Work and containment measures for **COVID-19**

Contributions from Work and Organizational Psychology in the pandemic context

VOLUME 2

The impacts of the pandemic on workers and their work relationship

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Introduction

The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is accompanied by a significant political, economic, and social crisis, strongly impacting the reality of the everyday worker and their relationship with their work. The Brazilian Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (SBPOT) developed the three-volume collection *Work and COVID-19 containment measures: contributions of Work and Organizational Psychology in the pandemic context* to support acting and reflecting upon this tragically challenging scenario.

In its first volume, the focus was in guidelines for home office experience - remote work mandatorily done at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this second volume, we move towards other topics that affect workers, also including work experiences beyond organizations and an attentive look at workers with diversified vulnerabilities.

This perspective is especially important at a time in which the majority of workers are exposed to so many frailties, both old and new, in their relationship with work. With this volume, we intend to inspire individual and collective actions and reflections that help us better comprehend and prepare for this novel world of work. For that purpose, nineteen experienced researchers developed seven topics, for which objectives are presented as follows.

Workers in the Pandemic: multiple realities, multiple bonds. Introducing multiple links - commitment, entrenchment, consent and rooting - established by workers in different contexts discussing how a pandemic affects these links and, consequently, workers.

Workers in Alternative Work Arrangements Before COVID-19. Discusses the pandemic's impacts in autonomous and informal workers placed in alternative work relationships, providing background of recent changes in the world of work and exploring the deepening of ongoing trends.

Work in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, mental health, and quality of work life: Essential guidelines. Analyzes the pandemic's repercussions in the work-health relationship and provides essential guidelines to face them, considering its risks and impacts to workers, especially on the field of mental health and quality of work life.

Workers in the informal economy: possible interventions. Debates measures related to informality that can be taken by the state, the field of psychology, and informal workers themselves, taking into account the origin and effects of informality and the signifying process upon which these workers operate.

Workers' new learning demands due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reflects upon learning demands related to remote work brought about by the pandemic, considering pre-existing learning demands and changes in the landscape of work, with the intent of providing recommendations for workers and managers.

Creating New Solutions for Work and for Workers in Response to the Pandemic. Examines how creativity may favor work and workers affected by the pandemic, and identifies social, contextual, and individual factors associated with its expression and its role in promoting workers' well-being and mental health.

The impacts of COVID-19 on Workers' Careers. Explores implications of the pandemic on workers' careers and alerts to the effects of social differences and consequent injustices on career development, and also includes suggestions to professionals on how to act to mitigate the effects of this crisis.

Themes and authors

1. Workers in the Pandemic: multiple realities, multiple bonds
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2. Workers in Alternative Work Arrangements Before COVID-19
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**3. Work in the context of pandemic, mental health and quality of life in work:
essential guidelines**
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4. Workers in the informal economy: possible interventions
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5. Workers' new learning demands due to the COVID-19 pandemic
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6. Creating New Solutions for Work and for Workers in Response to the Pandemic
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1. Workers in the Pandemic: multiple realities, multiple bonds; 2. Workers in Alternative Work Arrangements Before COVID-19; 3. Work in the context of pandemic, mental health and quality of life in work: essential guidelines; 4. Workers in the informal economy: possible interventions; 5. Workers' new learning demands due to the COVID-19 pandemic; 6. Creating New Solutions for Work and for Workers in Response to the Pandemic; 7. The impacts of COVID-19 on Workers' Careers

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Workers in the Pandemic: multiple realities, multiple bonds

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March 11, 2020. The World Health Organization (WHO) declares the COVID-19 pandemic, initiating what may come to be considered a new period in history. Isolation guidelines, border shutdowns, and disruption of transportation services greatly reduce people's mobility. Social behaviors in different spheres of life, such as family, friendships, community, religion, and especially work, are now much more mediated by digital technology. Here is a scenario with consequences for the bonds of individuals and groups.

The literature on commitment had already been predicting changes in the models of work associated with technological development and the gig economy, but the conditions of the pandemic exacerbate differences in class, gender, race, and put on the essential agenda some debates previously lacking in the area's literature. In less than one quarter, many arrangements that would take years in transformation, needed to be quickly adapted to meet the challenges imposed by the ramifications of the pandemic. In this text, we describe central elements of the work context in Brazil during the pandemic and analyze how they can have an impact on people's bonds. We map variables from different work realities and present examples that illustrate their impact on bonds. Finally, we comment on possible perspectives for bonds in the post-pandemic future.

Elements of the context that affect bonds

The data on the economy and the labor market are already announcing the specificity and gravity of the moment: in the first months of the pandemic in Brazil, between March and April 2020, the country lost more than one million formal jobs. Unemployment insurance claims increased 39% in April compared to March (Ministry of the Economy of Brazil, 2020). In addition, by May 2020, more than 7 million people had their wages reduced or their employment contract suspended, contingencies covered by Provisional Measure No. 936/2020 that instituted the Emergency Program for Maintaining Employment and Income (Alvarenga, 2020).

These data indicate that less than half of the individuals capable of working today have the right to some type of social coverage associated with work: unemployment insurance, guarantee fund reserve in case of dismissal, or being able to leave work without losing pay, if one gets sick (with COVID-19 or with all the other risks of illness

that do not cease because we are in a pandemic). It is worth noting that the compensation for informal jobs is also lower and this group is composed mainly of youth, Black, and peripheral occupations (Abílio, 2019), which reflects the inequalities historically experienced in this country.

Even for those who maintained their employment ties, suddenly, a huge portion had their routines substantially changed. Remote work, which was already showing strong growth, needed to be adopted quickly and without the ideal preparation and resources for its effectiveness. Working from home, especially in a pandemic context, can mean dealing with structural and psychological issues. Among workers who set up a home office, there are those whose homes do not meet their organizations' requirements and whose families have been demanding more of their time, especially in the case of women and mothers. This change required configuring the domestic space as a working space and made the limits between the time for work and for personal life less clear.

In addition, working hours, when they take place at home, demand adaptation by workers, either in relation to their time, or in terms of the new way of carrying out their tasks. Since before the pandemic, it was noted that job flexibility was responsible for the illness of professionals, among other reasons, by drastically reducing the boundaries between work and private life (Antunes, 2018). Now, when work and home overlap and there is no space for leisure, these negative perspectives of flexible work are highlighted. The differences experienced between genders were also evident during the pandemic. Partial results of a home office survey of 30,000 workers from more than 100 companies, such as Totvs, Sodexo, Natura, Pearson, and Alelo in Brazil and other Latin American countries, show that the experience of remote work has been more difficult for women than for men (Muniz, 2020).

Finally, there are still workers in activities considered essential, such as health, security, delivery services, cleaning, or industry workers, who go on with their routines despite the pandemic and the decreed social distancing. These workers suffer the psychological effects of fear of contagion, often having to work without individual and collective protective equipment. Some work for organizations that offer certain conditions for protection and health. Many of these created protection committees that dialogue with all internal sectors and strive to keep the recommendations of the competent bodies related to prevention up-to-date, which, despite their importance, are not effective in ensuring the total safety of workers, nor do all organizations guarantee their implementation. In the specific case of health professionals, by May 13, 2020, Brazil counted 31,790 of them contaminated with COVID-19. Among doctors, nurses, nursing technicians, community health agents and those combating endemic diseases, receptionists, pharmacists, biomedical scientists, health unit managers and others, health professionals represent 15.9% of the country's total cases of contamination. (Ministry of Health - Brazil, 2020).

In the face of such contexts, workers are expected to transform the meaning and role of work in their lives, with repercussions on the bonds they establish with the work itself, the organization, and even the family, especially at this point in time in which the boundaries between such dimensions are so weakly defined.

Analysis of bonds during the pandemic

We intend to speak here about four types of bonds: commitment (which can be directed towards the work; the employing organization, if any; the community; the family; and others), entrenchment (analyzed here in relation to the work and the organization), consent to the organization's norms, and embeddedness in the community.
Figure 1 presents the definition of each one, the criteria that help us to identify whether people manifest them or not, and fundamental questions for us to reflect on how pandemic variables can affect their levels.

Commitment, for example, is a psychological bond that denotes affect on a voluntary basis, which means there is no external element that compels a person to feel committed. Being a bond that develops based on how the individual perceives others (be it work, family, community, etc.), the levels of commitment at this moment depend on how people assess their work, their family relationships, the actions of organizations and the community during the pandemic. In a moment of restricted freedom, how much can they still make small choices in this adaptation process?

Bonds	Definition	Criteria	Variations in the pandemic
Commitment	Voluntary psychological bond that reflects dedication and responsibility for one focus in particular (Klein et al, 2012)	Voluntariness Dedication Attributed importance	Can you choose to work at home? Do you like the new format imposed by the context?
Entrenchment	Tendency of individuals to remain in the organization due to possible losses associated with their leaving (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2011)	Limited alternatives Financial necessity Adaptation level	Do you have other work options available? Are you dependent for your immediate survival?
Consent	Tendency of individuals to obey the organization or their superiors in the work environment hierarchy (Silva & Bastos, 2010)	Inner acceptance Obedience	Do you believe in the new rules of the organization? Do you follow instructions regardless of how much you agree?
Embeddedness	Bond that individuals establish with the community, with the place where they live, and that affects their bonds with the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001).	Adjustments to the community Community ties Sacrifices if leaving	Do you support or receive support from the community? Do you miss contacts with people in the community?

Figure 1 - Bonds and reflections on the pandemic

The impossibility of choosing is connected to a second bond, entrenchment. The health and economic context in the pandemic reduces the alternatives for paid work and, for formal employees, the chances for job mobility are undone by the simple interruption of regular recruitment and selection processes, and more broadly, by reduced economic activity. As a general rule, the more individuals depend on their job for their immediate livelihood, the greater their chances of staying, continuing the activity possible at the moment, even if it is not their actual choice. In the pandemic, this condition is amplified, aggravated by uncertainty and by the increase in unemployment rates.

