition to democracy in the 1980s witnessed significant changes. Economic development ensued, marked by the increased number of companies and workforce, acknowledging workers' rights to form unions. Persistent restrictions on hiring were addressed with the 1980 Basic Employment Law. State intervention decreased, but certain prerogatives, such as setting minimum wages and regulating dismissal conditions, continued (Tascon, 2000). The 1984 amendments to the Workers' Statute introduced temporary contracts, reflecting a historical shift towards precarity, especially important for female workers. This shift, rooted in the erosion of labor stability, was founded on the Keynesian belief that economic growth relied on employment at any cost. By 1987, Spain had 15.6% temporary workers compared to 4.8% in Italy, 4.7% in France, and 5.7% in the UK, indicating a trend towards a more flexible labor market (Mayoral, 1994). Insecure employment, feminised due to increased female participation in non-domestic occupations, disproportionately affected the younger demographic and those with lower academic qualifications, creating inequalities related to labor market liberalisation in Spain (Strath, 1996).

The post-Franco era saw Spain integrating more deeply into the global economy and the European Union. This period was characterized by major labor market reforms, which were meant to increase flexibility and competitiveness. Accession into the European Economic Community in 1986 created the need for further alignment with European standards and practices in labor matters. Further legislative reforms continued through the 1990s and the early 2000s.

Globalization and digitalization are changing the Spanish labor market even today. The increase in precariousness, linked to an increasing gig economy-type labor market, and the rise of technological skills became highly relevant. As a new challenge and opportunity in labor policy, Spain joined the OECD while having to face labor market difficulties, such as high rates of youth unemployment and job instability, along with a persistent gender pay gap (Garcia-Serrano and Malo, 2013).

3.4.2. The position of women in legislation in 20th-century Spain

The initial Civil Code, ratified in Spain in 1889, stipulated that the status of a legal person – denoting a "person with legal capacity" – was acquired at birth,

irrespective of gender. However, while the code did not explicitly outline male dominance, it delineated specific constraints on women's capacity to engage in certain activities. These limitations were particularly evident in regulations concerning a woman's legal age and marriage laws, which imposed various legal restrictions on married women (Duran, 2011).

The 1931 Constitution incorporated the principle of equality, explicitly stating that gender could not serve as a basis for legal privileges. Despite this, Franco's political regime saw a regression in certain aspects, especially concerning nationality. Under Franco, a child's nationality was predominantly determined by the father's nationality, with some cases considering the marital regime (Tamames, 1981). The law enacted on April 24, 1958, subsequently integrated into the Civil Code and agreed upon by the State and the Holy See in 1953, included an explanatory memorandum stating: "Regarding a woman's legal capacity, the current Law is generally founded on the principle that, both in terms of natural and social order, gender alone should not lead to differential treatment in the realm of Civil Law that might imply any limitation on women's involvement in legal proceedings" (Bodelon, 2000).

Significant progress was made with Law 14/1975, enacted on May 2, 1975, which addressed the legal status of married women and introduced reforms to regulations concerning nationality and marital regimes, ensuring that married women would not face any form of discrimination (Chislett, 2018). The new Constitution of 1987 gave further necessary strength to the new understanding, content and paradigm of equality and non-discrimination, providing a new basis and explanation for further value rearrangement and developments in Spain.

The abolishment of the need to register partnerships due to the decriminalization of adultery and cohabitation outside of wedlock took place before the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Although this occurred independently, it marked a starting point for subsequent changes in both civil and criminal law. Subsequent amendments to the Civil Code, particularly Laws 11/1981 addressing parenthood, custody, and the economic aspects of marriage, and Law 30/1981 addressing grounds for annulment, separation, and divorce, were significant steps towards providing women with increased autonomy within the marriage system, which had

previously subjected them to nearly complete subordination to men before the enactment of the Constitution (Duran, 2011).

At the outset of democratisation, Labor Law reforms focused on ensuring equal access to the labor market, encompassing specific professions traditionally restricted to women, such as the Armed Forces and mining (Bustelo, 2016). Originating, in part, from Spain's European Union membership, these reforms aimed not only to establish fundamental opportunities but also to regulate aspects like salaries, promotions, and the capacity to establish businesses (Arregui, 2022). Additionally, these reforms addressed maternity protection, adhering to the non-discriminatory principles outlined in the Spanish constitutional text.

Throughout the 20th century, the legal status of women in Spain underwent significant changes. Until the democratic shift, many of these changes were hurdles to the successful incorporation of women into a functioning labor market. Historical peculiarities contributed to gender asymmetries, which authorities are expected to address to achieve a balance in both markets and private life, including work-life conflict exacerbated by patriarchal values.

3.4.3. From constitutional foundations to legislative advancements: the evolution of gender equality in Spain

The foundation for gender equality in Spain was laid by the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which explicitly addresses and prohibits gender-based discrimination, thereby establishing a constitutional commitment to the principle of equal treatment. This constitutional recognition served as a catalyst for subsequent legal advancements based on a new gender-equal framework (Salazar Benitez et al., 2023).

The first key legislation in support of eliminating gender discrimination while promoting equality in society on all fronts, including workplaces, came with the adoption of the 1983 Law for Effective Equality between Women and Men. As such, comprehensive gender-equality policies may be grounded upon the laid legislative outline and as the starting ground for overall conceptions that surround notions of gender equality for Spain to this day's perspective (Ballester-Pastor, 2014a).

Spain initiated the process of ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1980. After the passage through the

relevant parliamentary stages, Spain ratified the Convention on December 16, 1983. Two months later, on February 4, 1984, Spain became a Member State of the Convention, as confirmed by its publication in the Official State Bulletin. Regarding the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which was to provide a complaint and inquiry mechanism, Spain did not ratify it till 2001, when massive sociological changes were taking place in the post-Convention ratification period, states Duran (2011). The consensus text of the said Protocol was reached in March of 1999 and was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December of the same year. This would ensure that civil society's voice was heard while upholding the provisions contained in the said Protocol. The adoption of the new Constitution and Spain's membership in CEDAW, followed by the ratification of the Protocol, directed future legislative advancements concerning equal opportunities.

As a European Union member state, Spain operates under the legal framework laid down by European Directives and other legal instruments. Considering equal treatment and equal opportunities for all genders as an important issue, the European Union has issued various directives, recommendations, and resolutions. Based on the Treaty of Rome of 1957 and the Amsterdam Treaty, adopted by the European Council in June 1997, the understanding of the European Community on the issue was collected, incorporated and expressed. The right to equal pay for work of equal value via the Treaty of Rome gave women and men an opportunity of inclusion in the labor market and exercising of their professional duties. The most recent significant impetus came with the Treaty of Amsterdam, which regulations emphasized the vector and the goal of equal opportunities for men and women, as well as it set specific goals concerning the elimination of gender-based inequalities and the promotion of equality that should underpin all Community activities and policies. In addition, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union pointed out the principle of equality before the law and non-discrimination, providing a specific section on the issue of equality between women and men that considers positive actions as a measure compatible with equal treatment. Directives such as Directive 2002/73/EC on equal treatment in employment and vocational training, Directive 2004/113/EC establishing the principle of equal treatment in access to goods and services, and Directive 2006/54/EC addressing equal opportunities and treatment for both men and women in employment and occupation provide an additional explanation of the European Community views for national states.

The Organic Act 3/2007 considers equality as a fundamental principle of the European Union, underlining norms of the Treaty of Amsterdam that explain, pursue and detail the notion of equality and of the elimination of disparities. This Act transposes two directives on equal treatment into Spanish legislation, mentioned above: Directive 2002/73/EC and Directive 2004/113/EC. This way, the Spanish legislation manages to encompass the European views. The Organic Law for Effective Equality between Women and Men introduced the principle of gender equality as a fundamental concept for public action for Spanish. This law mandated all ministries to reconsider their structure and to establish gender units under their governing bodies, tasked with functions related to the principle of equality between women and men. Recognizing the imperative need to implement measures ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, the government issued Decree RD 6/2019 in March 2019. Subsequently, two additional decrees were approved in October 2020, collectively elaborating on and specifying various aspects of the Organic Law for Effective Equality (3/2007). Despite its objectives, the law did not achieve the impact of the equal opportunity plans, which incorporated political strategies for the effective implementation of gender equality (Duran, 2011).

Gender equality gained prominence on the Spanish government's agenda, particularly in the years leading up to the economic crisis from 2004 to 2010. This emphasis is evident through the enactment of significant laws, including Law 1/2004 addressing gender violence, the amendment to the Civil Code allowing same-sex marriage, the 'Dependency Law' advocating for public care for dependent individuals (Law 39/2006), the 'Equality Law' addressing gender equality in employment and various domains, incorporating gender mainstreaming (3/2007), and Law 2/2010 extending rights to sexual and reproductive health (Lombardo, 2017). The Organic Act 3/2007 explicitly outlines the principle of mainstreaming gender equality, specifying that actions taken by all public authorities will be cross-sectionally informed by the principle of equal treatment and opportunities for women and men. Both central and regional/local governments are mandated to actively incorporate this principle in the formulation and implementation of legislative provisions, budgeting across all areas of public policy, and executing their activities. Additionally, the Act legitimised positive actions, asserting that public authorities would adopt specific measures favouring women to rectify evident *de*

facto inequality with men. These measures, applicable while the situations persist, must be reasonable and proportional to the objective pursued in each case. The Equality Law 3/2007 marked a significant step towards achieving a more equitable distribution of gender roles in childcare by introducing an individual right to two weeks of paternity leave. This initiative aimed to foster a more balanced approach to parenting responsibilities. Recognizing a regulatory void at the central state level regarding gender identity and transgender rights, several regions in Spain, including Andalusia, Catalunya, Basque Country, Galicia, and Navarra, took legislative measures to address these issues (Alventosa del Rio, 2015).

While gender equality policies in Spain until 2008 may not have adequately addressed the intersection of gender with other factors of inequality (such as migration status, age, and race), there was notable progress during the preparation of a specific bill devoted to this intersection in 2008-2009 (Salazar Benitez et al., 2023). However, despite being meticulously prepared through a consultation process involving experts and civil society organisations and adopted by the government in January 2011, the bill never reached parliamentary discussion. The economic crisis agenda took precedence, relegating it to a second-order issue (Bustelo, 2016).

The economic recession further lowered gender considerations in Spain after the 2008 crisis. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women report in 2015 pointed out that the economic and financial crisis, together with the austerity measures put in place in 2008, had negative impacts on many aspects of women's lives (UN, 2015). These effects align with findings from a global report by UN Women, indicating a form of indirect discrimination through seemingly neutral policies that disproportionately affect women (Carlson, 2022).

In 2020, two concurrent decrees aimed at enhancing gender equality in the workplace were enacted. One of these decrees outlines obligations for employers to disclose gender-based compensation data throughout their organisations, while the other establishes guidelines for companies required to formulate negotiated equality plans. The Equality Plan Decree (Royal Decree 901/2020) and Equal Pay Decree (Royal Decree 902/2020) intend to address the gender pay disparity in companies by ensuring and elucidating the stipulations within Spain's pre-existing equality legislation (European Commission, 2023).

In the contemporary post-crisis era, the consideration of the equal opportunities agenda has been postponed due to the recession created by the pandemic. However, in March 2023, according to the news from Reuters, new legislation on gender equality was presented, which was related to the Equal Representation Law (Reuters, 2023). This legal framework mandates increased gender balance in political, business, and various public domains, encompassing measures directed at electoral lists, the executive boards of major corporations, and the governing bodies of professional associations.

3.4.4. Strategic plans for equal opportunities

In the realm of gender equality policies and functional responsibilities, Spain established its state mechanism of focused public policy implementation in 1983, designating competencies to handle this area. Together with previous attempts made at lower bureaucratic levels, the Council of Ministers assigned the Women's Institute the responsibility of developing equality plans in 1987, just four years after its establishment (Duran, 2011). This initiated the formulation of several equal opportunity plans: Plan I (1988-1990), Plan II (1993-1995), Plan III (1997-2000), Plan IV (2003-2006), Plan V (2008-2011), Plan VI (2014-2016), Plan VII (2018-2021).

Understanding the basic vector of such plans, in 1985 the initial reception to the CEDAW report occurred, presented by Spanish authorities in Vienna in April of 1987, asserted that the main purpose of the plans and the chosen strategy was not to create a new equality law but to expand existing egalitarian legislation (Mousmouti, 2022). Exploring the idea of egalitarian legislation it is worth noting that until the 2000s, policy plans served as the primary instrument for implementing gender equality policies in Spain (Lombardo, 2016). In other words, it meant that apart from Plans there has been no other equally effective and applicable instrument to address issues of a mass gender asymmetry on a state level.

Plans, nowadays regulated by Law 3/2007 and approved by the government, are soft law instruments designed to integrate gender considerations into various policy sectors. They include specific measures and objectives for government departments and sometimes civil society organisations to execute within defined timeframes (Bustelo, 2016). Since 1988, Spain has implemented these plans not

only at the central state level but also at the regional level. Nowadays, various entities like universities and companies also adopt Plans as a compendium of all future actions and intentions towards gender equality.

Plans initially aimed to encompass a broad spectrum at the time of issuance, but notably, they stimulated a shift in attitudes, lifestyles, and social structures (Duran, 2011). Perceived as ambitious, they spearheaded the development of egalitarian legislation, introducing measures to counter stereotypes related to men's and women's roles in society (Villagomez, 2004). Legislators aimed to portray a social image of women aligned with their actual circumstances, ensuring heightened participation by women across diverse action sectors (Rubio Castro, 2014).

Earlier Strategic Plans were grounded in principles of equality and non-discrimination, outlining measures across 12 priority areas. These areas encompass socio-political and economic participation, co-responsibility in family and work tasks, education, knowledge, health, attention to diversity and social inclusion, violence, development, media, and protection of the right to equality (San Jose, 2015). The third plan (1997) introduced an innovative element: the concept of transversal integration or the incorporation of a gender perspective across various sectors (Duran, 2011). This concept is crucial, representing a core idea of gender mainstreaming applied to a political and legal process. It posits that gender inequality is intrinsic to almost all processes and must be reconsidered to achieve progress and sustainability within society. National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2008-2010 aimed at a reduction of poverty and social exclusion, proposing measures with particular relevance for gender inequalities, especially in labor and social areas. The ground idea of such initiatives is an improved integration of women into the labor market that would help them personally and society as a whole to counteract poverty among women (Frazer and Marlier, 2013). Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2008-2011 focused on developing and uniting the advances in gender equality through the realization of certain programmes on a federal level related to health, employment, education, and work-life balance. For instance, upon this Initiative, measures including improvement in equal opportunities in employment, reconciliation of work and family life, and prevention of gender-based violence were undertaken (Bustelo, 2016). National Employment Plan 2011-2013, focused on full-time job creation and improvement of working

conditions in Spain, with a gender perspective, keeping in mind that there is a clear tendency of Spanish women to be employed under part-time contracts. Also, it included certain actions like promoting the employment of females and equal pay to establish gender equality in the labor market (Malo, 2015). Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2011-2014 continued the vector and work of previous plans, and this plan addressed new emerging areas like co-responsibility and equality in decision-making opening a discussion on difficulties of female career on the level of state Initiatives. It focused on promoting equal opportunities in employment, education, and women's political participation, including initiatives to foster shared responsibility in domestic and family tasks and, this way, creating a new paradigm based on values, different from patriarchal ones (Reverte, 2015).

The Strategic Plan for Equality of Opportunities 2014-2016 invests the lion's share in securing women's employment and adopting measures aimed at favoring the compatibility of work-life balance. The plan focuses on three primary strategic objectives: promoting female employment and combating wage discrimination; supporting measures for reconciling family and work responsibilities; and eradicating violence against women (Grisoni and Ruiz, 2019). The Plan that was in action in 2018-2021 enlarged the area of a state concern towards work-life balance including improving parental leave and childcare services and well-being introducing a point concerning the necessity of gender-sensitive healthcare services.

In March 2022, the Strategic Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men 2022-2025 was adopted. This plan serves as Spain's principal national initiative on gender equality, aligning with the goals of Agenda 2030, key Council of Europe Conventions, and the European Strategy for Gender Equality 2020–2025. Comprising six thematic areas, it supersedes the prior Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities, which was operative from 2014 to 2016. The plan has four dimensions: inclusive governing, fair distribution of wealth, no male violence, and effective rights for women.

Equality plans are an important policy instrument that defines gaps and areas that need more attention during a certain period of time. On a federal level, they have a decisive character concerning the vector of action against gender asymmetries and those plans adopted on a lower level add to it by acting locally and in a more precise way.

3.4.5. Economic constraints and gender equality in Spain

After the previous crisis occurred in 2008, Paleo and Alonso (2015) conducted a comparative analysis of the budget allocation for equality policies at both central and regional levels before and after the economic crisis in Spain. The findings reveal a substantial 57.2% increase in the gender policy budget at the central level before the Great Recession and a 34.1% decrease across all governmental levels (except Andalusia), at the central level. In their CEDAW Shadow Report to the UN (2013), Spanish feminist organizations expressed concerns about budget reductions in equality policies and the reorganization of equality institutions at both central and regional levels, highlighting the broad influence of economic priorities on all areas of public life. However, such budgeting measures hit directly and indirectly those who are initially in a vulnerable position (San Jose, 2015).

Austerity policies in the workplace disproportionately affect women, leading to increased female unemployment, widening wage gaps between women and men, and the prevalence of precarious job conditions. Employers play a crucial role in shaping these conditions, as their capital allocation strategies influence the structure of employment opportunities. The difference between investing in on-site employees versus teleworkers reflects broader employer interests in labor division, workforce hierarchization, and unpaid labor allocation. Kushi and Macmanus (2018) explored the measured effect of austerity measures and concluded that due to the fact that women often bear the primary responsibility for caring for children and dependents, reductions in benefits related to childcare, housing, elderly care, and disability support could have a more significant impact on them. This, in turn, may hinder their opportunities in the labor market, making austerity measures designed to cut social spending particularly burdensome for women.

Welfare systems influence the role of women in the workforce and society both directly and indirectly as well as female workforce participation and economic independence through parental and family leave, childcare programs, and workforce training (Huber and Stephens, 2014). Bettio et al. (2012) cautioned in their report on the repercussions of the crisis on gender equality in the EU that the budget cuts resulting from fiscal consolidation measures pose a tangible risk of diminishing the significance of equality policies or curtailing the budgets earmarked

for them. Mark Blyth's (2013) work on austerity highlights how budget cuts primarily benefit financial institutions and capital-holding entities, while disproportionately harming social groups reliant on state-supported employment protections, including women in precarious jobs.

The CEDAW Committee's report in 2015 highlighted several negative aspects of gender equality policies in Spain in recent years, such as the lack of a consistent strategy, the prevalence of traditional stereotypes about the role of women in society and coordination, and low participation of women in public and political life (Salazar Benitez, 2016). There is a notable absence of a consistent strategy for gender equality at the national level, and the coordination between the central government and Autonomous Regions is insufficient (Mousmouti, 2022). There is a need for short-term goals and quotas to address the underrepresentation and the disadvantages faced by women (Terjesen and Sealy, 2016).

Traditional attitudes and stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men in both family and society persist in Spain and are another reason for worry. Moya and Moya-Garofano (2021) observed the evolution of gender stereotypes in Spain from 1985 to 2018 and concluded that the progress made during more than three decades in the images, beliefs, or expectations that people have about men and women is obvious but not sufficient to change a structural inequality. There is a clear indication of the persistence of certain social, political, legal, economic, and cultural patterns that perpetuate a patriarchal order. This patriarchal framework is further strengthened, as observed in Spain, by the conjunction of economic difficulties (Cordoba-Dona and Escolar-Pujolar, 2019). These stereotypes contribute to gender-based inequalities, particularly affecting women from ethnic minorities, Romans, migrants, and women with disabilities (Lips, 2016).

Spanish women's participation in public and political life, especially in decision-making roles in Autonomous Regions, the diplomatic service, and the judicial branch, remains low (Salazar Benitez, 2016). As well, Spanish women are often overrepresented in part-time and lower-paying sectors, such as education, healthcare, and social services, while being underrepresented in higher-paying sectors like technology, engineering, and finance (Eurostat, 2023). The intersection of employer interests and government austerity policies further exacerbates gender disparities in these sectors. Employers benefit from labor segmentation strategies that sustain occupational hierarchies and gendered divisions of labor, making it

more difficult for women to transition into high-paying, in-demand industries. In practice, it implies that women have limited access to employment, legislative and policy-making processes, and even when their interests are to be considered, it is not done by those who represent them. This way, the whole process is biased, and progress in gender-sensitive policies is unsatisfactorily slow.

The European Semester recommendations (2023) provided critical guidance on enhancing gender equality and employment strategies across EU member states and offered a framework for monitoring and providing recommendations to member states to address these issues. Key recommendations for Spain included increasing female labor market participation by means of policy intervention, reducing gender pay gaps with a focus on pay transparency, improving work-life balance via flexibility in work arrangements and better childcare services, and addressing labor market segmentation by reducing gender segregation and enhancing female representation in high-demand fields (Alonso and Matea, 2023). The European Semester report proposed several strategies: targeting women's inclusion in emerging sectors, especially in technology and high-demand areas, enforcing regulations that require companies to disclose gender pay data, and developing equality plans and initiatives for training and reskilling women to participate in growing industries and occupations with lower female representation (Guidi et al., 2023).

The main hurdles to a better female labor participation in Spain include the slow speed of traditional values' transformation towards a progressive path, economic cuts of different kinds that eventually impact women, and, consequently, the limited ability of the political machine to address things quickly.

3.4.6. Public policies and gender mainstreaming

Numerous shortcomings in Spanish gender equality policies can be attributed to the flawed implementation of the underlying principle—gender mainstreaming. Often, its introduction has been more symbolic than substantive, with a lack of consensus on interpretation and practical application, resulting in diverse approaches tailored to specific national contexts, creating a form of "a la carte" mainstreaming (Alonso Alvarez, 2015).

Evaluating the effectiveness of gender equality policies in Spain, particularly in addressing employment disparities, requires a detailed assessment of legislative measures, corporate practices, and societal initiatives. While progress has been made, challenges persist, and the effectiveness of these policies varies across different dimensions. It is crucial to involve women in defining, implementing, and evaluating these policies to ensure their efficacy (Lombardo, 2017). The participation of gender experts is also essential in shaping effective and applicable mainstreaming strategies based on their professional experiences. Discrepancies between academic theories and administrative practices, limited involvement of the feminist movement in decision-making, and weaknesses in administrative structures addressing equality contribute to an ineffective mechanism in Spain. These issues hinder activists and specialists who advocate and promote gender equality from addressing structural inequalities beyond the recognized "specific needs of women" (White, 2011).

Gender mainstreaming has not served as the cornerstone of all Spanish public policies, necessitating ongoing implementation of affirmative actions in specific domains where gender inequality persists (Neimanis, 2001). The correlation between gender mainstreaming and parity democracy is clear, as achieving a balanced political participation of women and men is crucial for steering a transformation in public policies (Duran, 2011). The Organic Law for Effective Equality between Women and Men (3/2007) explicitly defines balanced presence, ensuring representation of at least 40% for each gender in candidate lists according to the revised Organic Act 5/1985. This way both genders get an opportunity to participate in a political process introducing or supporting issues that might not be considered of the same importance by representatives of other genders, for example, the childcare issues being mostly a burden of women can be assessed as less worth attention by those who don't experience its necessity in their life (Waldfoegel, 2002).

Despite the ambitious scope of many laws enacted by both the central government and the Autonomous Regions, their practical impact has been compromised due to prioritising budgetary stability over social policies. The 2011 amendment to the Spanish Constitution introduced the principle of budgetary stability as a crucial condition for developing and implementing social and equality policies. Well-intentioned laws alone are insufficient to transform a reality shaped by

a "strong and elusive patriarchal system, disguised in legal formalism, rooted in a socio-cultural context, and perpetuated across generations" (Gil Ruiz, 2012). There is a need for stronger instruments that are capable of changing such a situation, and the amendment to the Constitution is an example of this. Gender mainstreaming as a principle of law and policy-making processes emphasises the persistent nature of gender inequalities, intertwined with other types of inequalities and reproduced in different spheres. Stable and reliable budgeting is a prominent step towards equal opportunities and effective implementation of gender equality policies.

The period following the 2008 economic crisis brought significant challenges but also opportunities for reform in Spain's approach to gender equality. The crisis exposed and exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities, particularly in the labor market, where women faced higher unemployment rates and increased precarity in employment (OECD, 2023). However, it also prompted legislative and policy reforms aimed at addressing these disparities. After 2008, Spain implemented a number of relevant legislative reforms to advance gender equality. Notably, Royal Decree 6/2019 expressed urgent measures for equal treatment and opportunities, opening up employment and the workplace for women and men. This decree ordered that gender equality plans be developed in companies, increased transparency regarding salary disparities between genders, and advanced work-life balance. In 2020, it was further developed by the adoption of Royal Decree 901/2020 and Royal Decree 902/2020. These decrees developed an integral framework for gender equality plans and equal pay audits in companies as a means to address the gender pay gap in a structured manner and ensure that remuneration practices are fair (European Commission, 2023).

Meanwhile, socio-political advocacy from feminist organizations and broader civil society remains crucial, and to complement this, corporate measures involving workplace inclusion policies, improved maternity/paternity benefits, and a gender-sensitivity workplace culture are also vital pieces to consider when implementing reforms toward gender mainstreaming and gender equality (Catalyst, 2022). It is feasible to implement gender mainstreaming in the policy-making process but it must be a dual process where the introduction of the regulation is followed by the budgeting for its implementation, awareness and monitoring of results.

3.4.7. Specific characteristics of Spanish gender laws

Historically, Spanish civil resolutions have perpetuated the Roman and Germanic traditions, portraying women as individuals with disabilities subject to the authority of another within their private legal domains (Duran, 2011). Contemporary Spanish equality laws, however, align predominantly with the soft law approach, characterised by non-binding recommendations and principles rather than enforceable mandates. This approach is designed to play a promotional role of law, encouraging gradual societal change rather than imposing immediate compliance (Rubio Castro, 2014).

The efficacy of these legislative instruments is intrinsically linked to the degree of political commitment and the engagement of socially conscious stakeholders who acknowledge the societal and economic advantages of their enforcement (Arregui, 2022). However, the reliance on voluntary adherence and the prioritisation of other governmental objectives frequently leads to the marginalisation of such measures. Additionally, many initiatives designed to address discrimination against women have historically been framed within a liberal, male-dominated paradigm of equality, thereby creating substantial obstacles to the holistic realisation of gender equality policies (Thornton, 2021).

The model of the social state implemented in Spain during the late 20th century was built on a "prototypically masculine" model of productive work, emphasising the traditional role of women as caregivers (Bodelon, 2010). While gender equality policies have contributed to positive changes in employment and other areas, continuous evaluation and adaptation are necessary to address persistent challenges and ensure sustained progress toward comprehensive gender equality (Bodelon, 2010).

Constitutionalizing the principle of parity democracy is essential to avoid the dependence of equality policies on economic factors and political will (Piatti-Crocker, 2019). This principle underscores the need for parity in representation and administration to achieve true equality, as highlighted during the 1992 Athens Declaration on women in power. The under-representation of women in decision-making positions results in a loss of societal potential, as the full range of talents and skills remains underutilized.

Reconsidering family models and productive relationships that eliminate the division between provider and caregiver roles is imperative. Promoting an "equality of supporters/caregivers" approach has significant implications for economic policies, as achieving gender equality necessitates addressing and transforming economic structures that perpetuate inequalities (Pazos, 2013).

The Women's Institute has played a crucial role in the history of equality policy development in Spain. Established to formulate and implement equality policies, it received the official government mandate in 1987 to develop equal opportunity plans for both men and women, taking into account Spain's territorial distribution and its implications for competencies (Duran, 2011).

Several legislative instruments are worth mentioning. Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March for Effective Equality between Women and Men: pioneering legislation whose objective is to give complete fulfilment to the principle of equal treatment and opportunity between women and men in every area, thus demanding the use of a gender perspective when considering policies that affect public politics in addition to promoting equality in educational, professional, and healthcare aspects. By integrating gender considerations into the formulation, execution, and evaluation of public policies, the law seeks to dismantle systemic barriers that perpetuate gender inequality (Organic Law 3/2007, 2007). In education, the law emphasises eliminating gender stereotypes from educational materials and curricula, fostering an environment where boys and girls can pursue any field of study without prejudice. This would further explain, that the employment of equal opportunity, that it ushers in measures to close the gap in pay between the sexes and facilitates equal career opportunities. Health policies require that health services be gender-sensitive to the needs peculiar to women and men.

Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March on Urgent Measures for Equal Treatment and Opportunities in Employment and Occupation marked a milestone in furthering equality between men and women in the workplace. Among its most innovative provisions, the equalization of paternity and maternity leave stands out. For that matter, the law has provided for the gradual increase of paternity leaves up to the level of maternity by 2021, hence giving opportunity for shared responsibility for their children (Royal Decree-Law 6/2019, 2019). The law introduces more robust protection against gender-based discrimination in hiring, promotions, and workplace

practices. It also encourages companies to adopt equality plans that outline concrete measures to promote equality within their organizations.

Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence comprehensively covers gender-based violence, establishing a robust framework to prevent and combat gender violence. It offers extensive legal, psychological, and social support for victims, along with prevention measures and specialized courts dealing in gender violence cases. This law comprises educational programs and public awareness campaigns to prevent gender-based violence (Organic Law 1/2004, 2004). It also provides legal aid, psychological counselling, and social services for victims. The establishment of specialized courts guarantees speedy and sensitive processing of gender violence cases.

Spain's legislative framework to address gender equality is very comprehensive and progressive in addressing discrimination and inequality between different genders. The laws discussed earlier highlight huge strides towards ensuring gender equality. These legislative measures not only help correct existing disparities but also seek to foster a cultural shift toward greater sensitivity and true equality between genders. Their continuous development and application underpin the commitment of Spain to the advancement of gender equality and the protection of rights for all people, regardless of gender.

CHAPTER IV: ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE: TRANSFORMATION THROUGH TELEWORK IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

4.1. Introduction

As we have stated before, technological advancements of different kinds and direction are reshaping labor markets and catalyzing the rise of telework due to the automatization and destruction of several types of jobs, as well as the creation of new ones. The domestication of ICT and globalization have shaped an idea of telework into a flexible work arrangement, enabling workers to operate remotely, away from employer premises, through digital technologies like networks, laptops, and the internet (Mukherjee and Narang, 2023). In Portugal and Spain, telework adoption has surged, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, and both countries implemented new policies to regulate and promote remote work as discussed in Chapter III.

Telework has profound implications for gender dynamics in employment, particularly in traditionally gendered societies with low speed of adopting new values like Portugal and Spain (Rubery and Tavora, 2021). Although there is a prevalent belief that technological and social innovations inherently foster progress, we argue that such transformations alone are insufficient to eliminate ingrained gender biases or address systemic inequalities (Bussevich et al., 2022). Both nations face persistent issues related to the feminization of unpaid domestic labor and cultural norms that almost always position women as primary caregivers, and this discourse is integrated with the growth of available opportunities to telework..

The ability to work remotely is widely discussed as a potential opportunity to reconcile work-family conflicts. However, telework having special features also risks reinforcing traditional gender roles, especially for women in Portugal and Spain, who historically face a "double burden" of paid and unpaid labor. As Eurofound (2020) highlights, remote work may deepen precarization by normalizing non-standard employment while reducing access to labor rights and social protection. In a way, we still consider a standard employment as full-time in-office work that makes employees visible for management. For women, the different,

diverse dynamic could perpetuate the historical pattern of working at home as well as of unpaid care work being undervalued, invisible, and disproportionately shouldered by them.

Both Portugal and Spain have embraced gender equality as a core policy goal, aligning with Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering women (Roig, 2021). These goals emphasize the importance of addressing unpaid care work, a pressing issue in both nations, where family structures often place disproportionate caregiving responsibilities on women. In Spain, the legislative focus on reducing workday length (such as the *jornada intensiva*) to enable work-life balance contrasts with Portugal's emphasis on flexible telework regulations. However, in spite of these efforts, women in both countries increasingly turn to telework as a means of managing domestic responsibilities, highlighting a paradox: while telework provides flexibility, it risks solidifying an acceptance of traditional roles and widening gender inequalities.

This chapter explores the intersection of telework, legal and social transformations, and the gender gap in labor markets in Portugal and Spain. By focusing on these two cases, we will analyze the complexity of gendered outcomes in the digital economy and the socio-cultural and legislative frameworks influencing telework adoption. In doing so, we highlight that technological changes and what they bring to society and women need to be supported by a clear comprehension and control over the dynamic of labour market changes as well as strong, gender-sensitive political response to avoid turning telework into another form of "staying at home" for women.

4.2. Effects of telework on work-life balance in Portugal and Spain

Telework has been widely regarded as a tool for enhancing work-life balance, particularly for women juggling professional and domestic responsibilities (Guttek, 1983). However, the potential of telework to balance work-life balance remains contested, particularly in Portugal and Spain, where specific socio-cultural norms with a quite patriarchal context and labor market dynamics characterised by vivid and hidden gender gaps influence its outcomes. Despite initial optimism, studies evidently suggest that telework may reinforce and worsen traditional gender roles

unless supported by targeted interventions and robust and effective policy frameworks (Baruch, 2000; Athanasiadou and Theriou, 2021).

In Spain, studies by Andres-Sanchez et al. (2023) indicate that while telework is generally perceived positively, its impact varies significantly across demographic groups. Women with childcare responsibilities report higher levels of work-life conflict, highlighting that telework often exacerbates existing inequalities rather than alleviating them. Similarly, Santos et al. (2022) identify socio-normative pressures in Portugal, where the unequal distribution of unpaid labor—particularly among mothers of young children—negatively affects women's attitudes toward telework. This finding aligns with data from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2021), which shows that Portuguese women perform 80% of unpaid domestic work, spending approximately 38 hours per week on childcare—65% more than men (Eurofound, 2017). In Spain, mothers spend approximately 35 hours per week taking care of their children which is on average 15 hours per week more than their male partners (Farre et al, 2020).

Moreover, the pandemic added complexity to these dynamics. While increased time at home led some Spanish men to spend an additional three hours per week on domestic tasks (Farre and Gonzalez, 2023), which apparently influenced work-life balance positively for women, studies such as those by Sanz Tolozana and Perez Esain (2021) still highlight persistent gender imbalances in household responsibilities, so that results are varied and, likely, depend a lot on a sample, geographical and socioeconomic conditions. In Portugal, women reported minimal improvement in co-responsibility during lockdowns, with most unpaid work still falling on their shoulders (Santos et al., 2021). These findings underscore the resilience of the traditional model of family labour division in both countries, even under transformative circumstances like the pandemic.

Even though telework's flexibility holds the potential to enhance women's access to quality jobs and a positive change of professional environment, as suggested by Gonzalez Ramos and Garcia-de-Diego based on their study of Spanish case (2022). However, unregulated telework, which tends to create longer shifts and mental health issues due to a remote and isolated location of teleworkers, risks intensifying domestic workloads, reducing professional visibility, and deepening gender disparities in career advancement. This way, we see that there are several aspects that undermine the positive vector of telework towards a

better work-life balance for females. For instance, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI, 2023) emphasizes that without safeguards like the right to disconnect, teleworking women may struggle to maintain boundaries between professional and domestic spheres, further blurring these lines. Other issues still remain to raise.

Portugal and Spain exemplify these challenges, as telework becomes a "double-edged sword" for women. In Portugal, Rebelo et al (2024) conclude that even though it is obvious that the absence of the travel time becomes a gain for teleworkers but the pressure towards meeting objective tend to intensify, that is why there is the need for an additional research on effects on telework that would help to balance the situation. Within the traditional division of labour, such a situation of required extra production can seriously deteriorate quality of life and work-life balance. Similarly, in Spain, telework adoption among women is often driven by practical necessity rather than genuine empowerment, perpetuating occupational segregation and wage disparities (Rubery and Tavora, 2021). In this case, the structural problems come before the issues of life satisfaction that are the base of work-life balance.

Addressing the gendered impact of telework on work-life balance in Portugal and Spain requires coordinated policy interventions that promote gender equality and shared responsibility in caregiving. Furthermore, both countries must integrate gender-sensitive measures into their telework regulations, as advocated by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI, 2023). The right to disconnect, decent working conditions, and equal access to career opportunities are a policy framework reducing the risks of burnout and professional stagnation among teleworking women. In addition, accessible and affordable high-quality childcare service provision are an urgent need and would reduce the domestic burden faced by women and contribute to better labor market participation. Cultural barriers and a solid patriarchal discourse has to be addressed through public awareness campaigns and workplace initiatives that would encourage men to take on more caregiving responsibilities. The governments should also collect gender-disaggregated data on telework to assess the long-term impacts and adjust policies accordingly.

For Portugal and Spain, integrating these principles into national telework regulations and actions as a base of the policy-making process could help bridge the gender gap in teleworking and foster a more equitable labor market.

4.3. Telework and economic transformation from a gender perspective

The core of gender perspective on telework and economic transformation is an estimation of probability to provide a positive dynamics towards solidified structure of gender inequality. From this perspective, it is important to emphasize that shifts in economic structures, encompassing production, distribution, and consumption activities, play a critical role in long-term economic growth that is the base of labour market expansion and the availability of new jobs (Gonzalez-Diez and Moral-Benito, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation, altering both employee and employer perceptions of physical office presence and onsite work requirements (Dietrich and Hansen, 2022). In Portugal and Spain, where the culture of presential work has traditionally been strong (Salavisa et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Cifuentes et al., 2020), there has been a notable shift toward hybrid and remote work models available for already existing positions as well as for the new emerging ones. As for the response of workers, in Spain, 53% of them prefer hybrid arrangements, and 16% favor full-time remote work (Ramirez, 2023). Similarly, in Portugal, 71% of respondents express a preference for remote or hybrid work modes (BCG, 2023). This shift has also transformed labor market demand and supply dynamics as workers with sufficient qualifications increasingly seek remote or hybrid roles, while companies, aiming to reduce costs, are adopting virtual or partially virtual office models (Andres-Sanchez et al., 2023).

These changes have also contributed to the rise of "digital nomads," professionals who work online while traveling or living abroad, a phenomenon that Schlagwein (2018) attributes to the broader trends of digitalization and labor flexibility and that is extensively influencing life in both countries due to flexibilization of migration requirements for those who work remotely. Among digital nomads, women occupy 39% of the workforce, men take a greater share - 61%, according to the latest Statista study (2024). Just these numbers reflect the intensity of patriarchal paradigm in both countries and the traditional gender division of labor, wherein men are mostly focused on career development and paid

employment and less so on household tasks that allow them to be more conscious and decisive concerning their career as well as accumulate incomes unlike women who are in charge of other family or care-related tasks that are income-free (Gonzalez Ramos and Garcia-de-Diego, 2022). As a consequence of such a situation, in this structure of life and values telework often becomes a double-edged sword for women: while it enables a certain adaptability to balance professional and domestic responsibilities, it also risks perpetuating existing inequalities by increasing their unpaid workload, limiting career advancement opportunities and eventually becoming a shield to cover a real situation with gender equality and work-life issues (Eurofound, 2020).

The other point is a benevolence of such an intersection of telework with economic shift. In Spain, male teleworkers are often highly mobile professionals or self-employed individuals, while a significant proportion of women telework from home under less favorable conditions and hold lower-ranking positions (Gonzalez Ramos and Garcia-de-Diego, 2022). In Portugal, we observe the same situation with women on average earning 78% of the male's income for the same amount of work and qualifications (OECD, 2021). Despite these inequalities, studies such as Kley and Reimer (2023) report similar levels of satisfaction with work-life balance among male and female teleworkers. However, further research indicates nuanced differences: Spanish women, particularly occasional teleworkers, are more likely to express satisfaction with how their working hours align with their lifestyles, while men tend to be more critical of their work-life dynamics (Moreno-Colom and Borrás-Català, 2023). Portuguese women express their positive attitude to telework as they have more time for themselves and their families, meaning that their care-related concerns influence their career satisfaction (Rebelo et al, 2024). This feedback reflects different priorities, where women value obtaining any employment opportunities that would not prevent them from taking care of their families whereas men value a quality employment focusing more on working conditions and flexibility.

In the contexts of Portugal and Spain, telework does create positive economic outcomes as it provides new jobs but, on the other hand, it intersects with entrenched patriarchal values and structural gender inequalities. Women's increased participation in professional fields due to telework contrasts with men's continued dominance in traditional roles (Astroza et al., 2020). This dynamic imposes disproportionate burdens on women, who often manage overlapping roles

as employees, caregivers, and household managers, under tight biological and professional timelines. These pressures, as Elgin and Elveren (2021) note, significantly impact women's well-being and career trajectories.

Ultimately, telework in Portugal and Spain reflects the intersection of economic transformation and gender dynamics. While it holds potential to improve labor market inclusivity, its success depends extremely on policies and cultural shifts that would be capable of addressing the structural barriers faced by women. Without targeted action, telework risks reinforcing traditional gender roles and losing the potential of possible economic transformation rather than advancing gender equity in the digital economy.

4.4. Gender disparities and the digital economy

In Portugal and Spain, as in the whole world, digitalization has played a role as a relevant engine for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, having the potential to improve social and economic opportunities for women in different directions (UN Women, 2020). The digital economy as the production, sale, and delivery of goods or services that depend on digital technologies (Javaid et al., 2024), has gained prominence since the advent of the internet and related technologies in the early 21st century and opened new vectors of actions and development for everyone, including creating many jobs (Kling and Lamb, 2000). In Spain, the share of the digital economy is 22,6% of GDP²⁷ (BCG, 2023), while in Portugal it is estimated around 10% of GDP (ITA, 2024). As this digital transformation continues, uniting with the ongoing globalization and a speedy migration, both countries have seen the integration of women into the digital workforce that involves addressing historically low female representation in technical fields.

Nevertheless, this integration is happening hand in hand with significant challenges that remain and are to be discussed within the issue of gender disparities and the digital economy. As discussed before, both Portuguese and Spanish women face persistent barriers to entering and advancing within digital industries, stemming from structural inequalities such as unconscious bias and

²⁷ Gross Domestic Product

entrenched gender stereotypes rooted in patriarchal traditions (La Caixa, 2021). These factors and low digital skills contribute to the digital gender gap, which limits women's access to technical professions and perpetuates disparities in career opportunities in sectors related to IT.

Measures and efforts to bridge these gaps often fall short of addressing the systemic nature of the problem becoming a drop in the ocean. By now, there was no structural comprehension and essential reforms that would include the promotion of gender-sensitive education policies and workplace inclusion strategies for female workers. Such generalized actions of governments and authorities are essential for creating an equitable digital landscape in both countries (Eurofound, 2020). As the digital economy is getting stronger and occupies an increasing share in the economies of both countries as it was mentioned prior, not letting these barriers exist and multiply for women is a key in fully leveraging the potential of digitalization for gender equality and growth of the economy, both in Portugal and Spain, where we observe a shortage of workers with enough IT competencies. In Spain, there are 212% more open vacancies in It sector per person than in other sectors on average while in Portugal the situation is even more striking: one can find 288% more open positions in a sector of IT than in others (OECD, 2024).

Despite named difficulties, in both countries, women already contribute to the growth of the digital economy in a way indispensable for choosing non-traditional forms of employment more and more often. At the beginning of 2023, 14.6% of employed women worked remotely compared to 13.1% of men in Spain. By age group, the share of remote work increases to 16% among workers aged 35 to 44 years and 15.3% among workers aged 25 to 34 years. The lowest share in telework is recorded by workers aged 55-64 years, at only 10.9% in this age bracket (NISS, 2023). In Portugal, in 2023, 19.3% of the employed population worked remotely, among them 51% were women and 49% were male. Most Portuguese employed remotely are in the 45+ group (Marme, 2023).

Focusing on skills, related to the integration of digital economy into life of Portuguese and Spanish women, it is necessary to mention that according to the latest data of the bulletin of the National Observatory of Technology and Society devoted to the digital gender gap, 92.8% of Spanish women aged 16 to 74 use the Internet at least once a week, which is two-tenths below the usage rate of men. Compared to the European average, Spanish women use the Internet more, with a

difference of 4.7 percentage points. Regarding digital skills, both in Spain and across the European Union, the largest gender gap is observed in competencies beyond basic skills (2.5 points in favour of men in Spain and 3.8 points across the EU), although Spain ranks fourth in terms of Internet user skills. With a final score of 65.5, it exceeds the expectation given by the European average by almost 13 points (ONTSI, 2023).

Access to the Internet is an important indicator that reflects whether citizens have at least a basic understanding of digital skills. In this way, 83% of Portuguese women between the ages of 16 and 74 years old claim to use the Internet at least once a week, which is 2% less than men - a significant difference to notice. According to the report "Digital Decade 2023," made in Portugal last year, only 55% of the population obtain basic digital skills that are not enough for exercising any kind of professional function, while 29% have above-basic skills. However, the percentage of women ICT specialists in the country is 20.4%, higher than the EU average of 18.9% (European Commission, 2023).

Spanish women use the Internet more than Portuguese women, but they also use it more often than the European average. Both countries show gender disparities in digital skills, with Spain having a more detailed measurement of the gap. However, Portugal reports a higher proportion of women among ICT specialists compared to the EU average. Portugal has a relatively higher representation of women in ICT roles compared to the EU average, highlighting a positive aspect in their digital gender landscape (Da Silva et al., 2024). Digital skills improve for both women and men as the level of education increases (EIGE, 2019). However, gender disparities in all forms of digital skills are most pronounced among individuals with lower levels of education, especially among women (Gillward and Patridge, 2022). Regardless of educational attainment, women tend to lag behind in problem-solving and software skills (EIGE, 2019). The skill gap is caused by systemic barriers and while more women are supposed to be educated with programmes allowing them to work in a highly technological and digitalized society, structural problems are supposed to be addressed to remove a reason for gender bias (Andres-Sanchez et al, 2023). Negative gender stereotypes frequently discourage women from pursuing ICT-related training (Kley and Reimer, 2023). Additionally, even when women have access to advanced training opportunities through their professional networks, the responsibilities of unpaid care or domestic

duties may hinder their ability to take advantage of these opportunities (EIGE, 2019).

