

Forms of On-Line and On-Site Employment*

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Abstract

The emergence of various forms of work in the contemporary labour market has prompted social dialogues on their terms and conditions. The aim of this paper is to present the characteristics of nine new forms of on-line and on-site work in the context of working conditions in different professions and to point out the effects they have on the worker and the economy. To define the concept of new forms, a proposal contained in the Eurofound document "Gig economy report: employment status" (2019) was adopted. The new forms significantly exceed the insofar employment standards with regard to place, time as well as remuneration formats. Even though they make it possible to acquire new contacts and experience as well as increase income, their new levels of flexibility also result in instability, greater volatility, irregularity and discontinuity.

Introduction

Modern forms of on-line and on-site employment are being increasingly developed and popularised. In Poland, as many as 10% of employees, who declared that they perform their main working activities at an unusual time or place, are involved in new forms of work (GUS 2021). The level of adaptation to the new forms varies within the EU countries. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced changes that had been previously planned in Poland for the coming years (PARP, 2022). After the situation returned to normal in 2021, 57% of employees expected more frequent remote work (Deloitte, 2021).

The aim of the article was to present the characteristics of new forms of work that distinguish them from traditional models and to point out the effects they have on the worker and the economy.

Among the known new forms of working practices there are on-line forms, also known as remote work (ICT-mobile work) and on-site forms, among which there are: platform work (crowd employment), employee sharing, job sharing, interim management, casual work, portfolio work, collaborative employment and voucher work. They have a significant potential for growth, due to the prevailing need for flexibility in working practices declared by employees, as well as in the face of shortages on the labour market. The potential lies in their use of digital technologies that enable:

- efficient communication within the work process,
- application of a flexible work system, including settlement of a task-based working time mode,

- better performance control,
- mobility.

Digital technologies have changed the mode and conditions of the work process and have provided a number of benefits and obligations, both for employees and for employers. Remote work enjoys a higher use than before the Covid-19 pandemic, as more and more companies and organisations provide ongoing services to both customers and employees by means of their digital platforms. The Eurofound report "Gig economy report: employment status" (2019) provides a description of the new forms of employment. The aim of the study is to present and characterise them, based on the literature that appeared on the labour market along with the dissemination of digital technologies conducive to communication and employee service processes. New forms of work differ from purely stationary work mainly in their use of Internet connection. Hence, we distinguish on-line forms that are fully based on remote and hybrid communication and on-site forms that are fully based on stationary work.

The study presents nine new forms of work. Working conditions, application in professions and their favourable and detrimental qualities are taken into account. Also, employer-employee relationship is addressed. Among the presented forms, the widest use of the Internet occurs in on-line forms (Eurofound, 2019). Its essence boils down to the fact that the lack of Internet connection interrupts the flow of work, and also inhibits the activity of the entire organisation, especially since security and control functions are off as well. The Internet is used on-site to a lesser extent (Eurofound, 2019) as one of components of stationary work used for communication or document flow and control. In general, on-line and on-site forms work are differentiated by the role of time, place, method of remuneration and work organisation. Besides, efficient internet connection constitutes a key to their development, including further modification. This makes the labour market increasingly complex in terms of control and regulation.

New forms of work and their socio-economic dimension

Knowledge of new forms of work, with particular emphasis on international aspects, includes a wide body of research on their influence on both sides of the labour market. The research focuses essentially on the economies of some selected countries of Western Europe, which are saturated with different new forms of work more than Central Europe. Analyses of the impact of remote work and other new forms of employment on economic development have developed in the literature in recent years, but only the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a strong focus on their impact on economy. In the studies by Arntz M. et al. (2020) and Hung H. and Lippe T. (2020), the impact of work on family life, social policy, which is expected to provide social security, and economic policy that would ensure the stabilization of labour law, enabling employers to certain financial and organizational conditions, are all emphasised. Other studies indicate differences between the status of employees performing stationary and remote work. Gimenez-Nadal et al. (2020) noted the value of these forms of work for gender equality and for the environment, as they reduce commuting to and from work and have a positive impact on work-life balance. Other studies focus on time management competences and the impact of remote work on the lack of trivialization, which increases its productivity thanks to proper control and management (Nakrosiene et al. 2019).