It appears that the greater dependence on organizations, whether formal employers or not, plus the strict public policies aimed at job security, can intensify consent. In other words, under these conditions, workers can assimilate new rules from organizations and

accept the working conditions (remote or not), even if they disagree with them. The consent bond can precede, for example, the emptying of the meaning of work and engaging in unethical or more controversial behaviors with regard to socially accepted morals.

In the case of embeddedness, social acceptance is often felt in living with the community, and contributes to a feeling of adjustment. This type of bond with the place where we live and with the people who make it up (neighborhood, co-workers, friends, etc.) also affects our work relationships and even the decision to remain or not in certain jobs (Mitchel et al., 2001). In many cases, individuals have been increasing their interactions with virtual communities during the pandemic, and reducing the contacts that worked by engaging in activities in the geographic spaces in their surroundings (such as commercial, religious, leisure establishments, and fitness centers, for example). On the other hand, many vulnerable groups in Brazil still depend on engagement and/or community action (including face-to-face) for access to health and survival conditions (distribution of consumer staples and resources such as masks, cleaning materials, etc.).

This reflection on possible directions for bonds given the variables of the pandemic reinforces the fact that a more comprehensive analysis requires a mapping of the different working conditions and elements of context that cannot be generalized for all groups. For this, we set out to talk with workers in formal and informal work situations, within a three-point scale: impossibility to continue working, possibility of working conditional on being outside the home, and the option to continue working at home.

Figure 2 illustrates ten examples of workers, comparing their working conditions, the changes imposed by the pandemic, the role of work in their emotional regulation and, finally, the main bonds presented. These examples are not intended to exhaust the possible cases, or to generalize the specificities observed, but to assist our analysis of this ongoing scenario.

Work arrangement	With an employment contract						Without an employment contract			
Work location	Works at home		Works away from home				Works at home		Works away from home	Cannot work
Work structure	With structure		Without structure	Relative unhealthiness	High unhealthiness					
Fictitious name	Flávia	Lucas	Michele	Paula	José	Rosa	J.H.	Laura	Marcos	Zen aide
Socio-demographic characteristics	Woman, 45 years old, White, married, 1 child, postgraduate, resident of upper middle class neighborhood.	Man, 31 years old, White, single, no children, postgraduate, resident of upper middle class neighborhood.	Woman, 23 years old, Black, single, no children, postgraduate, resident of a popular neighborhood.	Woman, 45 years old, White, married, no children, postgraduate, resident of middle class neighborhood.	Man, 42 years old, Black, married, 3 children, completed high school, resident of a popular neighborhood.	Woman, 56 years old, Black, divorced, 1 child, technical level, resident of a popular neighborhood.	Man, 34 years old, Black, divorced, 2 children, postgraduate, resident of a popular neighborhood.	Woman, 30 years old, White, married, 1 child, postgraduate, resident of a middle class neighborhood.	Man, 34 years old, Black, married, 1 child, completed high school, resident of a popular neighborhood.	Woman, 64, Black, single, 1 child, completed high school, living in a popular neighborhood.
Profession / function	Public Relations and Communication Manager at a private University	Manager, Postgraduate in Marketing	Importation Assistant	Psychologist at SUS reference center	Waste collection truck driver	Nursing Technician	Bookseller, writer, editor	Researcher (doctoral student)	Delivery - by app or private	Housekeeper
Description of working conditions	Manages a team of 5 people in an organization that offers her support and working conditions. Her working hours have some flexibility but her workload is regularly 40 hours during business hours	Manages a team of 15 people in a multinational organization.	She works 44 hours a week in a multinational organization in the central region of São Paulo (about 1 hour and 30 min away from her home). She performs a function distinct from her higher education. The organization had support and working conditions.	She works 30 hours a week at a SUS* Health Center. During the pandemic, workers were required to concentrate the work shifts due to the pandemic, to reduce the number of days out of home. *Unified Health System in Brazil (public system)	He works as a driver for waste collection.	She works as a nursing technician in two hospitals, with a 12/36 workday. One of the hospitals receives patients with Covid-19. At the beginning of the pandemic, there was little protective equipment for professionals.	Writer, works with edition/publishing of books by independent authors, workshops, lectures, and performances in soirees, schools, cultural centers, etc. Now he works at home, goes out at most 1x a week to go to the post office.	Takes turns with her husband using the home office (4 to 5 hours a day) and taking care of their child. At night, they both compensate by working late (as far as they need to or can).	He works from 4 to 8 hours as a delivery man, with his own motorcycle, and reconciles that with a formal job of restocking minibars in a hotel.	She worked every day of the week, each day in one house: some in ABC Paulista and others in the São Paulo capital. Gets around by public transport to the work location.
Principal changes due to the pandemic	There was no drop in income due to the pandemic. She started to do basically the "same" work as before, only in the Home Office, with the necessary adaptations and restrictions imposed by this model. She lives in a large apartment and has her own computer, which makes it possible to adapt the space without major inconvenience. The housework intensified but she managed to divide tasks with her husband and her son, without accumulating a great overload. She would like, after the pandemic, for some meetings to remain virtual, avoiding excessive traveling.	He started working from home, with less flexible hours. Had a reduced workload and wages. He reported that the ergonomics of working at home is a concern to be solved individually, without support from the organization. Work hours and wages were reduced to face the economic and health crisis.	She started doing Home-Office, with a change of schedule. She has worked approximately 55 overtime hours since the pandemic began. The remote work model was problematic since it does not have adequate infrastructure to carry out the work (adequate table and chair, sufficient internet). The organization also decided that all overtime, including those before the pandemic, would not be paid, only counted as an hour bank. The company is also considering adopting the Home-Office model even after the pandemic.	The work shifts were condensed because, although the appointments are being done online, you still need to go to the unit in person. In the beginning this extension of the workday was proposed to save on masks, since they were used all day. For online appointments (individual or group) it was necessary to create alternative forms (internet or telephone). She reports not trusting the cleaning of the unit, but even so her work routine is disturbed by repetitive cleaning actions in the area. Going to the bathroom, drinking water, and having lunch became moments of tension, planning, and hygiene procedures. Conflicts in the services were intensified and unethical behaviors became evident.	Reduction of working hours. Increased control of hygiene in handling waste and control so that there are no gatherings among workers.	There were no changes in routine, but the work became more intense given the number of visits. The instructions on hygiene and correct use of PPE were largely reinforced.	80% of his routine was changed. His work used to take place in direct interactions, now he uses the online environment. Some are not possible, such as presentations with a spontaneous audience from outside spaces. He relies on the network he already had, and the exhibitions of work on social networks do not significantly expand his network as they usually do. The source of income and accesses is basically from that audience that already knew his work. After the pandemic, he plans to maintain online workshops, as well as expand online sales (which he already did). Time management has also changed, a more disciplined look at it.	She used to work at home, but now the 3-year-old son is out of school. In addition to previous projects, she started working on covid-related projects, increasing her workload. She used to order food, now she is ordering less. Her husband has 2 jobs and started working on his doctorate. She took over the domestic duties (they regularly shared the chores at home). She reports a more intense and tiring routine. She would not like to incorporate any changes after the pandemic.	There were no changes in his working hours but he noticed an increase in competition (many delivery people on the streets). In addition, there were changes in the delivery profile, since now there is a lot of demand for supermarket purchases. He started using alcohol gel, masks, and reduced direct contact with customers. At home, he started to adopt the hygiene recommendations that are being propagated. He said that the platform offers masks and alcohol and sends messages about the health conditions of the couriers and offering information. In addition, the company created a financial aid fund for delivery people who become contaminated by COVID. He would like this care to be maintained post-pandemic.	She stopped working and, with that, she is receiving payment from only three employers, and only two are paying full price. As a result, she also stopped accumulating work with the domestic services of her own home. Personal cleaning routines have been intensified because the worker belongs to the risk group, and only rarely goes out for purchases in local markets.K9
Work and emotional regulation	She believes that work is essential to not be "thinking about the virus all the time" and maintain her mental health. She thinks that work gives her a "social function" and makes her feel useful.	The work has served as an escape valve to deal with the social isolation scenario.	She feels that the work is relevant to the economic sector. But when she talks about herself, she does not mention the social functions of the work, because if she had a choice, she would not work in that position. Despite this, she sees herself as privileged to be able to work during this period.	She reports an experience of well-being when collaborating with the well-being of others. "Sense of belonging, of being together, collective. Something that touches on humanitarian values. And often, helping others to survive, to stay more in balance, to become more resilient, to get in touch with vitality. ... is also doing this myself in some dimension".	Greatly worried about exposure to the virus, demonstration of being infected and contaminating the family.	Attention, caution, and apprehension increased considerably. There is a lot of fear of being contaminated and contaminating other people, neighbors. She no longer receives visits from her only son and is afraid of contaminating her father who receives her care.	He sees his work as a channel of communication with other realities, other experiences, and through this artistic-pedagogical nature, proposes that people express themselves. One creates a network of people and solidarity, not only the one who produces the item artistically, but those who buy it and offer it to other people as well. Work in itself represents a very large part of what he does, makes it possible to think about what I have already done and what one can propose at that moment.	Work represents normality. The moment you enter the office and focus on work, you feel as if you are in pre-pandemic normality. Work is calming.	Despite the fear of contagion, he considers that work serves as "therapy" and helps him "work the mind", avoiding depression and other psychological problems. Despite this, he feels that work leaves him insecure about his own health and puts his family at risk.	She says she is sad, she is missing work, because of her role and the social aspect. She mentions that she misses "serving" the owners of the houses where she works.
Bond elements	She presents important characteristics of **commitment to the organization**, even excessively, since she feels "guilty" for not managing to produce enough because of her "anxiety disorder". She demonstrates a lot of adherence to the organization's values and affective bond with it and with the activities it develops. She sees the organization as an important space for social exchange.	He demonstrates **commitment**, because he is concerned with the economic crisis that the company faces and with the jobs that may be affected. He shows that his dedication to the company increased during the pandemic. He demonstrates **entrenchment** because he intends to look for other jobs, in other companies, after the end of the pandemic.	She demonstrates **entrenchment in the organization**, since she would like to change areas and is having difficulties with adaptations to the Home-Office model. She demonstrates **commitment to the customer**, because her dedication and responsibility are in favor of this focus. She also demonstrates **commitment to the family**, represented by her mother, which is why she keeps her job.	She demonstrates a **drop in commitment to the unit**, although she remains **committed to her work and to her patients** (it does not want to ask for leave because of the patients). As for **consent with the organization**, she carries out activities without agreeing, but she also reports dissidences, such as having left early when there was no water, and having lunch in her room instead of having lunch in the cafeteria. As such, she presents neither blind obedience nor inner acceptance, although there is relative compliance with the rules imposed by the organization.	He demonstrates **entrenchment** when he entered the current job, by reporting that that job was his second option. However, **commitment** is presented when he reports that he started to like the job of a driver and perceived the importance of this work for society.	She demonstrates **entrenchment in the job** by reflecting that, on the one hand, she would prefer not to be working in this or any other job, she would prefer to be in isolation. She demonstrates **commitment to the work** when talking about the importance of her work in the face of the health crisis scenario and her dedication to perform her activities well.	He demonstrates **commitment to the work**, as he would not like to do another activity at the moment and intends to continue doing the same work after the pandemic. **Commitment to the community**, for thinking of ways to help it process the pandemic moment, and offer scholarships to those who cannot access his courses.	She demonstrates **commitment to the family and to the work**. She likes what she does and considers the work relevant. She presents **commitment to the community**, coordinating campaigns to distribute toys / activities to low-income families	He demonstrates characteristics of **entrenchment**, since he sees no alternatives and stays, despite the feeling of insecurity. He says that if he could choose, he would like to remain not working for at least 3 months and travel to have more contact with nature. He demonstrates **commitment to the family** both in terms of their livelihood and their safety in relation to contagion.	She demonstrates **consent** in relation to her employers, reiterates several times that she "serves" them. She demonstrates **commitment to the family**, to whom she is dedicated and responsible in the pandemic and non-pandemic period.