To resist the patriarchal paradigm that was discussed before and to provide the sustainable growth of the digital economy, state facilitation and certain participation in processes related to employment and advancement are required. Initiatives such as Portugal's ActionPlan for Digital Transition 2020, Industry 4.0 integrated into the Portuguese National Strategy for the Digitization of the Economy aims to create favourable conditions for the development of domestic industry and services within the new paradigm of the Digital Economy were funded and currently are applied. Portugal Digital more Equal – Initiatives where Women (Already) Have an Active Role" 2021 with an emphasis on enabling women entrepreneurs to leverage the digital economy highlight the recognition of the need to address the digital gender gap and create opportunities for women in this evolving economic landscape (Pinto et al, 2022). In Spain, the Plan of Digitalization Pymes devoted to the development of company digitalization within the framework of Digital Spain 2025, as well as the National Digital Skills Plan with the intention to educate 80% of the Spanish population with basic necessary internet-related skills (Spain, 2021). Reducing the gender gap in digital skills is a commitment by the government and one of the key priorities that cut across the Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan Spain 2021, as well as the Spain Digital 2026 Agenda (Bisciari et al, 2022). As jobs become increasingly dependent on digital technologies, states have to provide opportunities for the population's life-long learning.

In the cases of Portugal and Spain, the expansion of the digital economy presents critical opportunities to tackle persistently high unemployment rates, particularly as these countries continue transitioning away from agrarian and industrial sectors (Rani et al., 2022). The digitalization of economies in both nations has created new job prospects, which could benefit women significantly. However, the extent of this impact is contingent on the type of occupation and tasks involved, as digital innovations often lead to job displacement in roles vulnerable to automation (EIGE, 2019).

4.5. She - cession and its implications in Portugal and Spain

The COVID-19 pandemic has been termed a "She-cession" to highlight its disproportionate impact on female employment, contrasting with earlier recessions that primarily affected male-dominated sectors ("Man-recessions") (Bluedorn et al., 2021). In Portugal and Spain, the She-cession's effects were particularly evident due to the significant reliance of their economies on tourism, retail, and other service-oriented sectors—industries severely disrupted during the crisis and characterised by a predominance of female workers. This gendered economic impact stems from persistent labor market asymmetries, including the feminization and segregation of labor, where women are often confined to precarious and low-paid roles (Nelli and Virgillito, 2023).

In both countries, the feminization of telework reflects broader trends tied to historical labor market structures. Telework's roots are in home-based employment, which has long been associated with female-dominated sectors such as textiles and manual labor, illustrate its connection to gendered roles (Arabadjieva and Franklin, 2023). These roles have traditionally been shaped by caregiving responsibilities, making telework an appealing option for women seeking to reconcile domestic and professional obligations (Andres-Sanchez et al., 2023). In Spain and Portugal, this dynamic has resulted in women disproportionately occupying telework-compatible sectors, such as education, financial services, and administrative activities, while men remain concentrated in sectors requiring physical presence, such as construction and manufacturing (Kley and Reimer, 2023).

She-cession or destruction of traditionally female jobs let women realize that telework offers flexibility and the potential for improved work-life balance. However, it also might have a precarious character. In Spain and Portugal, the prevalence of informal and non-standard telework arrangements, often characterised by low wages and limited job security, has deepened the precarization of female labor (Elgin and Elveren, 2021). This aligns with broader European trends where trade liberalisation and cost-cutting strategies have incentivized firms to hire women at lower wages, leveraging their temporary and flexible employment for productivity gains (Fernandez-Mateo, 2009).

This way, digitalization in both countries has highlighted the gendered dimensions of telework and its propensity to deteriorate working conditions related to payment and stability conditions. Women's overrepresentation in telework-adaptable sectors has resulted in these sectors becoming even more

feminised, reinforcing gender disparities in job opportunities and pay (EIGE, 2020). Lopez-Igual and Rodriguez-Modrono (2020) described it in their study on Spanish case, considering different types of telework, such as occasional, highly-mobile and home-based: among those who worked from home more frequently, Spanish women took the most share, and in case of being mother, the chance of choosing working from home was even higher while most occasional and highly-mobile workers were men according to the results. In Portugal, Brandao (2020) states that such a change as overrepresentation of women in telework is a direct result of the combination of the sanitary crisis and necessity to provide care to minors and seniors.

Adoption of programmes (like the Portuguese National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (ENIND)), which aims to promote gender equality at work, prevents and combats violence against women, and eliminates discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, is necessary and does its part against consolidation of feminisation of work as clear gender distinctions persist in employment, wages, and training areas (Carvalho et al, 2022). It is especially crucial now in a post-pandemic time as studies have provided proof of gender inequality aggravation in labour market outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that women are more likely than men to experience negative impacts on their employment (Abdel-Rahman, 2023). In Spain similar goals are pursued by the new Comprehensive Law 15/2022, enacted on July 12, 2022, that aims to ensure and encourage the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination, while upholding the equal dignity of all individuals. This law specifically introduces measures in the realm of employment to enhance the effective application of anti-discrimination principles (Roda, 2023). Another way to deal with the named situation is to raise an issue of the potential for teleworking to promote male joint responsibility at home as a way to give the right direction to male teleworkers: men work from home and are able to do a part of household duties (Moreno-Colom and Borrás-Català, 2023).

She-recession and the pandemic brought implications resulting in a growing number of female teleworkers and further feminization of sectors that were already feminized by now as well as the growing interest of women toward the position of IT as discussed before. In this situation, upon an ineffective or absent state policy enhancement, with no other way to control, it can be argued that the remote regime

might become an instrument of gender discrimination and a long-term pattern of feminization of labour markets based on its most evident structural element: the working place (Nelli and Virgilito, 2023).

4.6. Legal transformation on telework and gendered implications

ILO had addressed home-based work in its Convention No. 177 and its corresponding Recommendation No. 184 in 1996, but there was no specifically developed regulation on teleworking until recently as the share of teleworkers before the pandemic was not significant to the point of creating new legislative concerns (in 2019, only 5.4% of employees in the EU-27 usually worked from home) (European Commission, 2020). In the pre-pandemic period the applicable regulation came from labour codes, collective agreements and contractual agreements, which could not provide a proper regulation and legal responses for all aspects related to teleworking and its working conditions (Ouro, 2022).

At the EU level, there is no specific legislation that would encompass crucial and actual issues of telework. However, the following regulations and directives consider different situations related to the working conditions of teleworkers. There are several Directives that were mentioned above but are worth focusing on. The Working Time Directive (Directive 2003/88/EC) imposes rules on working time limits, including rest periods and annual leave, for workers in the European Union, creating on the European level a basis for decent quality of work. In respect to telework, it puts into focus that such workers receive equal protection as workers on site with regards to maximum working hours, rest breaks, and annual leaves. This issue is extremely important for work-life balance and prophylaxis of burnout of teleworkers as it ensures that teleworkers are not obliged to work longer hours than their on-site counterparts and must have adequate rest periods. As teleworkers work mostly independently, they might end up having longer shifts, so this issue must be treated attentively on all levels, starting from company instruction and to regulations of the European community.

Furthermore, Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work (Directive 89/391/EEC) establishes general principles for promoting workers' safety and health, and requires employers to ensure the health and safety of workers in all aspects related to work, including telework. Under this regulation, companies and

enterprises are obliged to estimate and keep in mind risks related to telework during working activities, as well as take in-company measures to protect teleworkers from occupational hazards which are in the case of teleworkers, mostly related to mental health issues.

Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions (Directive (EU) 2019/1152) is directed to improve the quality of work by making working conditions as clear as possible and predictable for workers, including teleworkers. Upon this regulation, companies are to provide maximum transparency on the conditions, and requirements of telework arrangements, responding to questions on the place of work, working hours, and availability schedule of teleworkers. The mentioned Directive also considers issues such as the right to disconnect, avoiding and securing a situation when a teleworker is expected to be constantly available in front of the screen or on the phone.

Another Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers (Directive (EU) 2019/1158) is important for employees with family responsibilities, parents and carers, including those who telework. This Directive is especially important for female workers who are most frequently those in charge of minors and seniors. Upon this Directive flexible working arrangements and the right to request flexible working conditions are established, which can be particularly relevant and frequently used for teleworking arrangements where many employees (mostly women, as discussed before) seek to balance work with a variety of caregiving responsibilities.

General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation EU 2016/679) is not a regulation which we would consider specific to telework but, nevertheless, it provides rules on the protection of personal data within the EU. In the context of telework, this regulation prescribes that companies and enterprises be cautious with the personal data that they have control over and process while teleworking. It creates a procedure and security tools as well as data protection safeguards to avoid unauthorized access or breach, especially in cases when teleworkers are handling sensitive information outside of the usual office environment²⁸.

²⁸ In this Resolution, the European Parliament urges the European Commission to suggest a directive outlining standards and minimal criteria to enable workers to genuinely exercise their right to disconnect. Furthermore, it asks the Commission to introduce a legislative framework aimed at setting basic standards for telecommuting throughout the European Union, safeguarding teleworkers' employment terms from any adverse impacts caused by telework.

It is also worth mentioning the European Parliament Resolution of January 21, 2021, which contains specific and long expected recommendations to the European Commission on the right to disconnect. The named resolution emphasises the importance of establishing and informing workers about a right to disconnect, which helps employees, and those of them who work remotely, to create and have clear boundaries between work and personal life. Upon this European regulation, employers are prevented from contacting employees outside of their regular working hours.

It was considered to articulate a comprehensive regulation of the telework regime at the initiative of the social partners, who signed the European Framework Agreement on Telework (EFAT) in 2002. The agreement aimed to provide greater security for teleworking employees, modernise work organisation in the public sector, and enable the reconciliation of personal, work, and family life. Furthermore, although lacking legal force and being merely explanatory and motivational, the EFAT constitutes the general European framework for the working conditions of teleworking employees. In Spain, it was incorporated in 2003 through the Inter-Confederal Agreement for Collective Bargaining, by which provisions of the former were integrated into the text of the latter. Additionally, successive agreements for employment and collective bargaining established criteria based on the provisions of the EFAT, but despite this, it was not incorporated into Spanish positive law within ordinary labour legislation. In Portugal, EFAT was adopted in 2003 as well, and, based on it, Portugal has become the first country in Europe to legally regulate the telework modality in the private sector, through the legal framework of telework by inclusion of new articles into the Labour Code in concordance with the EFAT (Veloso et al, 2022). Both legal systems draw from EU Law and are influenced by the 2002 European Framework Agreement on Telework. Despite this commonality, Portuguese and Spanish laws adopt distinct approaches to regulating telework, leading to differences in their legal frameworks.

In Spain, the enactment of Royal Decree-Law 28/2020 on September 22, 2020, followed by the implementation of the Distance Work Law (Law 10/2021) on July 11, 2021, marked significant developments in telework regulation. These legislative changes, stemming from social dialogue and the Distance Work Agreement, include stricter penalties for companies failing to comply with telework agreement requirements. Similarly, Portugal's Law No. 83/2021, enacted on December 6,

2021, amended the telework framework, impacting the Labor Code and Law No. 98/2009 concerning compensation for work-related accidents and illnesses.

Spain has taken a proactive approach to promoting gender equality in telework through its legal advancements. The Royal Decree-Law 28/2020 introduced significant reforms to telework regulations, including measures to ensure work-life balance and prevent discrimination based on gender in telework arrangements. The Decree on remote work has the aim of "providing sufficient, cross-cutting, and comprehensive regulation" to fill the regulatory gap (Article 4 of the Royal Law-Decree). On the other hand, it is not applicable to existing employment relationships regulated in previous collective agreements or agreements, nor to staff in the public service unlike in Portugal where the new norms on telework are retroactive and are applied to any sector of work.

According to an explanatory part of the Spanish law on telework, it is a new specific regulation on this form of employment to address the reality of the digital world in the Covid-19 era and to outline a new interaction between women and men without subordination of the female population based on gender²⁹. It imposes a set of obligations on companies regarding gender equality, harassment, violence, and discrimination based on sex and gender. These include: avoiding any type of discrimination, particularly on the grounds of sex, against remote workers, taking into account the circumstances and work characteristics of each of these workers in the diagnosis, implementation, application, monitoring, and evaluation of equality measures and plans; and paying attention to the particularities of remote work, especially teleworking, in adopting measures against sexual harassment, harassment based on sex, harassment based on discriminatory grounds, and workplace harassment³⁰. The Spanish legal advancement recognizes that the implementation of teleworking should avoid the consolidation of gender biases³¹, without giving up the opportunities that remote work may offer. Thus, it recognizes and requires the adoption of mechanisms and criteria to prevent remote work and preferences associated with certain circumstances from contributing to the perpetuation of gender roles and stereotypes. However, these measures are not sufficient to guarantee the protection of women, nor will they be fruitful in preventing

²⁹ Article 4 of the Royal Law-Decree

³⁰ Under the heading "Equal treatment and opportunities and non-discrimination"

³¹ Article 8.3

the consolidation of segregative stereotypes, so we will have to wait for the fulfilment of the repeated calls made by the legislator to collective bargaining (de la Puebla Pinilla, 2020).

The Portuguese law on telework (Lei n.º 83/2021 of 6 of December) does not recognize the difference between genders and does not provide any intersection between telework and traditional gender. The new norms on disconnection and modifications concerning the mode of work are applied equally to both men and women. The only article³² On inequality is devoted to the explanation of the rights and functions of those who continue working within the office and remotely. This way gender inequality and issues of discrimination were ignored and not reflected in any specific manner.

Both in Portuguese and Spanish legislation, it is established that teleworkers have the same rights and obligations as other employees in the company with the same category or similar role. This includes the right to training and professional advancement.

In special cases outlined in Portuguese law the right to telework is provided to employees who are victims of domestic violence, employees with a child up to 8 years old (under certain conditions such as when both or a single parent meets conditions for teleworking) and employees with informal caregiver status; its violation constitutes a serious offence (article 166.8 of the Law 83/2021 on the regime of telework) (Ouro, 2022). But even considering that the named categories of workers are usually females, the legislator doesn't mention gender avoiding positive discrimination in the law.

Roig (2021) analysing public policies on telework considers that by new norms telework is not conceived as a transformative engine of unequal relations between women and men. It is presented as the equation to facilitate the reconciliation between work and life for women who primarily work, as inferred from the same statement of reasons. Touzet (2023) adds that new policies adopted during the pandemic embrace the idea that the solution to the gender social hierarchy lies in freedom regarding the use of time in female employment, such as telecommuting. Telework, being formulated as a labour policy and aimed at the female population in

³² Article 169 of the cited Law

the labour market, among effects can act as a mechanism for reconciling work and family life and improving the quality of life for women (Gschwind and Vargas, 2019).

The introduction of new legal norms aimed at regulating telework, such as new laws, decrees, telework agreements and flexible work arrangements, has raised questions about their gendered impact. While such legislation may ostensibly promote equality and work-life balance, its implementation and enforcement can inadvertently reinforce existing gender disparities. As there is a phenomenon of feminization of telework, it can be said that telework regulations and policies are likely to have failed by now to address the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities, placing a disproportionate burden on female teleworkers to juggle work and family commitments.

4.7. Telework and workers' mobility

In the context of Portugal and Spain, the reduction in daily commuting through telework has been viewed as a key factor in enhancing productivity by alleviating fatigue associated with travel, especially if considering those workers who live in cities (Rebelo et al., 2024; Eurofound, 2022). While telework presents environmental benefits, such as reducing CO2 emissions and contributing to decarbonization efforts, its impact on eliminating the use of private vehicles remains limited in both countries (Viana Cerqueira et al, 2020). This is especially true for women who often need to manage family-related transportation tasks, such as driving children to school or extracurricular activities. Any multitasking can become a drawback, particularly for women who bear a disproportionate share of household and caregiving responsibilities, in this case, transportation of children. This often compels them to perform overlapping domestic and professional tasks, intensifying the challenge of managing their workload effectively (Veloso et al., 2022).

In this way, telework in Portugal and Spain, while it offers a reprieve from daily commutes, reinforces the gendered nature of household roles, leaving women to navigate a complex interplay of decisions concerning transportation of dependants. In both countries, teleworking has significantly reshaped residential and mobility patterns, with individuals increasingly relocating to more affordable suburban or rural areas, especially those outside major city centres. This trend has been particularly evident among professionals seeking to enhance their quality of life by

reducing living costs and avoiding urban congestion, a dynamic also visible in the administrative hubs of these countries (Moens et al., 2022). In this case, it requires additional female participation in family planning and tasks.

In Portugal and Spain, where urban mobility infrastructure is unevenly distributed, these responsibilities often increase reliance on private vehicles due to so-called mobility poverty characterising the shortage of public transportation in less developed areas (Kuttler and Moraglio, 2021) that eventually leads to exacerbating traffic congestion and emissions in suburban and rural areas in case of the incoming flow of families depending on everyday transportation.

Teleworking households being away from city centers are adapted to other mobility patterns, including an increased dependence on cars for family-oriented trips, which contrasts with reliance on public transportation, walking, or cycling of those who live in more urbanized areas (Christidis et al., 2023). This difference coupled with telework has unintended consequences on physical activity levels, contributing to sedentary lifestyles and, consequently, adverse effects on mental health. For women in particular, who are often more engaged in family logistics, moving to a rural area as a consequence of family shift to telework can disrupt their routines, potentially leading to long-term health implications (Gokan et al., 2022).

Before the pandemic, remote work adoption in Portugal and Spain was limited due to employer hesitance, often rooted in concerns about managing operational coordination and supervising performance effectively (Gschwind and Vargas, 2019). However, the widespread acceptance of teleworking during and after the pandemic has begun to alter the spatial configurations of urban areas. Initially, the absence of telework opportunities fueled gentrification as skilled workers sought proximity to city centres to mitigate commuting costs. With the gradual rise in telework adoption, suburban migration has increased, especially among skilled workers, leading to what has been termed a hyper-suburbanization trend. This phenomenon risks marginalising unskilled labourers who remain dependent on city-based employment opportunities (Gokan et al., 2022).

Mobility within the telework framework has also taken on new dimensions. In Portugal and Spain, where caregiving and household responsibilities are predominantly carried by women as discussed before, so that their mobility opportunities remain constrained by fixed-location needs such as access to schools, healthcare, and childcare facilities. These gendered barriers exacerbate

disparities in the benefits derived from teleworking, limiting women's ability to relocate or fully utilise the flexibility offered by telework arrangements (Abdel-Rahman et al., 2023). This constraint is an additional aspect contributing to gender gaps in digital skills and access to technology, which continue to hinder equal telework participation (Dietrich and Hansen, 2022).

In these contexts, mobility opportunities associated with telework—such as digital nomadism—tend to favour individuals without caregiving responsibilities. For women, particularly those in Portugal and Spain, teleworking may inadvertently heighten the imbalance between professional and domestic demands. In both countries the surge in teleworking presents profound implications for social welfare, urban mobility, and gender equality, potentially encapsulating what Wong (2020) terms a "time bomb for inequality." This characteristic is especially relevant when considering the nuanced impacts of teleworking on mobility patterns, environmental outcomes, and familial structures. While telework has demonstrable benefits, such as reducing traffic congestion, air pollution, and long-distance commuting, its adoption has simultaneously generated new challenges. In Portugal and Spain, the post-pandemic shift toward telework has influenced urban mobility by reducing reliance on public transport and increasing sedentary lifestyles among teleworkers (Christidis et al, 2023). Moreover, although telework contributes to climate change mitigation through decreased greenhouse gas emissions, its broader environmental impact is contingent on how mobility behaviour evolves—especially in light of new household responsibilities (Eurofound, 2020).

In both cases, the transformation and shift in mobility patterns due to the increased prevalence of telework reveal notable gendered implications. For male workers, telework often translates into an opportunity to fully capitalise on the flexibility of remote arrangements. This flexibility allows them to prioritise their professional responsibilities while being less impacted by caregiving roles, which continue to disproportionately fall on women. In contrast, the traditional societal expectation of women as primary caregivers in Portugal and Spain often constrains their ability to benefit equally from telework's potential advantages. Women are frequently more dependent on localised infrastructure, such as kindergartens, schools, and healthcare facilities, to manage their family responsibilities effectively. This reliance limits their geographic mobility and restricts their ability to relocate to

more affordable or flexible living arrangements, which male teleworkers might more easily pursue.

Moreover, telework can inadvertently increase the burden on women, as the time saved from commuting may be reallocated to an overwhelming number of domestic and caregiving tasks. These additional responsibilities can make the telework mobility pattern disproportionately costly for women, both in terms of physical and mental health. The lack of equitable sharing of household duties, coupled with a continued expectation for women to manage caregiving and professional responsibilities simultaneously, risks reinforcing pre-existing gender inequalities within the labor market of both countries.

4.8. Societal challenges of telework on gender equality

The impact of telework on labor markets and gender equality in Portugal and Spain is diverse, encompassing work-life balance, social protection, mobility, presentiality, and the need for legal frameworks that safeguard decent working conditions and reserve time for rest and personal life (ETUI, 2023). The digitalization of the economy, its day-to-day use, and its implications for business organizations challenge gender equality, particularly in labor markets that traditionally perpetuate inequality. In Portugal and Spain, telework opportunities can enable women's participation in the workforce, but the transformation of labor markets must prioritize gender equality as a core principle. This includes ensuring women's inclusion in roles beyond precarious, non-standard, or low-paying positions, addressing structural segregation, and eradicating discriminatory practices that hinder equality (Rubery and Tavora, 2021; Ramos Quintana, 2020).

The extensive utilisation of telework technologies in both countries poses additional risks, such as hyperconnectivity and ceaseless workdays, leading to deteriorating health (Eurofound, 2022). Women, in particular, face psychosocial risks, including social isolation, work-related stress, and techno-stress, as well as psychological challenges like anxiety, irritability, and depression (Veloso et al., 2022). This dual-edged nature of telework is evident as it simultaneously provides flexibility and exacerbates mental health risks, especially for female workers who balance professional and caregiving responsibilities.

In Portugal, telework often appeals to women due to its perceived potential for achieving work-life balance, yet this comes with significant challenges. Women frequently shoulder disproportionate caregiving responsibilities, and telework risks entrenching traditional gender roles. This dynamic is mirrored in Spain, where women's telework participation is also higher but concentrated in lower-paying sectors, further perpetuating occupational segregation. These trends underline how telework, if not carefully managed, risks reinforcing gender inequalities rather than mitigating them (Rubery and Tavora, 2021).

The interplay of telework, mobility, and presentiality highlights further challenges. In Portugal, reduced long-distance commuting due to telework has supported decarbonization efforts but introduced new transportation patterns, particularly for women managing household-related responsibilities (De Abreu e Silva, 2022). Similar trends in Spain reveal that women, as primary caregivers, often remain reliant on developed infrastructures like schools and healthcare, limiting their ability to capitalise on telework's mobility benefits. The dependency on these location-fixed resources illustrates how caregiving roles intersect with telework to constrain mobility opportunities for women (Ramos Quintana, 2020).

Both Portugal and Spain have made strides in implementing telework regulations, but gaps persist. Portugal's labor code updates emphasise work-life balance and the right to disconnect, yet enforcement remains inconsistent. Spain's hybrid work frameworks similarly aim to ensure equitable conditions but often fail to address the nuanced challenges faced by women, particularly regarding caregiving and access to telework-compatible roles. These regulatory shortcomings highlight the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies that proactively mitigate inequality, ensure equitable distribution of telework benefits, and promote the sustainable inclusion of women in the evolving labor markets of Portugal and Spain (ETUI, 2023; Rubery and Tavora, 2021).

Given that women are disproportionately engaged in occupations conducive to remote work and perceive it as an avenue for achieving work-life balance, they, as primary beneficiaries of work-life balance rights, are inclined to opt for teleworking more frequently than men (Metselaar et al., 2022). This trend is particularly relevant in Portugal and Spain, where cultural and legislative frameworks emphasise work-life balance as a critical component of gender equality initiatives. In these countries, teleworking is increasingly embraced by women as a strategy to manage

professional and domestic responsibilities effectively, yet it also amplifies the challenges of multitasking and hyperconnectivity, which can disproportionately affect their mental health and career progression.

Telework has the negative potential for the entrenchment of traditional stereotypes, perpetuating professional inequalities among women that efforts were being made to overcome (EIGE, 2021). In Portugal and Spain, these risks are particularly pronounced due to persistent cultural and structural disparities. Remote work, especially teleworking, raises concerns about the reconciliation of personal and family life, as well as fundamental rights like privacy, occupational health, and digital disconnection (Bussevich et al., 2018). Despite some legal advancements in both countries, current frameworks are insufficient to address all the pressing issues arising from telework's transformative impact, especially concerning gender equality.

The opportunities telework offers for organising daily life on a proximity basis are evident as residents perform activities near their homes, aligning with principles of sustainable communities and livable cities (Louro et al., 2021). However, the persistence of gender bias continues to undermine these benefits (Bussevich et al., 2018). Men and women still face entrenched inequalities rooted in gender-based roles and responsibilities that dominate both the domestic and public spheres. Furthermore, men remain the primary drivers of social change, including those directly affecting women's quality of life, while women, as a vulnerable group, require targeted public policy interventions (Kley and Reimer, 2023). The Gender Equality Index for 2023 highlights these disparities, with Spain scoring 81.1 and Portugal significantly lower at 57.4 in power relations, reflecting the degree of female access to political decision-making processes that influence their life scenarios (EIGE, 2023a; EIGE, 2023b). This discrepancy underscores how social and political conditions compel women to navigate circumstances often shaped by male perspectives, which naturally lack full comprehension of the routine challenges women encounter daily (Touzet, 2023).

Estimating the likelihood of a meaningful positive change driven by technological advancements, particularly telework, necessitates a nuanced understanding of the intersection between gender and labor dynamics in Portugal and Spain. While social transformations impact both genders, research on gender regimes often focuses on women's roles as employees and their treatment within

institutions, emphasising their centrality in societal evolution (Tabassum and Nayak, 2021). This is evident in studies of gender regimes and shifts from private to public spheres, which predominantly focus on the implications of role reversals for women (Bussevich et al., 2018). However, this one-sided assessment often fails to provide a comprehensive perspective on the broader dynamics at play.

In the specific contexts of Portugal and Spain, telework presents both challenges and opportunities. A primary concern is to prevent telework from exacerbating existing gender inequalities while leveraging its potential as a transformative tool. For women, this means not only gaining access to income but also achieving a quality of life that encompasses meaningful career development, the ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities, and freedom from disproportionately burdensome roles in domestic labor. In Spain, a more robust infrastructure supporting gender-sensitive policies has positioned the country ahead of Portugal in many areas, but both nations struggle with ensuring that telework does not entrench precarious forms of employment that lack professional prospects and security.

The responsibility of creating equitable telework opportunities lies with both states and businesses. Governments must establish comprehensive legal and regulatory frameworks that address these disparities, while employers must avoid relegating teleworkers—especially women—to roles that lack security or growth potential. These measures are critical in aligning telework with broader objectives of gender equality and fostering a labor market where technological advancements contribute to social transformation rather than deepening existing divides.

CHAPTER V: FIELDWORK AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1. Conceptual notes

The conceptual framework was discussed from different perspectives in the Chapter I of the current study devoted to the literature review and scholarship accomplishment to the date of the study. However, in the methodological part it is necessary to reinforce on notions of flexibility and equality provided to illustrate the complete picture of the results associated with the analysis of fieldwork. The present work integrates three theories of precarity (Beck, Butler and Bauman) and associated behaviours related to the teleworker's needs and goals. Beck (2000) posits that the negative repercussions of unchecked economic expansion have ushered in what he terms the risk society, wherein advancements in science and technology amplify the array of hazards individuals encounter in their everyday existence. On the other hand, Bauman (2000) perceives the onset of a novel epoch characterised by the dissolution of the firm, enduring institutional frameworks that supported industrial capitalism, giving rise instead to what he calls liquid modernity. This era is marked by a prevailing sense of precariousness, instability, and vulnerability, which permeate contemporary living conditions most prominently and painfully (Bauman, 2000). The state of economic precariousness is not simply a temporary or sporadic circumstance but rather a novel mode of regulation characteristic of our current historical era (Butler, 2015). Butler argues that precarity has evolved into a dominant regime, serving as both a method of governance and a means by which individuals govern themselves.

5.2. Discussion of method

The chosen approach for this investigation is qualitative research, aiming to explore the effects of telework on female employees and the overall employment landscape in Portugal and Spain. Through qualitative methodology, the researcher can construct a comprehensive and nuanced understanding by scrutinising narratives, descriptions, and thorough insights provided by participants within their natural contexts (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Furthermore, qualitative research is

particularly suitable for examining individual experiences and the dynamics of interactions that shape relationships (Teherani et al., 2015). As this study focuses on labor relationships, qualitative methodology is considered a proper instrument to delve into it.

The data collection method employed in this study involved conducting interviews to explore the experiences and perspectives of experts regarding disrupted work due to the pandemic, gender dynamics, and the implications of new telework legislation. The interviews focused on eliciting discussions from experts, aiming to uncover their expertise, concerns and prognoses about inequality, and insights into the transition to telework in general and from the gender perspective, feminization of telework and its future implications. Given the qualitative nature of the data sought and the richness of non-numerical information desired, a qualitative study was deemed the most suitable approach to address the research questions effectively.

Experts in research possess specialized knowledge, extensive experience, and a deep understanding of a particular subject or field, cultivated through academic qualifications, professional experience, and contributions to scholarly or policy-oriented discussions. As Flyvbjerg (2001) argues, expertise in social science research extends beyond theoretical knowledge to include practical insights gained from real-world applications, enabling a nuanced understanding of complex social phenomena. In the context of this study, experts encompass a diverse range of stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, labor market analysts, and representatives from organizations engaged in gender and telework research. Their insights provide informed perspectives on structural labor market trends, policy implications, and the broader socio-economic dimensions of telework. Furthermore, as Weiss (1998) emphasizes, expert knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward labor market transformations and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting gender equality in telework. By integrating expert analysis, this study contextualizes telework within evolving labor market structures and underscores the necessity of gender-sensitive policies to prevent the reinforcement of existing inequalities.

The quantitative approach would not align well with the objectives and timetable of the fieldwork. Quantitative research typically aims to test hypotheses using numerical data and statistical analysis. It operates under the assumption that data

can be quantified, measured, and subjected to statistical scrutiny to identify patterns and relationships (Watson, 2015). Since the data collected in this study pertains to qualitative aspects such as experiences, attitudes, and narratives related to disrupted work, gender dynamics, and telework legislation, it cannot be quantified for hypothesis testing. Moreover, typically quantitative research deals with collection of big amounts of data and requires either a temporal or physical substantive resource which was not the case of this study. Therefore, a qualitative method is more appropriate for capturing the depth of the information sought in this research.

Considering the mixed methods approach is also a valid consideration. Mixed methods research integrates both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, with the aim of enhancing the overall understanding of a research problem (Watkins and Gioia, 2015). This approach goes beyond merely combining methods; it involves integrating assumptions about methodologies, research questions, and data to develop comprehensive interpretations (Watkins and Gioia, 2015). Since the research questions of this study were successfully addressed through qualitative inquiry and the timeline did not allow an inclusion of another field work, a mixed methods approach was not considered for this study.

5.3. Case study

A comparative case study is defined as "the systematic comparison of two or more data points ('cases') gathered using the case study method" (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999). It can produce a generalizable knowledge of why and how a certain event is benevolent or detrimental for systems and the systematic understanding of scientific problems. This way, we study how telework mode brings an effect to female employment based on comparison of two systems - Portuguese and Spanish labor markets. Harrison et al (2017) consider that comparative case study is "a valid form of inquiry to explore a broad scope of complex issues particularly when human behaviour and social interactions are central to understanding topics of interest". As telework coupled with gender perspective involves issues like gender gap, positive legal discrimination, segregation of work based on gender, the comparative case study is a comprehensive effort in setting up propositions, conducting analytical work and synthesising findings.

Various case selection can be identified based on the purpose of the study (Vogt et al, 2011). The Mill's most similar method approach was used for this investigation. The choice of Portugal and Spain is justified based on several key factors that highlight their relevance to the Mill's understanding of similarity with the aim of contribution to the scientific community.

Pfadenhauer et al (2021) consider that comparative case study is useful while evaluating complex events and addressing evidence gaps that exist due to the innovation of the studied issue and can explain differences across different socio-cultural contexts. Portugal and Spain are cases that bring a special contribution due to the number of reasons. They share a geographic border and cultural similarities, providing an ideal context for comparative analysis. This proximity allows for a meaningful examination of subtle differences and similarities in labor market indicators and industrial relations. Their intertwined histories and socio-economic developments further enhance the validity of this comparison.

As members of the European Union, both Portugal and Spain are significant in studies related to EU policies, economic integration, and technological advancement dynamics. Understanding how labor markets and labor relations benefit or lose from the growing tendency of telework is essential. Additionally, both countries have experienced significant economic transitions, including periods of rapid growth, crises, and recovery, making them pertinent for analysing the impacts of economic policies and reforms.

Portugal and Spain have been at the forefront of the effect of telework as initially, before the pandemic, they were those with the low share of teleworkers. No surprise that, according to Martinez-Sanchez et al (2007), most studies on telework were conducted in Anglo-Saxon countries. Prominent advancements in legal regulation on telework adopted within the course of the sanitary crisis provide unique case studies that contribute valuable insights to the literature on technological advancement coupled with issues of labor. Additionally, both countries face demographic challenges such as ageing populations and migration patterns, offering a broader context for examining the socio-economic impacts of remote work and digital reskilling policies.

While larger European countries like Germany and France are frequently studied, Portugal and Spain are often underrepresented in the research. By focusing on these countries, this study fills a critical gap in the literature on gender

inequalities, labor markets and advancement of digitalization. Furthermore, analysing the specific impacts of national policies in Portugal and Spain can provide unique contributions to policy-making literature, highlighting effective strategies and potential pitfalls in similar contexts.

The findings from this research will contribute to the development and refinement of theories related to telework and labor policy effectiveness. By providing empirical evidence particularly from Portugal and Spain based on the conducted fieldwork, the study makes a valuable contribution and offers valuable data for theoretical advancements in sociology of labor. Additionally, the practical applications of this research can inform policy-makers, businesses, and organisations within and beyond these countries, leading to improved company and market practices and policies globally. The cross-cultural insights gained from studying these two culturally rich and diverse countries will enhance the understanding of how cultural factors influence the course of telework implementation.

5.4. Data collection

As it was decided that data collection would occur via interviews, the questionnaires for both expert and workers were presented based on main research questions and objectives of the study as well as the following extensive literature review and guides for qualitative interviews developed by Turner III (2010), Brinkmann (2013) and Seidman (2006). The questionnaires were developed in Portuguese and in Spanish (annexed in Annex 1, Annex 2, Annex 3, Annex 4 respectively).

The questions were carefully designed to explore various aspects of telework, particularly focusing on its impact on gender dynamics, the abrupt change in working conditions, and the overall experience of remote work. The formulation process involved several key steps. An extensive review of existing literature on telework and gender studies, and work conditions during the pandemic was conducted. This helped identify common issues, gaps, and areas of interest. Input from experts in telework, gender studies was sought to ensure the questions were relevant and comprehensive. The questions were structured to cover broad themes and specific sub-themes. This ensured a holistic understanding of the topic.

The main areas included: technical transition to telework, gender dynamics and inequality, work-life balance and mental health, employer support and corporate responsibility, legal and policy implications. After data collection, a thorough coding process was undertaken to analyse the responses and identify key themes.

The process involved several stages. During the initial coding stage each response was read carefully, and initial codes were assigned based on recurring concepts, issues, and observations. This step was open-ended to capture as much detail as possible. Upon the focused coding stage the initial codes were reviewed and refined. Similar codes were grouped together, and irrelevant ones were discarded. This step helped in reducing redundancy and focusing on significant patterns. The categorization stage was devoted to identifying overarching categories that encompassed multiple related codes. For instance, codes related to "technical challenges" and "software adaptation" were grouped under the theme "Technical transition". The last stage, the theme development ended up in five main themes that were picked based on the categorised codes. Each theme represents a significant aspect of the transition to telework and its impact. The themes are: abrupt change of the conditions of work, women and organisation of telework, legal regime of telework, feminization of telework, future of telework.

Preliminary pilot interviews were conducted, followed by analysis and refinement of the interview guide and study methodology. The interviews utilized open-ended questions to gather information. Broad, general questions were initially asked to elicit participants' personal experiences. A comparable interview guide was employed for both interview types. For specialists, sample questions included: "How did the transition to telework due to the virus outbreak transform working conditions?", "During the pandemic, was telework adaptable and adequate to accommodate women's various responsibilities, including household management, childcare, and elder care?", "Has the pandemic altered the trajectory of telework feminization - accelerating, decelerating, or introducing new developmental trends?". This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of telework on women's professional and personal lives during the pandemic. The full list of questions is annexed in the Annex 1, 2, 3, 4 in Portuguese and Spanish language respectively.

Data collection was planned and occurred in the period of September, 2022 and May, 2023 for the both cases. The research process involved meticulous

documentation of interview data. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Field notes were used extensively and captured non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and body language. Interviews took place in two settings: private rooms at participants' workplaces or virtually via Google Meet. Each participant was assigned a unique identifier and pseudonym to ensure anonymity following the ethical requirements. The duration of interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. A total of 30 expert interviews and 30 interviews with female workers were completed successfully. While no interviews were terminated prematurely, one session was rescheduled due to disruptive background noise.

5.4.1. On demographic profile of female workers - respondents

This study draws on in-depth interviews with 30 female remote workers, including 15 Portuguese (wPT) and 15 Spanish (wES) participants. Respondents were selected to reflect diversity in age, marital status, caregiving responsibilities, geographic location, racial and ethnic background, educational background, and employment sector. Below is a comparative demographic profile of both groups, highlighting commonalities and differences.

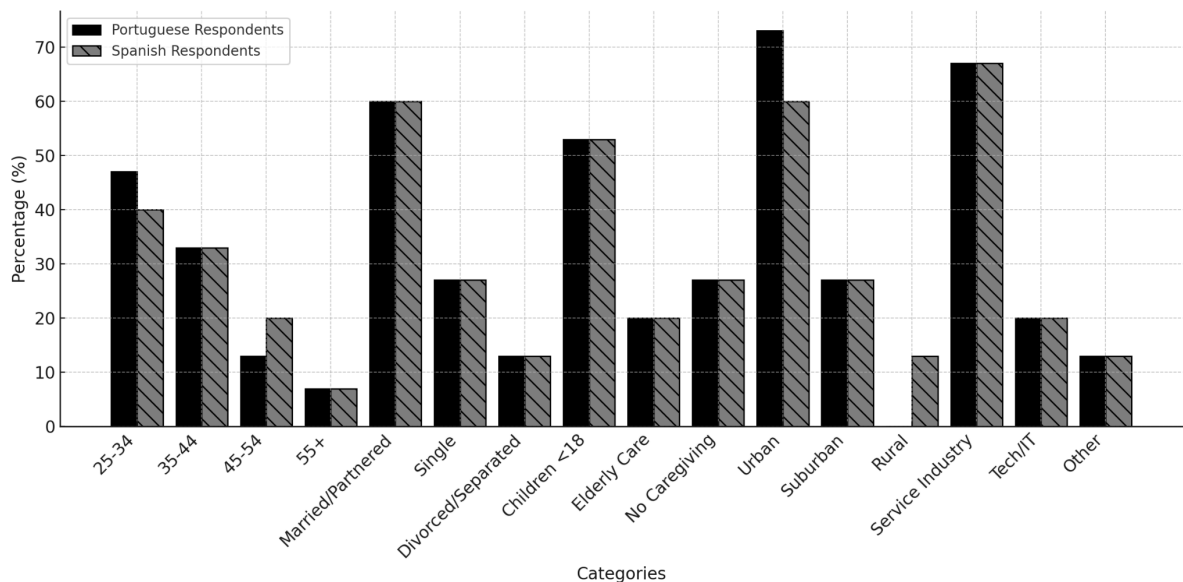
The majority of Portuguese participants were between 25 and 44 years old, with 47% (7 respondents) aged 25–34 and 33% (5 respondents) aged 35–44. Older age groups were less represented, with 13% (2 respondents) aged 45–54 and 7% (1 respondent) aged 55 and above. This distribution aligns with the study's focus on working-age women managing both professional and domestic responsibilities. Regarding marital status, 60% (9 respondents) were married or in a partnership, while 27% (4 respondents) were single, and 13% (2 respondents) were divorced or separated. The prevalence of married or partnered respondents is significant, as it often correlates with caregiving duties. Indeed, 53% (8 respondents) had children under 18, while 20% (3 respondents) cared for elderly family members. Only 27% (4 respondents) had no caregiving responsibilities, illustrating the dual burden many Portuguese women face in balancing work and family life. Geographically, 73% (11 respondents) lived in urban areas, primarily in Lisbon, where employment opportunities and infrastructure are more concentrated. The remaining 27% (4 respondents) resided in suburban areas, highlighting potential disparities in access

to resources such as reliable internet, which can impact telework efficiency. In terms of racial and ethnic background, all Portuguese respondents identified as White/Caucasian, reflecting Portugal's broader demographic composition. Educational attainment among Portuguese respondents was relatively high, with 67% (10 respondents) holding a university degree, 20% (3 respondents) having completed vocational or technical education, and 13% (2 respondents) holding only a secondary education diploma. Higher education was particularly common among those working in technology, administration, and civil service roles, whereas vocational training was more prevalent among those in retail and service sectors. Their professional sectors were diverse but primarily service-oriented, with 67% (10 respondents) working in administration, design, or retail. Another 20% (3 respondents) were employed in technology/IT, while 13% (2 respondents) worked as civil servants.

The age distribution of Spanish respondents closely mirrored that of the Portuguese group: 40% (6 respondents) were aged 25–34, 33% (5 respondents) were 35–44, 20% (3 respondents) were 45–54, and 7% (1 respondent) were 55 and above. Like their Portuguese counterparts, these women were at a life stage where professional and caregiving responsibilities frequently overlap. Marital status also followed a similar pattern, with 60% (9 respondents) married or in a partnership, 27% (4 respondents) single, and 13% (2 respondents) divorced or separated. Correspondingly, caregiving responsibilities were prevalent: 53% (8 respondents) had children under 18, 20% (3 respondents) cared for elderly family members, and 27% (4 respondents) had no caregiving duties. This reinforces the parallel challenges faced by Spanish and Portuguese remote-working women. Geographically, 60% (9 respondents) lived in urban areas, mainly in Madrid, while 27% (4 respondents) resided in suburban areas and 13% (2 respondents) in rural regions. Compared to the Portuguese respondents, a slightly higher proportion of Spanish participants lived outside major urban centers, suggesting potential differences in access to telework-enabling infrastructure. Racial and ethnic diversity was more pronounced among Spanish respondents, with 87% (13 respondents) identifying as White/Caucasian and 13% (2 respondents) as Black/African descent. This variation highlights the need for further research on how race and ethnicity intersect with remote work experiences. Spanish respondents exhibited a slightly higher educational attainment than their Portuguese counterparts, with 73% (11

respondents) holding a university degree, 13% (2 respondents) having completed vocational or technical education, and 13% (2 respondents) possessing only a secondary education diploma. Higher education levels were particularly prevalent among those working in administration, education, and healthcare, while vocational training was more common in manufacturing and retail roles. In terms of employment, Spanish respondents were predominantly in service-oriented industries (67%, 10 respondents), including administration, education, and healthcare. Another 20% (3 respondents) worked in technology/IT, while 13% (2 respondents) were in manufacturing.

Graph 1. Demographic profile of female workers - respondents



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.4.2. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are an important and inevitable feature while dealing with sensitive and private information even when it comes to expert opinions. In this particular research, there were stricter norms applied to the collection of the data in order to ensure benevolent respectful participation in the qualitative interview, confidence of participants, and successful outcome.

Informed consent was prepared with great concern in this research. All information regarding the purpose, procedure, funding and eventual use of information obtained from the participants during this study was fully described. The mentioned consent was viewed as a feature that can be changed any moment upon participants' will, and through this, participants were confident and aware of their rights within this research. Participants were explained that they have the option to pause or stop the course of interviews in case they experienced discomfort and distress.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly protected: personal identifiers were removed from the data, and pseudonyms with the mentioning of the country were used in reporting to maintain participants' anonymity. Procedures regarding data storage and handling were informed in detail to prioritize participants' privacy and make the collection of data consistent to all relevant data protection policies.

The integral part of this study was researcher reflexivity. Potential biases were considered and acknowledged that these factors might influence the interview process and subsequent analysis. This reflexive practice contributed to maintaining the pursuit of initial objectives as well as objectivity and ensuring fair representation of participants' perspectives.

In analysing and reporting findings, a commitment was made to uphold data integrity in order to keep the received data within the context. This entailed the cautious interpretation of participants' responses and narratives, detailed avoidance of decontextualization, and an attentive consideration of experiences shared. In this respect, it is expected that the current research will make a valuable contribution, while the dignity and rights of participants are respected.

5.5. Sample and procedure.

Data was gathered from one primary source: individual responses from experts, specialists and trade unionists in order to test hypotheses. Following an objective to gain a deeper understanding of the issue of how telework is experienced and perceived, we undertook a qualitative approach that encompassed thirty in-depth interviews with specialists and thirty interviews with female workers (fifteen in Spain and fifteen in Portugal for both parts).

For specialists, the sample consists of both men and women, experts, and trade unionists. The share of men and women is the same for both countries: three men out of fifteen interviewees for each country. In Portugal eleven experts and four trade unionists responded to the questionnaire, while in Spain two trade unionists and thirteen experts.

For workers, the sample consists of only women, who had been working remotely since the beginning of the pandemic, while the specialists were professionals with expertise in labor and gender issues. All participants in this cohort identified as heterosexual, white, and cis-gendered women.