Working with the use of an Internet connection has its drawbacks, with emphasis on its impact on mental well-being as well as on social interactions. Aspects such as loneliness, alienation, technostress, poor work organisation, lack of equipment, undefined work standards and legal regulations concerning the employer-employee relationship, potentially weaken interest in the new forms. A different statute for employers is another example of a hindrance, as instead of employers, there are "intermediaries" in the form of electronic platforms, a status unknown to the Labour Code (Institute of Public Affairs, online debate: 09.2020). This is related to a situation in which employees of digital platforms do not have full employee rights (Owczarek 2018). The nature of the factors influencing employees depends on their social status, living conditions, type of work, as well as skills, internal motivation and competences. For companies, wide use of the Internet, as well as availability of such solutions as business intelligence, including data analytics applications, exploration, bot creation, and electronic customer services are all positive aspects. They facilitate the implementation of individual and collective tasks (project work).

Lower operating costs is not the only incentive for using atypical forms of employment, because employers also recognise that the departure from stationary work makes free management of personnel possible, i.e. more flexible response to the needs of the market, which, due to globalisation and global competition, has become more demanding and less predictable than ever.

Characteristics of the new forms of work and the effects on the worker and the economy

New forms of work have been defined as phenomena characterised by specific rules (Owczarek, 2018; Forde et al, 2017). The new forms include:

- changed definition of the relationship between employers and employees; for example, it includes many employers with one employee or many employers with many employees,
- provision of work that is irregular in time or performed in a very short period of time, results from permissible freedom to choose work its execution time,
- network collaboration solutions between job providers, such as self-employed, freelancers, go beyond the usual types of supply chain relationships or traditional team project work.

1. The new types of work described in the Eurofound report (2019) include remote work, which has become the most widespread way of making work more flexible in both contractual and non-contractual relationships. According to Wyrzykowska (2014), remote work appeared in the 1960s. In the most industrialised countries, the number of people working remotely began to increase during the pandemic. In 2019, approximately 4.7% worked remotely in Poland, only 3% in Hungary, but slightly below 10% in the Czech Republic (GUS, 2021). In April 2020, the number of people working remotely increased to 17% in Poland, and to 14.2% on average in other countries. There was a similar proportion of remotely working people in terms of sectors. In Poland, the greatest number of remotely employed persons were in ICT, i.e. approx. 60% for the fourth quarter (GUS, 2021).

Currently, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines remote work as performed in a location away from headquarters or production plants, separating the employee from personal contact with colleagues at the workplace, based on new technology that enables and facilitates communication. In Poland, remote work involves work outside the place of permanent employment at the employer's request. Its use was associated with counteracting COVID-19, as evidenced by the following instruction: "During the period of a threat of epidemic or a state of epidemic due to COVID-19, and within 3 months after their cancellation, in order to counteract COVID-19, employers may recommend performing work specified in the employment contract outside the place of employment for a specified period of time" (Act of March 2, 2020). Nevertheless, during the lockdowns, many modifications were applied, such as:

- performing work remotely at the workplace, where the conditions for adequate isolation are provided, including combining work from outside the company's premises with work on its premises,
- renting premises for remote work, located relatively close to employees' place of residence.

Remote work is not one of prototypes of a flexible work model, as it was preceded by working from home and teleworking. According to L. Hensvik et al. (2020), it can be treated as a special case of flexible work. The author lists its specific dimensions, including flexibility of time and location, communication, and forms of contract between employees and employers. These features clearly distinguish it from work performed traditionally. The workplace is at home or in telework centres or virtual offices equipped with high-quality connections and IT equipment. In addition, there are different forms: nomadic or mobile. According to Florek (2021), there are strong differences in the amount of working time. Employees may or may not comply with time standards at an organization's premises, which depends solely on the contract and the rules of reporting working time. Communication via a computer network involves such aspects as technical competence, equipment and secured access to data. Clarity and unambiguity of statements through verbal and non-verbal contact, which are required at a higher level than in the case of full communication supported by gestures, micro movements and facial expressions, are significant. Moreover, there are doubts as to whether a person working remotely is still an employee or already self-employed. In this situation, employees become relatively independent, and their dependence on their employer is purely economic.

2. Platform work is a new, specific and innovative way of working mainly in services. Śledziewska and Włoch (2020) distinguish two types of platform services:

- online work performed by freelancers with expert knowledge or exceptional skills. The performed task is an order - a project. It is complex and requires cooperation in its implementation. It occurs in the services of translation, data analysis, graphic design, software testing.
- for people with low qualifications, jobs are offered where it is difficult to replace human work with a robot or an application. Task examples are: designing computer content and software, creating and cleaning databases, classifying websites, transcribing scanned documents and audio clips, classifying and tagging images, checking documents, checking websites for specific content, validating search results, designing logos and developing slogans for the advertising industry.