Figure 2 Examples of workers, comparing their working conditions, the changes imposed by the pandemic, the role of work in their emotional regulation and the main bonds presented.

For informal workers, the main feature of their working conditions is the lack of support that guarantees everything from a minimum income to personal protective equipment (PPE) in the case of working outside, or guidelines and technological resources in the case of working at home. In this scenario of doubts, there is an exacerbation of uncertainty and greater dependence on daily work activity to maintain income. There is a tendency, therefore, toward entrenchment and consent bonds, in this case not to an organization, but to the conditions imposed (assimilation and adaptation to reality).

In the case of formal workers, inappropriate working conditions can trigger a set of complaints (explicit or not) directed at the employer or the leadership. This dissatisfaction can lead more to a drop in organizational commitment rather than to greater consent (when the organization reduces workloads and salary, or decreases the flexibility of schedules in remote work, for example). Even so, the need to comply with decisions and protocols with which they disagree shows how consent can lead to questionable responses from a moral point of view (like continuing to leave the house because the organization wants this, even when the social norm requires social distancing). On the other hand, there are also organizations concerned with offering resources and guidance for remote work, or the PPE necessary for working outside the home, in addition to maintaining benefits and programs for well-being at work. Such perception of support tends to favor a greater organizational commitment.

For all the workers, the social function of work is affected during the pandemic: those who are in isolation (working or not), have partial contact with co-workers or with people with whom they interacted to carry out their activities; those who go out to work experience the tension of not being able to get close to their colleagues, while the exposure caused by work also adversely affects their contact with family members. Bonds are, in themselves, phenomena that are built in relationships, and such a direct impact on their levels and forms of manifestation causes, to a certain extent, mental suffering. This is possibly why the reference to work as escape, belonging, normality was so recurrent in the interviews carried out (Figure 2), especially for those in isolation. For those who go out, the references insecurity, tension, and caution also arise through a relational dimension (fear of contagion, not only of themselves, but of others).

In the case of workers who can stay at home (with or without a formal employment contract), the massive use of information technology has also been generating social training for other forms of relationship, for life and for virtual work. The pressure for better time management also seems to grow, with or without the intermediary of organizational processes. The failure to carry out such self-management, within such a complex web of variables, can also be associated with a feeling of guilt when there is commitment to work. Whoever, moreover, cannot work during the pandemic (because they are merchants, because their contractors dismissed them, because they were fired…) still deals with the frustration of broken bonds.

There is, in general, an experience of cognitive dissonance for those who need to work away from home, with or without a formal employment contract. They oscillate between the need (and/or desire) to continue working and the fear of contagion. In some cases, workers are forced to put other people at risk, and they do so, even if they

do not agree. This can occur, for example, among taxi or ride-share drivers, as not providing the service means not making money, at the same time that it represents a chance of contagion to every passenger who enters the car.

The same goes for other essential service workers. In this case, there is a conflict between entrenchment at work and commitment to one's own health, that of the family and the community. On the other hand, there is also the case of professionals on the front line, such as nurses and hospital secretaries, who need public transport to get around and can carry the virus with them by bus and subway, as well as take it back to family members. However, they understand their work as fundamental during the pandemic, which constitutes a conflict between commitments to work, the family, and the community.

In the case of formal workers with the option to stay at home, the process of learning virtual behaviors still confronts work models from prior to the pandemic. The mental representation of the organization was mostly constructed based on a dynamic of face-to-face exchanges. The determination of work schedules, intersections with people from other sectors, interactions in common spaces, inside or outside times for rest (such as the "coffee break") also contribute to the sense of belonging, to the notion of collective, and to organization schemes until then shared. As contacts are restricted to the people with whom they work directly, exclusively virtual work can also reduce their systemic view of the organization and, in the medium term, lead to stronger bonds with the teams than with the organization as a whole.

Figure 3 presents the summary of analyses and reflections for the multiplicity of factors present in the context of the pandemic.

Work Arrangement	With an employment contract				Without an employment contract		
Work Location	**Works at home**		**Works away from home**		**Works at home**	**Works away from home**	**Cannot work**
Structure	**With structure**	**Without structure**	**Relative unhealthiness**	**High unhealthiness**			
Examples	Employees of organizations whose work can be done remotely. The arrangements are coordinated by the organization to make a work at home routine feasible.		Workers in essential services, industry, banking.	Health professionals and morticians (frontline).	Liberal professionals, artists, researchers without formal ties (grants).	Couriers, taxi and ride-share drivers, doctors and dentists as legal entities (non-frontline).	Day laborers, owners of shops, restaurants, etc.
Working conditions	With structure, adaptation to remote work is facilitated and tends to be more satisfactory.	The demands of remote work are confronted with physical and family structure, gender roles (possible unequal divisions of domestic chores).	Assessment of the organizational support received. Perception of insecurity; questioning the psychological contract.	Greater intensity of work, increased attention to the use of PPE, and concern about being contaminated and contaminating other people.	No support for adjustments to working at home.	Little or no support for PPE or guidelines; Little chance of getting away in case of illness.	Little or no financial support to face the period without working.
Elements that have impact on bonds	Significant changes in the way of working. Loss of social contact that the face-to-face job offered. Risk of less systemic view of the organization. In some cases, higher reported performance, and feeling of guilt when they do not rate their own work highly.	Need for important adjustments in family arrangements to adapt to the work routine.	Possibility of contagion.	Possibility of contagion. Increasing tension of personal relationships at work.	Uncertainty and significant changes in the way of working. Loss of social contact that the face-to-face job offered.	Greater uncertainty. Possibility of contagion.	Temporary interruption of work. Loss of social contact that the face-to-face job offered.
Reflections on bonds	Commitment as an antecedent for willingness to adjust as requested by the organization. In some cases, consent with the organization.	Commitment conflicts when there are tensions between family and work. Consent with the organization.	Negative impact on commitment to the organization and to the work. Consent in relation to the organization.	Compatibility between commitment to the work and to the community, but even so, associated with emotional fluctuations.	Commitment to the work, which can be maintained even when there is no financial reward.	Greater tendency toward entrenchment.	While committed, frustration with the impacts / impossibility of continuing the work.

Figure–3 - Mapping of the context of the pandemic and repercussions on bonds

It is worth mentioning that all these conditions can be crossed by specific characteristics of the reality of each worker, especially with regard to race, gender, and social class. We can imagine, for example, that for an upper-middle-class worker in Brazil, living in a large apartment (where each family member can transform a room into their own "office"), transposing the work space into the domestic space may take place in a less complex way than for a worker for whom this is a distant reality, living in a smaller place shared with more people. Being less complex, we imagine that changes in the quality and intensity of their bonds may happen in a more subtle way. In the same way, women experience more conflicts between commitment to work and to their own family, a situation that tends to intensify in these conditions of less defined borders. In addition, the more unfavorable the workers' living conditions, the greater their chances of adapting to unfavorable work situations, leading them to consent or become entrenched in the work or in the organization more easily. This is, as discussed in the previous section, a typical characteristic of the young, Black, and peripheral population in Brazil.

Post-pandemic perspectives

The studies and debates on bonds and commitment literature still deal with the work model in force until the 1990s, when the rule, or at least the expectation, was the permanence of workers in the organization from the beginning to the end of their careers. In fact, this literature is still largely constructed with an emphasis on formal work in traditional organizations. In the last decades, these premises started to be

questioned, to the point that staying in the organization and continuing in the same job ceased to be criteria for considering that a worker is committed (Klein Cooper & Molloy, 2014; Rodrigues & Bastos, 2011).