The selection criteria for experts were based on their relevance and expertise related to the research topic. Experts were chosen for their extensive knowledge and experience in the field, while trade unionists were selected to provide insights from the perspective of labor organisations. The inclusion criteria included individuals with at least five years of experience in their respective fields, while those without significant relevant experience were excluded. The selection criteria for workers was a transition to telework due to the pandemic.

Participants were recruited via personal invitation and the snowball sampling (Parker et al, 2019). Interviews were conducted personally and via GoogleMeet and recorded in full. Before the study began, its aim was explained to all participants, whose names have been anonymised here for confidentiality. The interviews commenced only after oral consent had been obtained. Experts were asked about the disruption of work due to the pandemic and the extensive growth of teleworkers in both countries and its probable impact on the quality of labor life of Spanish and Portuguese females as well as on future talent discovery and further support based on the questionnaires mentioned above. Issues of new teleworking legislation and trends of feminization of work were discussed. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using the computer software MAXQDA. Qualitative coding was used to analyse the collected data (Charmaz, 2006). The selection of software was guided by two key criteria: capability for comprehensive note-taking and functionality for quantifying and visually representing research findings.

The research methodology involved: audio recording of all interviews and a systematic open coding of transcripts by the researcher. Open coding was applied as a widely utilised technique in qualitative research aimed at dissecting copious amounts of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, into coherent

themes and concepts. Its goal is to facilitate a deeper comprehension of the data, leading to the extraction of novel insights and knowledge. During the open coding process, meticulous attention was paid to coding the data comprehensively, ensuring no significant information is overlooked. The more detailed the coding, the more comprehensive the analysis, until a point of saturation is reached (Strauss, 1987).

The specialists' and female workers perspectives yielded several key themes, including the sudden shift in work environments due to the pandemic, unique aspects of remote work for women, the regulatory landscape governing telework, the increasing prevalence of women in remote work settings, and projected trends for telework in both nations under study. To facilitate a qualitative content analysis, a coding system was implemented. The analytical framework was established in advance, with categories conceptually defined prior to examining the empirical data. Utilising MAXQDA streamlines, the analysis of various interviews was made simultaneously and systematically producing content analysis.

5.6. Data analysis

The research employed a conventional content analysis approach to examine the data. This methodology was chosen for its ability to capture participants' perspectives directly, minimizing potential theoretical biases from the interviewer.

The analysis process began immediately after each interview was recorded, utilizing MAXQDA software. Semantic units within participants' responses were used to generate codes, ensuring a close alignment with the original data.

The qualitative data analysis involved a rigorous process of code categorization and refinement. After eliminating redundancies, in the final analysis 75 unique codes (detailed in the Annex 3), 5 main categories, 15 sub-categories, 28 sub-sub-categories were developed. Their hierarchical structure allowed for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the data, capturing the complexity of participants' experiences and perspectives on telework during the pandemic. The code maps were developed to illustrate the results of the study and the dynamics of issues discussed with respondents.

5.7. Assessments and perceptions of specialists

The information will be organised in three forms: text that represents most vivid and interesting for the study statements where specialists will be given the identifier of the country: PT for specialists in Portugal and ES for those in Spain and numbers that separate specialists according to the order interviews were collected. The text will be additionally organised into graphics that will reflect on main common and different ideas and concepts raised by specialists. Finally, the codes will give a visual understanding in the form of mindmaps.

5.7.1. Theme 1. Abrupt change of the conditions of work

In response to the questions based on the theme 1, Portuguese experts believe that “surprisingly the transition to telework was not that difficult in technical terms.”

PT-1 thinks that since telework was not an absolutely new notion, it was easier to adapt to the changed mode that it was expected. “As far as I know, there was a difficulty with adopting a certain software, to get operational with programmes.

PT-4: “The response to curfew requirements was more than sufficient for the minimal economic stability of the state considering the outstanding situation that enterprises were going through.” “The change was abrupt and for many managers and companies it was as additional stress that added to the general distress of the situation: management worried about control and productivity while employees had to make sure that they had enough facilities to work from home”.

PT-7 explains about the transformation of the working conditions striking that “almost from day to night the living environment coincided with the working one, and, considering the Portuguese reality of small apartments, those who did not have any family responsibilities could not be compared with those who did have.”

PT-10 adds to it: “Suddenly the living room became a working and learning place for the whole family as schools and childcare were closed as well. From this perspective employees who live in their own houses, had an opportunity to divide the space unlike people who were closed within the city space”

PT-6 mentioned that “for companies and unities who mostly work in a team mode, it was the most challenging time as being apart from each other and not prepared for that, team players experienced a lot of tension initially.”

PT-13 points out that “eventually Zoom, Microsoft teams and other services for having team conversations did work so well that when the situation stabilised many employees did not want to come back to a presential mode of work”. PT-2 reflects on the attention of employers to the problems that employees had to face being new to telework: “The companies’ responsiveness depended pretty much on an ability of companies to provide workers with better conditions. It varied from a situation when companies gave laptops to each employee to the resistance to pay internet expenses even upon a new law introduced³³”.

ES-3 describes that first of all it must be taken into consideration that the presential culture of work is very strong in Spain. So, basically it was a disruption of basic understanding of working conditions in Spain when many people had to work from home and not from the facilities provided by the employer.

ES-5 refers to an emotional response and certain distress due to it as management feared that being absent from the office necessarily means absenteeism from professional duties in general. “Special software was introduced that would control the time that employees were with their screen active. This uncovered the institutional need for control while belonging to a subordinate working environment.”

ES-7 believes that the conditions of work did change in a stressed and disrupted mode, however, the technological advancement that existed by the moment of the Covid-19 onset has become “an airbag” allowing companies not to collapse under the restrictions of curfews. Based on previously existing knowledge and skills, those who had to telework managed to build new technological and professional capacities and competencies that allowed them to manage tasks remotely with a certain resilience. “To a certain extent it was an example of intensive and massive digital upskilling”.

ES-8 stresses out that technical ammunition was only one part of the disruption but the attitude of workers was another important point that facilitated the transition to telework upon the sanitary crisis. “Corporate culture should be considered as a key factor in this situation. Employees did not want to lose their jobs but an issue of personal professional responsibility enhanced the process”. ES-9 points out that most companies could not help their employees that experienced difficulties

³³ Meaning a new law on telework

changing to the remote mode, however, cases of Spanish companies buying laptops for their employees en masse are known. “Several companies also introduced compensation for the electricity and internet, however, this was not a general case as initially companies simply didn't know how to deal with the situation (as anyone else)”.

ES-11 focuses on the right to disconnect and explains that even though there was the understanding that working from home raises this problem, companies did not consider it as an important issue especially in a pandemic time. “Probably, many people found the long hour working day as a remedy against a rise of anxiety based on COVID-19 proliferation and subsequent instability at working place, However, quite fast a discussion on the necessity to disconnect and to have a simple rest out of necessity to respond your working emails appeared and the situation started to change to a healthier pattern of a limited 8-hour working day”.

ES-14 explained a concern of companies to lose productivity while being remote: “as they never managed so many remote workers, the feasibility of keeping the efficiency seemed unrealistic which eventually led to an additional burden of stress within not an easiest situation of work disruption”.

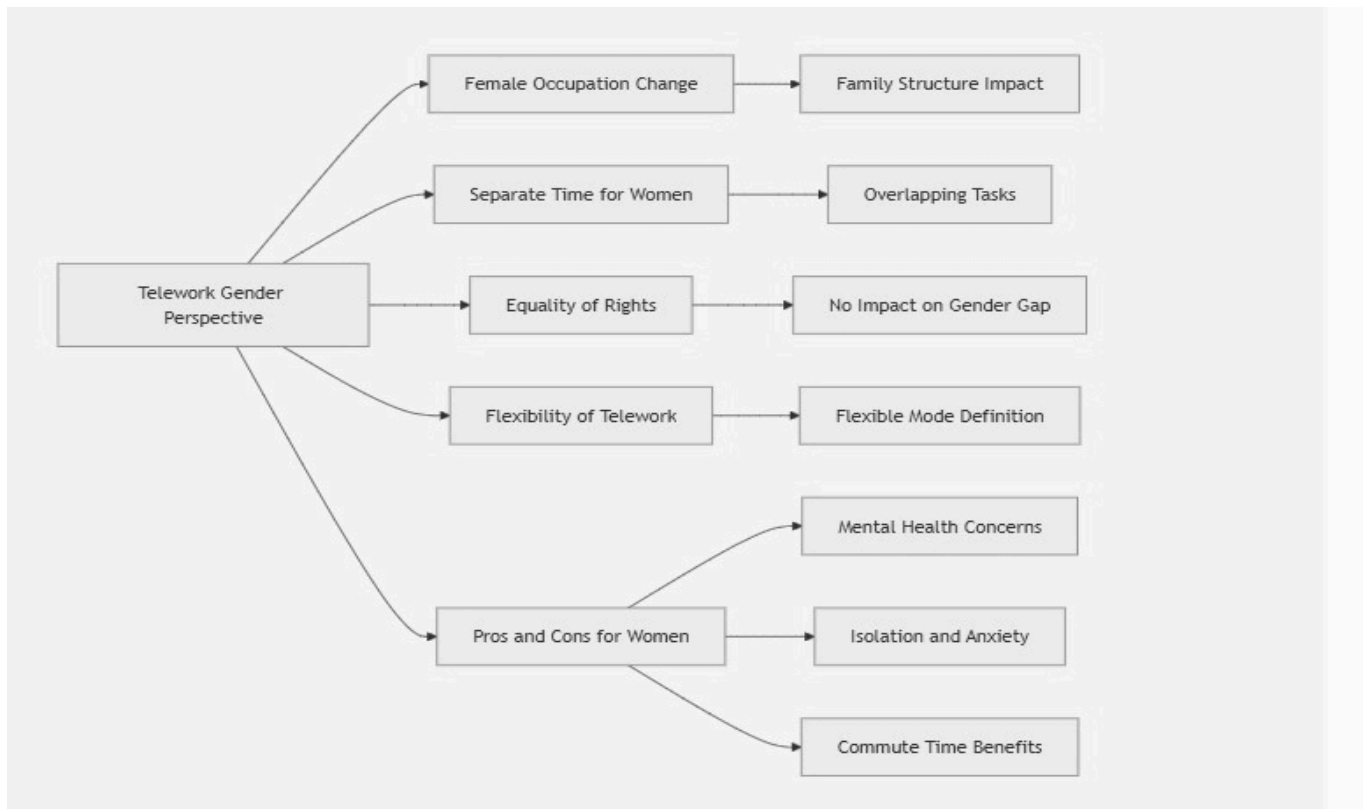
Table 1. Specialists reflections on abrupt change of the conditions of work

Theme	Portuguese specialists	Spanish specialists	Common points	Differences
Ease of technical transition	- PT-1: Adaptation to telework was easier than expected due to prior exposure to the concept. - PT-4: The response to curfew requirements ensured minimal economic stability. - PT-13: Tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams were effective, leading to some employees preferring remote work post-pandemic.	- ES-7: Existing technological advancements prevented companies from collapsing during curfews. - ES-8: The corporate culture and worker attitudes facilitated the transition. - ES-9: Some companies provided laptops and compensated for utilities.	- Both agree that prior knowledge and technological tools helped facilitate the transition to telework.	- Portuguese specialists highlight the smooth transition due to existing familiarity with telework. - Spanish specialists emphasise the role of corporate culture and the emotional responses of workers.
Impact on working conditions	- PT-7: The overlap of living and working spaces was particularly challenging, especially in small apartments. - PT-10: The closure of schools and childcare exacerbated the challenge for families. - PT-6: Team-based work units experienced initial tension due to separation.	- ES-3: Strong presential work culture in Spain made the transition disruptive. - ES-5: Management feared absenteeism, leading to the use of monitoring software. - ES-14: Concerns about maintaining productivity led to additional stress.	- Both acknowledge the challenges posed by the sudden shift to remote work and the overlap of personal and professional spaces.	- Portuguese specialists focus on the physical and logistical challenges, particularly in small living spaces. - Spanish specialists emphasise cultural resistance and management concerns over productivity.
Support from companies	- PT-2: Company responses varied; some provided laptops, others resisted paying internet expenses.	- ES-9: Some companies provided laptops and utility compensation, but this was not widespread.	- Both note the variability in company support, with some providing necessary resources and others struggling to adapt.	- Portuguese specialists discuss the legal and financial support disparities among companies. - Spanish specialists highlight the initial uncertainty and gradual adaptation of companies to

				support remote work.
Emotional and psychological impact	- PT-7: The abrupt shift to working from home caused stress, particularly for those with family responsibilities. - PT-10: Living spaces became multifunctional, adding to the stress.	- ES-5: Fear of absenteeism led to stress among management and employees. - ES-11: The issue of the right to disconnect emerged, with long working hours initially seen as a coping mechanism for anxiety.	- Both recognize the emotional strain caused by the sudden transition to telework and the overlap of home and work life.	- Portuguese specialists highlight the stress due to logistical challenges and family responsibilities. - Spanish specialists focus on management's anxiety over productivity and the eventual need for work-life balance.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code map 1: On abrupt change of working conditions



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.7.2. Theme 2. Women and organisation of telework

The next block of questions was devoted to telework from the gender perspective.

Portuguese experts observed that while the specifics of women's occupational roles have evolved, the underlying institutional structures remain largely unchanged. One specialist (PT-2) aptly noted, "The tools have changed, but the responsibilities haven't. A century ago, women washed clothes in rivers; now they manage laundry machines while working remotely. The task is still primarily theirs."

Several analysts emphasized that family structure plays a more significant role in female employment compared to male employment. This disparity stems from traditional gender roles where men typically have less involvement in household chores.

The experts highlighted how family composition significantly impacts women's professional lives by contrasting two scenarios: a family with two children and/or elderly dependents and a household without minors or elderly dependents. The

consensus was that women in the first scenario would likely face greater challenges in balancing professional duties with familial and household responsibilities. This underscores the persistent influence of traditional gender roles on women's work-life balance, even in the context of remote work.

PT-3 explains that being not remote for a woman means to have a separate time to focus on her professional tasks as she has to work out of the house. Being remote and at home, the overlapping of tasks happens: “especially it was vivid during the Covid-19 time when there was no childcare and many retirement residences were closed as well. Upon curfews, female working conditions for those with family duties worsened drastically as paid and unpaid work had to be done at the same time and in the same place. As for obstacles for career and payment

PT-7 believes that the situation was pretty much the same for both men and women, however, with the consideration of the already existing gender gap: “ It was an unexpected change for all, but apparently it could not impact in a benevolent way a gender gap. In a way, it was no change of scenario, just a change of a stage - from office to home”.

PT-11 offers a contrasting perspective, suggesting that the shift to remote work has had unintended negative consequences for gender equality. In their view, the widespread adoption of telework has inadvertently reinforced traditional gender roles by "bringing women back home." This observation implies that working from home may have reversed some of the progress made in workplace equality, potentially limiting women's professional opportunities and reinforcing domestic responsibilities. The specialist's comment highlights a concern that telework, despite its apparent flexibility, might be inadvertently perpetuating gender disparities by blurring the lines between professional and domestic spheres in a way that disproportionately affects women.

PT-10 and PT-5 discuss the issue of flexibility of telework. PT-10 consider telework to be a flexible mode but not under the pandemic: “being obliged to stay at home continuously managing numerous tasks at the same time in the same location has nothing to do with flexibility, however, out of the sanitary crisis, telework indeed becomes at least more flexible mode of work than a traditional office regime”. PT-5 adds that we should go deeper into a concept of flexibility: “being flexible doesn't actually mean to be able to manage family and career rigorously but to be able to plan your daily schedule upon your needs and those who are now

teleworking, do manage to control their own time and, moreover to get an additional one due to the absence of commuting”.

Several specialists reflect on pros and cons of telework for women. PT-2 has a concern concerning mental health: “normally many women are subjected to an exhaustive routine of multitasking, adding a professional activity with no essential contact with colleagues might be ruinous for mental stability”.

PT-8 refers to the already existing pool of research which proves that telework is associated with isolation and consequent anxiety, depression. PT-14 and PT-9 agree on benefits of telework: “women can decide on her schedule and not waste time in transportation. It is especially crucial for those who live in big cities as commuting time can occupy around 2 hours daily”(PT-9).

Spanish specialists considering the issue of teleworking from the gender perspective are more focused on a discussion whether telework is an instrument of conciliation, meaning a solution for a work-family conflict. ES-2 states that telework can not be deemed as a conciliation measure as “it does not create an alleviation for women in terms of burden of work. Opposite to it, the time that previously women were at the office and could focus only on professional duties now is fully used for both paid and unpaid work.” ES-6 adds: “many women might personally assess it as an advantage when during the course of their remote meeting they can do work at home like, for example, starting a washing machine. However, it is a clear example of defocus that eventually benefits the gender gap.” Spanish experts are not homogenous concerning the issue of flexibility as it was with Portuguese specialists, but they use other kinds of argumentation.

ES-7 tags telework as truly flexible as its concepts are intrinsically connected with an understanding of freedom: “telework is flexible indeed and the growing number of those who work from anywhere including women-digital nomads prove it”. ES-12 opposes this point of view referring to the conditions of life that might have an impact of accepting a notion of telework: “family structure and pre-existing structure of life as ability, skills and capacity to telework influence pretty much on efficiency and productivity of work, especially if considered from a gender perspective. That is why the results of studies on telework satisfaction can not be seen without knowing the profile of teleworkers. For a single 20-something person telework is one thing, for a father or mother of three who has to pick children from different schools it is a completely another thing”.

Concerning the pros and cons of telework, Spanish specialists continue to stick with a profiling of workers. This way, ES-13 states that for those who live far from the office or have to move to another city for work and obviously to spend a part of their income paying rent, telework has become a solution, ES-4 notices that since after the pandemic there has been a raise of remote work opportunities, it is beneficial for women as it provides them with more options to be included into labor market, since every extension of market impacts positively the numbers of female employment.

ES-1 warns that such a benefit has another side: "women choosing work only remotely can feel less seen and more invisible. They can perceive themselves as not that important for the team and for the company and, moreover, working from home under the traditional concept of office work may seem "not that serious" for family members and, eventually, for a woman herself".

ES-14 discusses the existent gender promotion gap and concepts of "glass ceilings" and "sticky floors" anticipating the likely problems that ambitious women can face being remote: "Being apart from the team and supervision, may mean that moving up the career ladder can become even more difficult for a woman than when she is seen in the office even if the work that she does is the same".

ES-9 expands on the challenges faced by women in telework environments, highlighting potential career setbacks and emotional repercussions. They point out that women typically experience slower career progression, and remote work exacerbates this issue. The lack of in-person interaction and visibility in a telework setting can further hinder professional growth opportunities for women. ES-9 emphasizes the long-term emotional impact of these career obstacles, stating that the combination of slower advancement and reduced opportunities for professional development in remote work scenarios can lead to "consolidated distress and disappointment" among women. This suggests that the telework model, if not managed properly, may contribute to feelings of career stagnation and frustration, potentially widening the gender gap in professional advancement.

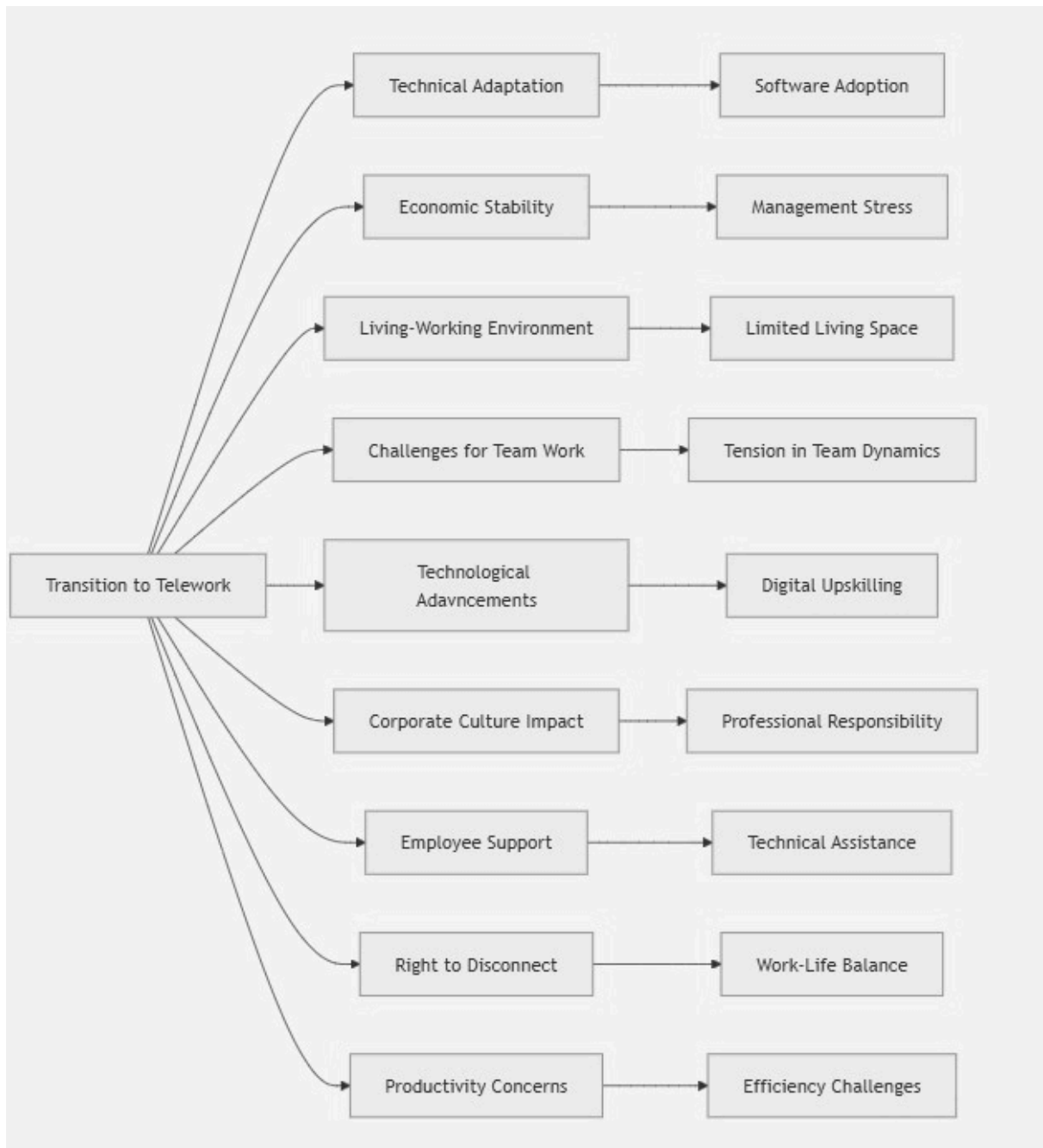
Table 2. Specialists reflections on women and organisation of work

Theme	Portuguese specialists	Spanish specialists	Common points	Differences
Changes in female occupation	- PT-2: Modern devices replace manual chores but women still manage household tasks while working remotely.	- ES-2: Telework doesn't alleviate women's workload; instead, it merges paid and unpaid work.	- Both perspectives highlight that telework merges professional and domestic responsibilities for women.	- Portuguese specialists emphasise the continuation of traditional roles despite technological advancements. - Spanish specialists stress the lack of work-life separation due to telework.
Impact of family structure	- PT-2: Family structure significantly affects women's telework experience. - PT-3: Remote work exacerbates overlapping professional and domestic tasks, especially during crises.	- ES-12: Telework efficiency and satisfaction vary greatly depending on family structure and personal circumstances.	- Both acknowledge that family responsibilities heavily influence women's telework experience.	- Portuguese specialists focus on the immediate impact during crises like COVID-19. - Spanish specialists consider a broader range of life circumstances impacting telework.
Career and pay gap	- PT-7: Gender gaps persist, with no significant improvement in career and payment disparities during telework. - PT-11: Telework might reinforce traditional gender roles, hindering equality.	- ES-1: Women working remotely might feel less visible and less important, affecting career progression. - ES-14: Telework can exacerbate the "glass ceiling" effect, making career advancement harder for women.	- Both recognize that telework can potentially hinder women's career advancement and visibility.	- Portuguese specialists discuss the retroactive impact on gender equality. - Spanish specialists emphasise the emotional and professional visibility issues.
Flexibility of telework	- PT-10: Telework under normal circumstances is flexible but not during the pandemic. - PT-5: True flexibility involves planning one's schedule, not just managing multiple roles simultaneously.	- ES-7: Telework is inherently flexible and associated with freedom, proven by the rise of digital nomads. - ES-12: Flexibility and satisfaction with telework are highly dependent on individual circumstances.	- Both see potential flexibility in telework but under different conditions.	- Portuguese specialists highlight the lack of flexibility during the pandemic. - Spanish specialists link flexibility to personal freedom and individual life conditions.

Mental health concerns	- PT-2: Multitasking and isolation can harm women's mental health. - PT-8: Existing research associates telework with anxiety and depression.	- ES-9: Slower career advancement and isolation in telework can lead to distress and disappointment.	- Both highlight mental health risks associated with telework, especially for women.	- Portuguese specialists focus on the multitasking and isolation aspects. - Spanish specialists emphasise the emotional consequences of career stagnation.
Pros and cons of telework	- PT-14, PT-9: Telework saves commuting time, which is beneficial for women, especially in big cities.	- ES-13: Telework is advantageous for those living far from the office, providing more employment options for women.	- Both recognize the commuting time savings and increased employment opportunities as benefits of telework.	- Portuguese specialists emphasize the specific benefits for urban women. - Spanish specialists discuss the broader inclusion in the labor market and potential invisibility issues.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code map 2. On women and organisation of work



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.7.3. Theme 3. Legal regime of telework

The experts from both countries were asked to discuss tendencies of legislation to become more gender-sensitive and progressive as well as new laws on telework and the fact that both laws did not have any special reference towards female workers. Portuguese specialists reflected that the legislation indeed has a certain tendency to consider a woman as a special subject of law when it comes to issues of maternity or political participation. However, PT-3 notices that when it comes to a labor legislation the temptations to make it gender-sensitive are not that successful so far:” A legal doctrine is based on the principle of gender equality so many lawyers consider a gender-sensitive approach to be discriminatory towards men”.

PT-11 adds that in order to accept a gender mainstreaming approach legislators are supposed to know the problem in-depth: “being driven by traditional values, stereotypes and understanding of the structure of gender relations, it is absolutely undeemed that the system of law is going to change towards creating mechanisms of breaking gender inequality attitude that has been created by centuries of an oppressive treatment”.

As for a new law on telework, PT-6 states: “to have a special law that encompasses many workers is, no doubt, something more than positive. But to have a special law on telework of a certain quality is a matter of future”.

PT-8 describes notions introduced by a new law as a right to disconnect and a reimbursement for electricity and gives them an evaluation as “necessary but not sufficient” as the law doesn't even consider a specific situation of digital nomads or those who are working from another state.

PT-15 explains the following position:” there was a need to initiate a separate regulation of labor relations with this category of workers, but later on due to ongoing digital transformation, there will be an obvious need to amplify and to make this law more adequate”.

PT-13 refers to the rule, allowing anyone to opt for a remote mode of work upon law in case of home violence and even in this case gender is not identified even though women are implied. There is virtually no special reference to women in law and the opinions of experts are not universal: some of them support the positive discrimination of women by law while others do not. The latter refers to the universality of positive law (PT-14).

Spanish specialists are more open to feminist and gender-sensitive ideas and values. ES-1 states that there is a definite tendency to consider women and their hurdles in different spheres by legislators but whatever is done by now is not enough as the gender gap is not closed in Spain.

ES-4 suggests that traditional ideas are still very strong and it influences the legal course of the country: “there is an apparent need of new solutions towards gender issue, however, the process is going very slow due to the mindset and the number of beliefs concerning women, that is to the certain extent still widely excepted, including by women themselves”.

ES-6 points out that the slow process of gendering legal systems is to the certain extent economically beneficial for the state as “if legislators consider females as special actors of the labor market, they would have to deal with an understanding that women have to deal daily with an extensive volume of work: a double or, sometimes, a triple burden comparing to male employees. In this case the state might need to pay for all this volume of work”.

As for a new legal norm on telework, experts give mostly a positive estimation: “it is a quite developed legal regulation with exact formulation of what telework is and rights of workers and companies” (ES-10). However, there is a space for a critic: “it is not really clear why legislators consider telework only a regime when an employee works more than 2 days a week remotely during 3 months”(ES-3).

ES-8 refers that the law does not prescribe the exact prerequisites that should be followed by employers in agreement with teleworkers: “this way telework in different companies can be very different from the perspective of flexibility”.

There is no special mention of gender by law. Experts have different opinions on that, several specialists do consider it normal and deem that it does not contribute to an existing gender gap (ES-5, ES - 9). However, there are those who think that it is against gender mainstreaming approach (ES-4) and a result of a hurry to adopt the law (ES-11) or of simple negligence (ES-14).

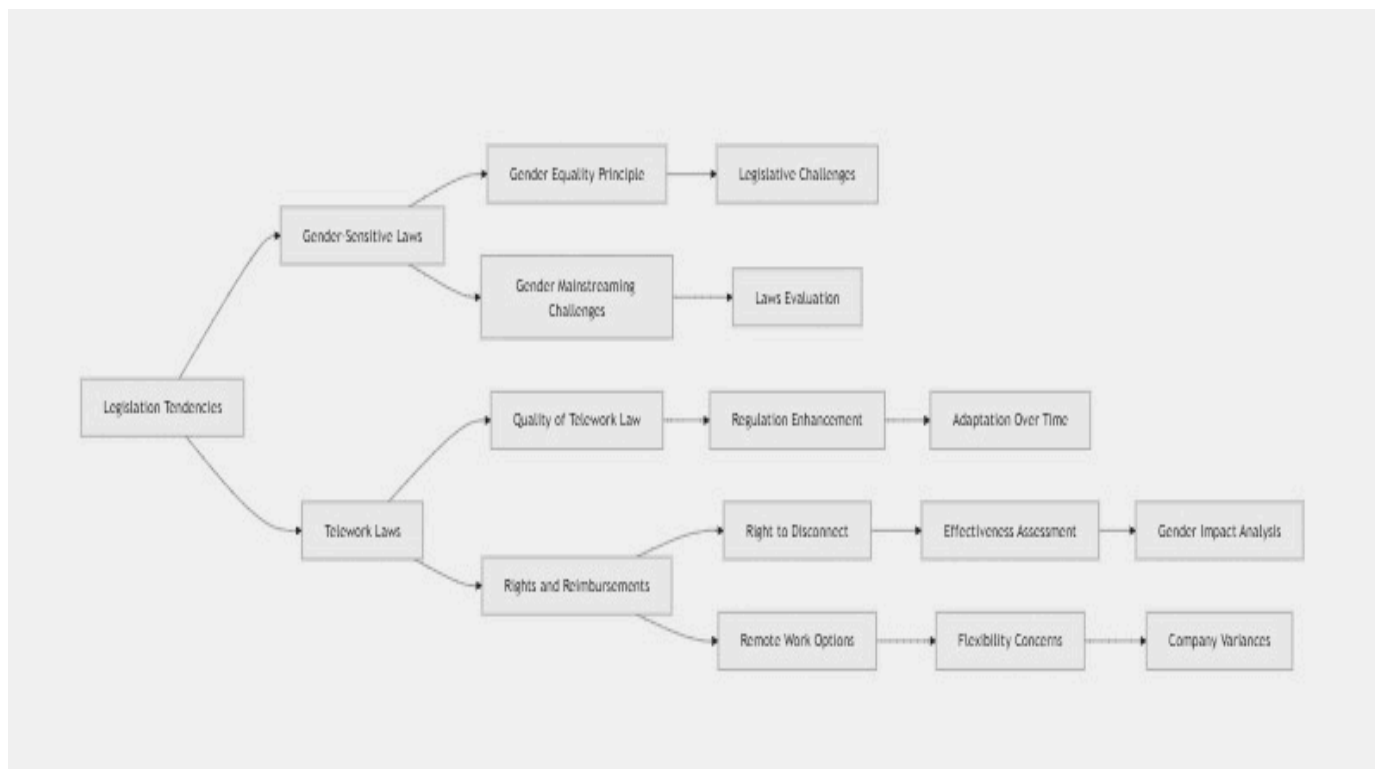
Table 3. Specialists reflections on legal regime of telework

Theme	Portuguese specialists	Spanish specialists	Common Points	Differences
Gender-sensitive legislation	- PT-3: Labor legislation struggles to be gender-sensitive due to the principle of gender equality being seen as discriminatory towards men. - PT-11: Traditional values and stereotypes hinder the adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach. - PT-13: Law allows for remote work in cases of home violence without specifically referencing women, although they are implied. - PT-14: Opinions divided on positive discrimination, some support while others believe in universality of positive law.	- ES-1: There is a tendency to consider women in legislation, but efforts are insufficient to close the gender gap. - ES-4: Traditional ideas and beliefs about women influence the slow legal process. - ES-6: Economic considerations slow down gender-sensitive legislation, as addressing women's additional burdens would require state support.	- Both countries acknowledge the slow progress towards gender-sensitive legislation and the influence of traditional values. - Neither country's telework laws explicitly address gender issues, although they impact women.	- Portuguese specialists emphasize the legal doctrine and principles hindering gender-sensitive approaches. - Spanish specialists focus on the influence of traditional beliefs and economic implications of gender-sensitive legislation.
New telework laws	- PT-6: The new law on telework is positive but needs future improvements. - PT-8: Right to disconnect and electricity reimbursement are necessary but insufficient. - PT-15: Future amendments are needed to address digital transformation adequately.	- ES-10: New telework law is well-developed with clear definitions of telework and rights. - ES-3: Critique on the definition of telework requiring more than 2 days a week remotely over 3 months. - ES-8: Law lacks specific prerequisites for employers, leading to varying flexibility across companies.	- Both agree on the positive aspects of new telework laws but acknowledge the need for further improvements. - Both note the absence of specific gender references in the laws.	- Portuguese specialists highlight the need for future amendments to address digital nomads and evolving telework scenarios. - Spanish specialists criticise the lack of clarity in telework definitions and prerequisites for employers.

	- PT-13: Remote work option for home violence cases does not specifically mention women, though implied.			
Expert opinions on gender reference in law	- PT-14: Divided opinions on the need for gender-specific references, with some supporting positive discrimination and others advocating for universality.	- ES-5, ES-9: Some experts find the lack of gender-specific references normal and not contributing to the gender gap. - ES-4, ES-11, ES-14: Others believe it goes against gender mainstreaming and is due to haste or negligence.	- Both have divided opinions on the necessity of gender-specific references in telework laws.	- Portuguese specialists debate the concept of positive discrimination more extensively. - Spanish specialists are more critical of the lack of gender mainstreaming and attribute it to negligence or rushed legislation.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code map 3. On legal regime of telework



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.7.4. Theme 4. Feminization of telework

Tendencies of feminization of remote work were discussed with specialists. The concept of telework feminization, characterized by women's inclination towards remote job opportunities, emerged as a significant theme among specialists. This trend is often perceived as a strategy for women to better manage work-life conflicts. However, experts caution that this apparent solution may have unintended consequences.

PT-2 offers a critical perspective, emphasizing that telework presents several structural drawbacks, such as the erosion of boundaries between personal and professional life and the tendency for women to work longer hours, often completing their tasks only after fulfilling caregiving responsibilities late at night. This highlights key challenges, as the flexibility of remote work may unintentionally perpetuate traditional gender roles, with women continuing to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving duties.

PT-5 points out that there is no real preference for a gender of teleworker. PT-11 supports this idea but notices: "since the sectors that can be teleworked are those, with a relative or an absolute majority of women, then it is usual for an employer to have an expectation that most candidates will be females".

PT-3 discusses the dynamics of the feminization of work and notices a certain turn: "it is likely that many women during the pandemic noticed that they can manage many home chores together with their professional activities in case they work from home. It becomes their motivation to continue with telework, or, if they do not manage to convince a current employer to provide them with such an opportunity, it makes them look for a new position that would allow them to be at least in a hybrid mode".

PT-9 focuses on the transition period after the curfews and points out that upon the fatigue of staying at home the dynamics of women teleworking slowed down as everyone desired to work on-site. "However, shortly afterward, the number of candidates seeking solely remote jobs increased again and has remained stable."

Evaluating the perspective of feminization, there is an ambiguity of opinions towards it. PT-12 considers that generally it is a more positive moment as it shows that there is a certain mode or sector that attracts more women.

PT-2 supports his position and adds that while teleworking women do develop additional and necessary digital skills which are now so crucial for labor market and employment.

However, PT-8 opposes these ideas: “feminization of telework virtually means segregation. The sectors which were already female-dense become even more feminised. Historically such sectors are badly paid and attraction of even more women would create a situation of gender gap stagnation or even worsening up”.

PT-15 shares the same views and adds:” basically feminization of telework leads to a disbalance and inequality of certain sectors or jobs like administration, for example. Any case of segregation eventually brings a disequilibrium to the labor market and makes it more difficult to reach decent working conditions”.

Spanish specialists also recognize the trend of women to look for a job with a certain flexibility, but in Spain mostly it is a mixed - hybrid - regime which is a compromise between on-site and fully remote job. ES-5 points out that feminization of hybrid jobs does bring segregation to different sectors but “it is less harmful for the career development of a woman since she can keep a close contact with the team and management”.

ES-7 rethinks a problem of feminization in a way that “it can be truly harmful if eventually telework will be associated with preferably women as it can lead to a consequent loss of prestige and importance of such jobs”.

ES-11 adds that “during the last fifty years there has been great progress made towards an equality of men and women in the labor market. Making any sector or mode of work feminised can become a huge step back”. Other perspectives of feminization are described by ES-2:”if this trend continues and consolidates, in future we will observe the same situation as a century before: men unite in the office and women stay at home”.

ES-4 notices that the labor market and employment has certain division and if to speak about those who look only for a remote job in Spain are mostly young people as it is directly related to the set of digital skills that they obtain by now and they do not fear the necessity to learn more:” as we speak about those between 25-34 mostly, it is even more worrying as it is a new generation who is creating a trend for next 40 years of labor market functioning in the country and the whole world”.

ES-15 notices certain positive points as “the trend to telework created due to the pandemic reinforced an understanding of workers including females that digitalization is now and obtaining a certain digital knowledge can not be postponed any more.”

ES-1 points out that everything depends on the perspective of looking at the problem as now we can make only prognosis on how far-going the feminization of telework is.

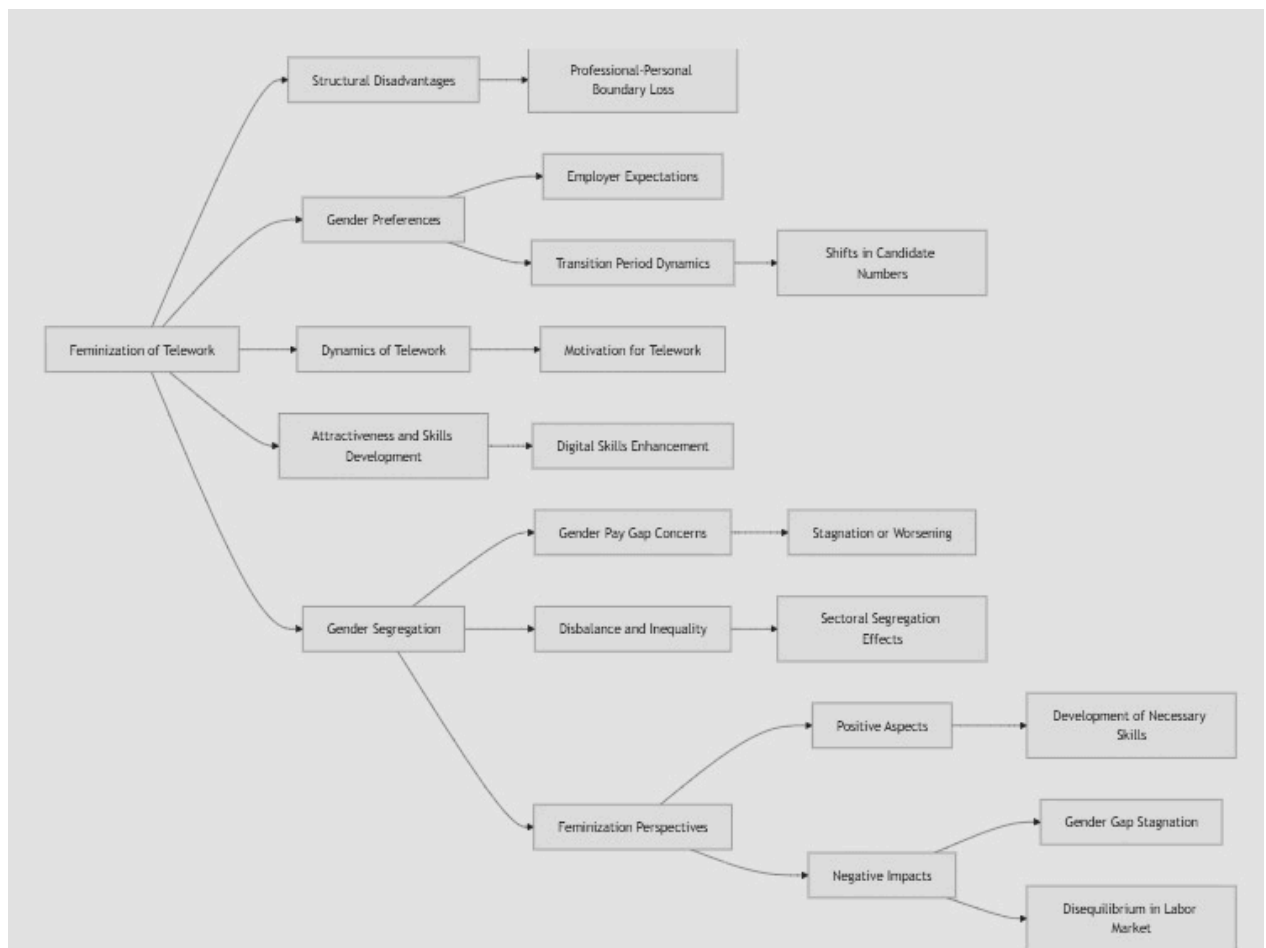
ES-14 provides a concise overview of the current situation: "The rapid pace of digitalization makes it challenging to predict its trajectory and long-term effects. We see various trends emerging and disappearing. In Spain, the culture of physical presence in the workplace remains deeply ingrained. It's probable that companies, motivated by a desire to maintain control over their workforce, will impede the progression of both telework adoption and its feminization."

Table 4. Specialists reflections on feminization of telework

Theme	Portuguese specialists	Spanish specialists	Common points	Differences
Feminization of telework	- PT-2: Telework as a form of conciliation brings disadvantages such as lack of separation between private and professional life, and longer shifts. - PT-5: No real gender preference for telework. - PT-11: Employers expect more female candidates for telework due to sector demographics. - PT-3: Women motivated to telework to manage home and work duties, pandemic highlighted this. - PT-9: After initial fatigue, interest in telework among women stabilised. - PT-12: Positive as it attracts more women to certain sectors. - PT-2: Women develop crucial digital skills. - PT-8, PT-15: Concerns about segregation and inequality in feminised sectors, leading to gender gap stagnation.	- ES-5: Hybrid jobs cause less harm to women's career development as they maintain contact with team and management. - ES-7: Feminization of telework can harm job prestige. - ES-11: Feminization could reverse progress in gender equality. - ES-2: Potential for telework to segregate men and women. - ES-4: Younger generation driving the trend, related to digital skills. - ES-15: Pandemic reinforced the need for digital skills. - ES-1: Prognosis on long-term impact of feminization is uncertain. - ES-14: Strong culture of presence in Spain, may slow down telework and feminization trends.	- Both recognize the trend of women choosing telework for flexibility and work-life balance. - Concerns about the potential negative impact on career progression and job segregation. - Acknowledge the development of digital skills through telework.	- Portuguese specialists highlight structural disadvantages and the demographic expectations of employers. - Spanish specialists focus more on the hybrid work model and the risk of losing job prestige. - Spanish experts emphasise the generational aspect and digitalization, while Portuguese specialists focus on sector-specific impacts.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code map 4. On feminization of telework.



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.7.5. Theme 5. Future of telework

The final segment of the interviews focused on forecasting the future of remote work. There was unanimous agreement among experts on one key point: the likelihood of a significant increase in telework participation in the near future. All specialists concurred that remote work has become an integral and unavoidable component of modern work organization.

However, several experts expressed concerns about the limited impact of telework on domestic dynamics. Despite the shift in work location, they noted that the fundamental structure and distribution of household responsibilities remain largely unchanged. This observation suggests that while telework has transformed

professional environments, it has not necessarily led to a corresponding evolution in domestic roles and responsibilities.

The experts' consensus on the growth of telework, coupled with their concerns about its limited effect on household dynamics, highlights a complex interplay between professional and personal spheres in the context of remote work. This nuanced perspective underscores the need for a holistic approach to understanding and addressing the broader societal implications of the telework trend.: "we observe general progress and technological advancement but the change of attitudes towards the unpaid work and how it is supposed to be organised is very slow" (PT-6).

PT-12 highlights that telework and its implications for inequalities and female employment are highly dynamic and evolving phenomena, making it premature to draw definitive conclusions about whether its overall impact is positive or negative.

There is also significant concern regarding workers' mental health, as isolation is an inherent aspect of telework. This applies even to those living with family, as the isolation extends beyond the physical realm. PT-2 emphasizes that "the disruption of contact with colleagues can lead to heightened anxiety, which may eventually result in burnout, directly affecting productivity."

PT-7 draws on a general tendency of digitalization to make people being excessively on-line and stresses that the right to disconnect which is clearly explained to both employees and employers is one of cornerstones of telework not to bring an essential harm en masse: "invisibility of remote workers united with never ending shifts can become devastating for a health status of workers and consequently for the productivity of companies".