The implementation of tasks and application for payment is carried out by means of an application. The efficiency of this solution translates into the effectiveness of the entire model, because it is easier to associate a customer with a delivery, and it is also cheaper to reach the customer. As a result, more and more people who want to work "through an application" are interested in it.

The platform solution in the labour market is almost the opposite of traditional employment, hence a person involved in the platform should not be fully called an employee (Behrendt et al. 2019). The provision of platform services is essentially an offer for independent workers, which is the reverse of employer subordination. Independence comes

from lack of a subordination relationship with the employer, which is a feature of a traditional contractual employment relationship. The platforms are based on advanced ICT solutions. They are used to organise work and carry out tasks that change the process of their day-to-day services. Applications enable signing contracts which confirm willingness to hire a job. The process of servicing the employee-customer relationship takes place as part of an electronic platform, where online processes combine demand with supply.

Such platforms act as intermediaries or agents between clients and employees. They associate employees to implement projects, outline the required services and invite employees to submit proposals for their execution. Those interested in performing a task select the preferred offer and agree on details with the employer. Quite often, there is no formal agreement between the client and the employee, and the relationship is based on an oral agreement.

Platform work is perceived differently on the labour market. It is characterised by low, uncertain remuneration, depending on the number of services provided and on the assessment of results, as well as by lack of protection of personal data. In addition, platforms are characterised by unilateral determination of working conditions, including remuneration and continuity of work, unclear rules for access to social protection benefits, and a threat to occupational health and safety, caused, for example, by the necessity of constant availability (Lopez Moreno, 2021).

For people who value independence and availability, platform work has positive features, such as a source of experience, social contacts, self-promotion, better organization of work-life balance, or a convenient form of obtaining additional income, so there is no shortage of candidates interested in this form of employment.

3. Portfolio work makes it possible to construct a set of paid jobs, provided by a single person for many employers at the same time. Working people enjoy independence from a single employer, as well as free management of their own competences and their scope of work. Employment is then carried out on the basis of self-employment, micro-enterprises or civil law contracts. A significant proportion of these workers, who provide expert services, are self-employed. It is such employee's responsibility to build and maintain relationships with clients from various industries, including continuous adaptation to various tasks and requirements. Performing them makes it possible to provide simultaneous services for two or even hundreds of bidders. It is popular with such professions as journalists, translators, artists, scientists, consultants and IT specialists. It is also present in the media relations or real estate sectors, as part of tasks related to data management, information, communication, as well as in transport, fisheries, agriculture (Mongey, Pilososph and Weinberg, 2020).

This form can be found in open organisation management (Procter, 2008), in which knowledge base is built on external resources. It consists in acquiring ideas, solutions and advice as part of an electronic platform managed by a business in order to quickly solve a problem or make a decision. Persons submitting an offer on the platform may or may not receive remuneration for their own contribution to the solution. However, they should be guaranteed protection of intellectual property (Jasiński, 2021, Fung; Fung, Wind, 2008). Due to the high autonomy, it constitutes an attractive alternative to self-employment, but requires the ability to adapt to the environment, as the service reaches a large number of clients at one time. Portfolio work does not fit into the framework of either self-employment or contractual employment and is, in a way, the beginning of the development of new legal solutions, based on paid commitment of a person, for some time, without imposing professional dependence.

4. Temporary management is aimed at employment for a specified period of time. It is sometimes limited to one task, such as dismissal of employees, technical problems or restructuring. It is addressed to specialised experts in the sectors of energy, oil, gas, road construction, ICT and banking services. Temporary management is cheaper for an enterprise than hiring a consultant, even if it is based on employee's employment rules. It allows employees to develop their careers along with maintaining high earnings. Sometimes, however, there are disadvantages, such as status of a guest, lack of stability or overwork, because the discontinuity of employment is compensated by carrying out several contracts at the same time.

5. Job sharing is a model based on employing two or more employees on one job position. Employers offer fixed-term, part-time employment. The solution is part of a shift and long-term work mode. This form occurs in healthcare, administration, education, tourism, and is less popular in the private sector. Flexibility, provision a round-the-clock service, smooth work flow, and the ability to retain skilled workforce are advantages of job sharing. It improves employer's reputation as an efficient organisation and employees also benefit from combining several paid jobs. Although they work part-time in positions of high responsibility, they have a chance for career development, which is associated with job satisfaction. Sometimes sharing work turns out to be a difficult solution organisationally, because there are conflicts between employees, there is no full control of work and its results or overload when performing work for another person.