Even after these reviews and after the first essays on working outside the organizations, the premise in the literature is still one of physical presence of workers. Faced with so many oscillating variables at the moment this text is being written, perhaps the most predictable assertion in this field is to say that the work models will continue to change, coupled with digital transformation. There is a learning process underway in society, in the global context, for greater adherence, testing, and validation of the available information technology tools. Virtual behavior protocols begin a process of maturation. In addition, the simultaneous use of technology for work and leisure, and even for interactions with family and friends, also leads to greater sharing and understanding of gaps not yet filled to improve the possibilities of online communication. The fact is that we will certainly see a greater number of workers hired from different cities, states, or even countries, who will never live personally with their teams. At the same time, informal workers will continue to be subjected to an exploitative model, mediated by applications.

Bonds, as psychological processes, will continue to be present, even if in formats and expressions not experienced until now. They are likely to receive new criteria. In the case of commitment, whose determinant was already not permanence, may cease to be (only) voluntariness, dedication, active contribution. In the case of entrenchment and of consent, the type of need that underlies them, or the type of sacrifice that restrains a person from leaving their organization or their work, goes beyond the financial issue and also covers the need for access to this virtual world. If, on the one hand, an online reality can favor the establishment of so many virtual communities to the point of making us question the role of places in our lives, on the other hand certainly mobility will no longer be a requirement for globalized work, since we will possibly have more restrictions on travel.

Not that all of these changes are coming exclusively from the context generated by the pandemic. However, if we need a temporal reference to demarcate the redirections in future studies of bonds and the world of work in general, it will possibly be this: March 11, 2020.

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Workers in Alternative Work Arrangements Before COVID-19

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The repercussions of COVID-19 have impacted all segments of society. The economy and the world of work were particularly affected due to the social isolation actions recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to contain the disease. Despite attempts to adapt to this new context, a global loss of 10.5% in terms of hours worked is estimated in the second quarter of 2020, equivalent to around 330 million full-time jobs. The impact is even greater for self-employed and informal workers, with estimates of 1.6 billion people globally affected (International Labour Organization, 2020a).

Faced with this reality, we propose to discuss the possible impacts of the pandemic on informal and self-employed workers in alternative work arrangements. First, we a brief background on recent changes in the world of work, based on the assumption that one of the main consequences of the pandemic is the deepening of certain ongoing trends. We then describe how such workers are being impacted by the pandemic, and finally, we reflect on future post-pandemic needs to mitigate the inevitable impacts. Rather than indicating directions, this chapter seeks to characterize certain aspects of the current reality, and reflect upon them in order to glimpse possible actions for the future.

Contextualization

The world of work is in constant transformation, due in part to technological advances, economic conditions, and social changes. It is in this process of metamorphosis that new work configurations emerge. Since the productive restructuring in the 1980s, society has undergone profound changes, marked by the fugacity and instability of the labor market, which persist even today. Organizations have become leaner and more capable of responding quickly to a complex, turbulent and changing environment; in other words, they are more flexible, which is a sought after characteristic in the workforce. Furthermore, the undesired consequence of this has been a weakening of the relationship between employees and employers, increasing the precariousness of work.

There is a new process of technological transformation today, aggravating these conditions. There is an emergence of less defined work models, which are more fluid and poorly structured with respect to time and place of work, as well as more ephemeral and autonomous from the point of view of production and financial return. An increasing number of workers are working on demand (Hook, 2015; Sundararajan, 2015; Rashid, 2016; Tran & Sokas, 2017), calling themselves entrepreneurs (Barbosa, 2011). In this new reality, the formal employment model (long-term, stable, structured activities and guaranteed remuneration and benefits) is no longer the primary form of work arrangement.

There is no consensus in the literature about the term that defines these new work configurations. Various researchers have presented various expressions and concepts, including new forms of work (Steenbergen, Ven, Peeters & Taris, 2018); contingent work (Tran & Sokas, 2017); contemporary configurations of employment (Moortel, Vandenheede & Vanroelen, 2014); as well as specific terms of organization and labor ties, such as crowdsourcing (Howe, 2006; 2008) or uberization (Hill, 2015), for example. We will use the term 'alternative work arrangements', proposed by Spreitzer, Cameron & Garrett (2017), as it is the most appropriate in broadly defining the multiplicity of configurations presented today, as well as their impact.

Despite the of terminologies, there is agreement that the new models of work organization are characterized mainly by individualization, weakening of contractual relations, time flexibility, and relocation of work, i.e. work is not tied to a specific location and can be performed virtually from anywhere, as long as one has access to a communication device with an Internet connection.

What´s going on

Data on the formal labor market points to an exponential rise in unemployment and economic recession in virtually all sectors of the economy. It must be noted however, that it is easier to estimate the impact of the pandemic on formal sectors of the economy, due to the availability of data and economic activity records. This was made clear, for example, by the Brazilian government's difficulties in paying emergency aid to a significant number of informal and self-employed workers. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some trends and impacts of the current pandemic on workers working in these alternative arrangements, which we present below.

Decrease in demand for work, and consequently, income. The containment actions for COVID-19 brought a deep shock to economic, simultaneously affecting the supply and demand of products and services. The stagnation of the economy and the increase in unemployment resulted in a decrease in peoples' consumption power, which, added to the lack of mobility, led to a decrease in demand for informal, self-employed and individual micro-entrepreneurs. This crisis is estimated to have resulted in a 60% loss of income for women workers and informal workers worldwide, while the loss reached 80% in Latin America and the Caribbean (ILO, 2020b). This vulnerability has revived long-standing debates on macroeconomic actions for economic regulation and social support, particularly bringing force to discussions on minimum income. The United Nations report on the economic impacts of COVID-19 points out that one of the alternatives could be providing universal transfers to all families in the informal sector and/or self-employed workers, obviously depending on the economic conditions of each country (Hevia & Neumeyer, 2020). In Brazil, the Federal Government has instituted a social benefit for informal workers (who constitute 45% of the country's labor force) of R$ 600 per month, for a period of three months.

Transfer of costs to the employee. One of the main characteristics of weakening contractual labor relations in alternative work arrangements is the transfer of responsibility from the organization to the worker. In this sense, a significant part of the

costs involved in the work process (traditionally related to training and development, but now expanding towards ownership of equipment, inputs, and maintenance) fall on the individual.

Increase exposure to the risk of contamination, aggravated by barriers to social security access. Economic insecurity puts these workers in a situation of greater exposure to contamination risks. Unlike formal workers who are also involved in activities with a risk of contamination, informal and self-employed workers usually have a lower level of social security protection and benefits. There are a number of barriers that make it difficult for such workers to access social security, such as: lack of knowledge about how to contribute; lack of financial education and long-term thinking; and even the objective difficulty of being able to save certain amount of money once their income barely rise above what is needed to pay for basic living costs.

Key examples on this issue are the *iFood* and *Rappi* delivery apps, which, in April 2020, lost a lawsuit requiring them to adopt sanitary, protective, and social measures to protect workers who provide services in the context of a pandemic (COVID-19).[1] However, these decisions were later reformed, based on the premise that there is no employment link between professionals and companies, which are described as mediators between clients/consumers and service providers. In this way, such organizations continue without any obligation to take responsibility for any health damage suffered by workers.

Future prospects

Although recent times have seen other pandemics, such as SARS and Influenza, their impacts have been more diluted in time or localized; therefore, literature on their economic consequences, specifically on the world of work, is quite limited (e.g., Schoenbaum, 1987; Meltzer et al., 1999; Lee & McKibbin, 2004). The current reality presented in the previous section indicates the seriousness of the current situation, raising an important question: what is the future for these workers? While we do not have an answer to this, we present certain reflections.

The pandemic has resulted in an economic recession and increased unemployment, and, very possibly, in an exponential increase of workers with alternative work contracts. At the same time, the policy of making formal labor relations more flexible will result in increased precariousness and informality. The current trend, therefore, is of more self-employed workers, as well as those who work on demand, part-time and in temporary arrangements. Faced with this increase, and combined with the various changes already taking place in the world of work due to the pandemic, it is possible to identify two needs, one at the micro level and one at the macro level, to adapt to this new reality.

Need to develop skills related to the use of technological resources. The urgent and compulsory confinement as a result of COVID-19 took everyone by surprise, generating a chaotic process of adaptation of workers to deal with this new reality. However,

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[1] Decisions available here: https://www.conjur.com.br/dl/liminar-ifood.pdf and https://www.conjur.com.br/dl/liminar-rappi.pdf .

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forecasts indicate that waves of contagion and, consequently, of confinement, will continue for an unknown period of time. For workers and the economy to remain active under these circumstances, technology will have to be frequently used for the development of work activities, so as to restrict physical interaction and reduce the rate of contact between infected and susceptible individuals. It is important to note, however, that this technological learning process has limited reach for a significant proportion of informal workers which might aggravate their situation.

Regulation of new employment relationships. Even before the pandemic, the absence of formalization of workers in these new work configurations was damaging at both the individual and the macroeconomic levels, with similar implications for social security. The pandemic has clearly revealed that health and social security guarantees are essential to face such a crisis with social cohesion and organization. This being the case, Brazil, which has historically always had high numbers of informal workers, should discuss the effectiveness of legislation guaranteeing these workers minimum conditions of well-being, health, safety and social security.

We would like to emphasize that we are living in uncertain times, and the dynamics of the world of work encompass countless variables, making it impossible to exactly predict the world that awaits us in the future. On the other hand, the construction of the future depends on each one of us.