Experts are not decided concerning whether the shift to induced telework has been beneficial for women. PT-10 reflects: "Yes and no. Digital transformation has opened new opportunities for females, especially for those who are ready to obtain new skills. For the labor market it means an increasing number of women employed. But what's going to happen with the quality of work, whether it will be deteriorated, we need more pos-pandemic observations."

PT-1 explained that indeed the progress and productivity of women at work can be potentially undermined due to the number of factors: "but with the better legal regulations problems of invisibility and hyperconnectivity can be solved and has to become an urgent agenda for legislators".

PT-13 adds that in order to adequate telework and to increase its chances to provide a better quality of work and life for women the focus must be on the roots of gender gap and its acceptance by society: "women face inequality onsite and remotely, so the reasons of it are not the mode of work but the patriarchal ideas that are still strong in the society. Working on this might stimulate a general progress in the society that will make the labor life of women more rewarding towards their talent and contribution, both professionally and personally."

Spanish specialists believe that remote work will become an intrinsic part of future of work with a great potential of creating more flexible jobs: "Different studies estimating probability of transferring to remote mode inform us that the numbers of teleworkers will grow and it will be specifically beneficial for non-urban areas of Spain as they get to be deteriorated and abandoned upon an urbanisation turn" (ES-5).

ES-12 specifies the gender impact: "Women who live away from big cities face a shortage of jobs available locally, for them remote jobs can become the only way to enter the labor market". The expert also comments the probability of the increasing feminization connected with such a trend: "Public policies are supposed to solve the issue of segregation and massive feminization of remote work..but the fact that women will be able to continue or to start a professional track is benevolent both for females, market and state".

ES-3 notes that telework itself does not make the progress or productivity of women more or less difficult: "everything depends on certain working conditions provided by an employer and corporate culture built in a certain environment. However, the rules should be provided by the state. That is why it is so important to have a special regulation that makes things clear for a better quality of life and work".

ES-15 adds: " A quality of agreement decides on whether labor relations will be prosperous between employer and employee, working in the premises of the company or from anywhere in the world. However, the issue of invisibility of remote workers contribution should be addressed urgently, especially considering that it does solidify with previously existing issues of inequality, and aggravates them". "Telework holds considerable potential to enhance flexibility and career satisfaction for women, especially by improving accessibility, time management, and access to lifelong learning opportunities" (ES-1).

ES-8 elaborates, "Public policies can better tailor telework to women's needs if developed with an understanding that female workers often bear a double or even triple workload burden."

ES-2 shares this point: "For developing a proper response, we need more research and observation, but policies concerning labor rights of women in general and telework in particular, should recognize the necessity of conceptualising female labor in other ways than it is done now".

ES-4 summarises that a comprehensive approach to female labor and conditions that are necessary for telework, both instrumental and organisational, is a key for creating thriving space for women to get their talents being recognized wherever they live as it simplifies the access to the market.

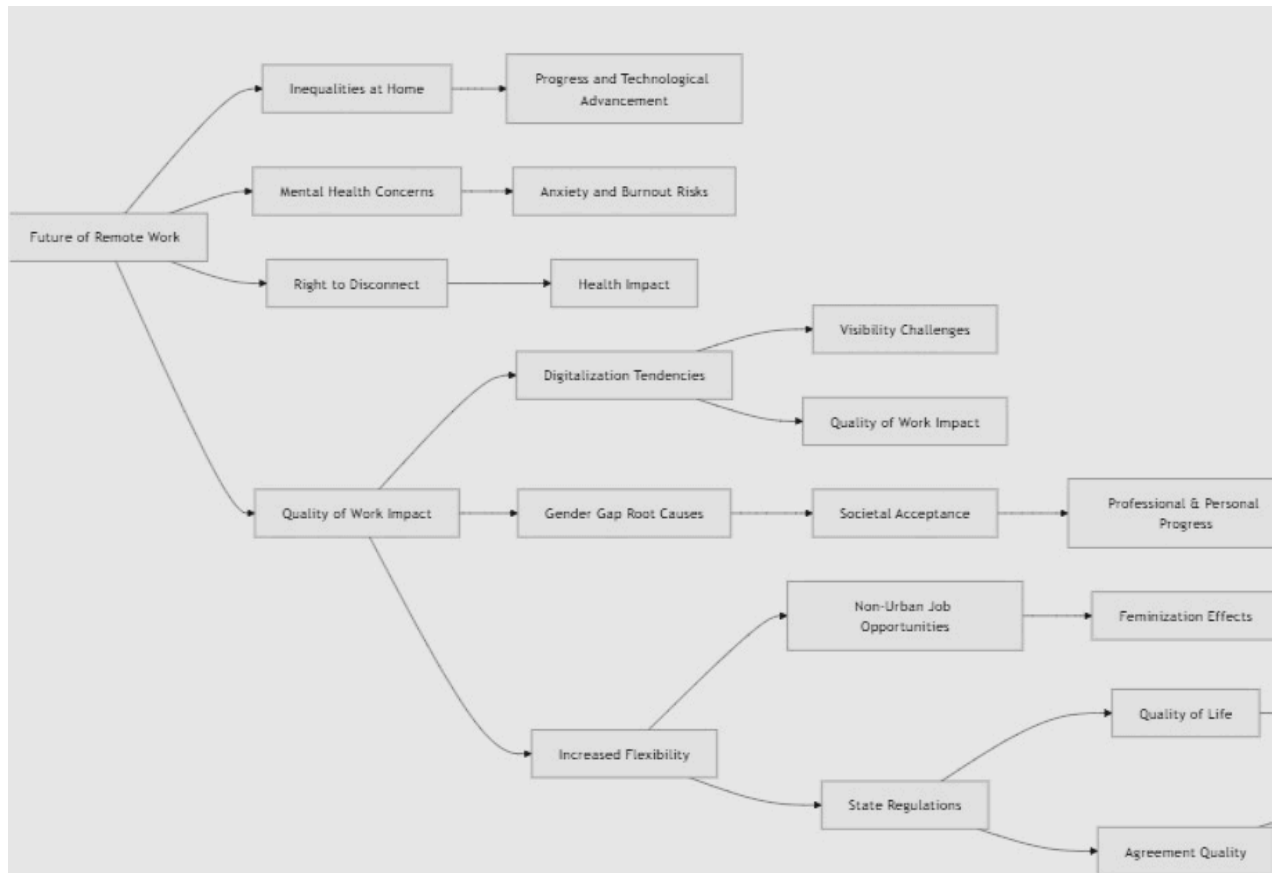
Table 5. Specialists reflections on future of telework

Theme	Portuguese specialists	Spanish specialists	Common Points	Differences
Future of telework	- Agreement on the inevitability of telework becoming a key part of work organisation. - PT-6: Slow change in attitudes towards unpaid work at home. - PT-12: Dynamic impact on inequalities and female employment; needs ongoing observation.	- Consensus on telework's growing role and its potential benefits for non-urban areas. - ES-5: Telework beneficial for non-urban areas facing job shortages. - ES-12: Remote work is crucial for women in rural areas to access the labor market.	- Both agree that telework is a permanent and growing trend.	- Portuguese specialists emphasise the slow change in unpaid work and dynamic impact on inequalities. - Spanish specialists focus on regional benefits and access for rural women.
Mental health concerns	- PT-2: Isolation and anxiety can lead to burnout and impact productivity. - PT-7: Importance of the right to disconnect to avoid harm from endless shifts.	- ES-15: Invisibility of remote workers needs urgent attention to prevent aggravation of existing inequalities. - ES-1: Flexibility of telework can improve career satisfaction through better time management and learning opportunities.	- Recognition of mental health risks and the need for policies to mitigate them.	- Portuguese experts highlight burnout and the right to disconnect, while Spanish experts stress the invisibility of remote workers and the importance of flexibility.
Impact on women	- PT-10: Mixed impact; digital transformation offers opportunities but may affect work quality. - PT-1: Better regulations needed to solve issues of invisibility and hyperconnectivity. - PT-13: Root causes of gender gap need addressing for	- ES-3: Progress and productivity depend on working conditions and corporate culture. - ES-15: Importance of quality agreements in labor relations. - ES-1: Telework offers flexibility	- Both emphasise the need for proper regulations and policies to ensure telework benefits women.	- Portuguese specialists focus on legal regulations and addressing root causes of gender gaps. - Spanish specialists highlight the importance of corporate culture, quality of agreements, and specific policies for female workers.

	telework to benefit women.	and career satisfaction. - ES-8: Policies should recognize the double/triple burden of female workers.		
--	----------------------------	---	--	--

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code map 5. On future of telework



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.7.6. Specialists reflections: results

The transition to telework can be considered unexpectedly easy from a technical point of view. This success can be attributed to the fact that telework was not a completely new notion and mode of work for many enterprises and, consequently, for their staff, which to a certain extent facilitated quicker adaptation to the new mode of operation. Despite this, a range of difficulties were reported with the comprehension and operationalization of certain software programs that were necessary for telework.

The response to curfew requirements in both Portugal and Spain was generally successful in maintaining basic mandatory economic stability even though enterprises had to go through difficult situations. The sudden nature of the change contributed to stress for everyone involved in labor activity. Managers were particularly concerned about maintaining speed of labor process, control and rates

of productivity, while employees had to adapt to new facilities to work from home. The sudden shift to telework led to a situation when living and working environments united. This was particularly difficult as nowadays employees' modern living space and conditions en masse are not comfortable and sufficient for such a set. For those without family responsibilities the situation was more manageable compared to those who had to balance work with family care. Employees living in their own houses had more physical space to separate work and personal life, which eased the transition compared to those in city apartments. This way, we could see that while telework offers flexibility and can reduce commuting time, it also merges professional and domestic responsibilities, often increasing women's workload.

Logically, the transition was especially complicated for the kind of teams that typically worked closely together day to day, as the separation and lack of preparation for remote work led to increased misunderstanding and tension. However, technologies such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams eventually helped effective communication and collaboration. Some teams managed it so well that, upon the stabilisation of the sanitary crisis, many employees and teams preferred to continue working remotely. The responsiveness of employers to difficulties of employees was very diverse. Some companies provided necessary equipment like laptops, while others were reluctant to cover additional expenses such as internet costs, even after new laws were introduced. The successful transition also relied heavily on the corporate culture and the professional responsibility of employees, who were motivated to maintain productivity to secure their jobs.

In Spain, the strong presential work culture made the transition to remote work in a more disruptive way than in Portugal. Significant emotional response was reported, with management fearing that remote work would lead to absenteeism. This led to the introduction of software to monitor employee activity, beginning of work, its end and other processes. This moment the issue of the right to disconnect became prominent, leading to discussions and instructions on maintaining a healthier work-life balance while teleworking.

As for female employment, the transition to telework has had significant implications for women, particularly in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities in both countries. Since historically, women have been dealing with a larger share of household duties, a trend is persistent even though nowadays a

lot is automatized. For instance: there is a device for washing clothes, but it is still women who are still primarily responsible and operate such things while working remotely. Such an overlapping of domestic and professional duties was particularly vivid and reported during the COVID-19 pandemic when institutions of childcare and eldercare facilities were closed. Generally speaking, the impact of telework on women is heavily influenced by family structure: women with children or those who depend on her every day either in Portugal or Spain face more burden compared to those without anyone to take care of. The situation when women have to manage both paid and unpaid work simultaneously being in the same space removes their full focus from any task. It can lead to increased stress and a decrease in the ability to proceed with professional tasks.

While some specialists point out that the transition to telework has no connection to the gender gap in career advancement and pay, others do believe it has a retrogressive effect on gender equality processes by reinforcing traditional gender roles virtually bringing women back into the home habitat. Due to such a situation, women working remotely may feel less visible and perceived as less integral to their teams, which could impact their career advancement opportunities.

Comprehension of the concept of flexibility in telework is ambiguous: while telework can offer more control over one's schedule and eliminate commuting time, the pandemic conditions of enforced home confinement did not represent true flexibility. Instead, it often ended up in women managing multiple roles simultaneously, leading to burnout, feeling of isolation and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Spanish experts are divided on whether telework serves as a conciliation measure for work-family conflict : some argue that telework does not alleviate the load of work for women but rather merges paid and unpaid work into the same timeframe, increasing the overall workload while others note that telework's inherent flexibility can be advantageous, allowing women to manage their schedules better and avoid long travel time to offices, which is particularly beneficial for those living in large cities.

As for the legal part of the interviews, Portuguese and Spanish experts agree that while there is a certain positive trend towards considering gender issues in legislation, the progress is unorganized, uneven and often inadequate. In Portugal, there is a recognition that labor legislation attempts to incorporate gender-sensitive approaches, but these efforts are often seen as discriminatory towards men due to

the principle of gender equality which does not accept gender-positive solutions. From this perspective, legal doctrine can be a structural hurdle to development of targeted measures to undertake gender disparities. Furthermore, traditional patriarchal values and stereotypes about gender roles continue to influence legislative processes, making substantial changes doubtful to occur. In Spain, there is a more pronounced openness to feminist and gender-sensitive legal ideas, however, traditional considerations about gender roles, including those held by women themselves, still persist among Spaniards, influencing the legal landscape and slowing the progress of gender-sensitive legislation adoption. The introduction of new telework laws in both countries has generally been a step forward. In both Portugal and Spain, the new laws on telework include necessary measures such as the right to disconnect and reimbursement for electricity costs. New regulations do not address the specific needs of digital nomads or cross-border workers, that is why the question of how many aspects new rules effectively encompass is open as the refinement of new legislation is supposed to happen with the same speed of digitalization in order to cover telework, digital workers - related issues and issues of digital economy in general. Spanish experts acknowledge that even though the new telework governance is well-developed and applicable to the rights of workers and enterprises, there are ambiguities: the law's definition of telework is restrictive, acknowledging that it is applicable only when an employee works remotely for more than two days a week over three months. Furthermore, the lack of precise guidelines for employers can result in varying degrees of flexibility and implementation across different companies. Both Portuguese and Spanish telework laws lack a consideration of gender issues, which has led to mixed opinions among experts. In Portugal, there is no consensus on whether gender-specific provisions are necessary: some argue that positive discrimination by law could be beneficial, while others believe it could undermine the universality of positive law and equality principles. In Spain, opinions are similarly divided: some experts believe that the absence of gender-specific mentions has nothing to do with the existing gender gap. On the other hand, others argue that ignoring gender in telework legislation goes against the gender mainstreaming approach and reflects a slow nature of legal progress in Spain, partly attributed to economic considerations.: legislators may be reluctant to recognize women as special actors in the labor market because

it might bring the need to consider the additional burdens women face, potentially leading to increased state expenditures to support these measures.

Experts from Portugal and Spain recognize a notable trend of the feminization of telework, where women increasingly opt for remote jobs. This trend is perceived as a form of work-life balance for women, allowing them to manage professional responsibilities alongside domestic duties. However, this dual role can lead to structural disadvantages: blurring of boundaries between private and working life as well as longer labour hours as women tend to come back to professional tasks after household ones finish. The feminization of telework is largely driven by the sectors that predominantly employ women. Since many telework-compatible sectors have a higher percentage of female employees, there is an expectation that candidates will be female. Due to the pandemic many women realised they could manage home chores alongside their professional work, motivating them to seek or retain telework positions. But the initial fatigue of staying at home led to a temporary decline in teleworking women, which soon rebounded as the demand for remote jobs stabilised and is gradually increasing. Opinions on the feminization of telework are divided. Some experts view it positively, highlighting that it is natural and allows women to develop essential digital skills, which are increasingly valuable in the labor market. But apparently there are others who argue that this tendency is a clear sign of a further gender segregation in the labor market and a step back to inequality: the overall gender pay gap may stagnate or worsen, and the status of traditionally feminine sectors may decline even more pronouncedly. Spanish experts also acknowledge the trend of women seeking flexible jobs, often preferring a hybrid work model that balances remote and on-site work: it is seen as less harmful to women's career development, as it maintains their daily connection with their team and management. The concern is that if telework becomes predominantly associated with women, it can potentially lead to a loss of prestige for these jobs and reverse the progress made towards gender equality in the workplace over the past fifty years starting from the moment when women could freely look for a job and get employed upon their desire, education, and talent. The continued feminization of telework might recreate historical gender divisions in the workplace, with men working in offices and women working from home. The trend is particularly prevalent among younger workers, who are more digitally skilled and

adaptable to telework. This could shape the labor market for decades to come, potentially reinforcing gender disparities.

All experts agree and state that telework will become a progressively integral part of work organisation: it is deemed as getting even more strength and inevitable, driven by societal and high-tech advancements and the changing nature of work environments. Despite the rise in telework, there is an observation that it has not profoundly altered the traditional division of domestic responsibilities. Experts highlight that progress in technology and work flexibility has not been matched by a corresponding shift in personal attitudes towards unpaid household work, which often keeps being the responsibility of women. The dynamics of telework and its impact on gender inequalities remain fluid and require ongoing study and analysis to determine their long-term effects.

Telework is revitalizing non-urban areas because it opens up job opportunities that have usually been connected to cities. This trend is particularly beneficial for women living in rural areas who apparently face limited local job prospects. In this process, public policies aimed at addressing gender segregation and supporting remote work are essential for raising awareness and leveraging these benefits while controlling potential drawbacks.

In summary, the future of telework holds great potential for transforming work environments and promoting flexibility. However, to fully realise these benefits, it is crucial to address underlying gender inequalities, support mental health, and develop robust legal and corporate frameworks that ensure fair and equitable telework arrangements.

5.8. Assessments and perceptions of female workers

The information will be organised in three forms: text that represents most vivid and interesting for the study statements where female teleworkers will be given the identifier of the country: wPT for female workers in Portugal and wES for Spain and numbers that separate employees according to the order interviews were collected. The text will be additionally organised into tables that will reflect on main common and different ideas and concepts raised by specialists. Finally, the codes will give a visual understanding in the form of mindmaps.

5.8.1. Theme 1. Abrupt change of the conditions of work

Several Portuguese female workers (wPT-1, wPT-5, wPT-13) noted that, despite the sudden transition to telework, the technical shift to telework was not as difficult as initially was anticipated and pretty much feared by them. wPT-1 shares her perspective: "I had heard about telework before, but I never thought I'd be thrown into it overnight. The biggest struggle wasn't working remotely—it was adapting to all the new software, being anxious but hoping everything would work smoothly."

However, the economic and managerial implications of this transformation were far-reaching. wPT-4 describes the immense pressure she and her colleagues faced: "We were already dealing with the stress of disease, lockdowns and uncertainty, and then we had to suddenly change everything about how we worked. My manager was constantly anxious talking about our team work, efficiency and productivity, while I was struggling to simply create a decent workspace at home."

The spatial limitations of home environments significantly influenced workers' experiences. wPT-7 explains: "I live in a tiny apartment, and suddenly my home became my office. It was exhausting. Those who lived alone had one type of challenge, but for those of us with kids, it was chaos. Balancing work, school, and home life in the same space was overwhelming." Similarly, wPT-10 adds: "Our living room turned into an office and a classroom overnight. My husband and I had to take turns working and helping our children with their schoolwork. I envied those with bigger homes who could at least separate their workspaces and sometimes - regrettably - those with no children."

For companies reliant on teamwork and collaborative processes, the transition was particularly disruptive. wPT-6 reflects on the initial difficulties: "Our team worked closely together in the same physical space, so being apart was tough. We weren't prepared for remote collaboration, and I felt the tension rising and consolidating as we struggled to keep up."

Over time, however, many employees became accustomed to digital tools that facilitated remote collaboration. wPT-13 notes: "At first, video calls felt awkward and inefficient, but soon, platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams became familiar and easy to navigate. When we were asked to return to the office, many of us didn't want to—why give up the flexibility we had finally adjusted to?"

Nonetheless, disparities in employer-provided support created an uneven landscape for teleworkers. wPT-2 describes the inconsistencies: "Some of my friends received company laptops, while I had to use my own old personal computer. And forget about internet expenses—my employer refused to reimburse me, even when the law required it. It felt unfair, like we were on our own in this transition." As for the necessary rest time out of digital amenities, wPT-15 shares the following: "After work hours, I should be able to switch off completely. If I'm expected to respond to emails or messages late at night, then when does my personal time actually start? If my schedule keeps shifting or extending beyond agreed hours, it's hard to maintain a healthy work-life balance."

In Spain, where workplace culture has traditionally been deeply rooted in physical presence, the shift to telework was particularly disruptive. wES-3 reflects on the cultural shift: "In Spain, work has always meant being physically present. When we were told to work from home, it felt like our entire understanding of professional life was turned upside down. No one knew how to handle it emotionally, technically, daily."

An internal and inherent managerial mistrust of remote work became evident during the transition. wES-5 shares her frustration: "Our bosses assumed that if they couldn't see us, we weren't working. They installed tracking software to monitor our screen activity—it felt like they didn't trust us at all, even though we were working harder than ever, under conditions more difficult than ever."

Despite these challenges, Spain's pre-existing technological infrastructure played a crucial role in mitigating the risk of economic collapse. wES-7 highlights the rapid adaptation: "If this had happened ten years earlier, I don't think we would have managed. But technology saved us. We quickly learned new skills, adapted, and kept our companies running. It was like a crash course in digital transformation."

Corporate culture also played a decisive role in shaping telework experiences. wES-8 explains: "I didn't want to lose my job, so I adapted as best as I could. But it wasn't just about fear—it was also about responsibility. We knew we had to make it work, for ourselves and our families." Employer support varied significantly, reflecting broader economic uncertainties. wES-9 recalls: "Some companies stepped up, providing laptops and even covering part of the internet bill. But many

didn't. My employer had no plan—just like the rest of us, they were figuring it out as they went along."

One of the most pressing issues that emerged was the right to disconnect. wES-11 describes the blurred boundaries: "In the beginning, I worked longer hours because it felt like the only way to cope with the uncertainty. But soon, I realized I was exhausted. More and more people started talking about the need to disconnect. Eventually, we pushed for a return to structured work hours."

Concerns over productivity remained a key theme throughout the transition. wES-14 expresses her frustration: "Our managers were terrified that we wouldn't be productive at home. They put so much pressure on us, constantly checking in and demanding updates. It made an already stressful situation even worse."

Table 6. Female workers' reflections on abrupt change of the conditions of work

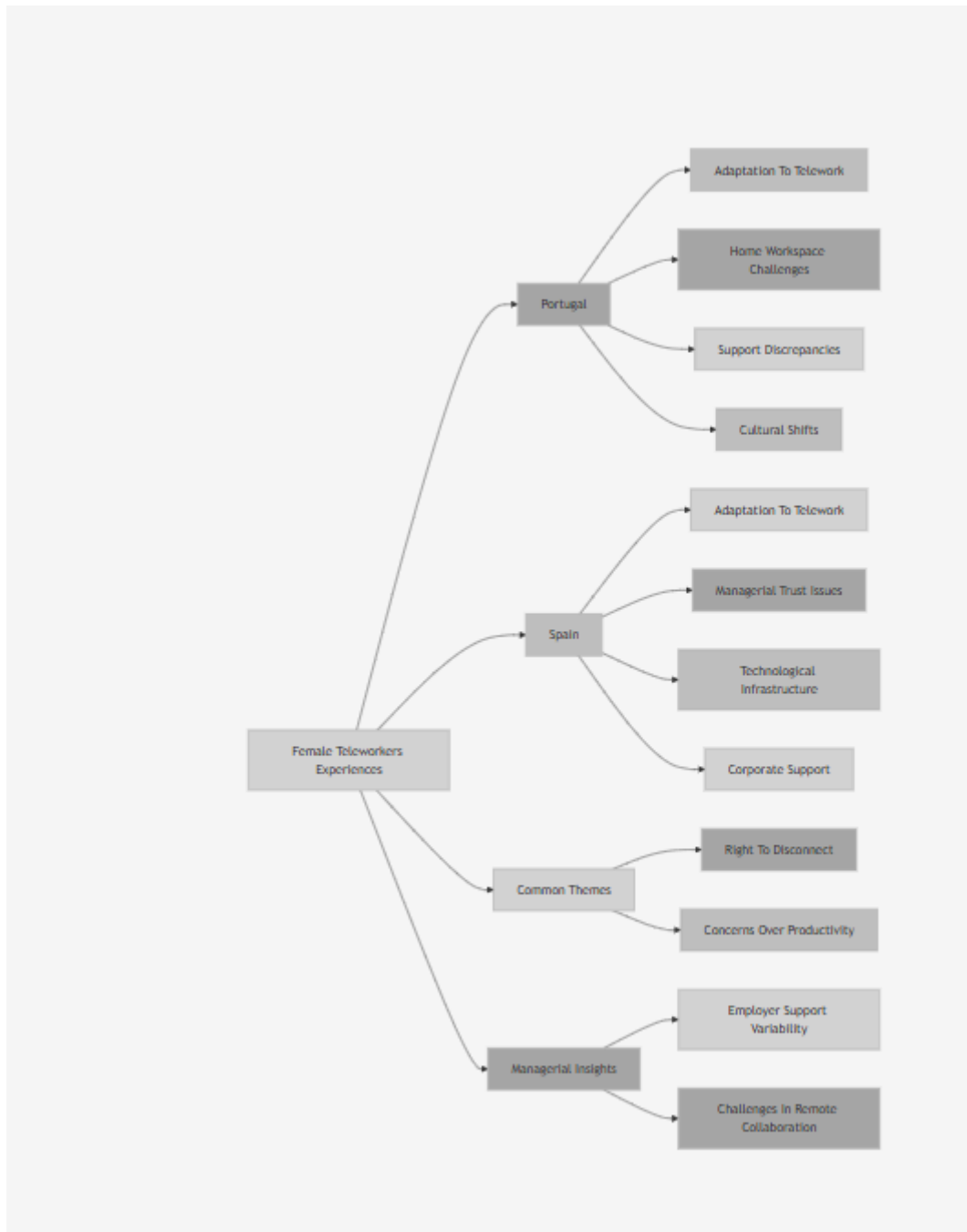
Theme	Portuguese female workers	Spanish female workers	Common points	Differences
Technical and emotional adaptation to telework	wPT-1, wPT-5, and wPT-13 noted that the technical transition was easier than expected but emotionally challenging. wPT-1 initially feared the change but adapted over time.	wES-3 described the shift as a cultural shock, as Spanish work culture was deeply rooted in physical presence.	Both groups faced emotional and logistical adaptation challenges.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-1) emphasized personal adaptation, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-3) focused on cultural disruption.

Managerial pressure and mistrust	wPT-4 reported heightened stress due to managerial concerns over productivity. wPT-6 described difficulties in adjusting teamwork to remote settings.	wES-5 noted that Spanish managers often distrusted remote work, installing monitoring software to track employees. wES-14 described excessive pressure and constant check-ins from managers.	Both groups experienced managerial pressure regarding efficiency and productivity.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-5) highlighted employer mistrust, while Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-4) focused more on internal team struggles.
Work-Life balance and spatial limitations	wPT-7 and wPT-10 struggled with small living spaces and balancing household responsibilities, with wPT-10 expressing envy toward those with separate workspaces.	Not explicitly mentioned, but wES-11 emphasized blurred boundaries leading to overwork.	Both groups faced work-life balance challenges.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-7) stressed spatial constraints, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-11) emphasized overwork.
Employer support and resource disparities	wPT-2 reported inconsistencies in employer-provided equipment and lack of expense reimbursements.	wES-9 noted significant variation in employer support, with some companies providing resources while others had no clear plan.	Both groups experienced disparities in employer-provided resources.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-2) emphasized legal non-compliance, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-9) highlighted broader corporate uncertainty.
Digital transformation and technological adaptation	wPT-13 noted initial discomfort with video calls but later adapted to platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams.	wES-7 highlighted that Spain's existing technological infrastructure facilitated rapid adaptation, preventing economic collapse.	Both groups adjusted to digital tools over time.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-7) emphasized the role of national technological infrastructure.

Right to disconnect and structured work hours	wPT-15 points out that a clear working schedule and a total daily disconnect is necessary to keep being able to work productively in the long run.	wES-11 pushed for structured work hours after experiencing exhaustion due to blurred work-life boundaries.	Both Portuguese and Spanish respondents were vocal about the right to disconnect.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-11) raised awareness of structured work hours, whereas Portuguese respondents showed more concern about the right to disconnect.
---	--	--	---	---

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code Map 6. Female workers reflections on abrupt change of working conditions



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.8.2. Theme 2. Women and organisation of telework

The organization of telework from a gender perspective reveals persistent structural inequalities that shape women's professional experiences. Many Portuguese female workers acknowledge that while the tools of work have evolved, their responsibilities—both professional and domestic—remain largely unchanged.

wPT-2 expresses frustration: "The way I see it, my job followed me home, but so did everything else. A century ago, I ran the dishwasher machine and vacuum cleaner between virtual meetings. The responsibility is still on me, and no one questions it or desires to share it with me."

Family structure plays a fundamental role in determining how telework affects women compared to men. wPT-3 highlights this issue: "Before remote work, at least my time in the office was just, let's say, mine—I could focus without distractions. But at home, I was constantly switching between tasks: answering emails, preparing food, checking on my kids, making sure my elderly parents were okay. The boundaries disappeared: it's a never ending working day and headache."

The closure of schools and elder care facilities exacerbated these tensions. wPT-7 reflects: "The pandemic turned our homes into multi-purpose spaces. It wasn't just an adjustment to remote work—it was an overwhelming layering of responsibilities, with no clear separation between professional and personal life. I had to care for my children while working, and that extra burden wasn't something my male colleagues faced in the same way or volume of emotional investment."

For some women, telework exposed pre-existing gender gaps rather than alleviating them. wPT-11 acknowledges: "Honestly, it felt like we were being sent back in time. Women fought to enter the workforce to have visibility and to build careers. But now, suddenly, we were back at home, managing everything—work and family—all at once. I fear we lost ground in being equally valuable workers as men."

The notion of flexibility in telework is also debated. wPT-10 states, "I love the idea of flexibility, but during the pandemic, it wasn't real flexibility—it was mandatory isolation. There's a difference. True flexibility means freedom: choosing when and how to work, not being forced to manage everything from home under crisis conditions." wPT-5 adds: "People misunderstand flexibility. It's not just about juggling tasks, it's about control over your schedule. And let's be honest, many of us didn't have that control—we had to mold our work around household demands."

Some women found telework beneficial in certain aspects. wPT-9 notes: "For those of us living in big cities, cutting out commuting saves us valuable time. Instead of wasting two hours a day in traffic, I could actually use that time for myself. That was a real advantage."

However, mental health concerns arose as isolation and burnout increased. wPT-2 warns, "Multitasking is already exhausting, and now professional isolation is added to the mix. Without daily interactions with colleagues, my work became emotionally draining." Supporting this concern wPT-8 referenced her perceptions and feeling "We need to acknowledge that working remotely can be incredibly lonely, especially for those of us who, like me, are already carrying multiple burdens."

Spanish female workers approached telework with a strong focus on whether it truly facilitated work-life balance or simply intensified existing struggles. Many argued that telework is not a real solution for work-family conflict. wES-2 states, "Some people on TV or on the internet call telework a tool for conciliation, but I don't see it that way. Instead of helping, it just merged my professional and domestic work into one never-ending cycle. At least before, I had a space where I could focus purely on my job."

For some women, the idea of multitasking during work was initially seen as an advantage. wES-6 admits, "I won't lie—I liked the idea that I could throw in a load of laundry while in a meeting. But in reality, it just meant I was constantly splitting my attention. It's not real productivity, it's a distraction that reinforces me doing pretty much everything for free."

The debate over telework's flexibility was just as divided in Spain as in Portugal. wES-7 strongly supports telework, calling it "a true expression of freedom": "For me, remote work is liberating. I know many women who have become digital nomads, working from anywhere. It gives us choices we didn't have before."

However, others argue that flexibility is only a privilege for those in certain life situations. wES-12 explains, "Telework works well for single young professionals, but for parents—especially mothers like me—it's a different reality. If you have to pick up kids from different schools, manage meals, and ensure your work gets done, then flexibility is just an illusion or a privilege of a few."

Profiling teleworkers further reveals differences in how telework is perceived. wES-13 finds that remote work is a lifeline for those living far from company offices: "For me as I previously had to relocate or spend part of my salary on rent just to be close to work, telework has been a blessing. It virtually allows me to stay in the workforce."

However, others warn that remote work can lead to professional invisibility. wES-1 cautions, "As I work exclusively from home, I fear being overlooked. If I am not physically present, it's easy for colleagues—and even, unfortunately, myself—to see my work as less important. I noticed that family members sometimes think that because I am at home, I am 'not really working.' And over time, that mentality affects how I see myself."

The issue of career progression also arises. wES-14 discusses the risk of "glass ceilings" and "sticky floors" becoming even more entrenched in a remote setting: "I worry that being away from the office means fewer chances for promotion. No matter how well I work from home, visibility matters. If I'm not in the room, I'm not in their minds when leadership opportunities arise."

wES-9 expands on the long-term consequences: "I believe that for me, telework might mean slower career growth. Without in-person networking, it's harder to gain recognition. Over time, this leads to disappointment, that's why I prefer at least a hybrid mode".

Table 7. Female workers reflections on women and organisation of work

Theme	Portuguese female workers	Spanish female workers	Common points	Differences
Household and professional burden	Many respondents (e.g., wPT-2, wPT-3, wPT-7) reported that telework did not reduce their workload but instead intensified their dual responsibilities.	Respondents like wES-2 and wES-6 emphasized that telework merged professional and domestic work into a single, endless cycle.	Women experience increased domestic and caregiving responsibilities alongside professional work.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-11) highlighted a sense of being sent "back in time" regarding gender roles.

Family structure and work boundaries	wPT-3 and wPT-7 described how telework erased professional-personal boundaries, forcing them to juggle multiple tasks throughout the day.	wES-12 noted that flexibility is often an illusion, particularly for working mothers who must balance childcare and professional duties.	Family responsibilities interfere with work focus, making telework more stressful.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-3) emphasized elder care responsibilities, whereas Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-12) focused on parental duties.
Flexibility debate	wPT-10 and wPT-5 argued that flexibility was a myth during the pandemic, as it was mandatory rather than a true choice.	wES-7 praised telework as a form of freedom, particularly for digital nomads, but wES-12 warned that flexibility benefits only certain demographics.	Flexibility is valued but not equally accessible or beneficial for all women.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-7) emphasized the benefits of telework for mobility, while Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-5) stressed its lack of control.
Commuting vs. remote work	wPT-9 found eliminating commuting time to be one of the few advantages of telework.	wES-13 noted that telework allowed women to remain in the workforce without relocating for work.	Time saved from commuting was a significant advantage.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-13) explicitly mentioned cost savings on rent due to telework.
Mental health and professional visibility	wPT-2 and wPT-8 reported increased isolation and emotional exhaustion due to the lack of workplace interaction.	wES-1 and wES-14 expressed concerns that working remotely reduces career visibility and promotion opportunities.	Professional isolation and career disadvantages are key concerns.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-14) emphasized "glass ceilings" and "sticky floors" in remote settings, while Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-2) focused more on emotional burnout.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code Map 7. Female workers reflections on women and organisation of work



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.8.3. Theme 3. Legal regime of telework

The regulatory landscape of telework has evolved rapidly in both Portugal and Spain, yet without explicit provisions addressing the unique challenges faced by female workers. Despite the progress made, women express frustration at the absence of gender-specific considerations in the new telework law.

One worker (wPT-3) shared her disappointment: "I read the new law on telework, hoping to see something that acknowledges our reality. But it speaks in general terms, as if men and women experience remote work the same way. We don't. Our responsibilities at home don't disappear just because we work remotely."

Several Portuguese female teleworkers note that while labor legislation in Portugal often provides special protections for women in areas such as maternity and political participation, telework regulations remain largely gender-neutral. wPT-11 elaborated: "Lawmakers seem to believe that gender equality means treating everyone the same. But when our starting points are unequal, this kind of neutrality only reinforces existing disparities."

Another concern raised is the law's limited scope in addressing broader structural inequalities. wPT-6 pointed out: "It's good to have a legal framework for telework, but it still feels incomplete. The challenges we face as women—balancing work, home, and children—aren't truly acknowledged. They need to do more."

Workers have also commented on the right to disconnect and the financial compensation for electricity costs introduced in the law. While these measures are seen as positive, they are deemed insufficient. wPT-8 observed: "Yes, it helps a little, but it doesn't address the mental load or the blurred boundaries between professional and domestic responsibilities."

Even with a designated work schedule, many workers report that they often find themselves answering emails late at night after managing family obligations. The lack of clear enforcement of the right to disconnect means that work often spills into personal time, exacerbating stress and burnout.

Spanish female workers echo similar frustrations. Many are aware of the telework law but feel it fails to address gender-specific obstacles. wES-4 remarked: "The law speaks of flexibility, but flexibility for whom? If I'm working from home and still managing everything else, where is my flexibility?"

Spanish workers also highlight the slow progress in integrating gender considerations into legal frameworks. wES-6 pointed out: "Spain likes to present itself as progressive, but real progress would mean recognizing the invisible labor women do at home. Right now, the law treats us as if we're all on an equal footing with men. We are not."

Many female professionals have expressed frustration that despite progressive rhetoric, actual policies do little to alleviate the structural burdens women face. The

law's neutrality often translates to a lack of meaningful support for women who bear the dual responsibility of professional and domestic work.

While some women see benefits in the regulation, such as the definition of telework rights and employer responsibilities, others criticize its limitations. wES-3 noted: "Why does the law only recognize telework as a formal arrangement if we work more than two days remotely for three months? What about those of us with hybrid schedules?"

The absence of a gender-sensitive approach in the law remains a contentious issue. Some workers view this neutrality as positive, believing it prevents gender-based discrimination, while others see it as a missed opportunity to address systemic inequalities. wES-14 lamented: "This could have been a chance to rethink work in a way that truly supports women. Instead, it's just another law that assumes we all have the same starting conditions."

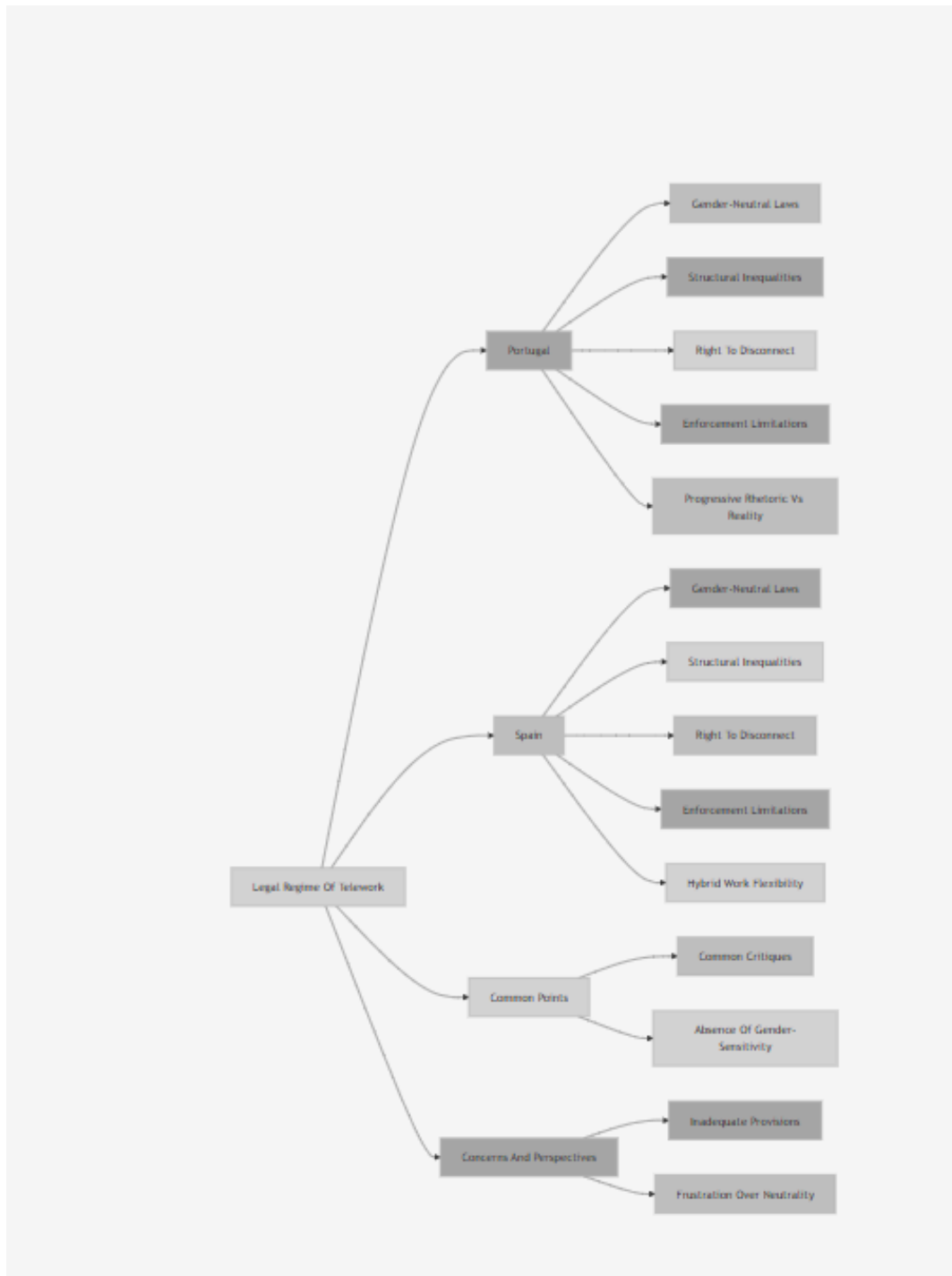
Table 8. Female workers reflections on legal regime of telework

Theme	Portuguese female workers	Spanish female workers	Common Points	Differences
Lack of Gender-Specific Provisions	Respondents like wPT-3 and wPT-11 criticized the gender-neutral language of Portugal's telework law, arguing that it fails to recognize the unequal distribution of domestic labor.	wES-6 and wES-4 expressed similar frustrations, stating that Spain's telework law ignores the invisible labor women perform at home.	Telework legislation in both countries remains gender-neutral, failing to address structural inequalities.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-11) highlighted the contradiction between gender protections in other laws and their absence in telework regulations.
Structural Inequalities and Gender Neutrality	wPT-6 noted that while the legal framework is a step forward, it does not fully account for the balancing act women face between work and home.	wES-14 argued that neutrality in the law overlooks systemic inequalities, missing an opportunity to support female workers.	Both groups see the absence of gender-sensitive provisions as reinforcing existing disparities.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-14) framed the issue as a missed chance for broader labor reform, while Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-6) emphasized the law's incompleteness.

Right to Disconnect and Mental Load	wPT-8 acknowledged the right to disconnect as a positive step but criticized its weak enforcement, leading to blurred work-life boundaries.	wES-4 questioned the practicality of telework flexibility, arguing that managing both professional and household duties negates real autonomy.	Women in both countries struggle with work encroaching on personal time despite legal protections.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-8) focused on stress and burnout, whereas Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-4) highlighted the illusion of flexibility.
Formal Recognition of Telework	wPT-6 and others noted that the financial compensation for electricity costs is helpful but does not address deeper gendered burdens.	wES-3 criticized Spain's requirement that telework must be more than two days a week for three months to be formally recognized, excluding hybrid workers.	Some legal provisions are seen as steps forward, but they fail to address fundamental gender disparities.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-3) emphasized technical limitations of the law, whereas Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-6) focused more on the inadequacy of support measures.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code Map 8. Female workers reflections on legal regime of telework



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.7.4. Theme 4. Feminization of telework

Several interviewees highlighted gender disparities in the adoption of remote work, shedding light on how organizational policies and societal expectations influenced these trends. For instance, wPT-2 noted, "During confinement, I observed a higher proportion of women working remotely compared to men in my

company. Female colleagues were more frequently offered remote work options, while male colleagues were often expected to remain on-site when it was possible." This suggests that organizational policies during the pandemic may have disproportionately allocated remote work opportunities to women, reflecting underlying gender biases in workplace practices.

In contrast, wPT-5 reported a more balanced distribution: "In my workplace, both men and women worked remotely in similar numbers during the pandemic. However, post-confinement, I observed that women were more likely to continue teleworking, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities." This indicates that caregiving roles, often culturally associated with women, may have influenced the persistence of remote work among female employees. The intersection of professional and domestic responsibilities appears to have played a significant role in shaping these patterns.

A temporal shift in telework adoption was also observed. wPT-3 remarked: "Initially, telework was universally adopted, but as restrictions eased, men returned to the office at higher rates than women." This trend aligns with broader societal expectations regarding gender roles and workplace flexibility, where women are often expected to prioritize caregiving and household duties. wPT-9 added further context: "After confinement, some women, including myself, initially returned to the office. However, over time, many colleagues reverted to telework, likely due to its flexibility in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities." This highlights the dynamic nature of telework adoption and its close connection to gendered caregiving expectations.

The interviews revealed divergent views on whether telework is becoming a female-dominated practice. On one hand, wPT-12 viewed the trend positively: "As we can do more remote work, it enhances our access to jobs that offer better work-life balance, potentially improving overall life and well-being." This perspective frames telework as an empowering tool for women, enabling them to navigate both professional and personal responsibilities more effectively. On the other hand, wPT-8 expressed concern about potential job segregation: "If telework becomes predominantly associated with us, women, it may mean concentrating women in lower-paying, less prestigious roles." This reflects broader anxieties about the entrenchment of gendered occupational hierarchies, where women are often relegated to roles perceived as less valuable.

Systemic risks were also emphasized. wPT-15 warned, " I believe that if telework turns into something truly feminine, eventually it may hinder women's career progression." This underscores the potential for telework to perpetuate structural inequities in the labor market, particularly in fields where women are already overrepresented.

Spanish interviewees echoed similar themes, with additional insights into hybrid work models and regional dynamics. wES-5 highlighted hybrid work preferences: "In my company, both genders work remotely, but women are more likely to adopt hybrid schedules, likely due to the flexibility it offers while maintaining a connection to the workplace." This suggests that hybrid models may appeal to women seeking to balance multiple roles, offering a middle ground between full remote work and on-site presence. However, wES-7 cautioned against the devaluation of remote work: "If telework becomes predominantly female, companies may undervalue these positions, negatively impacting women's career trajectories." This aligns with concerns about the gendered devaluation of labor, where roles predominantly occupied by women are often perceived as less prestigious or impactful.