6. Another form of work is employee sharing. It occurs when a group of employers jointly employ one employee, and the employee is formally employed by one of them. In Europe, this employment is most common in agriculture and construction. The largest labour market in this form is France. There are two most common models of this work, and their distinction results from level of advancement in employees' qualifications:

- strategic: a group of employers create a network and employ one or more workers to be deployed on specific tasks in a given project. This structure is similar to temporary work, with the difference that workers regularly "migrate" among their employers and the network of companies itself does not compete internally.
- ad hoc jobs: an employer who is temporarily unable to hire his employees sends them to work in another enterprise. The employment contract between the employer and employee is concluded when the employee is included in the organisation of the recipient employer. The structure is similar to temporary work, with the difference that the initial employer temporarily places the employee with another employer, but after some time the employee returns to work for him.

Employee sharing is rated well (Eurofound, 2019), due to conditions such as relative stability and the ability to negotiate. Usually, it is also aimed at ensuring that employees have the same conditions and job protection as those employed in permanent teams. However, sometimes there is a risk of underestimation of salary, reduction of working hours or sudden dismissal.

7. Collective employment is another category of a new form of work that takes place in areas such as administration and accounting services. It is a solution based on non-contractual work relations between participants of a co-working or cooperative initiative. As a rule, it assumes cooperation between self-employed individuals, assigned to a project, disregarding the framework of business activity and traditional cooperation in business.

8. Voucher work offers a purchase of a work package from an intermediary organisation between a potential employer and employee. This solution introduces a novelty of payment in exchange for a work service, which is a voucher conditioning the purchase. Although not everyone is satisfied with it, they are sometimes forced to accept this form of remuneration. The employee receives a voucher from the employer or government agency as a means of payment. Voucher work is common in the field of domestic services and agriculture, where undeclared work environments often occur. Fixed-term contracts constitute a basis for this form of employment, and both low and medium educated people aged 35-64 sign such contracts (Eurofound, 2020). Their advantages include access to social insurance, often paid by the client, easier possibility of finding a job in peripheral areas or the potential of adjusting working hours. Their disadvantages include lack of ensuring continuity of employment and low wages. This form of work imposes minimal administrative tasks on the employer, who usually employs an intermediary to contact employees.

9. Casual work is also considered a new and unconventional solution. It is attractive for students, people with low qualifications who are entering the labour market, or for additional income. Unstable and discontinuous casual employment results from the fact that some employers do not report a continuous need for work, and freely appoint and dismiss employees. This work is based on contracts known as "zero-time contracts" or fixed-term contracts, which do not include a minimum number of working hours. Hence, such form of employment is referred to as "intermittent work" or "work on call".

Summary

The aim of the article was to present the characteristics of new forms of work that distinguish them from traditional models and to point out the effects they have on the worker and the economy.. It can be said that a model of new economy is being shaped with their help. There is an increase in the amount of task work carried out in flexible structures, without subordination to employers, what is one of characteristic of new forms. Other characteristics are as follows:

1. Methods of remote communication and forms of control constitute a challenge for both employers and employees. The latter gain a certain degree of flexibility and even autonomy in scheduling tasks. Such work provides them with an opportunity to earn money and gain experience. However, it is problematic to indicate a permanent workplace and there are insufficient regulations specifying the obligations of the parties and the rules for determining them.
2. New forms of work offer potential for fixed-term workers, but also for migrants. They often work on-site in portfolio, part-time or voucher forms. At the opposite extreme, there are people with high and rare skills, who are also associated with on-site employment, i.e. temporary or occasional work. Nevertheless, in both of these groups, the principles of the employee-employer relationship are freely treated, and the flexibility of time and place is also appreciated. Work involving time and place sharing or worker sharing occurs rather in production and stationary services. However, joint employment is related to tasks performed in the form of a project. Its implementation time is specified, and the tasks are stipulated in the content of the project. Co-working places with access to office and network infrastructure are dedicated to this form.

The risk of infection during the pandemic suddenly increased interest in using remote work in Poland. Certain features of online work tend to be transferred onto most services, for example in education or healthcare. Currently, there are many indications that in the future the trend will disseminate, but similarly to other forms of employment described in the study, it will be limited to selected industries and professions.

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