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Quality of Work Life: Essential Guidelines

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The planet is plunged into a complex global turmoil triggered by COVID-19 pandemic [1]. It is a historically atypical event, even when considering the historical series that starts, retrospectively, from the so-called Spanish flu and goes back to the plagues that affected Europe during Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Given the quick coronavirus *pandemic's* pace, it is quite likely that some information from this brief introduction will be out of date by the time it reaches readers. Even so, it is worthwhile to identify some of the characteristic traits that, until now, have marked this worldwide health event, aiming at building the basic framework in which the central focus of this contribution is inscribed: the work-health relationship in the context of COVID-19 pandemic and the risks / impacts on Quality of Work Life (QWL).

Given the tsunami of news, articles, and publications about the outbreak of coronavirus so far, assessing the current scenario is not a trivial task. However, the broad, objective, and assertive assessment undertaken by Ramonet (2020) can substantially contribute to the synthesis of the background scenario proposed by this small chapter. In his article, Ramonet highlights some of the peculiarities of the COVID-19 phenomenon manifested at the threshold of the 21st century:

- **The global pandemic crisis is not just a health crisis:** it is a "total social fact" since it has consequences in all spheres of social life, involves people in general, institutions, puts values to test and has political, economic, cultural, and religious repercussions, and, above all, affects the world of work.

- **Sars-Cov-2 virus is super powerful:** detected in December 2019 in Wuhan city, China, in about three months the deadly novel coronavirus, due to economic globalization, had already spread to the whole world, forcing millions of people to stay at home (that for those who have a homeplace) while social distancing revealed to be the only effective way to slow the spread of COVID-19.

- **Nature-destroying production model:** the rampant exploitation of non-renewable resources, over the past few decades, creates and recreates objective conditions for the emergence of new coronaviruses and new diseases as human activities come into contact with wildlife and with unknown pathogens that end up contaminating people and pets.

- **Massive health cyber surveillance:** given the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, several countries have invested heavily in digital technologies (e.g. South Korea's Self-Quarantine Safety Protection) focused on identifying people in areas of contagion and potential sources of contamination via social networks, introducing

a technological solution that presupposes sacrifice of individual privacy and reverberates through the inexorable ethical debate.

- **Apotheotic disinformation:** the dispute, a real war of versions about the pandemic (e.g. if COVID-19 was deliberately created in a laboratory) by ideological groups and governments has provoked a real epidemic of fake news on social networks. Exploring the need for people to obtain information in the face of the existing risks, these groups disseminate disinformation – usually boosted by automated profiles called bots – with the same speed that the coronavirus spreads.

- **Digital Capitalism affirmation:** since more than half of humanity is now on lockdown, despite the difficulties of governments in enforcing social distancing measures, the vertiginous digital growth consolidates a market for several communication, entertainment, and commercial applications (Twitter, Mastodon, Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, Reddit, Snapchat, Amino, Signal, Telegram, Wechat, WT:Social, among others), generating huge profits for companies and big data to be exploited by new profit-focused algorithms.

- **Heroes and martyrs of our time:** In the war against coronavirus, the frontline warriors - nurses, nursing technicians, medical doctors, and other healthcare workers, most of them from the public sector in the case of Brazil and many also fatal victims of the pandemic – have taken the lead and are suddenly and finally getting unprecedented recognition, receiving applause, and homage for the strategic mission of taking care of health, not as a commodity, but as a human right.

It should be noted that much remains unknown about the new coronavirus itself and about what it is capable of causing to the human body (e.g. why will some young people without comorbidity only experience mild symptoms while others die?). In addition, the effects of the pandemic have given new visibility to the scrapping of public health services (e.g. lack of personal protective equipment – PPEs), imposed by the economic policy biased towards neoliberalism, and scandalous social inequalities, as the Brazilian case illustrates. The hegemonic conception of an economic model anchored in the flexibilization of production, in the precariousness of labor relations and in the idea of a minimum state are heading downward. The drastic reductions in economic growth, unemployment, the increase in poverty, and social exclusion have been panicking the "owners" of contemporary capitalism. Despite this finding, pointed out by several macro and microeconomic indicators around the world, since the beginning of the current crisis, the socio-economically unfair structure of contemporary societies has caused the damage of such a crisis to be distributed quite unevenly to social classes, genders (male and female) and even across geographic regions. This imbalance is virtual in the Brazilian case as illustrated by Graph 1, which shows that those who lost the most in terms of income in the first quarter of 2020 (when compared to the same period in 2019) were precisely the poorest, with the richest 10% of the population being the only segment to show gains. Along the same line of observation, women lost much more than men. Still, the south, central-west, northeast and north regions of Brazil, in that order, lost much more than the southeast region.
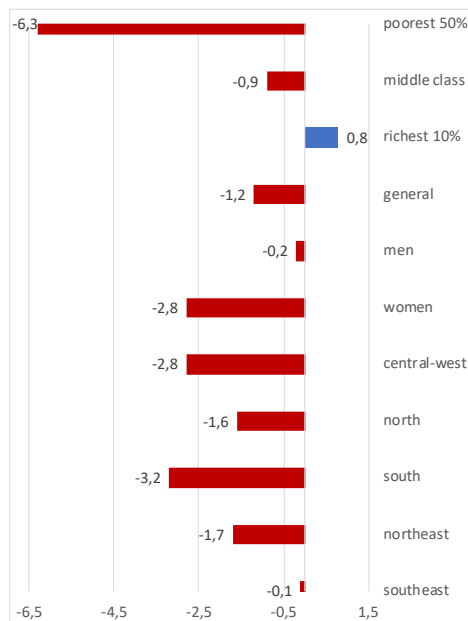
Graph 1: percentage of income decline among workers in Brazil in the first quarter of 2020, when compared to the same period of 2019. Source: Fundação Getúlio Vargas – Social – PnadC and IBRE data. Published in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, 06/07/2020 edition, section *Mercado – Coronavirus*, page A18, title: *Primeiro mês de isolamento destruiu 8,6 milhões de empregos*.

It is based on this background scenario unfolded by the pandemic, in which structural problems worsen and new problems arise, that the work/health relationship takes on new outlines and challenges. If, before the pandemic, the critical indicators of illness and accidents in the world of work were already a source of growing concern, the risks to Quality of Work Life are even more substantial.

Development

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly causes a wide crisis as it is a globally spreading disease that affects various aspects of human experience, ranging from the microbiological and infectious perspectives to the domains of economics, politics (and what some political operators are already calling necropolitics), management of urban spaces, mental health, and work-related health and illness. This last point leads us to the focus of our reflections and contribution, notably in terms of the concepts of mental health, quality of life and, finally, quality of work life. The complexity and severity of these points for the contemporaneity caused by the outbreak of the aforementioned pandemic not only amplifies the precarious conditions of work activities that preexisted the pandemic (as has clearly been the case with many health workers, as well as those of informal sectors and the broad domain of outsourcing), but also adds new stressors and pathogens (as has been the case with the intensification of previously incipient work modalities - teleworking in sectors such as education and the provision of public services, among others). The pandemic – within the context of social isolation ranging from the recommendations of quarantines to drastic and stricter confinement measures, also

known as lockdown – also reveals problems in the management of urban spaces and psychosocial functioning. This set of already existing aggravating factors and new sources of psychosocial risk has brought important impacts on the quality of work life in contemporary times.

The concept of mental health has been shown to be complex in its (not always harmonious) management in the fields of biological sciences and health, human, and social sciences, such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. Health and, by extension, mental health, are concepts that cannot do without due consideration of the associated concepts of normal/normality and disease (Canguilhem, 2006). Quality of life is a complex topic and requires an approach that goes beyond the health-illness dichotomy, a legacy left by the health sciences and adopted by medicine. In this field of medicine, normality and health rest on three basic criteria, each of which induces traditional definitions. Quality of life adopts, at first, the concept of health as "life lived in the silence of the organs", or absence of symptoms. This is a circular definition since there would be health in the absence of disease, and there would be disease in the absence of health. In the domain of mental health, there would be health in the absence of complaints, or psychological distress in its various forms (anxiety/distress, panic, and/or impaired mood). However, it is worth mentioning that this perspective would leave out what the French psychiatrist Louis Le Guillant called psychopathology of work, already in the 1940s and 1950s, when referring to the case that, in some professions, good performance seemed to be related to some type of pathology-like syndrome that, nevertheless, still enabled the worker to perform labor activities (Le Guillant, 1984; Zambroni-de-Souza, Athayde, Silva Araújo & Zambroni de Souza, 2009).   The concept of mental health as the absence of complaints and/or clear symptoms on the part of the individual is, therefore, a problematic perspective.

A second mental health perspective that also appropriates a medical perspective is based on the idea of "standard functioning", of "normal", in the sense of close to or coinciding with a "norm": mentally healthy would be the one that fits the expectations, models, and socio-cultural standards, the one that was shown to be predictable and faithful to different general standards. The literature records an important number of cases of the "ordinary neighbor", with no stories or complaints about inappropriate activities, in whose yard, one day, bones of all his victims are discovered and s/he is found to be a serial killer. The health model as behavioral adherence to usual patterns erodes, therefore, when behaviors that the social (possibly psychopathic) persona had hidden up to that point are revealed.

Finally, a third strand of mental health perspectives "inherited" from the medical field alludes to mental health as an "ideal", as a point of a continuum that would encompass disease at one extreme and health at the other. From this perspective, health would refer to an ideal to be reached in a gradient – ideal by definition, unattainable, but subject to theoretical circumscription. This is, as we can see, a resumption and refinement of the standard model, assuming, this time, that this standard would be basically virtual. In this case, criticisms regarding the flaws of a "model" proposition to which individuals would refer for the respective assessment of mental health would also serve here.