Historical parallels were also drawn. wES-11 reflected, "Women have historically fought for equal access to the workplace. If telework becomes a female thing, it may mean again the connection of women to home-based roles." This perspective frames telework as a potential threat to gender equality, as it could reinforce traditional gender roles and limit women's visibility in professional settings. Similarly, wES-2 warned of entrenched gendered divisions: "If current trends persist, we may see more women staying at home and returning to traditional work patterns, with men in on-site roles and women at home. It is scary." This highlights the long-term implications of gendered telework adoption, particularly in shaping workplace norms and expectations.

Generational influences were also noted. wES-4 observed: "I see that younger workers, particularly those till mid 30s, are driving demand for remote jobs. If women dominate telework while men remain in offices, this might lead to new work patterns like I won't be able to find a presential work." This suggests that generational preferences may reinforce gender disparities, as younger workers increasingly seek flexibility in their careers. Despite these challenges, wES-15 identified a potential benefit: "The increasing prevalence of telework has enabled my female friends and me to develop better digital skills, which are critical in today's

job market." This frames telework as an opportunity for skill development among women, equipping them with tools to thrive in a rapidly evolving labor market.

However, wES-1 urged caution in drawing definitive conclusions: "I think it is premature to definitively label telework as gendered as there was not much time passed after the pandemic. We discussed with my family that organizational policies of our jobs vary widely with some companies accepting remote mode and with others not at all." This highlights the evolving nature of telework trends and the need for further research to understand their long-term implications. wES-14 summarized the debate: "I deem that telework is not yet like the established norm and usual thing available for all in Spain. While more women are working remotely, many companies still prioritize physical presence, which may mitigate gendered trends." This underscores the role of organizational practices in shaping telework dynamics, suggesting that corporate policies will play a critical role in determining whether telework becomes a tool for empowerment or a barrier to gender equality.

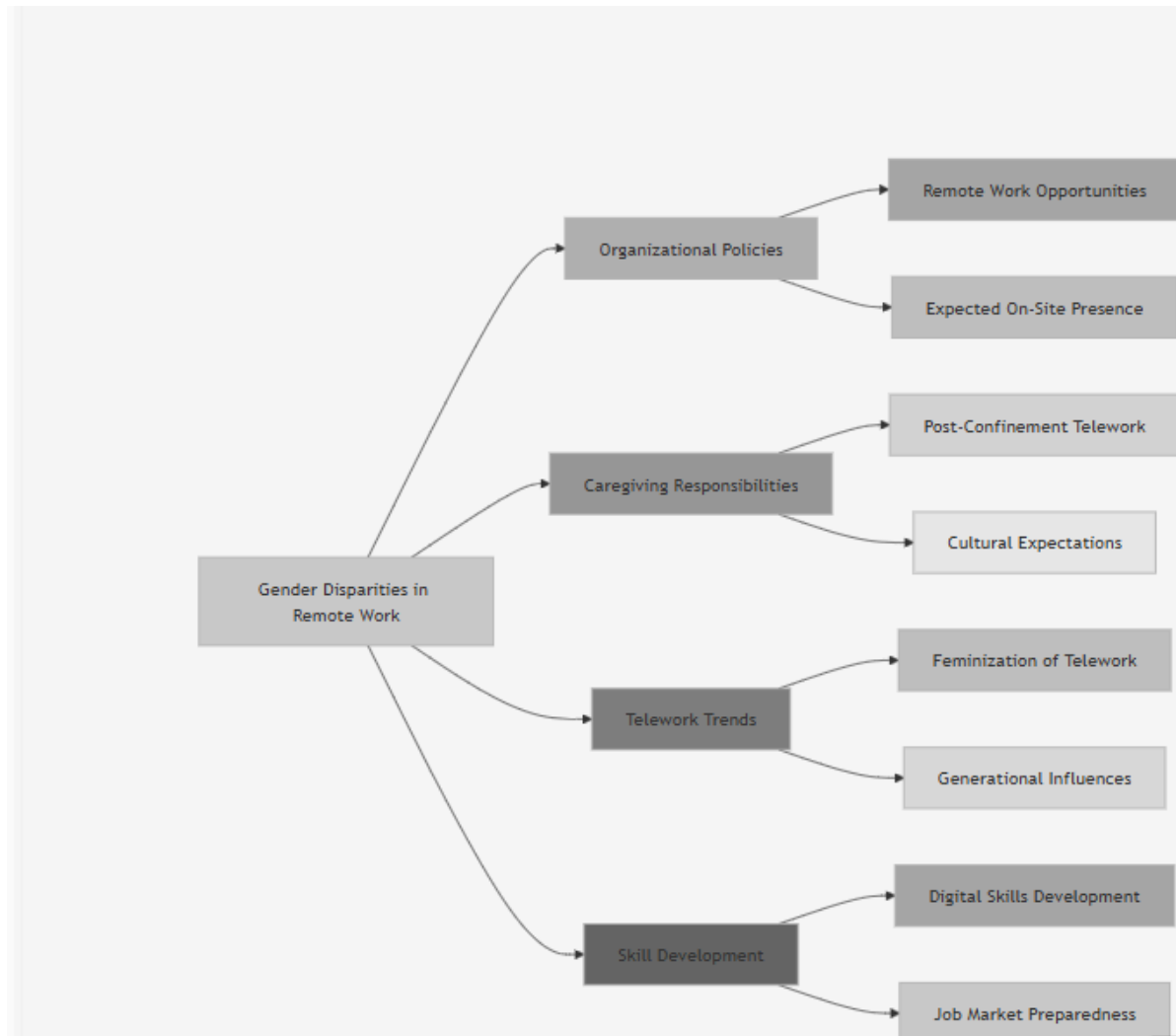
Table 9. Female workers reflections on feminization of telework

Theme	Portuguese female workers	Spanish female workers	Common points	Differences
Gender Disparities in Telework Adoption	wPT-2 noted that women were more frequently offered remote work options, while men were expected to remain on-site. wPT-5, however, observed a more balanced distribution during the pandemic, though post-confinement, women—especially those with caregiving roles—continued teleworking.	wES-5 highlighted that while both genders engaged in telework, women were more likely to adopt hybrid schedules due to the flexibility they provide.	Both countries show that caregiving responsibilities and organizational policies influence telework adoption differently for men and women.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-2) emphasized gender biases in initial telework allocations, whereas Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-5) focused on hybrid models.

Temporal Shifts in Telework Trends	wPT-3 noted that initially, telework was universal, but men returned to the office at higher rates. wPT-9 observed that some women returned at first but later reverted to telework due to its flexibility.	wES-2 warned that current trends might push more women into home-based roles, reinforcing traditional work patterns. wES-11 drew historical parallels, stating that telework might again link women to domestic spheres.	Both groups recognize a post-pandemic shift where women are more likely to continue teleworking, often due to caregiving responsibilities.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-2, wES-11) were more vocal about telework reinforcing historical gender roles, while Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-9) emphasized flexibility.
Telework as an Opportunity vs. a Risk	wPT-12 viewed telework positively, as it enhances work-life balance. Conversely, wPT-8 worried about job segregation if telework becomes female-dominated. wPT-15 warned of career stagnation for women in telework-heavy roles.	wES-7 raised concerns that telework's feminization could lead to job devaluation. wES-14 argued that telework is not yet a universal norm in Spain, potentially limiting its long-term gendered impact.	Some see telework as a tool for better work-life balance, while others fear it may entrench occupational segregation.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-8, wPT-15) stressed career progression risks, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-7, wES-14) highlighted telework's limited acceptance in corporate culture.
Generational and Structural Influences	wPT-6 and others noted that telework's flexibility allows women to manage multiple roles, but it does not address underlying structural inequalities.	wES-4 observed that younger workers are driving telework demand, warning that if gendered patterns persist, women may struggle to find in-office roles. wES-15 emphasized the potential for telework to enhance digital skills for women.	Telework is shaping labor market trends across generations, with digital skills emerging as a key benefit.	Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-4) linked telework's feminization to generational workforce shifts, while Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-6) focused more on gendered burdens.

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code Map 9. Female workers reflections on feminization of telework



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.8.5. Theme 5. Future of telework

When asked whether telework, induced by the COVID-19 crisis, has been beneficial for the future and quality of their employment, respondents provided mixed but insightful perspectives. Many highlighted the advantages of telework, particularly its flexibility and ability to improve work-life balance. For instance, a Portuguese female worker (wPT-2) noted: "Telework has been good for me because it gives me more flexibility to balance work and family. But sometimes I feel

isolated without face-to-face interaction, which affects my motivation and productivity." This reflects a common theme: while telework offers personal benefits, it also introduces challenges related to isolation and professional visibility.

Another worker (wPT-5) emphasized the practical benefits of telework but raised concerns about its long-term impact on career advancement: "Telework has helped me manage my time better, especially with family responsibilities. However, I worry that remote jobs might be seen as less valuable, which could limit my chances of promotion." This sentiment underscores a broader anxiety about the potential devaluation of remote roles and their implications for gender equality in the workplace.

Similarly, a Spanish worker (wES-3) highlighted the transformative potential of telework for women in distant areas: "For me, telework has been a game-changer because it allows me to access jobs that weren't available from everywhere. But we need better infrastructure, like reliable internet, to make it work properly." This points to the importance of addressing regional disparities to ensure that telework benefits are accessible to all.

However, concerns about job quality and work-life boundaries were also prevalent. One worker (wES-7) expressed apprehension: "Telework has made it easier for me to enter the labor market, but I worry about the quality of these jobs. If remote work becomes associated with lower pay or fewer benefits, it could make my chances for a better life standart fail." This highlights the need for policies that ensure remote work does not reinforce existing structural inequities.

When asked what should be introduced legally to make telework more suitable for their daily lives, respondents proposed several practical measures. Many emphasized the importance of clear boundaries to protect work-life balance. For example, wPT-1 stated, "There should be effective laws that guarantee the right to disconnect. I feel pressured to work beyond regular hours because I am always online, and this affects my mental health." This reflects a widespread need for policies that prevent the encroachment of work into personal time.

Support for caregivers was another recurring theme. wPT-6 argued, "Telework policies should include provisions for women with caregiving responsibilities, like flexible hours or subsidies for childcare. This would help us balance work and family life more effectively." This highlights the disproportionate burden of caregiving that many women face and the need for targeted support to address this issue.

The issue of professional visibility and recognition was also raised. wPT-12 explained, "Legal frameworks should ensure that remote workers receive the same recognition and opportunities for promotion as on-site employees. Right now, I feel like my contributions are less visible, and that could hurt my career in the long term." This underscores the importance of creating equitable systems that value remote and on-site work equally.

In Spain, respondents also called for gender-sensitive policies and infrastructure improvements. wES-2 suggested, "Public policies should consider the double burden that many women carry, balancing work and domestic responsibilities. Telework regulations should include measures like shared parental leave or support for household services." This reflects the need for policies that address the unique challenges faced by women in balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

Additionally, wES-5 highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure: "For telework to work well, especially in distant areas, governments need to invest in reliable internet and technology. Without these, many of us can't fully participate in remote work." This points to the critical role of infrastructure in ensuring equitable access to telework opportunities for Portuguese respondents as well. This way wPT-15 points out: "Reliable internet and proper equipment aren't luxuries—they're necessities for remote work. Without them, telework isn't really an option for everyone".

Finally, the need for fair employment agreements was emphasized. wES-15 stated, "Telework agreements should be standardized to ensure fair treatment, including clear expectations about working hours, communication, and performance evaluation. This would protect workers from exploitation." This highlights the importance of creating transparent and equitable frameworks to govern remote work.

Table 10. Female workers reflections on future of telework

Theme	Portuguese female workers	Spanish female workers	Common points	Differences
-------	---------------------------	------------------------	---------------	-------------

Telework benefits and challenges	wPT-2 appreciated telework's flexibility for work-life balance but noted isolation affects motivation. wPT-5 highlighted time management advantages but worried about remote jobs being undervalued for career progression.	wES-3 found telework transformative for accessing remote jobs but stressed the need for better infrastructure. wES-7 raised concerns that telework might lead to lower-quality jobs and pay.	Both groups see telework as beneficial for flexibility but worry about career visibility and job quality.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-5) emphasized concerns about promotions, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-3) focused on regional disparities.
Work-Life balance and the right to disconnect	wPT-1 stressed the need for laws enforcing the right to disconnect to prevent overwork and mental health strain.	wES-2 called for policies addressing women's double burden through shared parental leave and household service support.	Both groups advocate for policies protecting work-life balance.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-1) focused on disconnection laws, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-2) emphasized family support measures.
Caregiving support and gender-sensitive policies	wPT-6 argued for flexible hours and childcare subsidies to help women balance work and family.	wES-2 similarly suggested policies recognizing women's caregiving burdens and providing structural support.	Both groups highlight caregiving responsibilities as a key factor in telework adoption.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-6) focused on employer-driven flexible policies, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-2) emphasized public policy interventions.
Professional visibility and career advancement	wPT-12 warned that telework limits visibility, which could hinder promotions, and called for legal frameworks ensuring equal recognition of remote workers.	wES-15 stressed the need for standardized telework agreements covering expectations on working hours, communication, and evaluations.	Both groups worry that telework could reduce career advancement opportunities if not properly regulated.	Portuguese respondents (e.g., wPT-12) focused on visibility and promotions, while Spanish respondents (e.g., wES-15) emphasized contract standardization.

Infrastructure and access to telework	wPT-15 shares an opinion that nowadays the stable connection is a must for telework and should not be considered a luxury.	wES-5 highlighted the need for better digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equitable telework access.	Both Portuguese and Spanish respondents were vocal about the need for better digital infrastructure to support telework.	Respondents (e.g., wES-5, wPT-15) emphasized technological barriers
---------------------------------------	--	---	--	---

Source: data and analysis of the author.

Code Map 10. Female workers reflections on future of telework



Source: data and analysis of the author.

5.8.6. Female workers reflections: results

The transition to telework during the COVID-19 crisis revealed both commonalities and divergences between Spanish and Portuguese workers. While both groups faced technical and logistical challenges, their adaptation was shaped

by distinct cultural and organizational factors. In Portugal, many workers found the shift to telework less difficult than expected, with digital tools becoming a familiar part of daily work. However, economic and managerial pressures intensified the transition, particularly as workers struggled with inadequate home office setups and a lack of employer-provided resources. The economic burden of remote work was unevenly distributed, with some employees covering their own costs despite legal requirements for reimbursement.

In Spain, where workplace culture has traditionally been rooted in physical presence, the shift to telework was more disruptive. The transition was met with skepticism from both employees and managers, leading to increased surveillance and a lack of trust in remote work productivity. Spanish workers reported a stronger sense of pressure from employers, who introduced monitoring tools and imposed stricter oversight. Despite this initial resistance, Spain's existing technological infrastructure played a crucial role in enabling rapid digital adaptation, helping companies avoid economic stagnation.

Both Portuguese and Spanish workers experienced spatial limitations in their homes, but the impact was particularly pronounced for those with caregiving responsibilities. In Portugal, workers emphasized the challenge of balancing work, school, and home life in confined spaces, often highlighting inequalities based on living conditions. In Spain, the lack of structured telework policies exacerbated these difficulties, with blurred work-life boundaries contributing to overwork and exhaustion. The need for a clear right to disconnect became a major concern, as prolonged working hours led to mental and physical strain.

Concerns over career progression were prevalent in both countries, with workers fearing that remote roles might be devalued in the long term. Portuguese workers, while appreciating telework's flexibility, expressed apprehension about its impact on professional visibility and promotion opportunities. In Spain, these anxieties were compounded by a workplace culture that still prioritized in-person presence as a measure of commitment and productivity.

Despite these challenges, both groups acknowledged telework's potential to expand job opportunities, particularly for those in remote areas. However, Spanish workers placed greater emphasis on the need for infrastructure improvements, such as reliable internet access, to ensure equal participation in remote work.

Meanwhile, Portuguese workers called for legal measures to support caregivers and ensure that telework policies address gendered labor divisions.

Overall, while Spanish and Portuguese workers faced overlapping challenges, their experiences were shaped by distinct national labor cultures. In Portugal, the transition was marked by economic constraints and disparities in employer support, while in Spain, managerial mistrust and cultural resistance played a more central role. Addressing these challenges requires targeted policy interventions that consider both structural inequalities and the evolving nature of remote work.

5.9. Observations

The conceptual analysis was conducted through the concept of precarity, which encompasses a state of persistent uncertainty, instability, and lack of security, affecting individuals' economic and social conditions based on the perspectives of Beck, Butler, and Bauman to understand how telework contributes to and exacerbates precarity.

From a technical standpoint, the transition to telework was notably smooth, facilitated by pre-existing familiarity with remote working practices among employees. Despite this, issues with implementing and operationalizing necessary software highlight a certain instability. This resonates with Beck's (2000) "risk society" concept, where technological advancements simultaneously create new hazards. The initial adaptation issues reflect a lack of preparedness that contributes to a sense of economic precariousness, as both employees and managers grapple with maintaining productivity under new conditions. Portuguese experts emphasise the abrupt nature of the transition and the added stress it brought to management and employees alike. Spanish experts note the institutional need for control, which further underscores economic instability.

The overlap between living and working environments, especially challenging for women with overwhelming home offices or family responsibilities, underscores Bauman's (2000) notion of "liquid modernity." This term describes a societal condition where fixed and stable structures dissolve, leading to increased fluidity and uncertainty. The blurred boundaries between professional and domestic spheres exemplify this fluidity, creating a precarious balance where employees struggle to separate work from personal life. Women, particularly, bear the brunt of

this shift, managing increased domestic responsibilities alongside professional tasks, reinforcing traditional gender roles and contributing to ongoing precariousness.

Telework has had significant implications for gender dynamics, reinforcing the notion of precarity as a method of governance (Butler, 2015). The increased domestic workload on women, especially during the pandemic, reflects a systemic issue where gender roles are deeply entrenched. This dual role often leads to increased stress and mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, furthering the state of precarity for women in the workforce. Portuguese experts and Spanish specialists point out that the persistence of patriarchal norms continues to undermine women's professional progress.

The varying degrees of employer support in providing necessary telework equipment and covering additional costs reveal an uneven landscape of corporate responsibility. Some companies' reluctance to cover expenses like internet costs illustrates a governance approach where employees must self-manage their precarity. This lack of uniform support reflects a broader societal trend of shifting the burden of economic instability onto individuals, aligning with Butler's idea of precarity as a dominant regime. Portuguese specialists and Spanish experts note that insufficient employer support exacerbates economic instability for teleworkers.

The introduction of new telework laws in Portugal and Spain, while generally positive, lacks specificity in addressing the gendered dimensions of telework. The absence of gender-specific provisions indicates a failure to recognize the unique challenges faced by women, perpetuating a state of precarity. The slow progress in integrating gender-sensitive measures into legislation, influenced by traditional values and economic considerations, solidifies the systemic nature of precarity. Legal frameworks must evolve to address these disparities effectively and support a more equitable telework environment.

Analysing the transition to telework through the lens of precarity reveals a complex interplay of technological, economic, and social factors contributing to a heightened state of instability and insecurity for workers in particular. The integration of Beck, Butler, and Bauman's theories provides a comprehensive understanding of how telework not only reflects but also amplifies precarity, particularly for women. To mitigate these effects, it is essential to develop robust, gender-sensitive legal and policy frameworks and supportive corporate policies.

These policies should address the specific features of telework, promoting a more stable and equitable work environment. Both Portuguese and Spanish specialists stress out the importance of proactive measures to ensure that telework does not perpetuate or worsen existing inequalities and precarity, but rather, offers a pathway to greater economic and social stability for both men and women.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis investigated telework as a phenomenon arising from technological advancements and labor market evolution, analysed through the lens of gender inequality. It particularly focused on key factors such as the unequal distribution of unpaid labor, patriarchal norms and attitudes shaping women's roles, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in expanding the number of teleworkers, and the associated workplace segregation and discrimination linked to remote work. The objective was to provide a nuanced understanding of how these factors intersect and influence the broader landscape of female employment within the labor markets of the advanced Western economies of Portugal and Spain.

Based on examining both historical and contemporary discourses on gender inequality within the labor markets of these countries, conclusion remarks formulate the distinct approaches that Portugal and Spain have adopted in response to labor market shifts and the legal regulation of telework. They also explore related issues and aspects, including the potential for positive discrimination through legislation, the feminization of telework, and how these approaches have affected women's participation in the labor force within the context of telework.

On educational track

We recognize that a key factor in female employment in both Portugal and Spain has been the substantial progress in women's access to education during the years of democratization, which has significantly boosted female labor force participation over the last five decades. However, despite these educational advancements, traditional gender roles and stereotypes still hinder women's career progression, especially in male-dominated fields like STEM. While many women are gaining specialised education, we observe that patriarchal norms still lead them to concentrate in care-oriented professions, even within technical domains. For instance, we noticed that despite Portugal's educational gains, progress in overcoming barriers for women entering the tech industry has been slower compared to Spain. In Spain, although the Gender Equality Index shows improvement, the labor market remains marked by occupational segregation and a

dual structure as the gender pay gap and the digital divide continue to limit women's full participation in the workforce. As work evolves, particularly with the growth of telework, we see education and skills more critical for women as remote-friendly sectors often demand education beyond the basic level, meaning female teleworkers tend to have specialised training. Yet, the ongoing challenges, including balancing professional and domestic responsibilities, remain substantial barriers to obtaining such training for women in both countries. These observations emphasise the importance of sustained efforts to address systemic barriers to women's career advancement, especially as new work formats like telework take hold.

On labor market transformation through telework

We observe that the shift to telework has significantly altered labor market dynamics in both Spain and Portugal, with a growing number of individuals working remotely or in hybrid roles and an increasing willingness to adapt to these modes of work. As telework expands, it offers a possible reshaping of traditional workplace structures and understanding of it, developing more outcomes for women—from greater female labor force participation meaning new jobs to the rising demand for higher technical skills among female workers.

In Spain, we see that telework has contributed to a slightly more balanced sharing of household duties, as the versatility of telework allows both men and women to manage all kinds of daily tasks more efficiently. Broader social trends in Spain, where there has been a gradual move towards more egalitarian gender roles in recent decades, aligned with the shift towards a fair division of labor at home. However, we also recognize that traditional gender norms could persist if women continue to disproportionately accept household duties during and beyond teleworking hours. We point out that this dual effect signals the need for a proactive path that women themselves should consider to undertake in order to change the situation.

In contrast, we find that traditional gender roles in Portugal are more deeply embedded, which can limit the potential benefits of telework for women. These persistent norms may constrain women's capability to fully leverage the adjustability of remote work, supporting existing labor market disparities. This is especially evident in sectors where telework is prevalent, such as IT and finance, where

women remain depreciated despite advances in educational attainment. Given the slower pace of cultural change in Portugal, we believe that the role of the state is highly important as targeted legal and policy interventions are essential to ensure that telework benefits are equitably distributed across genders.

Our analysis of Spain and Portugal highlights the critical role of cultural factors in shaping the outcomes of labor market transformations. While both countries have made progress in increasing female labor force participation, the probability of telework to foster gender inclusivity varies according to societal attitudes toward gender roles. Our comparison via case study offers a detailed insight for social science research and suggests the need of culturally responsive policymaking to address the distinct obstacles and prospects of telework in diverse ambiances.

On employers' responses and facilitation of telework

Both countries faced the rapid shift to telework. For those employees with favourable living conditions and minimal caregiving responsibilities, the onset of telework was relatively smooth, especially in balancing professional and domestic spaces. Yet, many others—particularly women who often bear primary caregiving roles—found themselves with increased workloads as work and home responsibilities converged. Our analysis highlights that employer responses to telework adoption varied, reflecting differences in corporate culture, available resources, and management styles: some companies took proactive steps, supplying essential equipment like laptops, while others hesitated to cover additional basic costs, such as internet expenses, despite legal obligations and instructions. We observed that telework success often relied heavily on corporate culture and employees' professional commitment: driven by desire to keep their job, many employees, fearing a layoff, maintained the same responsible attitude and productivity levels as they had during the onsite work. Nevertheless, the sudden shift to remote work was particularly challenging for teams accustomed to close in-person collaboration, causing misunderstandings, initial tension and disruption between members of teams.

In Spain, where the tradition of on-site work runs deep, the change to telework was more disruptive than in Portugal: fearing absenteeism, some companies even implemented monitoring software to track employee activity, though these

measures apparently exposed employees to an additional stress of being controlled. Over time, tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams improved communication and collaboration, and we noted that many employees came to appreciate the flexibility of telework as, after they adapted to it, many of them preferred to work in this mode.

Generally, all the situation has driven substantial workforce upskilling. However, it also brought up the issues of a “right to disconnect,” as many teleworkers tend to work over their shifts and work-life boundaries become increasingly blurred. We observe essential conversations around more adequate and healthier work-life balance, prompting new telework regulations in both countries.

On implication of telework for women

As we examine the results, we recognize that telework has introduced both potential pros and substantial cons for women in Portugal and Spain, especially regarding the balance of professional and domestic responsibilities. Despite the introduction of time-saving household technologies, women still often manage domestic obligations, even upon remote work. In analysing this dynamic, we find that family structure significantly shapes the telework experience for women. Those with dependents, such as children or elderly family members, encounter more significant difficulties compared to those without these caregiving obligations. This blending of paid and unpaid work within the same environment can increase stress levels and impede focus on professional tasks. Experts across both countries note that this dual burden can detrimentally impact women's overall well-being and professional productivity, often leading to increased stress and burnout.

Within the issue, there is also a growing debate on whether telework aids or creates barriers for gender equality. Some specialists argue that the shift has no connection to reducing gender disparities in career advancement or pay. However, we find that others see telework as potentially supporting traditional gender roles, creating a situation of invisibility for management and, eventually, a return to home-based work: when women work from home, they may feel less connected to their teams, and vice versa, they can be potentially viewed as less valuable and motivated, which could undermine their career progression.

On flexibility and telework as a conciliation measure

In our analysis, the concept of flexibility within telework, especially as a tool for reconciling work-family conflicts, reveals complex dynamics—particularly when assessing its impact on women in Portugal and Spain : telework does indeed offer opportunities to control one's schedule and eliminate a necessity to travel to work, which can significantly benefit women managing both professional and family time. However, the pandemic showed that this flexibility often brings women managing multiple roles at once, leading to an ultimate burnout and dissatisfaction.

Spanish experts remain divided on whether telework genuinely aids in work-family reconciliation. Some argue that telework can not be called flexible as it has not eased the burden on women; instead, it has compressed both paid and unpaid labor into the same timeframe, raising the overall workload. The isolation that can accompany telework makes us doubt the gain of flexibility as it introduces burnout risks, while reduced social intercommunications and the absence of clear work-life division can deepen personal perception of loneliness and disconnection.

Alternatively, we note that those specialists, who advocate telework adjustability, emphasise its betterment for women residing in large cities with lengthy commutes: they state that the commuting also causes stress and working remotely withdraws it. Ultimately, we need to say that the utility of telework as a conciliation measure depends heavily on individual conditions, family structures, and work expectations and demands. For some it can be a great self-management and time allocation, for others - unclear work-life space and potential career stagnation.

On legislative trends

Our analysis reveals while there is a notable trend towards incorporating gender issues in labor legislation, the substantial progress remains unreachable so far. In Portugal, efforts to incorporate gender-sensitive approaches are evident in labor laws, although they encounter certain limitations based on the legal principle of gender equality: this legal doctrine impedes the development of measures specifically designed to address gender disparities in a way of positive

discrimination. We observe that concerns persist about potential perceptions of discrimination against men, complicating the implementation of gender-focused provisions. Moreover, the legislative process is still deeply shaped by traditional patriarchal values and gender stereotypes, which are very stable and resistant to any reformation. In contrast, we see that Spain's legislative framework is relatively more responsive and open to feminist and gender-sensitive approaches.: the apparent progress has been made within labor legislation but even though gender roles continue to influence the legal landscape especially in a form of the internalised perceptions of social norms among women themselves, which further complicates the advancement and effect of gender-sensitive legislation.

The recent introduction of telework laws in both Portugal and Spain signifies a positive step towards a progressive regulation. However, we observe their criticism for the limited scope. For example, Portugal's telework regulations include provisions on technical issues, such as the right to disconnect and reimbursements for electricity costs, and, while essential, we view these measures as insufficient, especially given that they do not account for specific groups like digital nomads or cross-border workers. In Spain, while telework regulations more clearly define the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers, the definition of telework, is applicable upon more than two days a week over three months, creates inconsistencies in understanding of flexibility and implementation across companies.

We also observe that both countries lack explicit gender-specific provisions in their telework laws. In Portugal, opinions are divided on whether such provisions are necessary: some argue that positive discrimination is capable of changing gender disparities, while others feel it is not consistent with the principle of equality in positive law as it was mentioned. Similarly, in Spain, there is a divide in views: some experts believe that the absence of gender-specific language does not negatively influence existing gender disparities, while others argue it mirrors a dissatisfactory legislative process, ignoring a gender-mainstreaming approach, which is critical for striving for genuine equality.

In our view, the slow integration of gender-sensitive measures into legal systems are a consequence of economic conditions: giving additional rights to women upon gender-sensitive legal advancement can bring undesirable state expenditures.

On feminization of telework

In our view, both Portugal and Spain are experiencing a clear trend toward the feminization of telework, as many women increasingly choose home-based telework as an attempt to balance professional and household duties. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we've observed that telework has become more normalised in sectors that already employ a high proportion of women, such as education, administration, and customer service, and we consider this rebound to be a sustained one. However, we believe the feminization of telework presents complex consequences. On one hand, this trend enables women to build crucial digital skills, a development that we consider to be essential as the digital economy grows. On the other hand, we worry that the association of telework with traditionally female-dominated sectors may worsen gender segregation and slow down wage growth and status for these positions. In our view, this could contribute to persisting wage gaps and could even lower the overall prestige of remote work.

In Spain, we've noted a significant preference among women for hybrid work models, as this approach allows one to achieve a certain professional visibility and create a connection with colleagues and supervisors. We believe this model may serve as a more balanced alternative, even though there's still a concern that if telework continues to be feminised, it could lower the perceived status of these roles, creating barriers for women's career advancement in the long term.

Likewise, we raise a concern that the ongoing trend of telework feminization risks reinforcing historical gender divisions in the workplace, particularly if men continue to dominate in-office environments while women work remotely. We see this as especially relevant for younger workers, who tend to be more digitally adept and adaptable to remote work. Upon a noted strong cultural preferences for in-person work in Spain, we anticipate that the speed of telework adoption may be slower than in Portugal, adding an additional complexity to how gender dynamics around remote work will evolve over time.

On the dual-valuation system for telework

In our analysis, the dual-valuation system for telework emerges as a novel theoretical framework that seeks to address the persistent gender disparities observed in remote work environments. This theory posits that the current economic paradigm fails to adequately account for the full spectrum of labor, particularly the unpaid domestic work that underpins the formal economy. By proposing a system that recognizes both paid and unpaid labor as integral components of economic productivity, this framework offers a more comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing gender inequalities in the context of telework.

At its core, the dual-valuation system challenges the traditional dichotomy between productive (paid) and reproductive (unpaid) labor. It argues that the exclusion of unpaid domestic work from economic models not only misrepresents the true nature of economic activity but also perpetuates gender inequalities. This is particularly salient in telework settings, where the boundaries between professional and domestic spheres are increasingly blurred. The theory contends that the gender disparities observed in telework are not merely the result of individual choices but are deeply embedded in institutional structures and societal norms that systematically devalue feminized labor. Legal frameworks, while necessary, have proven insufficient in addressing these structural inequalities. For instance, our comparative analysis of Portugal and Spain reveals that even robust telework regulations fail to adequately address the redistribution of unpaid labor, thus reinforcing existing gender norms.

To address these shortcomings, the dual-valuation system proposes integrating unpaid labor into economic models through various mechanisms. These could include tax credits for caregiving, social security benefits for unpaid domestic work, and employer-supported flexible work arrangements. By doing so, the theory aims to create a more equitable valuation of all forms of labor, potentially reducing gender disparities in telework environments. This theoretical framework aligns with and extends existing discussions on gender-sensitive labor policies, such as those

outlined in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It reinforces calls for an expanded economic framework that does not marginalize unpaid labor and offers a pathway to transform telework from a potential reinforcer of gender inequalities into a tool for promoting gender equity in the labor market. The dual-valuation system for telework thus provides a theoretical underpinning for future policy development and research. It challenges policymakers, employers, and researchers to reconsider traditional economic models and to develop more comprehensive and equitable approaches to telework that recognize the full spectrum of labor contributions. As remote work continues to shape the future of employment, this theoretical framework offers a crucial lens through which to examine and address the complex interplay of gender, work, and technology in the evolving labor landscape.

On future Implications and specific recommendations

In our view, one of the core findings regarding telework and gender inequality is the role of unpaid labor, which, we believe, deeply fortifies existing gender imbalances within telework. While female participation in the labor force has risen, we observe that women continue to bear a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic tasks: such a situation impacts their job-seeking patterns and career advancement, especially in Portugal, where the gender gap in unpaid work seems even more significant than in Spain.

Applying it to the issue of our study, we interpret this as a sign that women are more likely to pursue remote work arrangements that allow for a balance between professional and domestic roles, often at the expense of career prestige and advancement. To us, this pattern suggests a persistent gap in how labor economics considers gender-specific factors, leaving essential aspects of inequality underaddressed, unconsidered, hidden. Therefore, we feel that there is an urgent need for frameworks that incorporate gender-sensitive analyses into labor policies, political discourses, and economic assessments. We argue that future economic recovery strategies must include gender-sensitive policies to change the existing and further erosion of gender equality. Spain and Portugal have both made steps in regulating remote work, but we view Spain's approach as being more proactive in integrating gender considerations, whereas Portugal has shown a more gradual

and even resistant to changes response. Looking forward, we believe that the future of female employment in telework will depend heavily not only on historical moments and events but also on the direction of labor policies and shifts in societal vision of gender roles.

As for specific recommendations, we consider that an adoption of a dual-valuation system recognizing unpaid domestic work within economic frameworks can be beneficial. This approach would provide a better understanding and awareness of the societal contribution and importance, inevitability of such work as well as it will mirror and make its disproportionate burden on women conscious for society. Additionally, introducing such tax benefits or direct financial incentives for families practising a decent caregiving distribution could create an impulse for reducing the division of labor based on gender.

In the context of labor laws, we believe they must explicitly include provisions explaining conditions of gender-sensitive telework arrangements: a guarantee of equitable access to training programs for digital skills and programmes devoted to female n leadership. We suggest establishing independent monitoring authorities observing telework's gendered impacts in both countries as well as gaps in implementation and effectiveness. Moreover, we propose that Spain and Portugal incorporate telework-specific provisions into their national gender-equality action plans in order to prevent the precarization of traditional female sectors and support sustainable employment for women. Finally, we feel that societal attitudes toward gender roles must become more progressive towards caregiving and professional issues: public awareness campaigns are necessary for cultural evolution. If governments want to reach a better female labor participation and employment satisfaction, greater male participation in caregiving responsibilities must be promoted on all possible levels including a federal one. We believe that these numerous united efforts would create more equitable conditions for telework, benefiting both genders, economies, and society as a whole.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Several areas are important to highlight where further investigation is essential to deepen our understanding of the synergy of the triad consisting of economics, gender and technology in the labor market of any country. Any study, providing valuable insight, also reveals a great limitation that future research must address to offer a more comprehensive and encompassing analysis. It was mentioned before but it is worth mentioning again a general concern: there is a lack of gender perspective in modern studies of different scope. The main necessity when it comes to modern studies: there must be a specific consideration of gender asymmetries if there is a goal to provide truly enhancing information.

One key area for future research is the need to broaden the geographical scope. The current study focuses exclusively on Portugal and Spain, limiting the applicability of its findings to other regions. Expanding the scope to include countries with different socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and labor market structures would enable a comparative analysis that could reveal how various contexts influence telework adoption and its impact on the structure of gender equality. Most studies that cover the similar issues of the study made conclusions on one case: Spain (Galvez et al, 2020), United States (Pabilonia and Vernon, 2022), Vietnam (Nguyen and Armoogum, 2021). Ning et al (2021) observe the dynamics of remote work during the pandemic focusing on the impact of female leadership on labor processes comparing eight country cases. Such studies and further comparison of the whole region and other relevant issues to female workers being remote would extremely enrich the field of the study and become a step towards understanding global tendencies concerning telework and female employment.

Another significant limitation is the study's temporal focus, which captures primarily the short-term effects of the rapid transition to telework, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This limitation is particularly relevant when considering the sustainability of telework's impact on gender equality, as the current data may reflect temporary adaptations rather than lasting changes. This is a research in-course that gives tendency predictions and requires further observations and explorations in terms of timespan. Longitudinal studies that go

beyond observation within the pandemic time (like made by Karjalainen (2022) and Maillot et al (2022)) are needed to assess whether the observed changes in gender roles, labor market participation, and work-life balance are sustained over time or represent temporary shifts. Such research would provide critical insights into the long-term implications of telework for gender equality as it becomes more embedded in labor practices.

The sectoral and occupational focus of the research also requires further exploration. While the study does not emphasise any sector but mentions service, information technology and finance sectors, where telework is prevalent or frequent, it does not fully examine industries with lower telework adoption rates as it is beyond the scope of the study. Future research should investigate how telework is implemented in these sectors and its potential for promoting gender equality across a broader range of industries and occupations. Among recent studies Kim (2023) focuses on strategies for a better productivity and satisfaction among teleworkers employed in the public sector, and such a division between those employed by private enterprises and companies is also interesting and can bring a new perspective for studies in the field. Porto and de la Vega (2024) provide insights on telework in tourism in Argentina, focusing on the low potential of telework in this sector coupled with high rates of informality. Fortaneda et al (2023) explore industrial-sector teleworking and its impact on productivity as well as job satisfaction level. Additionally, there is a need for a more granular occupational analysis to understand how telework affects various job roles, from low-skilled positions to senior management, how these effects differ across gender lines and whether they bring up-skilling and a consequent career advancement as it was proposed by a recent study done by Hauret et al (2024).

Intersectionality is another critical dimension that future research should address. The current study focuses on gender inequality but does not incorporate other intersecting factors such as race, class, and disability, which can significantly influence telework experiences and outcomes in perspective. An intersectional approach would provide a more nuanced understanding of how different social categories interact with gender to shape telework dynamics, leading to more inclusive and effective policy recommendations. Coban (2022) specifies the research on those female workers who obtain marital status and have family obligation as childcare to specify experience of teleworkers in Turkey and this way

the focus of the study is intersectional. Ameri et al (2023) focuses on teleworkers with disabilities and opportunities which they can perspective get via the increase of remote work positions.

Technological advancements and their implications for telework also warrant further investigation. As digital tools and platforms continue to emerge, they are likely to reshape telework practices and potentially alter gender dynamics in the labor market. Future research should explore how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and automation, influence telework adoption and whether they mitigate or exacerbate existing gender disparities. Baldwin and Okubo (2023) dig into an issue of software automation by artificial intelligence. and whether it can eventually be a substitute for teleworkers. Chen (2024) makes a prognostic research on future teleworking models, considering inter-company ecological partnership models, decentralised self-governing entities, agile leadership and personal sense of belonging of workers in perspective. This line of inquiry is crucial for anticipating and addressing the challenges and opportunities that technological change presents.

The psychological and social impacts of telework, particularly on women, represent another important area for future research. While the current study touches on these aspects, more in-depth research is needed to understand the full range of psychological effects, such as stress, anxiety, and burnout, that teleworkers may experience. Gomez-Dominguez et al (2024) explore psychosocial risks of telework in comparison to on-site work that gives a clear perspective of how a remote job can modify mental health risks for workers. Castro - Trancon et al (2024) conducted a systematic review considering most encompassing studies on female teleworkers for over a decade and concluded that telework is prone to worsen work-family conflict. Additionally, the social implications of telework, including its influence on work-life balance, professional connections, and career advancement, should be studied and explored in greater scope that would potentially help to develop strategies supporting the well-being and growth of teleworkers, especially women.

Policy development and the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks related to telework are also critical areas for future research. Comparative studies could evaluate how different countries' approaches to telework regulation impact gender roles and labor market outcomes. There is also a need to explore the space and

opportunity for new policy initiatives that would specifically address the difficulties faced by women teleworkers, such as the right to disconnect in the context of balancing domestic and professional responsibilities. Positive discrimination and gender-sensitive legislation in promoting gender equality in telework are essential instruments that are to be considered for developing effective and equitable policies.

This study highlights the significance of legal and policy frameworks in shaping gender equality in the labor market. However, future research should focus on a deeper analysis of the implementation and effectiveness of these instruments, particularly in relation to telework. While the thesis provides a thorough summary of government interventions, further empirical research is needed to assess the concrete impact of these policies on women's career trajectories, workplace dynamics, and access to leadership positions. Comparative studies could examine how similar legislative measures have been applied in different sectors or regions, identifying best practices and gaps in enforcement. Additionally, future research should seek to integrate the perspectives of teleworkers themselves, exploring how policies translate into lived experiences and whether they effectively mitigate gendered barriers or inadvertently reinforce them. This could be achieved through expanded qualitative data collection, including interviews with female teleworkers across various industries. Finally, it would be valuable to examine potential mechanisms to dismantle structural barriers to women's career advancement, particularly in telework settings, by evaluating corporate practices, cultural attitudes, and policy adaptations that could foster more inclusive work environments.

As for the methodology, different kinds of methods could be enriching in studies concerning telework. Among them participant observation, ethnography, large-sample surveys that require a longer timeline.

Finally, the tendency towards the feminization of telework, as identified by the current study, raises concerns about a new wave of gender segregation in the labor market. Future research should examine the long-term consequences of the observed trend, including its connection to the gender pay gap, career advancement opportunities, and the perceived and prescribed by society value of telework roles. Comprehension of these dynamics is essential for ensuring that telework serves as a tool for gender equality rather than perpetuating existing disparities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abalkhail, J. M. (2020). Women managing women: Hierarchical relationships and career impact. *Career Development International*, 25(4), 389-413.
2. Abdel-Rahman, S., Awwad, F. A., Qasim, M., Abonazel, M. R. (2023). New evidence of gender inequality during COVID-19 outbreak in the Middle East and North Africa. *Heliyon*, 9(7), e17705.
3. Abdulkadri, A., John-Aloye, S., Mrktchyan, I. (2022). Addressing gender disparities in education and employment: A necessary step for achieving sustainable development in the Caribbean. *ECLAC Studies and Perspectives*.
4. Abendroth, A., Reimann, M. (2018). In S. L. Blair & J. Obradovic (Eds.), *The Work-Family Interface: Spillover Complications and Challenges*.
5. Abdurakhmanova, G., Shayusupova, N., Irmatova, A. (2020). The role of the digital economy in the development of the human capital market. *International Journal of Psychological Rehabilitation*, 24(7), 1475-7192.
6. Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4(2), 139-158.
7. Acker, J. (2006). Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations. *Gender & Society*, 20(4), 441–464.
8. Acosta, M. L. (2020). Gender-based violence during the pandemic and lockdown. *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine*, 46(3), 139-145.
9. Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin, M., Rauh, C. (2020). Inequality in the impact of the coronavirus shock: Evidence from real time surveys. *Journal of Public economics*, 189, 104245.
10. Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin, M., Rauh, C. (2022). Work that can be done from home: Evidence on variation within and across occupations and industries. *Labour Economics*, 74, 102083.
11. Adascalitei, D., Heyes, J., & Mendonca, P. (2022). The intensification of work in Europe: A multilevel analysis. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 60(2), 324-347.
12. Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 139-158.

13. ACEOWM - Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. (2020). Opinion on gender equality in the cohesion policy 2014-2020. https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/wp-content/uploads/Opinion_Gender_Equality_Cohesion_Policy_2014_2020_8.pdf
14. Agenor, P.-R., Karakurum Ozdemir, K., Pinto Moreira, E. (2018). Gender gaps in the labor market and economic growth (Policy Research Working Paper No. 8655). World Bank Group, Macroeconomics, Trade and Investment Global Practice.
15. Aguiar, J., Matias, M., Braz, A. C., Cesar, F., Coimbra, S., Gaspar, M. F., Fontaine, A. M. (2021). Parental burnout and the COVID-19 pandemic: How Portuguese parents experienced lockdown measures. *Family Relations*, 70(4), 927-938.
16. Alarcon, A. A., Muinos Villaverde, M. J., Serrano Alonso, M. D. L. A., Heyman, J. (2022). Language in the process of labour market rationalisation: A sociohistorical approach across twentieth-century Spain. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 16, 299-319.
17. Albanesi, S., Olivetti, C., Petrongolo, B. (2023). Families, labor markets, and policy. In *Handbook of the Economics of the Family* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 255-326). North-Holland.
18. Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., Shockley, K. M. (2015). How effective is telecommuting? Assessing the status of our scientific findings. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 16(2), 40–68
19. Allied and Associated Powers. (1919). Treaty of peace with Germany (Treaty of Versailles). Paris.
20. Almeida, J. (1998). Society and values. In A. Costa Pinto (Ed.), *Modern Portugal* (pp. 146–161). Palo Alto: SPOSS.
21. Alon, T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J., & Tertilt, M. (2020). This time it's different: The role of women's employment in a pandemic recession (No. w27660). National Bureau of Economic Research.
22. Alon, T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J., & Tertilt, M. (2021). From Man-cession to She-cession: Women's employment in regular and pandemic recessions. NBER Working Paper.
23. Alonso, D., Matea, M. D. L. L. (2023). The 2023 European Semester and the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Banco de Espana.