What concept of mental health could be proposed in the field of psychology and, by extension, work psychology, other than the concepts derived from medicine? We propose here, with Georges Canguilhem, the mental health model as normativity, in the sense of a condition that enables the individual to have the capacity to generate new operating standards, to innovate in the face of life's challenges, to have a collection of possibilities, of not being attached to ONE norm, of being equipped for diversity and novelty (Canguilhem, 2006). It is a concept that should not be assimilated to the idea of pure and simple adaptability; workers would have instead the power of not only adhering to the norms, but contributing, as protagonists, for its alteration, eventually contributing with a *personal style* to the set of norms of a group.

The simultaneous and delicate dynamics of adapting *to* rules and adapting rules will have a crucial impact on one's quality of life, and by extension, on their quality of work life. It is necessary to consider here, concomitantly, that we are facing a necessarily social and cultural dynamic, in which the individual is included, but not submerged, or subjugated. Feelings of loneliness among workers are a crucial aspect for the degradation of work activity, as discussed by Da Rocha Falcão, Silva Messias and Mascarenhas de Andrade (2020). Quality of work life is necessarily a condition that is built in the interaction of the individual with the collective. In the context of the current crisis triggered by COVID-19 pandemic, several jobs were considerably impacted, with consequences on the quality of work life. The scope of this crisis to jobs and its effect on the physical and mental health of individual workers gives way to a complex research program that has only just begun. The pandemic represents a context of dramatic collision (Da Rocha Falcão, 2020; Bonnefond & Scheller, 2015) that will lead to qualitative change in several professional branches. Such changes will eventually cause suffering, pain, and, ultimately, personal and professional development. Coping with these situations cannot be limited to the individual worker, in a strategy to suppress symptoms and adapt (or scrap) affected workers. The perversity of such an approach will betray a perspective of mental health limited to an "orthopedic" treatment of the psyche of each worker. This confrontation cannot, at the other extreme, essentially target the organization that gathers workers, as if the reengineering of that organization had the power to resolve everything. Such a confrontation also could not be limited to an approach aimed at the professional gender, that is, for an abstract entity that, "(...) crossing the professional activity of each worker [referenced by this gender], puts this worker exactly in the intersection of past and present [in the field of professional activity] (see Clot, 2008, p. 149). Professional genres have entered a crisis due to torsions triggered by the pandemic – as exemplified by the case of teachers, forced to move from the classic classroom activity, in the classroom space, to remote teaching contexts, or distance education.

The common point to allude in terms of the productive confrontation of such crises is the consideration that work activity necessarily and simultaneously encompasses the dimension and dynamics of the workers' individual experiences in their work collectives, collectives that are referenced by professional genders (doctors, teachers, gravediggers, policemen, etc.). Quality of work life is organized through the dynamic consideration of ALL of these aspects, in a context that takes for granted that there will always necessarily be a gap between the prescribed work and the work carried out by workers. This gap

must not be seen as a fissure to be welded, but as a constituent feature of human work activity (Clot, 2008; Ferreira, 2011).

Conclusion

In this scenario of global crisis – which largely transcends the health dimension and has a special impact on the territory of work and generates harmful consequences for its protagonists – it is absolutely strategic to take into account some guidelines aimed at mitigating or, at its limit, eliminating the negative effects that are being produced and, above all, to promote quality of work life with in the context of a sustainable bias. From this perspective, it is necessary, without intending to dictate managerial "tutorials" or even exhausting the diversity of applicable measures, to take into account that the implementation of remote work (within an emergency, circumstantial, and compulsory context) and teleworking (already adopted by many organizations before the pandemic) should consider some guidelines:

The effective **participation** of workers in the decision-making processes related to the design and implementation of remote work and teleworking so that they are summoned to the role that enables them to generate innovative solutions in this critical scenario.

The **establishment** of a collection of possibilities for regulation / management, equipping workers for the challenges posed by the diversity and novelty introduced by the pandemic.

The **mapping** of the different realities of work in which workers are immersed – this time cohabiting with the home-family-neighborhood scenario – by carrying out an organizational diagnosis with scientific rigor as an essential requirement for planning, operationalizing, evaluating, and re-planning measures of a corporate nature focused on the best possible harmony between quality of life and quality of work life and the effective promotion of workers' mental and physical health.

The **adequacy** of the management practices of performance evaluation, control of the execution of tasks and the "delivery" of results / goals of the work to the effective conditions of production placed in households, mostly characterized by improvisation and precariousness of the working conditions, especially in the area of compulsory remote work – aiming to provide organizational support to mitigate or eliminate existing risks, providing greater autonomy and room for maneuver for workers in carrying out assigned tasks.

The **participatory design** and the implementation of customized programs to effectively promote quality of work life that goes beyond the "corporate hot tub" assistance (Ferreira, 2017) – restricted to anti-stress and palliative practices – anchored on the assumption of that QWL – for it to be valid and lasting – is everyone's task and an institutional responsibility.

Here are some guidelines that can contribute to the effective promotion of workers' mental and physical health in the current historical context of the pandemic in which organizations and the plethora of existing singular work contexts are immersed. The current scenario calls on everyone to think and put into practice coping measures that can contribute decisively to the rescue of the ontological sense of work as a promoter / protector of health and, above all, to the way of constructing the personal, collective and social history of humanity at the threshold of the 21st century.

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[1] When the first cases in Wuhan city, China, were disclosed by the Chinese government in late December 2019, the World Health Organization officially announced a name for the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. The acronym COVID stands for COrona VIrus Disease (Coronavirus Disease) and the number "19" refers to the year 2019. The name is important to avoid cases of xenophobia and prejudice, in addition to confusion with other diseases.

Workers in the informal economy: possible interventions

Fellipe Coelho-Lima
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In March 2020, more than 38 million of Brazilians were working in informality, representing around 40% of active workers in this situation (IBGE 2020). Even though this number represents a slightly decrease in comparison to the previous trimester, informal work has been a growing tendency since 2015. (Lameira, Corseuil & Carvalho, 2020). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this type of work is expected to increase, prolonging itself to subsequent moments. Upon this context, the objective of this article is to debate a couple of measures the state, Psychology and workers in this situation could take in regard to informality. For this purpose, we will consider both the origin of informality in our context, and the impacts of such informality in the workers' lives. In regard to this last point, we will give a special attention to the signifying process upon which these workers operate, considering the role that the meaning and sense making have both in the way subjects apprehend the world, and the way they transform it. (Vigotski, 2009).

The Informal work as a tendency in the work sphere

In Brazil, workers have long coexisted with informality, which may be dated back to the subsequent moments of the end of slavery in the country. Even when the working regulations were created in the 1940's, less than half of those working at the time could have access to these rights (Costa, 2010). Thus, informality is a mark of how workers work in our country.

In general, informal work express itself both in the wage labor with no formal registration, and self-employed workers. They both have in common the lack of access to rights conquered by the working class, being associated with the struggle for survival, the precariousness of life, the lack of qualification, and with the intensive use of manpower. (Cacciamali, 2000; Tavares, 2010). In the concept adopted by this article, neither liberal professionals nor businessmen who evade taxes or commit other irregularities are included.

There are three central elements for understanding the origin and development of informal work: unemployment, lack of politics to assist workers, and the deterioration of work conditions. Brazil is an excellent example to understand the association between these three determiners. Here, we noticed that as the unemployment increases, there is a consequent growth of workers in informality. Due to the lack of politics aimed to mitigate the effects of the unemployment (by granting income or by ensuring basic rights), the unemployed workers conduct several different small services - gigs - or even start their own business. Such reality cannot be verified in countries like France and Japan, which have better developed politics for assisting unemployed workers (Guimarães, Demazière, Sugita & Brito, 2009).

The quality of the offered jobs itself also determines the increase in informality. Low wages, working conditions that risk the worker's life, threats, humiliations and several

kinds of harassment also push the workers into informality. One cannot ignore that women and black people are most of those in informal work, being also the same people who have the worst kind of job as their only option. (Marques, Henrique, Teixeira, & Abílio, 2018).

If informality seems to be located outside of the scope of formal jobs, when we observe what occurs in the productive process nowadays, we can verify an integration between both of them. Therefore, informal work plays at least two roles in our current society. The first one is to absorb an increasing contingent of workers who have lost their jobs, considering that the current model of production is based on progressively closing job openings. In this sense, informality alleviates the pressure over both the state and the companies by taking on effective measures for increasing the number of job openings. The second role is related to the fact that the existence of an informal chain has become useful to formal companies both in regard to the circulation of their goods - for instance, in the case of street sellers - and in regard to hiring services. In both cases, the result is the production cost getting cheaper while the illegal aspects of the process are outsourced (Tavares, 2010).

This dynamic becomes more intense when we look at how work happens in the so-called gig economy or uberization of work. In either case, it concerns companies - mostly large-capital ones - taking advantage of hiring workers as freelancers. By using a discourse of partnership, what we notice is similar to an informal recruitment of workers: there is no acknowledgement of an employment relationship, hence workers cannot access their rights, even if they are those who enable the main activity of the company which hired them (Slee, 2017).

The increasing usefulness of the informal work for the current economy is also followed by discourses that encourage workers to adhere to these modalities. The state's institutions, employer's associations and corporate media have been disseminating discourses affirming the superiority of self-employment as a way out – through entrepreneurship – to unemployment (Malaguti, 2001). Meanings related to individualism, personal accountability and the intensification of the competition between these workers are associated to it. The transformation of unemployed workers into businesspeople (without capital) seeks to weaken the acknowledgment of workers as part of the working class, while mystifies the possibility of them having the same advantages of the high-profile businessmen (Sousa, 2009).

Workers in the informal economy

These discourses are transmuted into socially shared meanings which aims to guide how this group of workers acts before reality. However, far from a mechanical reproduction, what we see is that by appropriating these meanings, which are configured into senses (Vigotski, 2009), such discourses are reshaped. From this aspect, we have compiled some of the findings regarding how this part of the working class has been signifying their work.