24. Alvarez, A. (2015). El mainstreaming de genero en Espana. Tirant lo Blanch.
25. Alvarez-Perez, M., Carballo-Penelo, A., Rivera-Torres, P. (2020). Work-life balance and corporate social responsibility: The evaluation of gender differences on the relationship between family-friendly psychological climate and altruistic behaviors at work. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*.
26. Alventosa del Río, J. (2015). La regulacion de la identidad de genero en las Comunidades Autonomas.
27. Andrade, C., Lousa, E. (2021). Telework and work–family conflict during COVID-19 lockdown in Portugal: The influence of job-related factors. *Administrative Sciences*, 11(3), 103.
28. Andres-Sanchez, J., Belzunegui-Eraso, A., Erro-Garces, A. (2023). Perception of home teleworking during COVID-19 crisis in Spain: significant factors and asymmetric influence on acceptance and resistance. *International Journal of Manpower*. Advance online publication.
29. Amancio, L., Santos, M. (2021). Gender equality and modernity in Portugal: An analysis on the obstacles to gender equality in highly qualified professions. *Social Sciences*, 10(5), 162.
30. Amaral, I., Daniel, F., Abreu, S. G. (2018). Policies for gender equality in Portugal: Contributions to a framework for older women. *Revista Prisma Social*, 22, 346–363. Retrieved from <https://revistaprismasocial.es/article/view/2467>
31. Ameri, M., Kruse, D., Park, S. R., Rodgers, Y., Schur, L. (2023). Telework during the pandemic: patterns, challenges, and opportunities for people with disabilities. *Disability and Health Journal*, 16(2), 101406.
32. Ando, M. S., Balakrishnan, M. R., Gruss, B., Hallaert, M. J. J., Jirasavetakul, L. B. F., Kirabaeva, K., Solovyeva, A. (2022). European labor markets and the COVID-19 pandemic: Fallout and the path ahead. *International Monetary Fund*.
33. Andrade, C., Petiz Lousa, E. (2021). Telework and work–family conflict during COVID-19 lockdown in Portugal: The influence of job-related factors. *Administrative Sciences*, 11(3), 103.
34. Andres-Sanchez, J., Belzunegui-Eraso, A., Erro-Garces, A. (2023). Perception of home teleworking during COVID-19 crisis in Spain: significant

- factors and asymmetric influence on acceptance and resistance. *International Journal of Manpower*. Advance online publication.
35. Antonopoulos, R. (2008). The unpaid care work-paid work connection. *Levy Economics Institute Working Papers Series*.
 36. Arabadjieva, K., Franklin, P. (2023). Home-based telework, gender and the public-private divide. In N. Countouris, V. De Stefano, A. Piasna, S. Rainone (Eds.), *The future of remote work* (pp. 61–81). ETUI.
 37. Araujo, H. (1990). As mulheres professoras e o ensino estatal. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 29, 81-103.
 38. Arregui, J. (2022). *Europeanisation of public policies in Spain*. McGraw Hill.
 39. Arroyo, L. (2020). Implications of digital inclusion: Digitalization in terms of time use from a gender perspective. *Social Inclusion*, 8(2), 180-189.
 40. Arroyo-Abad, C. (2021). Teleworking: A new reality conditioned by the right to privacy. *Laws*, 10(3), 64.
 41. Asmussen, K. E., Mondal, A., Bhat, C. R. (2024). The interplay between teleworking choice and commute distance. *Transportation Research Part C: Emerging Technologies*, 165, 104690.
 42. Assaad, R., Hendy, R., Lassassi, M., Yassin, S. (2020). Explaining the MENA paradox: Rising educational attainment yet stagnant female labor force participation. *Demographic Research*, 43, 817–850.
 43. Astroza, S., Tirachini, A., Hurtubia, R., Carrasco, J. A., Guevara, A., Munizaga, M., Figueroa, M., Torres, V. (2020). Mobility changes, teleworking, and remote communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Chile. *Transport Findings*, July.
 44. Athanasiadou, C., Theriou, G. (2021). Telework: systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Heliyon*, 7(10).
 45. Athens Declaration on Women in Power. (1992, November). Conference on Women in Power. Athens, Greece.
 46. Auciello-Estevez, I., Pijoan-Mas, J., Poldan-Blanco, P., Tagliati, F. (2023). Dual labor markets in Spain: a firm-side perspective. *Documentos Ocasionales N.º 2310*, Banco de España, Madrid.
 47. Autor, D. H. (2015). Why are there still so many jobs? The history and future of workplace automation. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 29(3), 3-30.

48. Babaeva, A., Kluev, A., Marinina, J., Merzlyakova, A., Shlykova, J. (2021). Gender markers in the space of a Russian university and their role in assessing the quality of students' life (on the example of regional universities). In E3S Web of Conferences (Vol. 291, p. 05011). EDP Sciences.
49. Bakker, I. (2007). Social reproduction and the constitution of a gendered political economy. *New Political Economy*, 12(4), 541-556.
50. Bailey, D. E., Kurland, N. B. (2002). A review of telework research: Findings, new directions, and lessons for the study of modern work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 23(4), 383-400.
51. Baldwin, R., Okubo, T. (2024). Are software automation and teleworker substitutes? Preliminary evidence from Japan. *The World Economy*, 47(4), 1531-1556.
52. Ballester-Pastor, M. A. (2014). Spain. *European Gender Equality Law Review*, 2, 103-105.
53. Bank of Portugal. (2021). Boletim Económico. <https://www.bportugal.pt/publications>
54. Bank of Spain (2023). Stylised facts about the post-pandemic performance of the Spanish labour market and future challenges. https://www.bde.es/f/webbe/GAP/Secciones/SalaPrensa/IntervencionesPublicas/Gobernador/Arc/Fic/IIPP-2023-11-03-hdc_en-tr.pdf
55. Baptista, V. (2014). Legislation and working women in Portugal: Since the end of nineteenth century to the 1940s. *Journal of Business and Economics*, 5(9), 3–15.
56. Baptista, V., Alves, P. M. (2022). Women in the mutual societies of Portugal from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1930s. In E. Betti & S. Neunsinger (Eds.), *Women, work, and activism: Chapters of an inclusive history of labor in the long twentieth century*
57. Barba, I., Iraizoz, B. (2020). Effect of the great crisis on sectoral female employment in Europe: A structural decomposition analysis. *Economies*, 8(3), 64.
58. Barcena-Martin, M., Medina-Claros, S., Perez-Moreno, S. (2021). Economic regulation, opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, and gender gap: Emerging

- versus high-income economies. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 27(5), 1311-1328.
59. Baruch, Y. (2000). Teleworking: Benefits and pitfalls as perceived by professionals and managers. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 15, 34–49.
 60. Basant, U. (2016). Female employment in Europe. In *Rethinking Gender, Work, and Care in a New Europe* (pp. 87-113). Palgrave Macmillan.
 61. Barbulescu, R., Bidwell, M. (2013). Do women choose different jobs from men? Mechanisms of application segregation in the market for managerial workers. *Organization Science*, 24(3), 737-756.
 62. Barreto, A. (1996). *A Situacao Social em Portugal, 1960–1995*. Lisboa: Instituto de Ciências Sociais.
 63. Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity* [EPUB]. Polity Press.
 64. Bayeh, E. (2016). The role of empowering women and achieving gender equality to the sustainable development. *Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 37-42.
 65. BBVA. (2020). Gender diversity and training.
 66. BCG. (2023). Consumer sentiment survey 2023. Boston Consulting Group. In TPN (2024). <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2024-02-20/only-24-of-employees-want-to-work-from-the-office/86184>
 67. Beauregard, T. A., Basile K.A., Canonico E. (2019). ‘Telework: outcomes and facilitators for employees’. In R. N. Landers (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Technology and Employee Behavior*, pp. 511–543. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 68. Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. Sage Publications.
 69. Beck, U. (2000). The cosmopolitan perspective: sociology of the second age of modernity. *The British journal of sociology*, 51(1), 79-105.
 70. Becker, G. S. (1975). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
 71. Becker, G. S. (1991). *A treatise on the family* (2nd ed.). Harvard University Press.
 72. Becker-Schmidt, R. (2007). Gender and labor relations in motion (pp. 250-268). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

73. Begeny, C. T., Ryan, M. K., Moss-Racusin, C. A., Ravetz, G. (2020). In some professions, women have become well represented yet gender bias persists—Perpetuated by those who think it is not happening. *Science Advances*, 6(26), eaba7814.
74. Beleza, T. (2015). Prefácio. In I. Pimentel H. Pereira de Melo (Eds.), *Portuguese Women: History of Life and Women's Rights in a World in Motion* (pp. 13–22). Lisboa: Clube do Autor.
75. Belo, E. M. C. P. (2017). *Gestão do processo de formulação, implementação e avaliação da política pública de cooperação para o desenvolvimento: Análise na perspectiva da governança* (Doctoral dissertation). [Name of University].
76. Bergmann, B. R. (1986). *The economic emergence of women*. Basic Books.
77. Bertay, A. C., Dordevic, L., Sever, C. (2020). Gender inequality and economic growth: Evidence from industry-level data. IMF Working Paper.
78. Bertogg, A., Imdorf, C., Hyggen, C., et al. (2020). Gender discrimination in the hiring of skilled professionals in two male-dominated occupational fields: A factorial survey experiment with real-world vacancies and recruiters in four European countries.
79. Bettio, F., Corsi, M., D'Ippoliti, C., Lyberaki, A., Samek, M., Verashchagina, A. (2012). The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies. The European Commission.
80. Bisciari, P., Gelade, W., Melyn, W. (2022). Recovery and Resilience Plans in Belgium, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. Belgian Financial Forum. <https://www.financialforum.be/en/articles/recovery-and-resilience-plans-belgiumgermany-france-italy-and-spain>.
81. Blanco, A. (2020). A new history of Iberian feminism, edited by S. Bermúdez & R. Johnson. *CiberLetras: Revista de Crítica Literaria y de Cultura*, 93–95.
82. Blau, F. D., Kahn, L. M. (2017). The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, and explanations. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(3), 789-865.
83. Blazquez, M., Herrarte, A., Moro-Egido, A. (2022). Has the COVID-19 pandemic widened the gender gap in paid work hours in Spain? *Journal of Demographic Economics*, 1-36.

84. Blyth, M. (2013). *Austerity: The history of a dangerous idea*. Oxford University Press.
85. Bluedorn, J., Caselli, F. G., Hansen, M. N. J. H., Shibata, M. I., Tavares, M. M. (2021). *Gender and Employment in the COVID-19 Recession: Evidence on “She-cessions”*. International Monetary Fund.
86. Bodelon, E. (2010). Las leyes de igualdad de género en España y Europa: Hacia una nueva ciudadanía? *Anuario de la Facultad de Derecho*, 26, 85–106.
87. Boletín oficial del estado (2020). ‘Real Decreto-ley 28/2020, de 22 de septiembre, de trabajo a distancia’, Sec. I. Pag. 79929
88. Bolio, E., Martínez Márquez, M. (2023). *Women Matter Spain 2023: Women are still far from top corporate leadership positions*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/women%20matter%20spain%20women%20are%20still%20far%20from%20top%20corporate%20leadership%20positions/women-matter-spain-women-are-still-far-from-top-corporate-leadership-positions.pdf>
89. Bonnet, F., Vanek, J., Chen, M. (2019). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical brief*. International Labour Office, Geneva.
90. Boston Consulting Group (BCG). (2023). *Consumer Sentiment Survey 2023*.
91. Brana, F. J. (2019). A fourth industrial revolution? Digital transformation, labor and work organization: a view from Spain. *Journal of Industrial and Business Economics*, 46(3), 415-430.
92. Brandão, A. M. (2020). “A mao que embala o berço”: as mulheres e o SARS-CoV-2. In M. Martins e E. Rodrigues (eds.). *A Universidade do Minho em tempos de pandemia: Projecoes* (109-126). Braga: UMinho Editora
93. Brinkmann, S. (2013). *Qualitative interviewing*. Oxford University Press, USA.
94. Brown, P., Lauder, H., Ashton, D. (2011). *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs, and Incomes*. Oxford University Press.
95. Brown, P., Lauder, H., Cheung, S. (2020). *The death of human capital?: Its failed promise and how to renew it in an age of disruption*. Oxford University Press.
96. Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*. Zone Books.

97. Budig, M. J., England, P. (2001). The wage penalty for motherhood. *American Sociological Review*, 66(2), 204-225.
98. Busseovich, M., Dabla-Norris, E., Kamunge, C., Karnane, P., Khalid, S., Kochhar, K. (2018). Gender, Technology, and the Future of Work [IMF Staff Discussion Note]. *International Monetary Fund*.
[<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/>]
99. Bustelo, M. (2016). Three decades of state feminism and gender equality policies in multi-governed Spain. *Sex Roles*, 74(3), 107-120.
100. Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
101. Butler, J. (2015). *Notes toward a performative theory of assembly*. Harvard University Press.
102. Cabases, M. A., Lopez, J. (2022). Young women in Spain faced with a model of structural job insecurity. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1).
103. Cabrero Blanco, C. (2017). El movimiento democratico de mujeres y las comunistas: de la resistencia antifranquista a la movilización feminista. *Nuestra Historia*, iii.
104. Caetano, M. (2022). Ja ha mais mulheres disponiveis para trabalhar do que homens. *Diario de Noticias*.
<https://www.dn.pt/dinheiro/ja-ha-mais-mulheres-disponiveis-para-trabalhar-d-o-que-homens--14819572.html>
105. Calvo, K., Gutierrez, M., Mena, L., Murillo, S. (2014). El papel del conocimiento experto en las políticas públicas de igualdad en Espana. *Investigaciones Feministas*, 5, 157–83.
106. Calvo-Iglesias, E., Epifanio, I., Estrade, S., Mas de les Valls, E. (2022). Gender perspective in STEM disciplines in Spain universities. In *Women in STEM in Higher Education: Good Practices of Attraction, Access and Retainment in Higher Education* (pp. 165-179). Springer Nature Singapore.
107. Campos, A. P. (2020). "Crises, estado e precariedade laboral: o trabalho temporario em Portugal." Tese no ambito do Doutoramento em Sociologia – Relacoes de Trabalho, Desigualdades Sociais e Sindicalismo
108. Campos Lima, M. D. P., Perista, H. (2018). Portugal: latest working life developments Q2 2018.

109. Campos Lima, M. P., Martins, D., Costa, A., Velez, A. (2021). Internal devaluation and economic inequality in Portugal: Challenges to industrial relations in times of crisis and recovery. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 27(1).
110. Canibano, A., Avgoustaki, A. (2022). How people view telework depends on factors beyond the organisation. *LSE Business Review*.
111. Canzio, L. I. (2021). Division of housework within couples in Spain: Consequences of educational differences and women's gender-egalitarian beliefs. *Papers*, 106(1), 59-94.
112. Card, D., Cardoso, A. R., Kline, P. (2015). Bargaining, sorting, and the gender wage gap: Quantifying the impact of firms on the relative pay of women. *NBER Working Paper*.
113. Cardoso, D., Branco, R. (2017). Labour market reforms and the crisis in Portugal: No change, U-turn, or new departure? *IPRI-NOVA Working Paper No. 56/2017*.
114. Cardoso, V. B. (2014). Legislation and working women in Portugal—Since the end of the nineteenth century to the 1940s. *Journal of Business and Economics*, 5(9), 1558-1567.
115. Carlson, L. (2022). The EU pay transparency proposed directive-general overview and some comments on the rules of enforcement and sanctions. *European equality law review*, 2, 1-20.
116. Carstensen, T. (2020). Flexibility in working time and place of work: Old gender inequalities and new patterns of division of labor through digital transformations. *Zeitschrift für Arbeitswissenschaft*, 74, 195-205.
117. Carvalho, T., Diogo, S., Jordao, C., Breda, Z. (2022). Gender Equality Plan – University of Aveiro, 2021-2025. *CHANGE project team at the University of Aveiro*.
118. Carvalho, C. O. Gonçalves, L. A. (IusLabor 1/2017). Fixed-term contracts and principle of equal treatment in Portugal. *Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, CEID-CRCFL*.
119. Casa Quesada, Susana de la. (2021). Teletrabajo, genero, riesgos psicosociales: una triada a integrar en las políticas preventivas 4.0. *Revista de Trabajo y Seguridad Social. CEF*, 459, 83-112.

120. Casaca, S. F. (2022). Desigualdades entre mulheres e homens no mercado de trabalho. Conjuntura Actual Editora - Grupo Almedina.
121. Casad, B. J., Franks, J. E., Garasky, C. E., Kittleman, M. M., Roesler, A. C., Hall, D. Y., Petzel, Z. W. (2021). Gender inequality in academia: Problems and solutions for women faculty in STEM. *Journal of Neuroscience Research*, 99(1), 13-23.
122. Casaca, S., Lortie, J. (2017). Handbook on Gender and Organisational Change. International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization.
123. Casanova, J., Andres, C. (2012). Breve historia de Espana en el siglo XX. Ariel, Barcelona.
124. Castro-Trancon, N., Zuazua-Vega, M., Osca, A., Cifre, E., Garcia-Izquierdo, A. L. (2024). Effects of teleworking on wellbeing from a gender perspective: a systematic review. *Frontiers in Organizational Psychology*, 2, 1360373.
125. Catalyst. (2022). Women in the workplace: Spain. Retrieved from <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-workplace-spain>
126. Cerezo, A., Izquierdo, M. (2023). The Banco de Espana Business Activity Survey [Article]. Banco de España. *Economic Bulletin*, 2023/Q4. <https://www.bde.es/bde/en/secciones/informes/boletines/>
127. Ceu do Rego, M. (2010). A construção da igualdade de homens e mulheres no trabalho e no emprego na lei portuguesa. *Cadernos de Direito*.
128. CIDM (1999). A abordagem integrada da igualdade de género: «mainstreaming» Lisboa: CIDM.
129. CIG. (2019). Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) National-level reviews - Portugal. UN Women. [<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/fil>]
130. Ciminelli, G., Schwellnus, C., Stadler, B. (2021). Sticky floors or glass ceilings? The role of human capital, working time flexibility and discrimination in the gender wage gap.
131. CIMH. (2021). Report 2021 of the Commission on Equality of Men and Women.

132. Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. sage.
133. Chen, Z. (2024). Metaverse office: Exploring future teleworking model. *Kybernetes*, 53(6), 2029-2045.
134. Chesley, N. (2011). Stay-at-home fathers and breadwinning mothers: Gender, couple dynamics, and social change. *Gender & society*, 25(5), 642-664.
135. Chislett, W. (2018, October). Forty years of democratic Spain: Political, economic, foreign policy and social change, 1978-2018. Real Instituto Elcano.
136. Christidis, P., Vega Gonzalo, M., Ulpiani, G., Vettters, N. (2023). Post-pandemic trends in urban mobility. Publications Office of the European Union. Luxembourg.
137. Clar-Novak, M. (2024). The gendered paradox of individualization in telework: Simultaneously helpful and harmful in the context of parenting. *Gender, Work & Organization*
138. Choi, A., Gil Izquierdo, M., Mediavilla, M., Valbuena, J. (2018). The Evolution of Educational Inequalities in Spain: Dynamic Evidence from Repeated Cross-Sections. *Social Indicators Research*, 138.
139. Chung, H. (2019). Women's work penalty in access to flexible working arrangements across Europe. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 25(1), 23-40.
140. Clarke, H. M. (2020). Gender stereotypes and gender-typed work. In *Handbook of Labor, Human Resources, and Population Economics* (pp. 1-23).
141. Coban, S. (2022). Gender and telework: Work and family experiences of teleworking professional, middle-class, married women with children during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 29(1), 241-255.
142. Collins, R. (1979). *The credential society: An historical sociology of education and stratification*. Academic Press.
143. Collins, R. (2019). Credential inflation and the future of universities. *Society*, 56(1), 3-7.

144. Collins, C. (2020). Who to blame and how to solve it: Mothers' perceptions of work–family conflict across Western policy regimes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(3), 849-874.
145. Comissao para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Genero. (2018). Estrategia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Nao Discriminacao 2018-2030 «Portugal + Igual».
146. Conde-Ruiz, J., Forteza, J. (2023). Future challenges of the labour market in Spain. (Retos Futuros del Mercado de Trabajo en España. Fedea Policy Paper 2023/05 Septiembre de 2023.
147. Conde-Ruiz, J. (2016). Gender Gaps in the Spanish Labor Market. *Estudios sobre la Economía Espanola* - 2016/32, FEDEA y Universidad Complutense.
148. Connell, R. (2009). *Gender: In World Perspective* (2nd ed.). Polity Press
149. Connell, R. W., Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829–859.
150. Corbett, C., Hill, C. (2015). Solving the equation: The variables for women's success in engineering and computing. *American Association of University Women (AAUW)*.
151. Cordoba-Dona, J. A., Escolar-Pujolar, A. (2019). The lasting effects of a “relentless crisis”: The Great Recession and health inequalities in Spain. *e-cadernos CES*, (31). Centro de Estudos Sociais.
152. Cordova, K., Grabka, M. M., Sierminska, E. (2022). Pension wealth and gender wealth gap. *European Journal of Population*, 38, 755-810.
153. Cortes, P., Pan, J. (2023). Children and the remaining gender gaps in the labor market. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 61(4), 1359-1409.
154. Costa, A. L. M. (2021). *A criacao do sistema portugues de seguranca social: 1962-1984* (Doctoral dissertation). [Supervised by Jose Luís Miranda Cardoso Alvaro Francisco Rodrigues Garrido], Universidade de Coimbra.
155. Costa, A., Henriques, J., Alarcao, V., Henriques, A., Madeira, T., Virgolino, A., Sousa, J., Feteira-Santos, R., Arriaga, M., Rocha, J., Nogueira, P. (2023). Active aging awareness and well-being among older adults in Portugal. *Frontiers in Public Health*.
156. Costa, C., Seeyitoglu, F., Malta, A. M., Martins, M. (2023). Gender (in) equality and work-life (in) balance in tourism and hospitality labour:

- Perspectives of tourism organisations in Portugal. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 29(4), 623-626.
157. Council of the European Communities. (1989). Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (Framework Directive).
 158. Coyle, D. (2020). *Markets, state, and people: Economics for public policy*. Princeton University Press
 159. Crain, M. (2018). The Transformation of Work in the Digital Gig Economy. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11(1), 153–169.
 160. Creanza, N., Kolodny, O., Feldman, M. W. (2017). Cultural evolutionary theory: How culture evolves and why it matters. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(30), 7782-7789.
 161. Crepaldi, C., Pereira, J. (2020). Portugal. Inclusive labour markets: Ensuring no one is left behind. *Cares! National report on poverty*.
 162. Creswell, J. W. (1999). Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In *Handbook of educational policy* (pp. 455-472). Academic press.
 163. Creswell, J.W., Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing among Five Approaches*. 4th Edition, SAGE Publications, Inc.Thousand Oaks.
 164. Crotti, R., Pal, K. K., Ratcheva, V., Zahidi, S. (2021). *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*. World Economic Forum
 165. Cuadrado Salinas, P. (2022). An analysis of hours worked per worker in Spain: trends and recent developments. *Economic Bulletin / Banco de Espana*, 2023/Q1, 14
 166. Cukrowska-Torzewska, E., Matysiak, A. (2020). The motherhood wage penalty: A meta-analysis. *Social science research*, 88, 102416.
 167. Curington, C. V. (2024). *Laboring in the Shadow of Empire: Race, Gender, and Care Work in Portugal*. Rutgers University Press.
 168. D’Acunto, F., Malmendier, U., Weber, M. (2020). Gender roles and the gender expectations gap. NBER Working Paper No. 26837.
 169. Da Silva, A., Potes Barbas, M., Teles Vieira, A., Casimiro, E., Dragan, C., Blasco, S., Torres, A., Pedrogao, A., Catita, B., Metrogos, D., Morais, G., Semanas, J., Gandara Manso, T. (2024). *Women in ICT [Handbook]*.

https://ace-eu.ipsantarem.pt/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/WomenInICT_hanbook.pdf

170. Dabla-Norris, E., Kochhar, K., et al. (2019). Reducing and redistributing unpaid work: Stronger policies to support gender equality. IMF Working Paper Volume 2019: Issue 225.
171. Dalingwater, L. (2018). Neo-liberalism and Gender Inequality in the Workplace in Britain. *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique. French Journal of British Studies*, 23(XXIII-1).
172. Daniels, A. K. (1987). Invisible work. *Social Problems*, 34(5), 403-415.
173. Das, S., Kotikula, A. (2019). Gender-based employment segregation: Understanding causes and policy interventions. *Jobs Working Paper Issue No. 26*.
174. Davila Dos Santos, E., Albahari, A., Díaz, S., De Freitas, E. C. (2022). 'Science and technology as feminine': Raising awareness about and reducing the gender gap in STEM careers. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 31(4), 505-518.
175. De Abreu e Silva, J. (2022). Residential preferences, telework perceptions, and the intention to telework: Insights from the Lisbon Metropolitan Area during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Regional Science Policy & Practice*, 14 (Supplement 1).
176. Del Boca, D., Oggero, N., Profeta, P., Rossi, M. (2020). Women's and men's work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 18(4), 1001-1017.
177. Delfino, G. F., Van Der Kolk, B. (2021). Remote working, management control changes and employee responses during the COVID-19 crisis. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 34(6), 1376-1387.
178. Dengler, K., Matthes, B. (2018). The impacts of digital transformation on the labour market: Substitution potentials of occupations in Germany. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 137, 304-316.
179. Dengler, A., Tisch, A. (2020). Examining the relationship between digital transformation and work quality: Substitution potential and work exposure in gender-specific occupations. *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 72, 427-453.

180. DGERT. (2020). Telework in the context of collective negotiations (Negociação coletiva em foco, Issue).
181. Díaz, D. P. (2020). Mujer y trabajo durante el franquismo: Una aproximación jurídica. In XII Congreso virtual sobre Historia de las Mujeres (pp. 781-794). Archivo Histórico Diocesano de Jaén.
182. Dietrich, P., Hansen Garcia, M. (2022). New challenges for women workers in Brazil facing the wave of Industry 4.0 technologies. *Gender & Development*, 30(3), 459-476.
183. Dolado, J., Felgueroso, F., Jimeno, J. F. (2020). The Spanish labour market at the crossroads: COVID-19 meets the megatrends (CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP15452). Centre for Economic Policy Research.
184. Dolado, J. J., Felgueroso, F., Jimeno, J. F. (2021). Past, present and future of the Spanish labour market: When the pandemic meets the megatrends. *Applied Economic Analysis*, 29(85), 21–41. Emerald Publishing Limited.
185. Domínguez-Folgueras, M., Castro-Martín, T. (2008). Women's changing socioeconomic position and union formation in Spain and Portugal. *Demographic Research*, 19, 1513-1550.
186. Donahue, M. (2007). Transitioning from patriarchal society: Women's rights and gender equality. *Essai*, 5(1), 18.
187. Duarte, V. (2023). The paradox of the Portuguese labour market: high long-term unemployment and record job vacancies. CaixaBank Research.
188. Dugarova, E. (2023). Reimagining globalization through a gender lens. In *Research Handbook on the Sociology of Globalization* (pp. 298-307). Edward Elgar Publishing.
189. Duman, A. (2020). Precarious employment intersecting with gender: Are women punished more? In *Female Voices from the Worksite: The Impact of Hidden Bias against Working Women Across the Globe* (pp. 3-25). Lexington.
190. Duran, P. (2011). The CEDAW's Reception in Spain. The Gap between Law and Practice. *Anuario de Accion Humanitaria y Derechos Humanos Yearbook on Humanitarian Action and Human Rights*.

191. Durao, M. S. F. (2021). Managing Retention, Careers and Quality of Working Life of Qualified HR in Tourism and Hospitality: The Case of Portugal (Doctoral dissertation, Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal)).
192. EIGE (2021). European Institute for Gender Equality. Gender Equality Index. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/ES>
193. EIGE. (2021). Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
194. EIGE. (2019). Gender equality and youth: opportunities and risks of digitalization. European Institute for Gender Equality.
195. EIGE (2020). Gender Equality Index 2020. Digitalisation and the future of work. Publications Office of the European Union. https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mhaf20001enn_002.pd.
196. EIGE (2023a). <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/country/ES>
197. EIGE (2023b). <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/country/PT>
198. Eisenstein, H. (2009). *Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World*. Paradigm Publishers.
199. El Morally, R. (2020). Women in development: A critique of neoclassical economic theory as one of the causes for gender inequality. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 10(1), 1-14.
200. Elgin, C., Elveren, A. Y. (2021). Informality, inequality, and feminization of labour. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 88, 102505.
201. England, P., Budig, M., Folbre, N. (2002). Wages of virtue: The relative pay of care work. *Social Problems*, 49(4), 455-473.
202. Enciso-Santocildes, M., Echaniz-Barrondo, A., Gomez-Urquijo, L. (2021). Social innovation and employment in the digital age: The case of the connect employment shuttles in Spain. *International Journal of Innovation Studies*, 5(4), 175-189.
203. Escuriol Martinez, V., Binimelis, R., Rivera-Ferre, M. G. (2014). The situation of rural women in Spain: the case of small-scale artisan food producers. *Athenea Digital*, 14(3), 3-22.
204. ETUI (2023). The future of remote work. ETUI aisbl.

205. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). (2017). European Quality of Life Survey 2017
206. Eurofound. (2020). Living, working and COVID-19. COVID-19 Series. Publications Office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
207. Eurofound. (2022). The rise in telework: Impact on working conditions and regulations, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
208. European Commission. (2019). She Figures 2018. Brussels: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation.
209. European Commission. (2019). Statistics on education and science.
210. European Commission (2020). Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to. https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1ccf7717-ab52-4215-b14a-08d74e9d44fc_en#:~:text=High%2Dskilled%20professionals%20and%20managers.employed%20in%20knowledge%2Dintensive%20activities.
211. European Commission. (2022). 2022 Report on Gender Equality in the EU. Publications Office of the European Union.
212. European Commission. (2023). Digital Decade Country Report 2023 on Portugal.
213. European Commission. (2023). Gender equality in employment and occupation in Spain. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality>
214. European Commission. (2023). Employment statistics in Portugal.
215. European Commission. (2023). 2023 report on gender equality in the EU. Publications Office of the European Union. https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/annual_report_GE_2023_web_EN.pdf.
216. European Commission. (2023). European Semester 2023: Recommendations for economic and fiscal policies
217. European Commission. (2024). Education and Training Monitor. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor>
218. European Commission. (2024). European Semester Country Report for Spain. Retrieved from

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/european-semester-country-reports-2024/>

219. European Economic Community. (1957). Treaty establishing the European Economic Community [Treaty of Rome]. Official Journal of the European Communities.
220. European Institute for Gender Equality. (2021). Gender Equality Index 2021. <https://eige.europa.eu>
221. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2003). Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time (Working Time Directive).
222. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).
223. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2019). Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.
224. European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2019). Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union.
225. European Parliament. (2020). Female unemployment in times of COVID-19. Parliamentary question - E-003591/2020. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-003591_EN.html
226. European Parliament. (2021). Resolution of January 21, 2021 on the right to disconnect.
227. European Parliament (2021). The impact of teleworking and digital work on workers and society.
228. European Union. (1997). Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and

- certain related acts. Official Journal of the European Communities, C 340, 1–144.
229. European Union. (2000). Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. Official Journal of the European Communities, L 303, 16–22.
230. European Union. (2012). Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Official Journal of the European Union, C 326, 26 October 2012, pp. 391–407.
231. European Quality of Life Survey. (2017). Eurofund. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu>
232. Eurostat (2020). Labour market statistics at regional level. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour_market_statistics_at_regional_level
233. Eurostat (2021). Employment rate by sex. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen/bloc-2b.html?lang=en#:~:text=On%20average%20in%20the%20EU,women%20\(66%20%25\)%20in%202021.](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen/bloc-2b.html?lang=en#:~:text=On%20average%20in%20the%20EU,women%20(66%20%25)%20in%202021.)
234. Eurostat (2022). Gender pay gap in unadjusted form. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics#:~:text=For%20the%20economy%20as%20a,in%20%20\(Figure%201\).](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics#:~:text=For%20the%20economy%20as%20a,in%20%20(Figure%201).)
235. Eurostat. (2023). Spain - Gender gap in part-time employment
236. FAO. (2007). The state of food and agriculture 2007. Paying farmers for environmental services (FAO Agriculture Series No. 38). Rome: Communication Division – Food and Agriculture Organization.
237. Farre L. et al. (2020). How the COVID-19 Lockdown Affected Gender Inequality in Paid and Unpaid Work in Spain. IZA Institute of Labor Economics
238. Farre, L., Gonzalez, L. (2023). Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work after the pandemic. [https://elobservatoriosocial.fundacionlacaixa.org/en/-/desigualdad-de-genero-en-trabajo-remunerado-y-no-remunerado-tras-la-pandemia#:~:text=As%20a%20result%20of%20these,and%2069%20hours%20for%20women\).](https://elobservatoriosocial.fundacionlacaixa.org/en/-/desigualdad-de-genero-en-trabajo-remunerado-y-no-remunerado-tras-la-pandemia#:~:text=As%20a%20result%20of%20these,and%2069%20hours%20for%20women).)

239. Fiala, E. (2019). A critical analysis of the implementation of the right to work and employment in the national context of Germany and Portugal: Implications for social policy (Doctoral dissertation).
240. Federici, S. (2004). *Caliban and the witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation*. Autonomedia.
241. Felipe-Redondo, J. (2014). Worker resistance to “social” reform and the rise of anarchism in Spain, 1880–1920. *Critical Historical Studies*, 1(2), 255-284.
242. Fernandez-Mateo, I. (2009). Cumulative gender disadvantage in contract employment. *American Journal of Sociology*, 114(4), 871-923.
243. Ferreira, V. (1993). Padroes de segregacao das mulheres no emprego: uma analise do caso portugues no quadro europeu. In B. de Sousa Santos (Ed.), *Portugal: Um Retrato Singular* (pp. 233-257). Porto, Afrontamento.
244. Ferreira, V. (1998). Engendering Portugal: Social change, state politics, and women's social mobilization. In A. Costa Pinto (Ed.), *Modern Portugal*. Stanford University Press.
245. Ferreira, V. (2000). Engendering Portugal: Social change, state policies and women's mobilization. In *Portugal Contemporaneo* (pp. 157-186). Madrid, Spain: Sequitur.
246. Ferreira, E. (2022). Equality policies and intersections of gender and sexuality: The role of academic research. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 11(1), 49-71.
247. Ferreira, V., Monteiro, R. (2012). Introducao: Políticas de igualdade em Portugal—Assinalando o fim de um ciclo. *ex æquo*, 25, 9-12.
248. Figueiredo, E., Ribeiro, C., Pereira, P., Passos, C. (2021). Teletrabalho: Contributos e desafios para as organizacoes. *Revista Psicologia: Organizacoes e Trabalho*, 21(2), Article 21642.
249. Fishman, R. M. (2010). Rethinking the Iberian transformations: How democratization scenarios shaped labor market outcomes. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 45(3), 281-310.
250. Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge University Press.
251. Folbre, N., Nelson, J. A. (2000). For love or money—or both?. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 14(4), 123-140.

252. Folbre, N. (2021). *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems: An Intersectional Political Economy Perspective*. Verso Books.
253. Foley, M., Cooper, R., Mosseri, S. (2020). Gender, work and organization: Exploring implicit bias in recruitment. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(5), 701–719.
254. Foley, M., Williamson, S., Mosseri, S. (2020). Women, work and industrial relations in Australia in 2019. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 62(3), 365-379.
255. Fontaneda, I., Pradanos, Y., Gonzalez Alcantara, O. J., Camino Lopez, M. A., Garcia Izquierdo, A. L., Osca Segovia, A. (2023). Teleworking in manufacturing: dealing with the post-pandemic COVID-19 challenge. *Administrative Sciences*, 13(10), 222.
256. Forte, T., Santinha, G., Carvalho, S. A. (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic strain: Teleworking and health behavior changes in the Portuguese context. In *Healthcare* (Vol. 9, No. 9, p. 1151). MDPI.
257. Fossen, F. M., Sorgner, A. (2018). The effects of digitalization on employment and entrepreneurship. In conference proceeding paper, IZA–Institute of Labor Economics.
258. Foucault, M. (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. Palgrave Macmillan.
259. Franco, M. D. R. R. (1995). Nuevos horizontes para las mujeres de los años 60: La ley de 22 de julio de 1961. *Arenal: Revista de Historia de las Mujeres*, 2(2), 247-268.
260. Fraser, N. (1994). After the family wage: Gender equity and the welfare state. *Political theory*, 22(4), 591-618.
261. Fraser, N. (2009). Feminism, capitalism and the cunning of history. *New Left Review*, 56, 97-117.
262. Fraser, N. (2013). *Fortunes of feminism: From state-managed capitalism to neoliberal crisis*. Verso.
263. Frazer, H., Marlier, E. (2013). *Assessment of the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on active inclusion: A study of national policies*. European Commission.
264. Friedman, M. (1968). The role of monetary policy. *American Economic Review*, 58(1), 1-17.

265. Friesen, A., Burge, R., Britzman, K. (2021). Digital segregation: gender, occupation, and access to politics. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(1), 38-55.
266. Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Dries, N., Gonzalez-Cruz, T. F. (2013). What is the meaning of 'talent' in the world of work? *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4), 290-300.
267. Galvez, A., Tirado, F., Martínez, M. J. (2020). Work–life balance, organizations and social sustainability: Analyzing female telework in Spain. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3567.
268. Garcia-Serrano, C., Malo, M. A. (2013). Beyond the contract type segmentation in Spain: Country case study on labour market segmentation. *ILO Working Papers*. International Labour Organization.
269. Gerber, C. (2022). Gender and precarity in platform work: Old inequalities in the new world of work. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 37(2), 206-230.
270. Giarini, O. (1992). The transformation of the industrial economy into a service economy: The function of technology and the role of insurance in the management of risk. The Geneva Association. https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/36/028/36028679.pdf
271. Gil, M. (2017). Women in the working world in 20th and 21st century Spain. The case of the automotive industry in the province of Soria
272. Gil Ruiz, J. (2012). Las nuevas técnicas legislativas en España. Tirant lo Blanch.
273. Gillwald, A., & Partridge, A. (2022). Gendered nature of digital inequality: Evidence for policy considerations. UN Women. Research ICT.
274. Givan, R. K., Roberts, K., Soule, S. A. (2010). *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects*. Cambridge University Press.
275. Glass, J., Camarigg, V. (1992). Gender, parenthood, and job-family compatibility. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(1), 131-151.
276. Goellner, S., Jaegita, A. (2007). *Os feminismos em Portugal*. Lisboa: Publicacoes Dom Quixote.

277. Gokan, T., Kichko, S., Matheson, J. A., Thisse, J.-F. (2022). How the rise of teleworking will reshape labour markets and cities. CESifo Working Papers. Munich Society for the Promotion of Economic Research - CESifo GmbH.
<https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/9952.pdf?abstractid=4235466&mirid=1&type=2>.
278. Goldin, C., Katz, L. F. (2008). *The Race between Education and Technology*. Harvard University Press.
279. Golden, A. Elia, A. (2017). Alternative Work Arrangements. In Scott, C. & Levis, L. (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Business Communication*. Hohoken: John Wiley & Sons.
280. Gomez-Dominguez, A., Ferrer-Rosende, P., Esteve-Matalí, L., Llorens-Serrano, C., Salas-Nicas, S., Navarro-Gine, A. (2024). Comparing Exposure to Psychosocial Risks: Face-to-Face Work vs. Telework. *La Medicina del Lavoro*, 115(3).
281. Gonzalez, P. (2014). Gender issues of the recent crisis in Portugal. *Revue de l'OFCE*, 133, 241-275.
282. Gonzalez-Diez, V., Moral-Benito, E. (2019). The process of structural change in the Spanish economy from a historical standpoint. *Documentos Ocasionales*, (No. 1907). Banco de España.
283. Gonzalez Ramos, A. M., Garcia-de-Diego, J. M. (2022). Work–Life Balance and Teleworking: Lessons Learned during the Pandemic on Gender Role Transformation and Self-Reported Well-Being. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(14), 8468.
284. Grau-Sarabia, M., Fuster-Morell, M. (2021). Gender approaches in the study of the digital economy: a systematic literature review. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1), 1-10.
285. Grisoni, L., Ruiz, S. (2019). Gender Equality, Austerity, Vulnerabilities and Resistance in the Spanish Neoliberal Life Cycle (pp. 145-167). Springer International Publishing.
286. Grohmann, R., Pereira, G., Guerra, A., Abilio, L., Moreschi, B., Jurno, A. (2022). Platform scams: Brazilian workers' experiences of dishonest and uncertain algorithmic management. *New Media & Society*, v. 24, n. 7.

287. Gschwind, L., Vargas, O. (2019). *Telework and its effects in Europe. Telework in the 21st Century*, Edward Elgar Publishing.
288. Guerin, T. F. (2021). Policies to minimise environmental and rebound effects from telework: A study for Australia. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 39, 18-33.
289. Guidi, M., Piccinetti, M., Verzichelli, L. (2023). NextGenerationEU and the European Semester: Comparing national plans and country-specific recommendations. *Politics and Governance*, 11(4), 339-351.
290. Gutek, B. (1983). Women's Work in the Office of the Future. In J. Zimmerman (Ed.), *The Technological Woman: Interfacing with Tomorrow*. Praeger
291. Guvenen, F., Kaplan, G., Song, J. (2014). The glass ceiling and the paper floor: Gender differences among top earners, 1981–2012. NBER Working Paper No. 20560.
292. Hajal, G. E. (2022). Teleworking and the jobs of tomorrow. *Research in Hospitality Management*, 12(1), 21-27.
293. Hausermann, S. (2012). The politics of old and new social policies. In G. Bonoli & D. Natali (Eds.), *The politics of the new welfare state* (pp. 111-132). Oxford University Press.
294. Hauret, L., Martin, L., Poussing, N. (2024). Teleworkers' digital up-skilling: Evidence from the spring 2020 lockdown. *The Information Society*, 40(3), 215-231.
295. Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., Mills, J. (2017, January). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. In *Forum qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: qualitative social research* (Vol. 18, No. 1).
296. Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
297. Hatton, E. (2017). Mechanisms of invisibility: rethinking the concept of invisible work. *Work, employment and society*, 31(2), 336-351.
298. Haque S. (2023). The impact of remote work on HR practices: Navigating challenges, embracing opportunities. *European Journal of Human Resource Management Studies*, 7(1).

299. He, J., Kang, S. K., & Lacetera, N. (2019). Opt-out choice framing attenuates gender differences in the decision to compete. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(14), 6015–6019.
300. He, J. C., Kang, S. K., Tse, K., Toh, S. M. (2019). Stereotypes at work: Occupational stereotypes predict race and gender segregation in the workforce. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 115, 103318.
301. Hegewisch, A., Childers, C., Hartmann, H. (2019). Women, automation, and the future of work. Institute for Women's Policy Research.
302. Heggeness, M. L., Suri, P. (2021). Telework, childcare, and mothers' labor supply (Institute Working Paper No. 52, revised). U.S. Census Bureau and University of Maryland.
303. Herreras, M. (2021). La incorporación de la mujer al mundo laboral en perspectiva histórica. Retrieved from <https://uvadoc.uva.es/bitstream/handle/10324/51685/TFG-E-1310.pdf?sequence=1>
304. Hickman, A., Saad, L. (2020). Reviewing remote work in the U.S. under COVID-19. Gallup. Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/311375/reviewing-remote-work-covid.aspx>.
305. Hochschild, A. (2012). *The second shift: Working families and the revolution at home*. Penguin Books.
306. Honneth, A. (2022). Labour: A brief history of a modern concept. *Philosophy*, 97(2), 149-167.
307. Huang, Q. (2006). *The nature of women's career development: determinants and consequences of career patterns* (Doctoral dissertation, Psykologiska institutionen).
308. Huber, E., Stephens, J. D. (2014). Income inequality and redistribution in postindustrial democracies: Demographic, economic, and political determinants. *Socio-Economic Review*, 12(2), 245–267.
309. Hupkau, C., Petrongolo, B. (2020). Work, care and gender during the COVID-19 crisis. *Fiscal Studies*, 41(3), 623-651.
310. Hupkau, C., Ruiz-Valenzuela, J. (2022). Work and children in Spain: Challenges and opportunities for equality between men and women. *SERIEs*, 13, 243-268.

311. Huws, U. (2014). Labor in the global digital economy: The cybertariat comes of age. NYU Press.
312. International Labour Organization. (1948). C089 - Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89).
313. International Labour Organization. (1996). C177 - Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177).
314. International Labour Organization. (1996). R184 - Home Work Recommendation, 1996 (No. 184)
315. ILO. (2022). Spotlight on work statistics No. 12: New data shine light on gender gaps in the labour market. International Labour Office.
316. ILOSTAT. (2020). Understanding the gender pay gap. <https://www.ilo.org/media/402181/download>
317. ILOSTAT. (2024). Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?name_desc=false
318. INE. (2012). Boletim Mensal de Estatística 2012
319. INE (2020). Statistics of employment: adhoc module - Working from home. <https://www.gee.gov.pt/pt/indicadores-diarios/ultimos-indicadores/30483-ine-estatisticas-do-emprego-modulo-adhoc-trabalho-a-partir-de-casa>
320. INE. (2021). Estatísticas do Emprego - 3.º trimestre de 2020. INE Portugal. [https://www.ine.pt/ngt_server/attachfileu.jsp?look_parentBoui=480118624&att_display=n&att_download=y#:~:text=Os%20resultados%20do%20Inqu%C3%A9rito%20ao,mil\)%20relativamente%20ao%20trimestre%20hom%C3%B3go.](https://www.ine.pt/ngt_server/attachfileu.jsp?look_parentBoui=480118624&att_display=n&att_download=y#:~:text=Os%20resultados%20do%20Inqu%C3%A9rito%20ao,mil)%20relativamente%20ao%20trimestre%20hom%C3%B3go.)
321. INE (2021) Taxa de desemprego. https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_pesquisa&frm_accao=PESQUISAR&frm_show_page_num=1&frm_modulo_pesquisa=PESQUISA_SIMPLES&frm_texto=desemprego&frm_modulo_texto=MODO_TEXTO_ALL&frm_data_ini=&frm_data_fim=&frm_tema=QUALQUER_TEMA&frm_area=o_ine_area_Destaques&xlang=pt
322. INE. (2024). Monthly employment and unemployment estimates.

323. Insarauto, V. (2021). Women's Vulnerability to the Economic Crisis through the Lens of Part-time Work in Spain. *Work, Employment and Society*, 35(4), 621-639.
324. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (1992). Athens Declaration on Women in Power. Adopted at the European Summit on Women in Power, Athens, Greece, 3 November 1992.
325. International Labour Organization (ILO). (1996). Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177).
326. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2001). Home Work Recommendation No. 184
327. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2016). World Employment and Social Outlook. International Labour Office.
328. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2021). Teleworking arrangements during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. ILO Policy Brief.
329. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). Working Time and Work-Life Balance around the World. Geneva: International Labour Office.
330. ITA-International Trade Administration. (2024). Portugal - Information and Communications Technology. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/portugal-information-and-communications-technology>
331. Jacobs, J. A., Steinberg, R. J. (1990). Compensating differentials and the male-female wage gap: Evidence from the New York State Comparable Worth Study. *Social Forces*, 69(2), 439-468.
332. Jacobs, N. (2001). Information technology and interests in scholarly communication: A discourse analysis. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*.
333. Jacobs, J. A. (2001). Evolution of occupational segregation in the United States. *Sociological Forum*, 16(1), 145–166.
334. Januario, J., Costa, A., Cruz, C., et al. (2023). Effects of regional accessibility on productivity: An analysis based on composite indicators. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*.
335. Jarvi, T. (2022). Analysing digital transition in small and medium sized companies in Spain.

336. Javaid, M., Haleem, A., Singh, R. P., Sinha, A. K. (2024). Digital economy to improve the culture of industry 4.0: A study on features, implementation and challenges. *Green Technologies and Sustainability*, 2(2).
337. Jayachandran, S. (2020). Social norms as a barrier to women's employment in developing countries (No. w27449). National Bureau of Economic Research.
338. Jurgens, U., Krzywdzinski, M. (2019). Response to Reviews of New Worlds of Work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 33(3), 546-548.
339. Jorge, S., Coelho, L., Pimentel, L. (2023). The institutional environment of gender budgeting: Learning from the Portuguese experience. *Public Money & Management*, 43(6).
340. Jose, M., Arias, R. (1981). Spain: Feminism in our time. *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 4(4), 471-476.
341. Kaarbo, J., Beasley, R. K. (1999). A practical guide to the comparative case study method in political psychology. *Political Psychology*, 20(2), 369-391
342. Kabeer, N. (2016). Gender equality, economic growth, and women's agency: the "endless variety" and "monotonous similarity" of patriarchal constraints. *Feminist economics*, 22(1), 295-321.
343. Kabeer, N., Razavi, S., Rodgers, Y. (2021). Feminist economic perspectives on the COVID-19 pandemic. *Feminist Economics*, 27(1-2), 1-24.
344. Kalleberg, A. L., Vallas, S. P. (2018). Probing Precarious Work: Theory, Research, and Politics. *Research in the Sociology of Work*, 31, 1–30.
345. Kalmar, E., Aarts, T., Bosman, E., Ford, C., de Kluijver, L., Beets, J., van der Sanden, M. (2022). The COVID-19 paradox of online collaborative education: when you cannot physically meet, you need more social interactions. *Heliyon*, 8(1).
346. Karjalainen, M. (2023). Gender and the blurring boundaries of work in the era of telework—A longitudinal study. *Sociology Compass*, 17(1), e13029.
347. Kelley, H., Galbraith, Q., Strong, J. (2020). Working moms: Motherhood penalty or motherhood return? *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 46(1), 102075.

348. Kemp, S. (2023). Digital 2023: Spain. Data Reportal. Retrieved from <https://datareportal.com/reports/tag/Spain>
349. Karyotaki, M., Bakola, L., Drigas, A., Skianis, C. (2022). Women's Leadership via Digital Technology and Entrepreneurship in business and society. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 28, 246.
350. Kashyap, K. (2021). Occupational and vertical segregation widen the gender pay gap. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 35(4), 223-250.
351. Katzmayer, M. (2020). Employee experience as a new strategic approach to people management to enhance competitiveness. Master's thesis, Johannes Kepler University. https://www.jku.at/fileadmin/gruppen/131/Master_Theses_Highlights/Katzmayr_Miriam_Master_Thesis.pdf
352. Keane, C., Russell, H., Smyth, E. (2017). Female participation increases and gender segregation. ESRI Working Paper No. 564. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Dublin.
353. Kelley, H., Galbraith, Q., Strong, J. (2020). Working moms: Motherhood penalty or motherhood return?. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 46(1), 102075.
354. Khan, M. S., Umer, H. (2021). Benefits and challenges of COVID-19 induced telework across gender: policy lessons for sustainable future telework. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
355. Khvan, M. (2020). The establishment and development of feminism in Portugal. In *Concept: Philosophy, Religion, Culture*.
356. Kikuchi, H., Fukuda, A. (2021). Dynamic simulation analysis of impact on teleworking policy for after COVID-19 using land-use and transport model: Case study of Japanese city within population decline. Conference paper 14th ATRANS Annual Conference At: Bangkok
357. Kim, J. (2023). Public management strategies for improving satisfaction with pandemic-induced telework among public employees. *International Journal of Manpower*, 44(3), 558-575.
358. Kley, S., Reimer, T. (2023). Exploring the Gender Gap in Teleworking from Home: The Roles of Workers Characteristics, Occupational Positions and Gender Equality in Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, 168, 185–206.

359. Kling, R., Lamb, R. (2000). IT and organizational change in digital economies, in *Understanding the Digital Economy*, E. Brynjolfsson and B. Kahin (eds), MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 295-324.
360. Kohlrausch, B., Weber, L. (2021). Gender relations at the digitalised workplace: The interrelation between digitalisation, gender, and work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(4), 518-540.
361. Kossek, E. E., Dumas, T. L., Piszczek, M. M., Allen, T. D. (2021). Pushing the boundaries: A qualitative study of how stem women adapted to disrupted work–nonwork boundaries during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(11), 1615.
362. Kovalainen, A., Poutanen, S., Arvonen, J. (2021). COVID-19, trust, and digitalization: A study on remote work and its organization in Finland in spring and autumn 2020. University of Turku, Turku.
363. Kramer, A., Kramer, K. Z. (2020). The potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on occupational status, work from home, and occupational mobility. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 119, 103442.
364. Kring, S. (2017). Gender in employment policies and programmes: What works for women? Employment Working Paper No. 235, International Labour Organization.
365. Kushi, S., McManus, I. P. (2018). Gendered costs of austerity: The effects of welfare regime and government policies on employment across the OECD, 2000–13. *International Labour Review*, 157.
366. Kuttler, T., Moraglio, M. (2021). Re-thinking Mobility Poverty: Understanding Users' Geographies, Backgrounds and Aptitudes (p. 317). Taylor & Francis.
367. La Caixa (2021). Feminisation of care work. Infodata. <https://elobservatoriosocial.fundacionlacaixa.org/en/-/feminisation-of-care-work>.
368. Lagarde, C., Ostry, J. (2018). Economic gains from gender inclusion: Even greater than you thought. IMF Blog.
369. Lagutina, I. (2022). Teleworking “is here to stay”? Knowledge of European Law, 2, 46–49.

370. Lafuente, C., Santaaulalia-Lopis, R., Visschers, L. (2021). Temping fates in Spain: hours and employment in a dual labor market during the Great Recession and COVID-19. *SERIEs*, 13, 101–145.
371. Lamas, M. (1948). *As mulheres do meu Pais*.
372. Lamas, M. (1952). *Mulher no mundo*.
373. Lamond, D., Daniels, K., Standen, P. (1997). Defining telework: What is it exactly?
374. Lariau, A., Liu, L. (2022). Inequality in the Spanish labor market during the COVID-19 crisis. *IMF Working Paper*, 2022/018.
375. Lavee, E., Kaplan, A. (2022). Invisible work at work and the reproduction of gendered social service organizations. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 29(5), 1463-1480.
376. Lazaro, N., Sanchez, R. (1993). Women and the labor market in Spain: From the transition to democracy. In J. Rubery (Ed.), *Women and recession* (pp. 45-68). Madrid, Spain: Ministry of Labor and Social Security.
377. Lazear, E. P. (1991). Labor economics and the psychology of organizations. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5(2), 89-110.
378. Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford University Press.
379. Leuze, K., Strauss, S. (2016). Why do occupations dominated by women pay less? How 'female-typical' work tasks and working time arrangements affect the gender wage gap among higher education graduates. *Work, Employment & Society*, 30(5), 802-820.
380. Lim, L., & Wang, Y. (2015). Closing the gender divide in tech: Challenges and achievements in vogue. In A. Marcus (Ed.), *Design, User Experience, and Usability: Users and Interactions* (pp. 220-231). *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, Springer, Cham.
381. Lima, F. (2021). *Um ano de pandemia: uma breve síntese - 2020-2021*. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, I. P. Monografia.
382. Lines, L. M. (2012). *Milicianas: Women in Combat in the Spanish Civil War*. Lexington Books. ISBN 9780739164921.
383. Linz, J. J., Sterling, M., Jerez, M. (2003). *Ministers and Regimes in Spain: From First to Second Restoration, 1874-2001*. Center for European Studies Working Paper No. 101.

384. Lips, H. M. (2016). A new psychology of women: Gender, culture, and ethnicity. Waveland Press.
385. Lodovici, M. S., Ferrari, E., Paladino, E., Pesce, F., Frecassetti, P., & Aram, E. (2021). The impact of teleworking and digital work on workers and society. Study Requested by the EMPL Committee.
386. Lomazzi, V., Crespi, I. (2019). Gender mainstreaming in Europe: legislation and cultural changes. In Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality in Europe (pp. 31-46). Policy Press.
387. Lombardo, E. (2017). The Spanish gender regime in the EU context: Changes and struggles in times of austerity. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 24(1), 20-33.
388. Longoria, I. A. I., Bustamante-Bello, R., Ramírez-Montoya, M. S., Molina, A. (2022). Systematic mapping of digital gap and gender, age, ethnicity, or disability. *Sustainability*, 14(3), 1297.
389. Lopez-Martinez, M., Garcia-Luque, O., Rodriguez-Pasquin, M. (2021). Digital gender divide and convergence in the European Union countries. *Economics*, 15(1), 115-128.
390. Lopez-Igual, P., Rodriguez-Modrono, P. (2020). Who is teleworking and where from? Exploring the main determinants of telework in Europe. *Sustainability*, 12(21), 8797.
391. Lopez-Roldan, P., Fachelli, S. (2021). Towards a Comparative Analysis of Social Inequalities between Europe and Latin America. Springer book.
392. Louro, A., Franco, P., Marques da Costa, E. (2021). Determinants of physical activity practices in metropolitan context: the case of Lisbon Metropolitan Area, Portugal, *Sustainability*, 13(18), 10104.
393. Lu, Z., Zhuang, W. (2023). Can teleworking improve workers' job satisfaction? Exploring the roles of gender and emotional well-being. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 18(3), 1433-1452.
394. Ma, S., Sun, Z., Xue, H. (2020). Childcare Needs and Parents' Labor Supply: Evidence from the COVID-19 Lockdown. Unpublished Manuscript. June 19, 2020.
395. Macrotrends (2024). Portugal Urban Population 1960-2024 <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/PRT/portugal/urban-population>

396. Madden, D. (2018). Politics and Sexual Politics: Women's Writing in Spain and Portugal, 1913-1933. Retrieved from <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/22467/1/D%20MADDEN%20-%20Politics%20and%20Sexual%20Politics%20Women%27s%20Writing%20in%20Spain%20and%20Portugal%2C%201913-1933.pdf>
397. Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., Krishnan, M., Ellingrud, K., & Yee, L. (2019). The future of women at work.
398. Maestriperi, L., Leon, M. (2019). So close, so far? Part-time employment and its effects on gender equality in Italy and Spain. In *Dualisation of Part-Time Work: The Development of Labour Market Insiders and Outsiders* (pp. 55-83). Policy Press.
399. Maillot, A. S., Meyer, T., Prunier-Poulmaire, S., Vayre, E. (2022). A Qualitative and Longitudinal Study on the Impact of Telework in Times of COVID-19. *Sustainability*, 14(14), 8731.
400. Malo, M. A. (2015). *Labour market measures in Spain 2008–13: the crisis and beyond*. Geneva: ILO.
401. Mamede, R., Pereira, M., Simoes, A. (2020). Portugal: A quick analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and in the business market. ILO - Lisbon.
402. Manyika, J., Lund, S., Chui, M., Bughin, J., Woetzel, J., Batra, P., Ko, R., Sanghvi, S. (2017). *Jobs lost, jobs gained: Workforce transitions in a time of automation*. McKinsey Global Institute Report.
403. Marek, D., Patrik, R., Veronika, G., Marina, F. (2020). Economic impacts of Covid-19 on the labor market and human capital. *Terra Economicus*, 18(4), 78-96.
404. Marini, M. M., Fan, P. L. (1997). The gender gap in earnings at career entry. *American Sociological Review*, 62(4), 588-604.
405. Mario, R., Cameira, M., Queiros, C., Bizarro, L. (2023). Exploring intergenerational attitudes in Portuguese work contexts using age stereotypes. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 22(1), 1–19.
406. Mariscal, J., Mayne, G., Aneja, U., Sorgner, A. (2019). Bridging the gender digital gap. *Econ. Open Access Open Assess. E J.*, 13, 1-12.
407. Maritsa, E., Martins, H. (2022). Where are you going, work from anywhere?: The challenges of remote work before and after the COVID-19

- pandemic. In P. Figueiredo, E. Tomé, & J. Rouco (Eds.), *Handbook of research on challenges for human resource management in the COVID-19 era* (Chapter 11).
408. Marme, P. (2023). Perto de um milhão de portugueses faz trabalho remoto: qual é o perfil do teletrabalhador? *Forbes Portugal*.
 409. Martinez-Sanchez A., Perez-Perez M., de-Luis-Carnicer P., Vela-Jimenez M.J. (2007). Telework, human resource flexibility and firm performance. *New Technol. Work. Employ.* 22: 208-223
 410. Mascherini, M., Bisello, M. (2020). Covid-19 fallout takes a higher toll on women. *Social Europe*.
<https://www.socialeurope.eu/covid-19-fallout-takes-higher-toll-on-women>
 411. Mascherini, M., Nivakoski, S. (2021). Gender differences in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment, unpaid work, and well-being in the EU. *International Journal of Manpower*, 42(3), 584-600.
 412. Mathrani, A., Sarvesh, T., Umer, R. (2022). Digital divide framework: online learning in developing countries during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 20(5), 625-640.
 413. Mayoral, J. (1994). Gestión empresarial. In *Tendencias sociales en España (1960-1990)*, vol. I. Fundación BBV Documenta, Bilbao.
 414. Mayrhofer, W., Gooderham, P. N., Brewster, C. (2019). Context and HRM: Theory, Evidence, and Proposals. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 49(4), 355–371.
 415. McDowell, L. (2015). *Gender, identity and place: Understanding feminist geographies*. John Wiley & Sons.
 416. McKinsey. (2015). The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth.
 417. McGrew, W. (2016). Gender segregation at work: "Separate but equal" or "inefficient and unfair". *Equitable Growth Blog*.
<https://equitablegrowth.org/gender-segregation-at-work-separate-but-equal-or-inequitable-and-inefficient/>
 418. McKinsey. (2023, March). *Women Matter Spain 2023: Women are still far from top corporate leadership positions*. McKinsey & Company.
<https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/women%20matter%20spain%20women%20are%20sti>

- II%20far%20from%20top%20corporate%20leadership%20positions/women-matter-spain-women-are-still-far-from-top-corporate-leadership-positions.pdf
419. McNeely, J. A. (2021). Nature and COVID-19: The pandemic, the environment, and the way ahead. *Ambio*, 50(4), 767-781.
 420. McRobbie, A. (2009). *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. SAGE.
 421. Medina, M. D. M. V., Aguilés, A. V., Santos, S. A. (2020). Sex and gender equality policies in education in three southern European societies: The cases of Andalusia and Valencian Community (Spain) and Portugal. *RES. Revista Espanola de Sociologia*, 29(1), 137-151.
 422. Mendonca, I., Coelho, F., Ferrajao, P., Abreu, A. M. (2022). Telework and mental health during COVID-19. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(5), 2602.
 423. Metselaar, S., Dulk, L., Vermeeren, B. (2022). Teleworking at different locations outside the office: Consequences for perceived performance and the mediating role of autonomy and work-life balance satisfaction. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 43.
 424. Meulders, D., Plasman, R., Rigo, A., et al. (2010). Horizontal and vertical segregation: Meta-analysis of gender and science research. *Meta-analysis Report*.
 425. Milkman, R. (2016). *On Gender, Labor, and Inequality*. University of Illinois Press.
 426. Milkman, R., Townsley, E. (1994). Gender and the economy. In N. Smelser & R. Swedberg (Eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (pp. 600-619). Princeton University Press.
 427. Mill, J. S. (2020). *El sometimiento de las mujeres*. Edaf.
 428. Millan, G. D., Vazquez de la Torre, G. M., Rojas, R. H., Jimber del Rio, J. A. (2021). The Spanish Labor Market: A Gender Approach. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 18(5), 2742
 429. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation - Ministerio de Asuntos Economicos y Transformacion Digital de Espana. (2021). *Plan Nacional de Competencias digitales*.
 430. Mobert, J., Schattenberg, M. (2020). Working from home: Be careful what you wish for. *German Monitor, Deutsche Bank Research*.

431. Moens, E., Lippens, L., Sterkens, P., Weytjens, J., Stijn, B. (2022). The COVID-19 crisis and telework: A research survey on experiences, expectations and hopes.
432. Monteiro, V. F. R. (2013). Trabalho, igualdade e diálogo social: Estratégias e desafios de um percurso.
433. Monteiro, R. (2010). Genealogia da lei da igualdade no trabalho e no emprego desde finais do Estado Novo.
434. Monteiro, R. (2016). Women's movements and the State in Portugal: a State feminism approach. *Sociedade e Estado*, 31(02), May-Aug.
435. Monteiro, R., Ferreira, V. (2016). Women's movements and the state in Portugal: A state feminism approach. *Sociedade e Estado*, 31(2), 459-486.
436. Monteiro, R., Lopes, M. (2022). Closing the gender digital gap in Portugal: Feminist challenges and achievements. In A. R. de Blas & D. Escandell-Salamanca (Eds.), *Algoritmos, Teletrabalho e Outros Grandes Temas do Feminismo Digital* (pp. 53-72). Dykinson.
437. Montenegro, S., Raya, E., Navaridas, F. (2020). Percepciones docentes sobre los efectos de la brecha digital en la Educacion Basica durante el Covid-19. *Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia Social*, 9(3), 317-333
438. Montgomery, T., Baglioni, S. (2022). Transformations of work in the era of the gig economy: towards a new paradigm of worker autonomy or exploitation?. In *The Routledge Handbook of the Gig Economy* (pp. 261-275). Routledge.
439. Moraga Garcia, M. A. (2008). Notas sobre la Situacion Jurídica de la Mujer en el Franquismo. *Feminismo/s*, 12, 236.
440. Morata Lujan, M. J. (2019). Crecimiento económico y participación de la mujer en el mundo laboral, relacion evidente?.
441. Moreno, A. (2010). Family and gender roles in Spain from a comparative perspective. *European Societies*, 12(1), 85-111.
442. Moreno-Colom, S., Borrás-Català, V. (2023). Is teleworking an opportunity for male 'joint responsibility' at home?: Egalitarian men during the pandemic in Spain. *Masculinities & Social Change*. Advance online publication.

443. Morero-Minguez, A., Ortega-Gaspar, M. (2022). A Change in Work-Family/Life or a Return to Traditional Normative Patterns in Spain? Systematic Review. *Front Sociol*, 7, 807591.
444. Mousmouti, M. (2022). Gender-sensitive law-making: concept and process. *The Theory and Practice of Legislation*, 10.
445. Moya M., Moya-Garofano A. (2021). Evolution of Gender Stereotypes in Spain: From 1985 to 2018. May 2021 *Psicothema*, 33(1).
446. Mukherjee, S., Narang, D. (2023). Digital economy and work-from-home: The rise of home offices amidst the COVID-19 outbreak in India. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 14(2), 924-945.
447. Musizvingoza, R., Handforth, C., Mishra, V., Abreu Lopes, C., Lefevre, A., Chamberlain, S. (2021). The digital gender gap in healthcare: Progress, challenges, and policy implications.
448. Nagy, S., Pelser, A.-M., Vaiman, V. (2023). The improvement of skills & talents in the workplace.
449. Nakrosiene, A., Buciuniene, I., Gostautaite, B. (2019). Working from home: Characteristics and outcomes of telework. *International Journal of Manpower*, 40(1), 87-101.
450. Narciso, S. D. C. (2021). Care-oriented occupations' devaluation and their relationship with profit and production (Doctoral dissertation).
451. Nefesh-Clarke, L., Orser, B., Thomas, M. (2020). COVID_19 Response strategies, addressing digital gender divides. G20 Insights.
452. Neimanis, A. (2001). Gender mainstreaming in practice: a handbook. United Nations Development Programme.
453. Nelli, L., Virgillito, M. E. (2023). More than a She-recession: Long-term feminization and short-term pandemic effects. GLO Discussion Paper No. 1291. Global Labor Organization (GLO), Essen.
454. Nelson, J. A. (1993). Marianne A. Ferber and Julie A. Nelson. Beyond economic man: feminist theory and economics, 1.
455. Nguyen, M. H., Armoogum, J. (2021). Perception and preference for home-based telework in the COVID-19 era: A gender-based analysis in Hanoi, Vietnam. *Sustainability*, 13(6), 3179.
456. Nicholls, K. (2007). "Europeanizing Responses to Labour Market Challenges in Greece, Ireland and Portugal: the Importance of Consultative

and Incorporative Policy-Making." Dissertação de doutoramento, Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame.

457. Nilles, J. M. (1975). Telecommunications and organizational decentralization. *IEEE Transactions on Communications*, 23(10), 1142-1147.
458. Ning, X., Gregg, D., Khuntia, J. (2021). Teleworking during COVID 19 pandemic crisis: Influences of female leadership on business continuity and employee layoff in eight countries.
459. NIS - National Institute of Statistics (2020). Employment by type of working day, sex, and age group.
460. NIS - National Institute of Statistics (2021). Employment by type of working day, sex, and age group.
461. NIS - National Institute of Statistics (2021). Incidents of employment due to the existence of children.
<https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Tabla.htm?t=28142&L=1>
462. NISS (2023). Data of the National Institute of Statistics Spain, <https://www.infobae.com/espana/2023/11/29/el-teletrabajo-vuelve-a-caer-en-2023-solo-lo-practica-el-138-y-aumentan-los-empleados-que-prefieren-la-presencialidad/#:~:text=En%202023%20teletrabajaron%20el%2014,de%2025%20a%2034%20a%C3%B1os>
463. Nogueira, C. (2009). Women in positions of power in Portugal: Contradictory positions and discourses. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 30(1), 70–88.
464. Nogueira, C., Paul, C., Amancio, L. (1995). Women in management in Portugal: A demographic overview. In L. Amâncio & C. Nogueira (Eds.), *Gender, Management and Science* (pp. 207–218). Braga: Universidade do Minho.
465. Nunes, R. (2020). Addressing gender inequality to promote basic human rights and development: A global perspective. *CEDIS Working Papers: Questoes de genero e outras aplicacoes do principio da igualdade no Direito Portugues*, (1), August.
466. OECD. (1998). The future of female-dominated occupations.
467. OECD. (2017). *OECD Digital Economy Outlook 2017*. Chapter 1: Going digital. OECD Publishing

468. OECD. (2018). Bridging the digital gender divide: Include, upskill, innovate. OECD Publishing.
469. OECD. (2021). Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris.
470. OECD. (2021). Caregiving in crisis: Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work during COVID-19. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/12/caregiving-in-crisis-gender-inequality-in-paid-and-unpaid-work-during-covid-19_85044948/3555d164-en.pdf
471. OECD. (2023). The Impact of Economic Crises on Gender Equality in the Labor Market. Paris: OECD Publishing.
472. OECD. (2023). The impact of regulation on international investment in Portugal. OECD Publishing.
473. OECD. (2024). Job creation and local economic development: The geography of generative AI. OECD Publishing.
474. Ofer, I. (2009). Señoritas in Blue. The Making of a Female Political Elite in Franco's Spain. Sussex Academic Press.
475. ONTSI - Observatorio Nacional de Tecnología y Sociedad. (2023). Brecha digital de género. 2023. Observatorio Nacional de Tecnología y Sociedad. Red.es. Secretaría de Estado de Digitalización e Inteligencia Artificial. Ministerio de Asuntos Económicos y Transformación Digital.
476. Ortiz-Ospina, E., Hasell, J., Roser, M. (2024). Economic inequality by gender. Our World in Data
477. Ortiz-Martínez, G., Vázquez-Villegas, P., Ruiz-Cantisani, M. I., Delgado-Fabián, M., Conejo-Márquez, D. A., Membrillo-Hernández, J. (2023). Analysis of the retention of women in higher education STEM programs. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1-14.
478. Otero-Gonzales. (2020). Gender Labor Policies in the Franco Dictatorship (1939–75): The Discursive Construction of Normative Femininity. *Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics*, 14(2), 196-225.
479. Ouro, M. (2022). Telework: A Comparative Analysis of the Portuguese and Spanish Legal-Labor Regime. *Revista Jurídica*, (31).

480. Pabilonia, S. W., Vernon, V. (2022). Telework, wages, and time use in the United States. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 20(3), 687-734.
481. Paleo, N., Alonso, A. (2015). Es solo una cuestion de austeridad? Crisis economica y políticas de genero en Espana. *Revista de Investigaciones Feministas*, 5, 36-68.
482. Palma Ramalho, M. R. P. (2013). Portuguese labour law and industrial relations during the crisis. International Labour Office, Governance and Tripartism Department, Geneva
483. Palomares-Ruiz, A., Cebrian-Martinez, A., Garcia-Toledano, E., Lopez-Parra, E. (2021). Digital gender gap in university education in Spain: Study of a case for paired samples. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 173, 121174.
484. Pazos, M. (2013). *Desiguales por ley*. Madrid: Catarata.
485. Parker, C., Scott, S., Geddes, A. (2019). *Snowball sampling*. SAGE research methods foundations.
486. Parnell, K. J., Plant, K. L. (2024). How can human factors close the gender data gap? *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries*, 34(1), 63-75.
487. Pedroso, P. (2014). Portugal and the global crisis: The impact of austerity on the economy, the social model, and the performance of the state. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Study. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/10722-20220207.pdf>
488. Pena, C. (2008). *A revolução das feministas portuguesas: 1972-1975*. (Master's thesis, Universidade Aberta).
489. Pereira, J. D. (2024). Mutuality and Cooperation in the Transition to Modernity (Portugal, 1834–1934). In *Social Alternatives in Southern Europe and Latin America* (pp. 73-102). Routledge.
490. Perista, H., Cardoso, A., Brazia, A., Abrantes, M., Perista, P. (2016). *Os uso do Tempo de Homens e Mulheres em Portugal*. Centro de Estudos para a Intervenção Social/Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego. http://cite.gov.pt/pt/destaques/complementosDestqs2/INUT_brochura.pdf
491. Perrot, M. (2008). “Metiers de femmes”. *Mouvement Social*, 140, 3-8.

492. Piatti-Crocker, A. (2019). The Case for Gender Parity. *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporaneas Epoca III*. Vol. XXIV. Numero Especial V, Colima, otoño 2019, pp. 11-31.
493. Pignatti, C., van Belle, E. (2018). Active and passive labour market policies in developed and developing economies. Research Department Working Paper No. 37.
494. Pimentel, I. F. (2001). "História das Organizações Femininas do Estado Novo, Lisboa, Temas e Debates."
495. Pinheiro, I. M. (2019). "Os limites da flexibilização no direito do trabalho: o conflito entre o negociado e o legislado nos ordenamentos jurídico português e brasileiro." Dissertação para obtenção do grau de mestre em direito.
<https://repositorio.ual.pt/bitstream/11144/4572/1/luanne%20pinheiro%20-%20t5%20dissertação%20%28definitivo%29.pdf>
496. Pinto, A. C. (1998). Preface. In A. Costa Pinto (Ed.), *Modern Portugal* (pp. v–ix). Palo Alto: SPOSS.
497. Pinto, C., Domingues, P., Sampaio, P., & Oliveira, O. (2022). Integrated management systems in Industry 4.0: Literature review. In *Proceedings of the 5th ICQEM Conference* (pp. 921-922). University of Minho.
498. Pinto T., Nogueira C., Vieira C et al (2013). Education guide: Gender and Citizenship 3rd Cycle. CIG and the authors
499. Pfadenhauer L.M. (2021). Conceptualizing Context and Intervention as a System in Implementation Science: Learning From Complexity Theory Comment on "Stakeholder Perspectives of Attributes and Features of Context Relevant to Knowledge Translation in Health Settings: A Multi-country Analysis". *Int J Health Policy Manag.* 2022 Aug 1;11(8):1570-1573
500. Pfau-Effinger, B. (2022). Women's employment in institutional and cultural context. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 32(9), 530-543. Pimentel, I. (2000). *Historia das Organizacoes Femininas no Estado Novo*. Lisboa: Circulo de Leitores.
501. Pimkina, S., De la Flor, L. (2020). Promoting female labor force participation. World Bank Group Jobs Working Paper.

502. Polanyi, K. (1957). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Beacon Press.
503. Polic, M., Holy, M. (2021). Gender-biased office culture in Croatian PR industry: why feminine sectors practice masculine patterns?. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 26(4), 716-727.
504. Pordata. (2021). Activity rate: total and by sex
https://www.pordata.pt/sites/default/files/2024-09/PORTUGAL_P05020012.xlsx
505. Pordata. (2023). População empregada do sexo feminino.
https://www.pordata.pt/sites/default/files/2024-09/PORTUGAL_P05020011.xlsx
506. Pordata (2023). Individuals who accessed the Internet, on average, at least once a week as a % of total individuals: by sex.
507. Portes, A. (1994). When more can be less: Labour standards, development, and the informal economy. In C. A. Rakowski (Ed.), *Contrapunto: The Informal Sector Debate in Latin America* (pp. 113-130). State University of New York Press.
508. Porto, N., de la Vega, P. (2024). Employment and Teleworking in the Argentine Tourism Sector: a Case Study Based on the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 15(2), 6706-6736.
509. Portugal. (1867). *Código Civil de 1867*.
510. Portugal. (1932). Decreto n.º 21.699. *Diário do Governo*.
511. Portugal. (1933). *Constituição da República Portuguesa de 1933*.
512. Portugal. (1937). Lei n.º 1952. *Diário do Governo*.
513. Portugal. (1965). Decreto-Lei n.º 42.731. *Diário do Governo*.
514. Portugal. (1966). Decreto-Lei n.º 47.032. *Diário do Governo*.
515. Portugal. (1966). Decreto-Lei n.º 47.344. *Diário do Governo*.
516. Portugal. (1969). Decreto-Lei n.º 49.408. *Diário do Governo*.
517. Portugal. (1973). Order No. 193/73, dated March 13.
518. Portugal. (1975). Decree-Law No. 372-A/75, dated July 16.
519. Portugal. (1976). *Constitution of the Portuguese Republic*.
520. Portugal. (1977). Decree-Law No. 485/77. *Diário da República*.
521. Portugal. (1997). Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 49/97, *International Plan for Equal Opportunities*. *Diário da República*.

522. Portugal. (1999). The Organic Law of the XIV Government – Decree-Law No. 474-A/99, dated November 8.
523. Portugal. (2000). Decree-Law No. 267-A/2000, dated October 20.
524. Portugal. (2000). Ordinance No. 1212/2000, dated December 26.
525. Portugal. (2003). Labor Code. Approved by Law No. 99/2003, dated August 27.
526. Portugal. (2006). Decree-Law No. 220/2006, dated November 3.
527. Portugal. (2006) Ministerio do Trabalho e da Solidariedade Social. Decreto-Lei n.º 220/2006. Diario da Republica n.º 212/2006, Serie I.
528. Portugal. (2007). Decree-Law No. 287/2007, dated August 17.
529. Portugal. (2007). Ministerio da Economia e da Inovação. Decreto-Lei n.º 287/2007. Diario da Republica n.º 158/2007, Serie I.
530. Portugal. (2007). Ministerios das Finanças e da Administracao Publica e da Justica. Portaria n.º 1463/2007. Diario da Republica n.º 220/2007, Serie I.
531. Portugal. (2007). Portaria No. 1463/2007, dated November 15.
532. Portugal. (2007). Presidencia do Conselho de Ministros. Resolucao do Conselho de Ministros n.º 49/2007. Diario da Republica n.º 62/2007, Serie I.
533. Portugal. (2007). Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 49/2007, dated March 28.
534. Portugal. (2008). Resolucao do Conselho de Ministros n.º 59/2008. Diario da República n.º 61/2008, Serie I.
535. Portugal. (2008). Resolucao do Conselho de Ministros n.º 70/2008. Diario da Republica n.º 79/2008, Serie I.
536. Portugal. (2008). Resolucao do Conselho de Ministros n.º 161/2008. Diario da Republica n.º 205/2008, Serie I.
537. Portugal. (2009). Lei n.º 7/2009: Aprova a revisao doCodigo do Trabalho. Diario da Republica n.º 30/2009, Serie I.
538. Portugal. (2009). Lei n.º 98/2009: Regulamenta o regime de reparação de acidentes de trabalho e de doenças profissionais. Diario da Republica n.º 172/2009, Serie I.
539. Portugal. (2011). Quarto Plano Nacional para a Igualdade – Cidadania, Genero e Nao-Discriminacao (2011-2013). Diario da Republica, I Serie, N.º 12.

540. Portugal. (2017). Lei n.º 62/2017: Regime da representacao equilibrada entre mulheres e homens nos orgaos de administracao e de fiscalizacao das entidades do setor publico empresarial e das empresas cotadas em bolsa.
541. Portugal. (2018). Resolucao do Conselho de Ministros n.º 61/2018. Diario da Republica n.º 97/2018, Serie I.
542. Portugal. (2018). Lei n.º 60/2018: Aprova medidas de promocao da igualdade remuneratória entre mulheres e homens por trabalho igual ou de igual valor. Diario da Republica n.º 160/2018, Serie I.
543. Portugal. (2019). Lei n.º 1/2019: Primeira alteracao a Lei da Paridade nos Orgaos Colegiais Representativos do Poder Politico, aprovada pela Lei Organica n.º 3/2006, de 21 de agosto. Diario da Republica n.º 63/2019, Serie I.
544. Portugal. (2019). Lei n.º 26/2019: Regime da representacao equilibrada entre homens e mulheres no pessoal dirigente e nos orgaos da Administracao Publica. Diário da República n.º 62/2019, Serie I.
545. Portugal. (2020). Action Plan for Digital Transition. Resolucao do Conselho de Ministros n.º 31/2020.
546. Portugal. (2021). Portugal Digital more Equal – Initiatives where Women (Already) Have an Active Role.
547. Portugal. (2021). Lei n.º 83/2021. Diario da Republica n.º 235/2021, Serie I, 2-9
548. Portugal, P., Bover, O., Garcia-Perea, P. (1998). A comparative study of the Portuguese and Spanish labour markets. Banco de Portugal, Economics and Research Department Working Papers.
549. Poutanen, S., Kovalainen, A. (2023). Skills, creativity and innovation in the digital platform era: Analyzing the new reality of professions and entrepreneurship (1st ed.). Routledge.
550. Preston, P. (1996). The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, revolution and revenge. W.W. Norton & Company.
551. Price, V. (2016). Women in non-traditional work fields. In N. P. Stoloff (Ed.), The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies (pp. 1-5). Wiley.

552. Puebla Pinilla, A. (2020). Teletrabajo a distancia y teletrabajo: una perspectiva de género. *Labos: Revista de Derecho del Trabajo y Proteccion Social*, 1(3), 5.
553. Quintal, A. (2002). O teletrabalho: o conceito e implicacoes [Telework: the concept and implications]. Departamento de Engenharia Informatica, Universidade de Coimbra.
554. Ramirez, P. (2023). Por que las empresas se empenan en volver a la oficina si Espana es un paraíso del teletrabajo? *La Informacion Economica*. <https://www.20minutos.es/lainformacion/management/por-que-las-empresas-se-empenan-volver-oficina-si-espana-es-un-paraiso-teletrabajo-5283487/>
555. Ramos Quintana, M.I. (2020). El trabajo de las mujeres en la economía digital: Desigualdad, violencia y estereotipos de genero en el marco de la nueva estrategia europea para la igualdad. In M.I. Quintana (Ed.), *La Estrategia Europea para la Igualdad de Genero 2020-2025. Un estudio multidisciplinar* (p. 32). Bomarzo.
556. Rani, U., Castel-Branco, R., Satija, S., Naya, M. (2022). Women, work, and the digital economy. *Gender & Development*, 30(3), 421–435.
557. Rebelo, G., Simoes, E., Salavisa, I. (2020). Working time and digital transition: A complex and ambiguous relationship. *Working time and digital transition: A complex and ambiguous relationship*, 128-135.
558. Rebelo, G., Almeida, A., Pedra, J. (2024). Telework and work intensity: Insights from an exploratory study in Portugal during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(14).
559. Rebelo, G., Delaunay, C., Diamantino, M. F., Almeida, A. R. (2024). Telework and Women's Perceptions on the Right to Disconnect—An Exploratory Study in Portugal. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(10), 261.
560. Reeser, V. (2019). Exploring female identity in francoist Spain. *Penn History Review: Journal of Undergraduate Historians*, 26(1), 73-101.
561. Reichenberger, I. (2017). Digital nomads – a quest for holistic freedom in work and leisure. *Annals of Leisure Research*. 21.
562. Reskin, B. F., Roos, P. A. (1990). *Job queues, gender queues: Explaining women's inroads into male occupations*. Temple University Press.
563. Reskin, B. F. (1993). Sex segregation in the workplace. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19(1), 241-270.

564. Reskin, B. (2002). Imagining work without exclusionary barriers. *Yale JL & Feminism*, 14, 313.
565. Reznikova, E., Gomez Urquijo, L. T., Enciso Santocildes, M. (2024). Assessing the Influence of the Induced Telework on Women's Employment in Portugal. *Lex ET Scientia Int'l J.*, 31, 7.
566. Reverte, C. (2015). The new Spanish corporate social responsibility strategy 2014–2020: A crucial step forward with new challenges ahead. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 91, 327-336.
567. Reuters. (2023). Spain announces a law promoting gender parity in politics and business. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spain-announces-law-promoting-gender-parity-politics-business-2023-03-04/>
568. Reyes, E. (2020). Body politics in the COVID-19 Era from a feminist lens. *Development*, 63(2), 262-269.
569. Riegraf, B., Weber, L. (2017). Excellence and gender equality policies in neoliberal universities. *Gender a vyzkum / Gender and Research*, 18(1), 92-112.
570. Rivera Garrido, B. (2019). Evolution of the wage gap in Spain by age and gender between 2006 and 2014. *Journal of Economic Inequality*, 17(2), 217-238.
571. Roberto, R., Zini, A., Felici, B., Rao, M., Noussan, M. (2023). Potential benefits of remote working on urban mobility and related environmental impacts: Results from a case study in Italy. *Applied Sciences*, 13(1), 607.
572. Roberts, B. (1996). The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, 21(2), 237-244.
573. Rodriguez-Cifuentes, F., Fernandez-Salinerio, S., Moriano, J. A., Topa, G. (2020). Presenteeism, overcommitment, workplace bullying, and job satisfaction: a moderated mediation relationship. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(22), 8616.
574. Rodriguez-Jimenez, R., Fares-Otero, N., Garcia-Fernandez, L. (2020). Gender-based violence during COVID-19 outbreak in Spain. *Psychological Medicine*, 53(1).

575. Rodriguez-Modrono, P., Pesole, A., Lopez-Igual, P. (2022). Assessing gender inequality in digital labour platforms in Europe. *Internet Policy Review*, 11(1), 1-23.
576. Roig, R. (2021). Teleworking and work-life balance facing gender equality: An approach from public policies.
577. Romero-Portillo, D., Marquez Bono, L. (2020). Exploring the patriarchal limits of liberal democracy. Spanish feminist movement's shift from institutional to protest struggle. *Femeris*, 6(1), 24-41.
578. Rottenberg, C. (2018). *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism*. Oxford University Press.
579. Roque, I., Carmo, R., Assis, R., Caleiras, J. (2022). Precarious Work and Intermittent Life Trajectories in a Portuguese Gig Economy. *Journal of Labor and Society*. 1-26.
580. Royo, S. (2000). From Social Democracy to Neoliberalism: The Consequences of the Spanish Socialist Economic Policy." *South European Society and Politics*, 5(2), 213-245.
581. Rubery, J., Fagan, C. (2019). Gender pay gaps and the 'future of work'. European Commission Report on Employment and Gender Equality.
582. Rubery, J., Tavora, I. (2021). The COVID-19 crisis and gender equality: Risks and opportunities. In B. Vanhercke, S. Spasova, & B. Fronteddu (Eds.), *Social Policy in the European Union: State of Play 2020* (pp. 71–96). European Trade Union Institute: Brussels, Belgium; European Social Observatory: Brussels, Belgium.
583. Rubino, N., Clemente, J. G., Quesada, O. (2024). Teleworking Dynamics in Spain: Pre and Post-Pandemic Insights. *SAGE Open*, 14(3), 21582440241260565.
584. Rubio Castro, A. (2014). Los efectos jurídicos del soft law en materia de igualdad efectiva: La experiencia española. *Anuario de Filosofía del Derecho*, 30, 37–68.
585. Saavedra L., Araujo A. M. (2015). Em discurso direto: a discriminacao contra as mulheres engenheiras, *Psicologia, Educacao e Cultura*, XIX 2, 170-180
586. Saavedra, J., Bascón, M., Arias, S., Calderon, M., Mora, D. (2013). Women caregivers of dependent relatives and health: Effects of the

- participation in a stress management workshop. *Clinica y Salud*, 24(2), 85–93.
587. Sachdeva, L., Bhati, B., Maheswary, M. (2021). A five-decade review of gender-based occupational segregation: A bibliometric study of influential authors, institutions, and research clusters. *Australian Journal of Career Development*.
 588. Sahin, A., Song, J., Hobijn, B. (2010). The unemployment gender gap during the 2007 recession. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 16 (February).
 589. Salazar Benítez, O. (2016). The fragility of gender equality policies in Spain. *Social Sciences*, 5(2), 17.
 590. Salazar Benítez, O., Cardenas Cordon, A., Adam Munoz, M. D., Agudo Zamora, M., Marrades Puig, A., Prados Garcia, C., Serrano Valverde, G. (2023). The Interpretation and Application of the Law with a Gender Perspective in Spain: Challenges and Outstanding Issues. *Social Sciences*, 12(5), 287.
 591. Salavisa, I., Rebelo, G., Simoes, E. (2021). COVID-19, digital transformation and the expansion of telework in Portugal. In *ECIAIR 2021 3rd European Conference on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics* (p. 150). Academic Conferences and publishing limited.
 592. Salido, O., Moreno, L. (2010). Female employment and welfare development in Spain. Conference: International Workshop on Female Employment.
 593. San Jose, B. (2015). Igualdad versus Austeridad: Resistencia, protestas y propuestas del movimiento feminista. *Revista de investigaciones feministas* 5, 185-206.
 594. Sanchez, L. R. (1990). Spanish Women: A Shadow of Destiny in the Universal. *Historical Trajectory of the Women's Section of Falange (1934-1977)*. University of Murcia.
 595. Sanhokwe, H. (2022). The influence of nonwork resources, nonwork demands and external support on work engagement and productivity: A moderated mediation model. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 48(1), 1-8.
 596. Santos, S. M. P. D., Carvalho, E. M. P. (2015). Graduacao em enfermagem: uma analise do curriculo da perspectiva de genero. *Rev. enferm. UFPE on line*, 8079-8087.

597. Santos, M. H., Amancio, L. (2016). Gender inequalities in highly qualified professions: A social psychological analysis. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 4(1), 427–443.
598. Santos, M. H., Rosa, M., Correia, R. B., Xavier, E. (2021). Gender roles and dynamics in COVID-19 times: Changes and continuities in sharing arrangements of housework and caregiving. *Psicologia*, 35(1), 147-156.
599. Santos, M. H., Rosa, M., Correia, R. B., Xavier, E. (2022). Gender equality under siege: Perceptions and satisfaction of telecommuting women workers with the distribution of unpaid work during the COVID-19 lockdown. <https://exaequo.apem-estudos.org/files/2023-01/03-maria-helena-santos-et-a-l.-ex-aequo-46.pdf>
600. Santos, T. K. B. (2019). *Inovacao social em Portugal: um estudo de caso a partir da estrategia Portugal 2020* (Doctoral dissertation, Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal)).
601. Santos, G. G. (2010). Gestao, trabalho e relacoes sociais de género. In *A igualdade de mulheres e homens no trabalho e no emprego em Portugal: Políticas e circunstâncias* (pp. 99-138). Lisboa, Portugal: CITE.
602. Sanz de Miguel, P., Bazzani, T. Arasanz, J. (2021), The definition of worker in the platform economy: Exploring workers' risks and regulatory solutions, European Social and Economic Committee, Brussels. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/publications-otherwork/publications/definition-worker-platform-economy-exploring-workers-risksand-regulatory-solutions>
603. Sanz Tolosana, E., Perez Esain, E. (2021). The Unequal Distribution of Domestic Work Before and During the Pandemic. *Generos: Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(3).
604. Sauer, A. T. (2018). *Equality Governance Via Policy Analysis?: The Implementation of Gender Impact Assessment in the European Union and Gender-based Analysis in Canada*. transcript Verlag.
605. Scheele, A. (2007). Gender and the quality of work: An overview of European and national approaches. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 13(4), 601-617.
606. Schlagwein, D. (2018). Escaping the rat race: Justifications in digital nomadism.