The first one concerns the **diversity of meanings according to the activity performed in informality.** That is, alongside the multiplicity of forms of informal work, there is also the meanings produced by workers. Therefore, it its both possible to identify sectors

such as the handicraft and food street marketers/producers, for whom the activity performed is of central importance, acknowledging and valuing the product of their work, and others, for example, connected entirely to the trading of industrialized goods, for whom the meaning of their work is just the income produced by it. Additionally, In this case, getting into informality (and remaining on it) is something also determined by the assessment that this activity provides a better income than a formal job - though they would return to a formal job if offered a better salary. (e.g. Busso, 2007; Gómez, 2011).

They both have in common the work as a **crucial role in their lives.** Thus, there is an inclination for desiring to work indefinitely. Also, in some cases, even the access to pensions would not be followed by the abandonment of informal work (e.g. Beloque, 2007; Coelho-Lima & Bendassolli, 2019). If, on the one hand, retiring would mean a complement for one's income, on the other we must have in mind that even with this extra sum, it concerns a population that is still far from getting a sufficient income to tend to their necessities for survival.

Two aspects that are also usually valued in informal work are **freedom and the immediate access to the income associated to work.** As for the first one, the prospect of organizing their own work (concerning daily worked hours, price, type of activity, applied techniques, etc.) according to their own will in addition to the absence of a manager or direct boss are valued elements. If, on the one hand, such freedom is limited - once there is a more elaborated relation for determining work through the flow of clients and suppliers, for example - on the other, there is more agency power for the workers in this activity than in their old jobs. As for the second one, we have observed the opposition between the salary - which takes waiting a month to have any income and it runs out before the next payment - and the immediate gains of the informality. Both meanings are connected to a third one, which is **the criticism of formal work**. For these workers, aside from a way to access rights and some stability, jobs are a source of humiliation both due to the constant harassments, and the offers of insufficient income (e.g. Beloque, 2007; Busso, 2007; Gómez, 2011).

The way they get involved with each other is also an important aspect to be considered. Different from what some authors have presumed in the past decades (e.g. Toraine, 1987), we have observed a **coexistence between competition and cooperation among informal workers.** If, on the one hand the neoliberal ideology, which encourages individualism and competition, has an impact over them, on the other, we have noticed, in their everyday life, the creation of several collective spaces where they formulate rules, aid or even share experiences (e.g., Coelho-Lima & Bendassolli, 2019; Sato, Andrada, Évora, Neves & Oliveira, 2011).

Beyond the meanings produced by these workers, it is also relevant to consider the effects that informality creates over their life conditions. Even if their assessment of this type of work points to advantages over formal work, the income of this first group of workers is lower, and most of them do not contribute to the social security and execute greater working hours (IBGE, 2003). There are also researches demonstrating situations of health vulnerability concerning these workers, once they have no resources to

mitigate work hazards, with accidents and illnesses derived from laboral activity being common, and they hardly take time off work to take care of their own health (e.g. Dias *et al*, 2011).

Interventions before informality

The thought about intervening before this context implies at least two crucial considerations. The first one concerns the necessity of intervening in the informal economy. In an individual fashion, as an immediate way for an unemployed worker or a worker in a precarious job survive or manage better life conditions, informality is a genuine alternative. However, considering informality as something socially accepted would be reinforcing the tolerance towards the inequality and social injustice which integrate our mode of production in general and specially in the Brazilian reality. As we have described briefly in the previous section, informal workplaces workers in worse life conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to transform this situation, be it by mitigating its effects over the life of these people, or ultimately eliminating this form of precarious work.

The second one concerns the people's implication over these changes. If the origin of informality is complex, overcoming this situation also involves several necessary actions with the participation of different social actors. The state, the companies, the public policies systems, the unions, the central unions and the academy, among others, have an important role in operating proposals and actions towards this end. This is a valid endeavor even if we consider the limitations of the way we organize our society, which presumes, as demonstrated, the existence of informality, precariousness and exploitation, ultimately.

Even if the active involvement of these individuals is of a central importance, this movement will hardly occur in an autonomous and spontaneous fashion. On the contrary, if we notice the project of society that has been defended, for example, by the last federal governments and employer's associations, what tends to happen is the deepening of informality and the worsening of the workers' life conditions as a whole. Thus, it is crucial that a part of the working class acting in informality plays a leading role in disputing measures and actions to improve their lives.

Hence, a pivotal intervention in this context is the strengthening of the **collective organization of informal workers.** The existence of collaboration, solidarity and cooperation bonds is an element we can identify in several research, as mentioned in the last section. There are also examples of associations and collectives of different informal workers - food street sellers, product street sellers, gig economy apps workers, among others - that take these bonds to a higher level. However, as it was also emphasized, meanings related to competition as well as to individualism are also present in this context. Fighting the production of these meanings seems to be a fighting front to be considered to encourage the collective organization of these workers.

Farina and Neves (2007) experience, or even the Martin-Baró's (1985) "de-ideologization" proposals point to a direction in which its possible to help overcoming this scenario. In general, interventions of this kind require that we concatenate at least three aspects. The first one is understanding the anxiety, fear and suffering intrinsic to

the unemployment and informality by which these workers have been subjected. Acting upon these feelings is crucial both for improving their mental health and for creating a space to attenuate the rivalry and suspicion between them. The second one is allowing reflections over the current situation of these workers by reinforcing the social and collective aspect of the problems faced by them - a way to fight the individual understandings that may exist. At last, the collective construction of alternatives and ways to overcome the problems intrinsic to informality is also an important step. About this last point, it is precisely when these proposals come into practice that it is unveiled to these subjects both the resistance of groups to whom informality and precariousness are functional, and the collective strength of this fighting process. Therefore, the interventions that strengthen the collective organization of these workers imply not only moments of reflection, understanding and planning, but also concrete actions for transforming one's reality.

We cannot ignore that further understandings shared by this group are also confronted by this process, for instance, the potentialities of the meaning of work other than a way to earn money or even the overestimation of their own condition as informal workers as the only possible way. That is, the collective confrontation with the current social dynamic, even if in a first moment, leads the consciousness of these subjects to advance towards distinct horizons where new possibilities are revealed.

Even during the context of the pandemic and the necessary measures for social isolation, it is possible to implement interventions in this sense. The social networks, specially the groups in applications such as WhatsApp or Facebook, can be important forums to anticipate discussions in this direction, and can be matured in person in subsequent moments.

Interventions of this size require the involvement of workers in this situation, but the participation of allies is also important. Here, both the teams from institutions of social policies (like Social, Health and Work Assistance) and other more organized sectors of the workers' class (for instance, unions, central unions, associations and political parties) can drive such actions). This is an important exercise both of the state's role and the class solidarity of these other sectors, considering that the progress of those more vulnerable people means a widespread gain for the workers' class.

In the context of the greatest economic, social and political crisis we have ever lived, only by the collective strengthening of those exploited, dominated and oppressed, through both their own acknowledgment as a class and their collective action, we can draw more humanized horizons before this current dehumanizing project.

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Workers' new learning demands due to the COVID-19 pandemic

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The pandemic impacts on work

The COVID-19 pandemic posed on workers the need for quickly getting adapted to the remote work. Before the pandemic, some of the learning needs of workers and managers related to the requirements defined by the organization to justify the adoption of remote work activities. In the public sector, for example, the establishment of barriers and control mechanisms that reached only remote workers gave rise to important distress in organization that did not clearly understand the potential of this modality. As a result of the resistance against the implementation or expansion of remote work, most organizations experienced for the first time the remote work of compulsory nature, with no material or psychological groundwork to deal with this sudden transition.

The possibility of voluntary remote work was typically associated to healthy motivations, such as better quality of life and well-being, work-family balance, and reduced expenses (Barros & Silva, 2010; Gaspar, Bellini et al., 2014; Legentil, 2020; Pereira Junior & Caetano, 2009). However, studies point out that the intensity with which workers perform remote work (number of days a week) affects their outcomes. For example, remote work might move away from an enhancement of work-family balance and become a promoter of work-family conflict (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). This aspect invites us to consider the characteristics of the work that could lead workers to experience perceptions that are different from those working on-site in the same organization, even if the contents of their tasks have not changed (Abbad et al., 2019).

To think over the learning demands related to remote work, one must rule out the belief that this modality is limited to the transition of the workspace. Such a restrictive thinking tends to make the adaptation stage even more challenging, mainly in settings in which the gaps of knowledge and the skills required by the migration from on-site work to telework had not yet been filled before the pandemic.

Some of the learning demands had already been reported by full-time (every day of the week) or half-time (once, twice, or three times a week) teleworkers. Among these demands, there is the need for developing affective skills to handle technology-mediated communication; seek social help and support from coworkers and superiors; control work and rest periods; and, find a balance between work tasks and housework. In this sense, the pandemic is found to have maximized the effects of adopting remote work, as it demands extreme efforts to mitigate the difficulties resulting from the adoption of multiple information and communication tools required to preserve integration among workers, and keeping the organization activities accommodating them with the housework.

The most sensitive changes in these times can be attributed to the characteristics of the work context. In a pre-pandemic scenario, workers' reports pointed out to higher capacity of concentration, largely associated to reduced interruptions by coworkers in

COVID-19
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the organizational environment. Moreover, workers could typically experience conditions more favorable to performing their tasks, such as their children's school shift; extra-class activities; support by domestic workers; and/or spouse going to work (Legentil, 2020)

As part of a more enabling setting, an isolate room at home, access to broad band Internet, and having proper computer equipment used to be the prevailing conditions among a set of remote workers surveyed in Brazil in 2019. However, what is perceived in this time of fighting the COVID-19, mainly among those individuals systematically working remotely for the first time, is the existence of important difficulties related to lack of proper furniture and computer equipment. Sometimes, there is even the need to relay mobile devices (smartphones, tablets and laptop) with family members who need to attend concurrent virtual classes.