607. Schmidt, F., Shephard, N. (2021). Intersectional perspectives on the digital gender gap. In *The value of digitalization: Common good in the digital world* (pp. 253-270).
608. Schmitz, H., Bauer, J. F., Niehaus, M. (2023). Working Anytime and Anywhere-Even When Feeling Ill? A Cross-sectional Study on Presenteeism in Remote Work. *Safety and Health at Work*, 14(4), 375-383.
609. Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review*, 51(1), 1-17.
610. Scuza, F., Woldu, H., Arbolz, E. (2022). Who is talent? Implications of talent definitions for talent management practice. *Economics and Business Review*, 8(22)(4), 136-162.
611. Segal, E. (2003). Cultural constructions of gender. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 32, 243-269.
612. Seibel, S. (2022). Shards of the glass ceiling: Women's leadership and corporations in science fiction television. *Recherches Germaniques*, HS 17, 165-182.
613. Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers college press.
614. Senden, M., Klysing, A., et al. (2019). The (not so) changing man: Dynamic gender stereotypes in Sweden. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 31-46.
615. Sentis, M., de la Rica, S., Gorlon, L. (2023). Opportunity bias in Spain: Empirical evidence, drivers and trends. *ISEAK Working Paper 2023/1*.
616. Serra Sala, C. (2018). When Instability Becomes Permanent: Uncertainty in the Labor Market as a Determinant of Redistribution Preferences.
617. Sevilla, A., Smith, S. (2020). Baby steps: The gender division of childcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 36(Supplement_1), S169–S186.
618. Silva, M. (1983). *O Emprego das Mulheres em Portugal*. Porto: Afrontamento.
619. Silva, P. Pereira, M. T. (2012). "As políticas de protecao no desemprego em Portugal." *Sociologia: Problemas e praticas*, 70, 133-150.
620. Silva, M. C. (2018). *Gender and Work in Portugal: Historical Perspectives*. Routledge.

621. Silva, P. A., Carmo, R. M., Cantante, F., Cruz, C. M., Estêvão, P., Manso, L., Pereira, T. S. (2020). Trabalho e desigualdades no grande confinamento: Perdas de rendimento e transicao para o teletrabalho. Estudos CoLABOR, 2. CoLABOR.
622. Silva, S., Moscatel, C., Oliveira, N., Soares, D., Valerio, B. (2022). "Trabalho (no) feminino – historias de mulheres (seculos XVIII a XX)." <https://estudogeral.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/111146/1/ebook.trbFeminino.pdf>
623. Sloane, P. J., Ward, M., Williams, J. (2021). Occupational segregation and the gender wage gap: Revisiting the role of job preferences. *Labour Economics*, 68, 101943.
624. Smith, A. (2007). *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction: Catalan Labor and the Crisis of the Spanish State, 1898-1923*. Berghahn Books.
625. Son Hing, L. S., Sakr, N., Sorenson, J. B., Stamarski, C. S., Caniera, K., Colaco, C. (2023). Gender inequities in the workplace: A holistic review of organizational processes and practices. *Human Resource Management Review*, 33(3).
626. Sorgner, A. (2021). Gender and industrialization: developments and trends in the context of developing countries.
627. Sorgner, A., Bode, E., Krieger-Boden, C., Aneja, U., Coleman, S., Mishra, V., Robb, A. M. (2017). The effects of digitalization on gender equality in the G20 economies: Women20 study. Kiel: Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW).
628. Sostero, M., Milasi, S., Hurley, J., Fernandez-Macías, E., Bisello, M. (2020). Teleworkability and the COVID-19 crisis: a new digital divide? (No. 2020/05). JRC working papers series on labour, education and technology.
629. Soubelet-Fagoaga, I., Arnosó-Martínez, M., Guerendiain-Gabas, I., Martínez-Moreno, E., Ortiz, G. (2021). (Tele)work and care during lockdown: Labour and socio-familial restructuring in times of COVID-19. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(22), 12087.
630. Sousa-Uva, M., Sousa-Uva, A., Sampayo, M. M., Serranheira, F. (2021). Telework during the COVID-19 epidemic in Portugal and determinants of job satisfaction: a cross-sectional study. *BMC public health*, 21, 1-11.

631. Spain. (1887). Law on the Exercise of the Right of Association of June 30, 1887 [Ley de 30 de junio de 1887, sobre el ejercicio del derecho de asociacion]. Official State Gazette.
632. Spain. (1889). Royal Decree of July 24, 1889, publishing the Civil Code [Real Decreto de 24 de julio de 1889 por el que se publica elCodigo Civil]. Official State Gazette.
633. Spain. (1926). Labour Code of 23rd August 1926 [Código del Trabajo de 23 de agosto de 1926]. Official State Gazette.
634. Spain. (1931). Employment Contract Act of 21st November 1931 [Ley de Contrato de Trabajo de 21 de noviembre de 1931]. Official State Gazette.
635. Spain. (1932). Law of Associations of Professional Employers and Workers [Ley de Asociaciones Profesionales de Patronos y Obreros]. Official State Gazette.
636. Spain. (1938). Fuero del Trabajo [Labor Charter]. Official State Gazette.
637. Spain. (1945). Fuero de los Espanoles [The Spaniard's Charter]. Official State Gazette.
638. Spain. (1958). Law of Public Order [Ley de Orden Público]. Official State Gazette.
639. Spain. (1961). Law on Political, Professional and Labor Rights of Women [Ley sobre Derechos Políticos, Profesionales y de Trabajo de la Mujer]. Official State Gazette.
640. Spain. (1975). Law 14/1975, of May 2, on the Rights and Liberties of Workers and their Social Integration [Ley 14/1975, de 2 de mayo, de derechos y libertades de los trabajadores y su integracion social]. Official State Gazette.
641. Spain. (1976). Industrial Relations Law [Ley de Relaciones Laborales]. Official State Gazette.
642. Spain. (1978). Spanish Constitution. Passed by the Cortes Generales on October 31, 1978; ratified by referendum on December 6, 1978; sanctioned by King Juan Carlos I on December 27, 1978; effective December 29, 1978
643. Spain. (1980). Law 8/1980, of March 10, on the Statute of Workers [Ley 8/1980, de 10 de marzo, del Estatuto de los Trabajadores]. Official State Gazette.

644. Spain. (1981). Law 11/1981, of March 30, on Divorce [Ley 11/1981, de 30 de marzo, de divorcio]. Official State Gazette.
645. Spain. (1981). Law 30/1981, of August 7, on the Regulation of Labor Relations [Ley 30/1981, de 7 de agosto, de regulacion de las relaciones laborales]. Official State Gazette.
646. Spain. (1983). Law 16/1983, of October 24, on the creation of the Women's Institute and on the promotion of effective equality between women and men [Ley 16/1983, de 24 de octubre, de creacion del Instituto de la Mujer y de promocion de la igualdad efectiva entre mujeres y hombres]. Official State Gazette.
647. Spain. (1997). Third Women 's Equal Opportunities Plan 1997-2000 [Tercer Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Mujeres y Hombres 1997-2000]. Official State Gazette.
648. Spain. (2004). Organic Law 1/2004, of December 28, on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence [Ley Organica 1/2004, de 28 de diciembre, de medidas de protección integral contra la violencia de genero]. Official State Gazette.
649. Spain. (2006). Law 39/2006, of December 14, on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Care for People in a Situation of Dependency [Ley 39/2006, de 14 de diciembre, de promocion de la autonomia personal y atencion a las personas en situación de dependencia]. Official State Gazette.
650. Spain. (2007). Organic Law 3/2007, of March 22, for effective equality between women and men [Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva entre mujeres y hombres]. Official State Gazette.
651. Spain. (2007). Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2008-2011 [Plan Estratégico para la Igualdad de Oportunidades 2008-2011]. Official State Gazette.
652. Spain. (2008). National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2008-2010 [Plan Nacional de Accion para la Inclusión 2008-2010]. Official State Gazette.
653. Spain. (2010). Organic Law 2/2010, of March 3, on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy [Ley Organica 2/2010, de 3 de marzo, de salud sexual y reproductiva y de la interrupcion voluntaria del embarazo]. Official State Gazette.

654. Spain. (2011). National Employment Plan 2011-2013 [Plan Nacional de Empleo 2011-2013]. Official State Gazette.
655. Spain. (2011). Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2011-2014 [Plan Estrategico para la Igualdad de Oportunidades 2011-2014]. Official State Gazette.
656. Spain. (2014). Strategic Plan for Equality of Opportunities 2014-2016 [Plan Estrategico para la Igualdad de Oportunidades 2014-2016]. Official State Gazette.
657. Spain. (2018). Strategic Plan for Equality of Opportunities 2018-2021 [Plan Estrategico para la Igualdad de Oportunidades 2018-2021]. Official State Gazette.
658. Spain. (2019). Royal Decree-Law 6/2019 of 1 March, on urgent measures for equal treatment and opportunities in employment and occupation. Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE), No. 57, 2 March 2019, pp. 20967–20992.
659. Spain. (2019). Royal Decree-Law 6/2019, of March 1, on urgent measures for guaranteeing equal treatment and opportunities between women and men in the workplace [Real Decreto-ley 6/2019, de 1 de marzo, de medidas urgentes para la garantía de la igualdad de trato y de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres en el empleo]. Official State Gazette.
660. Spain. (2020). Royal Decree 901/2020, of October 13, on the regulation of gender equality plans [Real Decreto 901/2020, de 13 de octubre, por el que se regula el plan de igualdad]. Official State Gazette.
661. Spain. (2020). Royal Decree 902/2020, of October 13, on equal pay between women and men [Real Decreto 902/2020, de 13 de octubre, de igualdad retributiva entre mujeres y hombres]. Official State Gazette.
662. Spain. (2020). Real Decreto-ley 28/2020, de 22 de septiembre, de trabajo a distancia. Boletín Oficial del Estado, 253, 79929-79971.
663. Spain. (2021). Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia [Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan].
664. Spain. (2021). (2021). Plan Nacional de Competencias Digitales [National Plan for Digital Skills].
665. Spain. (2022). Comprehensive Law 15/2022 on equal treatment and non-discrimination. Boletín Oficial del Estado.

666. Spain. (2022). Third Strategic Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men 2022-2025 [III Plan Estratégico para la Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres 2022-2025]. Official State Gazette.
667. Spain. (2023). Organic Law on Parity of Representation in Decision-Making Bodies [Ley Orgánica de Paridad de Representación en los Órganos de Decisión]. Official State Gazette.
668. Staab, P., Nachtwey, O. (2016). Market and labour control in digital capitalism. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, 14(2), 457-474.
669. Standing, G. (1999). Global Feminization Through Flexible Labour: A Theme Revisited. *World Development*, 27(3), 583–602
670. Statista. (2023). Preferred form of work in Spain in 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1450547/favorite-way-to-work-in-spain/>
671. Statista. (2024). Share of digital nomads worldwide as of March 2024, by gender. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1298857/digital-nomads-by-gender-worldwide/>
672. Stepanyan, A., Salas, J. (2020). Distributional Implications of Labor Market Reforms: Learning from Spain's Experience. IMF working paper.
673. Stevenson, B., Zlotnick, H. (2018). Representations of men and women in introductory economics textbooks. *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 108, 180-185.
674. Stewart-Williams, S., Halsey, L. G. (2021). Men, women, and STEM: Why the differences and what should be done? *European Journal of Personality*, 35(1), 3-39.
675. Stoian, C. A., Caraiani, C., Anica-Popa, I. F., Dascalu, C., Lungu, C. I. (2022). Telework systematic model design for the future of work. *Sustainability*, 14(12), 7146.
676. Strath, B. (1996). The transformation of the idea of full employment to a flexibility discourse in European comparison. Draft Project, E.U.I., Florence.
677. Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge university press.
678. Subtil, F., Silveirinha, M. J. (2017). Planos de igualdade de género nos media: para uma (re)consideracao do caso portugues. *Media & Jornalismo* 17(30), 43-61

679. Sugden, R. (2021). Normative economics without preferences. *International Review of Economics*, 68(1), 5-19.
680. Sullivan, V., Coles, L., Xu, Y., Perales, F., Thorpe, K. (2020). Beliefs and attributions: Insider accounts of men's place in early childhood education and care. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 21(2), 126-137.
681. Sunstein, C. R. (1991). Why markets don't stop discrimination. *Harvard Law Review*, 104(3), 639-693.
682. Tabassum, N., Nayak, B. S. (2021). Gender Stereotypes and Their Impact on Women's Career Progressions from a Managerial Perspective. *IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review*, 10(2), 192-208.
683. Tacoli, C. (2012). Urbanisation, gender, and urban poverty: Paid work and unpaid care work in the city. *International Institute for Environment and Development*.
<https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10614IIED.pdf>
684. Tamames, R. (1981). *La Republica. La era de Franco*. Ediciones Alfaguara, Madrid.
685. Tascon Fernandez, J. (2000). The organization of the labour market in Spain since 1890. *Documentos de trabajo* (Universidad de Oviedo. Facultad de Ciencias Economicas), Nº. 207.
686. Tavares, A. I. (2017). Telework and health effects review. *International Journal of Healthcare*, 3(2), 30-36.
687. Tavares, F., Santos, E., Diogo, A., Rito, H. (2020). Teleworking in Portuguese communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 14(3), 431-444.
688. Tavares, I., Candido, A. F., do Carmo, R. M. (2021). Desemprego e precariedade laboral na população jovem: Tendências recentes em Portugal e na Europa. *Observatório das Desigualdades*, CIES-Iscte.
<https://www.observatorio-das-desigualdades.com/2021/07/15/desemprego-e-precariedade-laboral-na-populacao-jovem-tendencias-recentes-em-portugal-e-na-europa-de-ines-tavares-ana-filipa-candido-e-renato-miguel-do-carmo/>
689. Tavares, M. M. (2000). *A condição feminina na História de Portugal*. Livros Horizonte.

690. Tavera, S. (2012). Anarchism or anarchisms? The history of a heterogeneous revolutionary deployment, 1930-1938. *Catalan Historical Review*, 5, 101-116.
691. Tavora, I., Gonzalez, P. (2016). The reform of joint regulation and labour market policy during the current crisis: national report on Portugal. *Joint regulation and labour market policy in Europe during the crisis*, 321-394.
692. Teixeira, C., Casaca, S. F. (2020). Assimetrias de género na(s) engenharia(s) em Portugal: Dinâmicas e desafios. *Faces de Eva - Estudos*, 43, 61-81.
693. Tejani, S., Kucera, D. (2021). Defeminization, structural transformation, and technological upgrading in manufacturing. *Development and Change*, 52(3), 709-740.
694. Teherani, A., Martimianakis, T., Stenfors-Hayes, T., Wadhwa, A., Varpio, L. (2015). Choosing a Qualitative Research Approach. *Journal of graduate medical*
695. Terjesen, S., Sealy, R. (2016). Board gender quotas: Exploring ethical tensions from a multi-theoretical perspective. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 26(1), 23-65.
696. Thornton, M. (2021). Equality and Anti-Discrimination Legislation: An Uneasy Relationship. *Law in context*, 37(2).
697. Threlfall, M. (2022). Women's movements (Spain). In *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements* (pp. 1–3). Wiley-Blackwell.
698. Tokbaeva, D., Achtenhagen, L. (2023). Career resilience of female professionals in the male-dominated IT industry in Sweden: Toward a process perspective. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 30(1), 223-262.
699. Tolliver, J. (2011). Politics and the Feminist Essay in Spain. In *A Companion to Spanish Women's Studies*, ed. by Xon de Ros and Geraldine Hazbun (Woodbridge: Tamesis), pp. 243-56
700. Ton, D., Arendsen, K., De Bruyn, M., Severens, V., Van Hagen, M., Van Oort, N., Duives, D. (2022). Teleworking during COVID-19 in the Netherlands: Understanding behaviour, attitudes, and future intentions of train travellers. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 159, 55-73.

701. Torns, T., Carrasquer, P., Moreno, S., Borrás, V. (2013). Career paths in Spain: gendered division of labor and informal employment. *Interventions Economiques*, 47/2013.
702. Torre, M. (2019). Women in blue: Structural and individual determinants of sex segregation in blue-collar occupations. *Gender and Society*, 33(4), 579-605.
703. Torres, A. (2009). Women, gender, and work: The Portuguese case in the context of the European Union. *International Journal of Sociology*, 38(4), 36-56.
704. Torres, A., da Silva, F. C., Monteiro, T., Cabrita, M. (2004). *Homens e Mulheres entre Família e Trabalho*. Lisboa: Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego.
705. Touzet, C. (2023). Teleworking through the gender looking glass: Facts and gaps. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 285. OECD Publishing, Paris.
706. Tubaro, P., Coville, M., Le Luëdec, C., & Casilli, A. A. (2022). Hidden inequalities: the gendered labour of women on micro-tasking platforms. *Internet Policy Review*, 11(1), 1-26.
707. Turner III, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The qualitative report*, 15(3), 754. *education*, 7(4), 669–670.
708. United Nations. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995. United Nations.
709. United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.
710. United Nations. (2015). *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, 61st session (6-24 July 2015), 62nd session (26 October-20 November 2015), 63rd session (15 February-4 March 2016). UN General Assembly.
711. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (2021). *The future is equal: Gender equality in the technology industry*. ESCAP Report.

712. UN Women. (2015–2016). Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016, Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights.
713. UN Women. (2020). The digital revolution: implications for gender equality and women's rights 25 years after Beijing. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/08/discussion-paper-the-digital-revolution-implications-for-gender-equality-and-womens-right>
714. UNWTO. (2019). International Tourism Highlights Report 2019. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421152>
715. Vargas-Llave, O., Mandl, I., Weber, T., Wilkens, M. (2020). Telework and ICT-based mobile work: Flexible working in the digital age. New Forms of Employment Series, 57.
716. Vayre, E., Morin-Messabel, C., Cros, F., Maillot, A. S., Odin, N. (2022). Benefits and risks of teleworking from home: The teleworkers' point of view. Information, 13(11), 545.
717. Veloso, A. P., Marques da Costa, E., Abrantes, P. (2022). Teletrabalho em tempo de pandemia: Das vantagens as incertezas nos quotidianos das famílias residentes na area metropolitana de Lisboa Norte, Portugal. Finisterra, LVII(121)
718. Viana Cerqueira, E., Motte-Baumvol, B., Belton Chevallier, L., Bonin, O. (2020). Does working from home reduce CO2 emissions? An analysis of travel patterns as dictated by workplaces. Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment.
719. Vicente, D. M. (2010). The civil code in Portugal and goa: common heritage and future prospects.
720. Villagomez E. (2004). Gender Mainstreaming: Konzepte, Handlungsfelder, Instrumente. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004.
721. Vidal, D. (2023). Portugal continues to win in gender equality. Iberian Lawyer. Retrieved from <https://es.andersen.com/recursos/doc/portal/2020/01/09/gender-gap-spain-iberian-lawyer-2020-sept.pdf>
722. Vidal, I. M. G., & Gewerc Barujel, A. (2021). Socioeducational gaps derived from the impact of digitization in Spain 2020 point to a STEM and gender approach in education. RED: revista de educación a distancia, 21(68).

723. Vogt, W. P., Johnson, B. (2011). Dictionary of statistics & methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences. Sage.
724. Vyas, L. (2022). "New normal" at work in a post-COVID world: work–life balance and labor markets. *Policy and Society*, 41(1), 155-167.
725. Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2022). The use of digitalization (ICTs) in achieving sustainable development goals. *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*, 14(2), 265-278.
726. Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Basil Blackwell.
727. Waldfogel, J. (2002). Child care, women's employment, and child outcomes. *Journal of Population Economics*, 15, 527-548.
728. Wall, K., Leita, M. (2017). Fathers on leave alone in Portugal: Lived experiences and impact of forerunner fathers. In M. O'Brien & K. Wall (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on work-life balance and gender equality* (Vol. 6, pp. 53-70). Springer, Cham.
729. Watkins, D. C., Gioia, D. (2015). *Mixed methods research*. Oxford University Press.
730. Watson R. (2015). Quantitative research. *Nursing standard* (Royal College of Nursing (Great Britain) : 1987), 29(31), 44–48.
731. Weber-Lewerenz, B., Vasiliu-Feltes, I. (2022). Empowering digital innovation by diverse leadership in ICT – A roadmap to a better value system in computer algorithms. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 7, Article 123.
732. Webster, R. (2022). Women and the Fight for Urban Change in Late Francoist Spain. *Past & Present*, 260(1), 158–199.
733. Weiss, C. H. (1998). *Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs and Policies*. Prentice Hall.
734. West, C., Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125-151.
735. White, K. (2011). Legislative Frameworks for Equal Opportunities. In *Gender, Power and Management. A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Higher Education*, 20-49
736. Wilcox, A. J., Dewar, S., & Lahey, J. N. (2022). The gender wage gap: Evidence from STEM and non-STEM careers. *Labour Economics*, 75, 102086.

737. Williams, C. L. (2023). Still a man's world: Men who do women's work. University of California Press.
738. Williams, J. (2001). Unbending gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it. Oxford University Press.
739. Williams, J. C., Dempsey, R. (2014). What Works for Women at Work: Four Patterns Working Women Need to Know. NYU Press.
740. Wit, H., Hunter, F., Howard, L., Egron-Polak, E. (2015). Internationalization of higher education. European Parliament Study. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU\(2015\)540370_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)
741. Wong, M. (2020). Stanford research provides a snapshot of working-from-home economy. StanfordNews.
742. World Bank. (2023). Part time employment, female (% of total female employment) - Portugal. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.PART.FE.ZS?locations=PT>
743. World Bank. (2024). Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modeled ILO estimate) - Portugal. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=PT>
744. Wood, A. J., Graham, M., Lehdonvirta, V., Hjorth, I. (2019). Networked but commodified: The (dis) embeddedness of digital labour in the gig economy. *Sociology*, 53(5), 931-950.
745. WTTC. (2020). Economic impact reports – Portugal. World Travel & Tourism Council. Retrieved from <https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>
746. Zamarro, G., Prados, M. J. (2021). Gender differences in couples' division of childcare, work and mental health during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 19(1), 11-40.
747. Zelizer, V. A. (2012). How I became a relational economic sociologist and what does that mean?. *Politics & Society*, 40(2), 145-174.
748. Zhang, C., Farley, J. (1995). Gender and the distribution of household work: A comparison of self-reports by female college faculty in the United States and China. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 26(2), 195-205.
749. Zveglic, J. E., Rodgers, Y. V. (2004). Occupational segregation and the gender wage gap in a dynamic East Asian economy. *Southern Economic Journal*, 70(4), 850-875.

ANNEX 1. Questionario para a entrevista com o especialista

O tema do estudo é o impacto do trabalho interrompido e da digitalização na trajetória laboral das mulheres: O estudo de caso pós-covid19 em Espanha e Portugal.

O objetivo do questionário: recolher os dados sobre os diferentes e comuns pontos relativos ao teletrabalho das mulheres em Espanha e Portugal em tempos de Covid.

A questão de pesquisa: que tipo de impacto a mudança abrupta do modo de trabalho teve na trajetória do emprego feminino

O número aproximado de perguntas: até 20.

A modalidade: presencial ou via google meet.

O tempo aproximado da entrevista: 45-60 minutos.

	Block	Questions
.	Mudança abrupta das condições de trabalho	1. Como poderia descrever a mudança para o teletrabalho devido ao início da covid-19? 2. Que tipo de transformação das condições do emprego ocorreu devido à obrigatoriedade do teletrabalho no momento do surto do vírus? 3. Houve alguma atenção às dificuldades dos trabalhadores com o trabalho remoto?
.	Mulheres e organização do teletrabalho	1. Desde a propagação do covid19, o teletrabalho criou obstáculos e dificuldades

		adicionais para as mulheres (em relação à jornada de trabalho, carreira, remuneração etc)? 2. Quais os prós e contras do teletrabalho para as mulheres na emergência sanitária e pós? 3. O teletrabalho foi flexível e suficiente para incorporar todas as atribuições das mulheres (cuidados domiciliares, creches, idosos) em sua agenda durante a pandemia?
.	Regime jurídico do teletrabalho	1. Acha que há uma tendência da legislação trabalhista mais recente a considerar assuntos do gênero? 2. Houve alguma alteração significativa no emprego feminino com a nova lei do teletrabalho (157/2021, adotada em 27.11.2021)? 3. Não há referência especial a mulheres/trabalhadores na nova lei, como você descreveria sua opinião sobre isso?

.	Feminização do teletrabalho	1. O teletrabalho é segregado por gênero no sentido de que principalmente mulheres ou homens são aceitos como teletrabalhadores? Se sim, por que isso acontece? 2. Com as pandemias, a dinâmica de feminização do teletrabalho mudou (acelerou, desacelerou, introduziu uma nova direção de desenvolvimento)? 3. Qual o impacto da feminização do teletrabalho tem no emprego das mulheres em geral ou poderia ter em perspectiva?
.	Futuro do teletrabalho de gênero	1. O teletrabalho induzido pela crise (devido à covid) tem sido benéfico para o futuro e a qualidade do emprego feminino? 2. O teletrabalho dificulta ou facilita o progresso e a produtividade das mulheres no local de trabalho? 3. O que deve ser introduzido no regime de teletrabalho legalmente e através de políticas locais para torná-lo

		mais adequado para as mulheres?
--	--	------------------------------------

ANNEX 2. Cuestionario para la entrevista con el especialista

El tema de estudio es el impacto del trabajo interrumpido y la digitalización en la trayectoria laboral de las mujeres: El estudio de los casos post-covid19 en España y Portugal.

Finalidad del cuestionario: recoger datos sobre los diferentes y comunes puntos relativos al teletrabajo de las mujeres en España y Portugal en tiempos de Covid y después.

La pregunta de investigación: ¿qué tipo de impacto tuvo el cambio abrupto en la forma de trabajar en la trayectoria del empleo femenino?

El número aproximado de preguntas: hasta 20.

Modalidad: presencial o vía google meet.

Tiempo aproximado de la entrevista: 30 minutos.

	Block	Questions
.	Cambio abrupto en las condiciones de trabajo.	1. ¿Cómo describiría el cambio al teletrabajo debido a la aparición del covid-19? 2. ¿Qué tipo de transformación de las condiciones de empleo se produjo debido al teletrabajo obligatorio en el momento del brote del virus? 3. ¿Se ha prestado alguna atención a las luchas de los trabajadores con el trabajo remoto?
.	Mujeres y organización del teletrabajo	1. Desde la propagación del covid19, ¿el teletrabajo ha creado obstáculos y dificultades adicionales para las mujeres (en relación con las horas de trabajo, la carrera, la remuneración, etc.)? 2. ¿Cuáles son los pros y los

		contras del teletrabajo para las mujeres ahora y durante la pandemia? 3. ¿El teletrabajo fue flexible y suficiente para incorporar todas las atribuciones de las mujeres (cuidado del hogar, guardería de los menores y personas mayores) en su horario durante la pandemia?
.	Régimen jurídico del teletrabajo	1. ¿Cree que hay una tendencia en la legislación laboral más reciente a considerar las cuestiones de género? 2. ¿Ha habido cambios significativos en el empleo femenino con la nueva ley de teletrabajo (Ley 10/2021, de 9 de julio, de trabajo a distancia)? 3. No hay ninguna referencia especial a las mujeres/trabajadoras en la nueva ley, ¿cómo describiría su opinión al respecto?
.	Feminización del teletrabajo	1. ¿El teletrabajo está segregado por género en el sentido de que la mayoría de las mujeres o los hombres son aceptados como teletrabajadores? Si es así, ¿por qué sucede esto? 2. Con las pandemias, ¿cambió la dinámica de feminización del teletrabajo (se aceleró, se desaceleró, introdujo una nueva dirección de desarrollo)? 3. ¿Qué impacto tiene la

		feminización del teletrabajo en el empleo de las mujeres en general o podría tenerlo en perspectiva?
.	Futuro del teletrabajo de género	1. ¿El teletrabajo inducido por la crisis (por la covid) ha sido beneficioso para el futuro y la calidad del empleo femenino? 2. ¿El teletrabajo dificulta o facilita el progreso y la productividad de las mujeres en el lugar de trabajo? 3. ¿Qué se debería introducir en el régimen de teletrabajo de forma legal y mediante políticas locales para hacerlo más adecuado para las mujeres?

ANNEX 3. Questionario para a entrevista com o trabalhador.

O tema do estudo é o impacto do trabalho interrompido e da digitalização na trajetória laboral das mulheres: O estudo de caso pós-covid19 em Espanha e Portugal.

O objetivo do questionário: recolher os dados sobre os diferentes e comuns pontos relativos ao teletrabalho das mulheres em Espanha e Portugal em tempos de Covid.

A questão de pesquisa: que tipo de impacto a mudança abrupta do modo de trabalho teve na trajetória do emprego feminino

O número aproximado de perguntas: até 20.

A modalidade: presencial ou via google meet.

O tempo aproximado da entrevista: 25 minutos.

Os inquiridos: 15 trabalhadoras portuguesas e 15 espanholas.

As regiões do trabalho de campo: áreas metropolitanas de Lisboa e Madrid.

N	Block	Questions
1	Mudança abrupta das condições de trabalho	1. Como foi a experiência de trabalhar remotamente? 2. Como as condições de emprego mudaram devido à obrigatoriedade do teletrabalho no momento do surto do vírus? 3. Tinham dificuldades durante o teletrabalho? A empresa prestou atenção nisso? Quais as principais dificuldades?
2	Mulheres e organização do teletrabalho	1. Quais os prós e contras do

		teletrabalho para ti durante a pandemia e agora? 2. Acha que no teu caso o teletrabalho foi flexível e fácil para incorporar todas as outras tarefas (cuidados domiciliares, creches, idosos) em sua agenda durante a pandemia? Por que?
3	Regime jurídico do teletrabalho	1. Conheceu a nova lei do teletrabalho? 2. Acha que geralmente tem que ser uma referência especial a mulheres/trabalhadores na nova lei, como você descreveria sua opinião sobre isso?
4	Feminização do teletrabalho	1. Acha que no seu emprego mais mulheres ou homens trabalharam durante confinamento ou no momento em regime remoto? 2. Acha que o teletrabalho gradualmente se vira uma tarefa mais feminina do que masculina conforme a sua experiência? Por que?
5	Futuro do teletrabalho de gênero	1. Acha que o teletrabalho induzido pela crise (devido à

		covid) tem sido benéfico para o futuro e a qualidade do seu emprego? Por que? 2. O que deve ser introduzido no regime de teletrabalho legalmente para torná-lo mais adequado para seu cotidiano?
--	--	--

ANNEX 4. Cuestionario para la entrevista con trabajadoras

El tema del estudio es el impacto del trabajo interrumpido y la digitalización en la trayectoria laboral de las mujeres: El estudio de caso post-COVID-19 en España y Portugal.

El objetivo del cuestionario: recopilar datos sobre los puntos diferentes y comunes relacionados con el teletrabajo de las mujeres en España y Portugal durante la época de COVID.

La pregunta de investigación: ¿Qué tipo de impacto tuvo el cambio abrupto en el modo de trabajo en la trayectoria del empleo femenino?

El número aproximado de preguntas: hasta 20.

La modalidad: presencial o a través de Google Meet.

El tiempo aproximado de la entrevista: 25 minutos.

Los encuestados: 15 trabajadoras portuguesas y 15 españolas.

Las regiones del trabajo de campo: áreas metropolitanas de Lisboa y Madrid.

N	Block	Questions
1.	Cambio abrupto de las condiciones de trabajo	1. ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia trabajando de forma remota? 2. ¿Cómo cambiaron tus condiciones de empleo debido a la obligatoriedad del teletrabajo durante el brote del virus? 3. ¿Tuviste dificultades durante el teletrabajo? ¿La empresa prestó atención a esto? ¿Cuáles fueron las principales dificultades?
2.	Mujeres y organización del teletrabajo	1. ¿Cuáles fueron los pros y los contras del teletrabajo para ti durante la pandemia y ahora?

		2. ¿Crees que, en tu caso, el teletrabajo fue lo suficientemente flexible y fácil para incorporar todas las demás tareas (cuidados del hogar, guarderías, ancianos) en tu agenda durante la pandemia? ¿Por qué?
3.	Régimen jurídico del teletrabajo	1. ¿Conoces la nueva ley del teletrabajo? 2. ¿Crees que debería haber una referencia especial a las mujeres/trabajadores en la nueva ley? ¿Cómo describirías tu opinión sobre esto?
4.	Feminización del teletrabajo	1. ¿Crees que en tu trabajo más mujeres o hombres trabajaron de forma remota durante el confinamiento o en el momento del teletrabajo? 2. ¿Crees que el teletrabajo se está convirtiendo gradualmente en una tarea más femenina que masculina, según tu experiencia? ¿Por qué?
5.	Futuro del teletrabajo desde una perspectiva de género	1. ¿Crees que el teletrabajo, inducido por la crisis (debido al COVID-19), ha sido beneficioso para el futuro y la calidad de tu empleo? ¿Por qué? 2. ¿Qué debería introducirse

		legalmente en el régimen de teletrabajo para hacerlo más adecuado para tu vida cotidiana?
--	--	---

ANNEX 5. The list of the developed codes

Theme 1: Abrupt change of the conditions of work

1. Technical Transition
 - a. Code: TECH_TRANS
 - b. Example: "surprisingly the transition to telework was not that difficult in technical terms."
2. Software Adaptation
 - a. Code: SOFT_ADAPT
 - b. Example: "there was a difficulty with adopting a certain software, to get operational with programmes."
3. Economic Response
 - a. Code: ECON_RESP
 - b. Example: "The response to curfew requirements was more than sufficient for the minimal economic stability of the state"
4. Management Challenges
 - a. Code: MGMT_CHAL
 - b. Example: "management worried about control and productivity"
5. Home-Work Environment Merge
 - a. Code: HOME_WORK_MERGE
 - b. Example: "almost from day to night the living environment coincided with the working one"
6. Space Constraints
 - a. Code: SPACE_CONST
 - b. Example: "considering the Portuguese reality of small apartments"
7. Team Dynamics
 - a. Code: TEAM_DYN
 - b. Example: "for companies and unities who mostly work in a team mode, it was the most challenging time"
8. Digital Tools Adoption
 - a. Code: DIG_TOOL_ADOPT
 - b. Example: "Zoom, Microsoft teams and other services for having team conversations did work so well"

9. Company Support

- a. Code: COMP_SUPP
- b. Example: "companies gave laptops to each employee"

10. Cultural Shift

- a. Code: CULT_SHIFT
- b. Example: "presential culture of work is very strong in Spain"

11. Employee Monitoring

- a. Code: EMP_MONITOR
- b. Example: "Special software was introduced that would control the time that employees were with their screen active"

12. Digital Upskilling

- a. Code: DIG_UPSKILL
- b. Example: "To a certain extent it was an example of intensive and massive digital upskilling"

13. Corporate Culture

- a. Code: CORP_CULT
- b. Example: "We should not exclude a corporate culture from the consideration of this situation"

14. Right to Disconnect

- a. Code: RIGHT_DISCONNECT
- b. Example: "Probably, many people found the long hour working day as a remedy against a rise of anxiety"

15. Productivity Concerns

- a. Code: PROD_CONCERN
- b. Example: "the feasibility of keeping the efficiency seemed unrealistic"

Theme 2: Women and organization of telework.

1. Gender Roles in Telework

- Code: GENDER_ROLES_TELEWORK
- Example: "women are still those who take care of it and they do it while doing their work remotely."

2. Family Structure Impact

- Code: FAMILY_STRUCTURE

- Example: "the family structure was much more important for female employment than for a male one."
3. Work-Life Overlap
 - Code: WORK_LIFE_OVERLAP
 - Example: "the overlapping of tasks happens: especially it was vivid during the Covid-19 time."
 4. Gender Gap in Telework
 - Code: GENDER_GAP_TELEWORK
 - Example: "it could not impact in a benevolent way a gender gap."
 5. Retroactive Gender Equality
 - Code: RETRO_GENDER_EQUALITY
 - Example: "bringing people to work from home triggered a retroactive process, negatively influencing the equality of rights."
 6. Flexibility of Telework
 - Code: FLEXIBILITY_TELEWORK
 - Example: "being obliged to stay at home continuously managing numerous tasks... has nothing to do with flexibility."
 7. Mental Health Concerns
 - Code: MENTAL_HEALTH_TELEWORK
 - Example: "adding a professional activity with no essential contact with colleagues might be ruinous for mental stability."
 8. Isolation and Anxiety
 - Code: ISOLATION_ANXIETY
 - Example: "telework is associated with isolation and consequent anxiety, depression."
 9. Telework as Conciliation Tool
 - Code: TELEWORK_CONCILIATION
 - Example: "telework can not be deemed as a conciliation measure as it does not create an alleviation for women in terms of burden of work."
 10. Defocus and Gender Gap
 - Code: DEFOCUS_GENDER_GAP
 - Example: "it is a clear example of defocus that eventually benefits the gender gap."
 11. Telework Flexibility Debate

- Code: TELEWORK_FLEX_DEBATE
- Example: "telework is flexible indeed and the growing number of those who work from anywhere including women-digital nomads prove it."

12. Life Conditions Impact on Telework

- Code: LIFE_CONDITIONS_TELEWORK
- Example: "family structure and pre-existing structure of life... influence pretty much on efficiency and productivity of work."

13. Pros and Cons of Telework

- Code: PROS_CONS_TELEWORK
- Example: "for those who live far from the office or have to move to another city for work... telework has become a solution."

14. Invisibility in Remote Work

- Code: INVISIBILITY_REMOTE_WORK
- Example: "women choosing work only remotely can feel less seen and more invisible."

15. Promotion Challenges in Telework

- Code: PROMOTION_CHALLENGES_TELEWORK
- Example: "moving up the career ladder can become even more difficult for a woman than when she is seen in the office."

16. Emotional Consequences of Telework

- Code: EMOTIONAL_CONSEQUENCES_TELEWORK
- Example: "the remote mode of work makes it even more difficult to grow professionally and eventually may bring a lot of consolidated distress and disappointment."

Theme 3: Legal regime of telework

1. Gender-Sensitive Legislation

- Code: GENDER_LEGISLATION
- Example: "tendencies of legislation to become more gender-sensitive and progressive."

2. Gender Equality in Labor Law

- Code: GENDER_EQUALITY_LAW

- Example: "temptations to make it gender-sensitive are not that successful."
3. Traditional Values and Stereotypes
 - Code: `TRAD_VALUES_STEREOTYPES`
 - Example: "driven by traditional values, stereotypes and understanding of the structure of gender relations."
 4. Right to Disconnect
 - Code: `RIGHT_DISCONNECT`
 - Example: "notions introduced by a new law as a right to disconnect."
 5. Reimbursement for Telework Expenses
 - Code: `REIMBURSE_TELEWORK_EXPENSES`
 - Example: "reimbursement for electricity... necessary but not sufficient."
 6. Digital Transformation and Law Adequacy
 - Code: `DIGITAL_TRANSFORM_LAW`
 - Example: "ongoing digital transformation... need to amplify and make this law more adequate."
 7. Domestic Violence and Remote Work Law
 - Code: `DOMESTIC_VIOLENCE_REMOTE_LAW`
 - Example: "opt for a remote mode of work upon law in case of home violence."
 8. Positive Discrimination Debate
 - Code: `POSITIVE_DISCRIM_DEBATE`
 - Example: "some support the positive discrimination of women by law while others do not."
 9. Feminist and Gender-Sensitive Ideas
 - Code: `FEMINIST_GENDER_IDEAS`
 - Example: "Spanish specialists are more open to feminist and gender-sensitive ideas."
 10. Traditional Ideas Impact on Legal Course
 - Code: `TRAD_IDEAS_LEGAL_IMPACT`
 - Example: "traditional ideas are still very strong and it influences the legal course."
 11. Economic Benefits of Slow Gendering

- Code: ECON_BENEFITS_SLOW_GENDERING
- Example: "slow process of gendering legal systems is economically beneficial for the state."

12. Legal Norms on Telework

- Code: LEGAL_NORMS_TELEWORK
- Example: "it is a quite developed legal regulation with exact formulation of what telework is."

13. Flexibility in Telework Agreements

- Code: FLEXIBILITY_TELEWORK_AGREEMENTS
- Example: "law does not prescribe the exact prerequisites... telework in different companies can be very different."

14. Gender Mainstreaming Approach

- Code: GENDER_MAINSTREAMING_APPROACH
- Example: "against gender mainstreaming approach... result of a hurry to adopt the law."

Theme 4: Feminization of telework

1. Feminization of Telework

- Code: FEMINIZATION_TELEWORK
- Example: "Feminization of telework as a tendency of women to choose remote jobs among others."

2. Work-Life Conciliation

- Code: WORK_LIFE_CONCILIATION
- Example: "Female workers take such a mode of work as a form of conciliation, an attempt to facilitate the work-life conflict for women."

3. Structural Disadvantages

- Code: STRUCTURAL_DISADVANTAGES
- Example: "Loss of separation between private and professional and longer shifts."

4. Gender Expectations in Telework

- Code: GENDER_EXPECTATIONS_TELEWORK
- Example: "Employers expect most candidates to be females since the sectors that can be teleworked have a majority of women."

5. Motivation for Telework
 - Code: MOTIVATION_TELEWORK
 - Example: "Women noticed they can manage home chores together with professional activities, motivating them to continue with telework."
6. Transition Dynamics
 - Code: TRANSITION_DYNAMICS
 - Example: "Dynamics of women teleworking slowed down after curfews but later stabilized."
7. Digital Skill Development
 - Code: DIGITAL_SKILL_DEVELOPMENT
 - Example: "Women develop additional and necessary digital skills while teleworking."
8. Segregation Concerns
 - Code: SEGREGATION_CONCERNS
 - Example: "Feminization of telework means segregation; sectors become more feminized, potentially worsening the gender gap."
9. Hybrid Work Preferences
 - Code: HYBRID_WORK_PREFERENCES
 - Example: "In Spain, it is mostly a mixed-hybrid regime, which is a compromise between on-site and fully remote job."
10. Career Development Impact
 - Code: CAREER_DEVELOPMENT_IMPACT
 - Example: "Feminization of hybrid jobs is less harmful for career development since women maintain contact with teams."
11. Prestige and Importance Loss
 - Code: PRESTIGE_IMPORTANCE_LOSS
 - Example: "Telework associated with women can lead to a loss of prestige and importance of such jobs."
12. Historical Gender Roles
 - Code: HISTORICAL_GENDER_ROLES
 - Example: "If this trend continues, we will observe the same situation as a century before with men in offices and women at home."
13. Generational Trends
 - Code: GENERATIONAL_TRENDS

- Example: "Young people seeking remote jobs are creating trends for the next 40 years of labor market functioning."

14. Digitalization Awareness

- Code: DIGITALIZATION_AWARENESS
- Example: "The pandemic reinforced an understanding that digital knowledge cannot be postponed."

15. Cultural Presence at Work

- Code: CULTURAL_PRESENCE_WORK
- Example: "The culture of presence at work is still strong in Spain, likely slowing down telework and feminization trends."

Theme 5: Future of telework

1. Telework Inevitability

- Code: TELEWORK_INEVITABLE
- Example: "Telework is a mode that has become an inevitable element of the organisation of work."

2. Persistent Gender Roles

- Code: PERSISTENT_GENDER_ROLES
- Example: "We observe general progress and technological advancement but the change of attitudes towards unpaid work and how it is supposed to be organised is very slow."

3. Dynamic Impact on Inequalities

- Code: DYNAMIC_INEQUALITY_IMPACT
- Example: "Telework and the impact that it brings to inequalities and female employment are extremely dynamic concepts."

4. Mental Health Concerns

- Code: MENTAL_HEALTH_CONCERNS
- Example: "The disruption of contact with other colleagues can bring a high level of anxiety that later on can end up in a burnout."

5. Right to Disconnect

- Code: RIGHT_TO_DISCONNECT
- Example: "The right to disconnect which is clearly explained to both employees and employers is one of cornerstones of telework."

6. Digital Transformation Opportunities

- Code: DIGITAL_TRANSFORM_OPPORTUNITIES
- Example: "Digital transformation has opened new opportunities for females, especially for those who are ready to obtain new skills."

7. Legal Regulation Needs

- Code: LEGAL_REGULATION_NEEDS
- Example: "With better legal regulations problems of invisibility and hyperconnectivity can be solved."

8. Societal Root Causes

- Code: SOCIETAL_ROOT_CAUSES
- Example: "Women face inequality onsite and remotely, so the reasons for it are not the mode of work but the patriarchal ideas."

9. Rural Employment Opportunities

- Code: RURAL_EMPLOYMENT_OPPTS
- Example: "It will be specifically beneficial for non-urban areas of Spain as they get to be deteriorated and abandoned upon an urbanisation turn."

10. Policy Intervention Necessity

- Code: POLICY_INTERVENTION_NECESSITY
- Example: "Public policies are supposed to solve the issue of segregation and massive feminization of remote work."

11. Employer Responsibility

- Code: EMPLOYER_RESPONSIBILITY
- Example: "Everything depends on certain working conditions provided by an employer and corporate culture built in a certain environment."

12. Worker Invisibility

- Code: WORKER_INVISIBILITY
- Example: "The issue of invisibility of remote workers' contribution should be addressed urgently."

13. Career Satisfaction Potential

- Code: CAREER_SATISFACTION_POTENTIAL
- Example: "Telework has a great propensity to offer women flexibility and a better career satisfaction."

14. Multiple Burden Recognition

- Code: MULTIPLE_BURDEN_RECOGNITION
- Example: "Public policies can adjust adequately telework more if they are developed from a position of understanding that a female worker is one with a double or, sometimes, triple burden of work."

15. Comprehensive Policy Approach

- Code: COMPREHENSIVE_POLICY_APPROACH
- Example: "A comprehensive approach to female labor and conditions that are necessary for telework... is a key for creating thriving space for women."