Moreover, it should keep in mind that pandemic caused fear, worrying, feelings of loneliness, uncertainty, anxiety, suffering, loss, grievance, and additional stress dues to the global, national, and local health crisis. These affective states were added with the challenges posed by the compulsory telework (half-time with rotation schedules, or full-time with no face-to-face meeting) among remote managers and workers. This generated learning demands to properly cope with the situation.

In this context of crisis and change to the work design, the human resources professionals should seek strategies to prevent telework from becoming an additional factor of stress, sickening, burnout, or anxiety. To mitigate the occurrence of undesirable results, we should foster the work redesign so that home office keeps its positive characteristics such as autonomy, variety and identity of tasks, social support, constructive feedback from the others, and comfortable work environment, providing satisfactory ergonomic conditions to its accomplishment (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Parker, Morgeson & Johns, 2017).

Another factor that deserves attention is the adjustment of individual performance goals, mainly for those who are accumulating caregiver tasks, housework, and home office. It is worth mentioning that these proposals consider a work context more sensitive to family demands and, in some circumstances, with limited technology resources and skills, which tends to compromise the workers' working capacity partially and temporarily.

Even before the pandemic, managers' emotional and affective support to their subordinates, in an effort to balance family and work demands, is considered a key element to prevent work-family conflicts. Several times the demands in the family context are incompatible with labor tasks performance. That should be added with the lack of emotional support towards reaching a family-work balance, and can reduce workers' commitment, increase their dissatisfaction and intention of leaving the organization (Hammer et al, 2007).

Thus, in the context of compulsory telework, human resources managers should develop behaviors of affective support to their subordinates. Overcoming the home office-related challenges in this context of pandemic comprises adopting organizational measures to foster the learning of skills which are crucial for telework, as well as the

activities redesign. Following are presented the work design challenges and the learning demands of workers and team managers.

Aspects to be considered in work (re)design

In order to guide potential initiatives on home office work redesign, we will approach some activities that, according to studies developed prior to the pandemic, can significantly affect the individuals' and organizations' outcomes (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Parker, Morgeson, & Johns, 2017; Windeler, Chudoba, & Sundrup, 2017), and people's motivation towards learning the new required skills for coping with the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The unexpected migration from on-site work to home office for those organizations or organizational units that did not work remotely prior to the pandemic hindered the change in the nature of tasks performed by employees, and the gradual work transition to the new modality. However, it was observed an enhancement in the autonomy of the planning and selection of working methods and tasks identity.

Autonomy is pointed out as a variable associated with positive results of remote work (productivity and well-being), mainly in organizations that adopted flexible working hours for their remote teams. However, the adoption of telework with strict working hours to complete tasks, or even demanding "full remote time" can damage the potential benefits of implementing remote work, as extensively depicted in studies carried out before the pandemic.

Another possible change that took place during the transition from on-site work to remote work consists in the **narrower range of tasks** assigned to the teleworker by virtue of the managers' difficulty in sharing and making accessible to workers the materials, documents and information required to complete the tasks. Many organizations have no automated systems to access, share, move and follow-up the work delivery.

Full-time home office is likely to have sustained the **identity of tasks** if this attribute was already present at work before the pandemic. Identity refers to the possibility for workers to fully perform a task. It means to say that workers do not depend on third parties to start and complete the tasks assigned to them. In the telework context (before, during and after the pandemic) this characteristic fosters the worker's sense of responsibility. Tasks with this characteristic typically increase autonomy in work organization, preventing distresses resulting from dependence on others to start or complete a work. (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1980). However, if independent and autonomous work is sustained for a long period of time (months or years) as the only telework design, there is a risk of expanding the social and professional isolation of teleworkers. That is why workers and human resources managers should be attentive to the maintenance of social links among the members of remote teams.

Moreover, the **interdependency of tasks** should be carefully and properly managed, as many activities are characterized by consistent and continuous flows of communication among individuals in and out of the team. This attribute of work in the remote work context is very sensitive, even in the so-called normal conditions, as people do not

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necessarily work on the same work intervals, and maybe some of them do not event perceive the actual impact of given tasks on other organizational levels.

Social support is another key factor for well-being, and alleviation of feelings of social and professional isolation. Enabling sustainable links of friendship and fellowship among coworkers during the period of social distancing is an important measure. The constructive **feedback** from coworkers and supervisors about the worker's performance is another factor that promotes positive work outcomes.
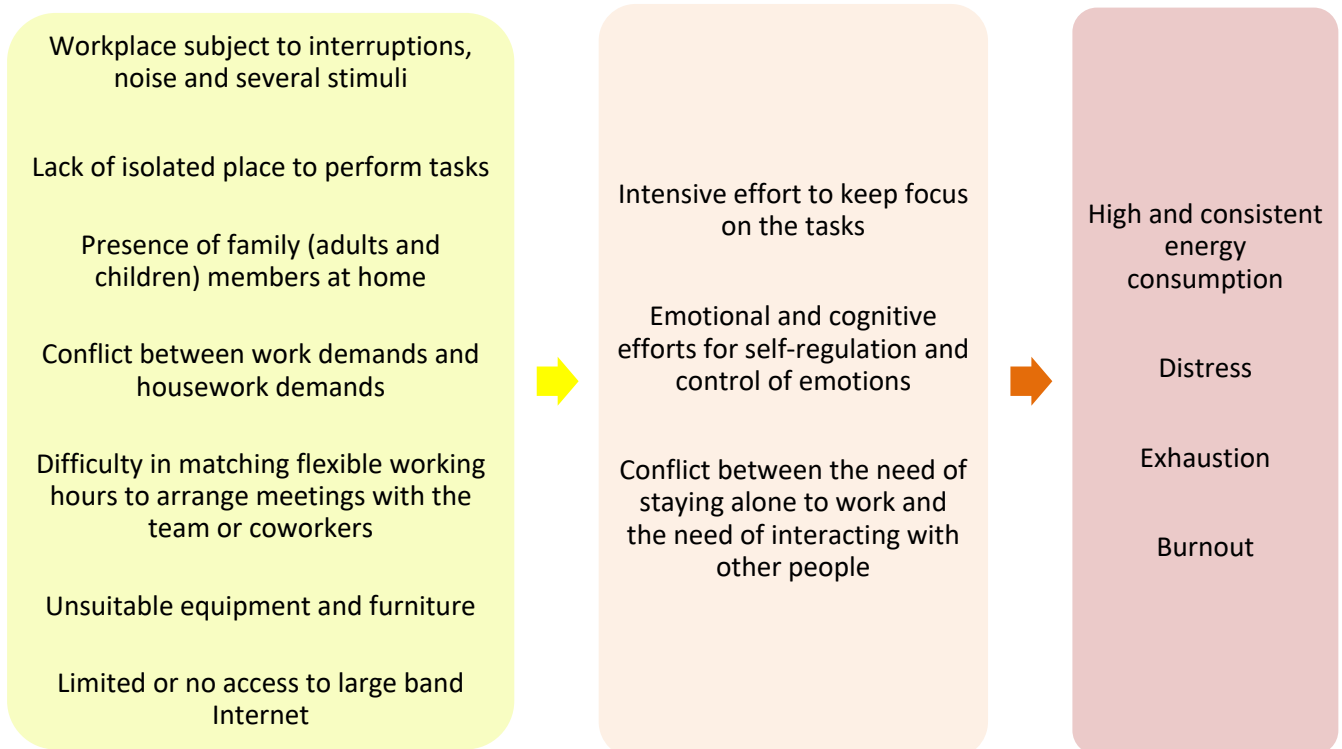
In addition to the characteristics of the tasks and the social interactions, the home office (re)design should also consider the **work context** in terms of environmental comfort, ergonomic and technological suitability. These are quite sensitive aspects that deserve attention from senior management to provide workers, as far as possible, with conditions to keep on performing their activities remotely. This way, the leadership could provide to workers the equipment and stranded furniture at the organization's facilities.

The offer of computer support, for example, is a key measure to make workers feel safer and more confident in the context of hard remote access to the systems maintained by the organization, notably those systems recently assigned, with no previous training. The different levels of familiarity with technology resources found in the organization's staff should be considered (Golden & Raghuram, 2010).

As can be observed, as a general rule the telework also more flexible working times and higher autonomy. On the other hand, it demands additional efforts from workers to focus on the tasks, because of the housework that, at many times, in conflict with the volume of professional tasks to be performed. In telework, tasks that demand a synchronous collaboration and interaction with another person can increase the risk of exhaustion, due to the additional efforts required to ensure synergy between individuals working at different times. Figure 1 shows how some costs associated to social interaction that can be maximized by telework when tasks demand high independence, frequent contacts with other team members or individuals external to the team, high focus and conflicting demands of work and housework.

Figure 1

Additional efforts of teleworkers in home office and possible effects

Additional efforts		
Workplace subject to interruptions, noise and several stimuli	Intensive effort to keep focus on the tasks	High and consistent energy consumption
Lack of isolated place to perform tasks		
Presence of family (adults and children) members at home	Emotional and cognitive efforts for self-regulation and control of emotions	Distress
Conflict between work demands and housework demands		Exhaustion
Difficulty in matching flexible working hours to arrange meetings with the team or coworkers	Conflict between the need of staying alone to work and the need of interacting with other people	Burnout
Unsuitable equipment and furniture		
Limited or no access to large band Internet		

Before the pandemic, the teleworkers succeeded in overcoming these difficulties through strategies to manage interruptions, and improvements on the workplace, as well as insertion of moments of leisure, rest and recovery in their routine. The loss of cognitive and emotional resources happens when the cycles of gaining and recovering energy are interrupted, or become insufficient, thus leading to distress and exhaustion. To avoid the excessive consumption of cognitive, affective and emotional resources in the everyday life, the worker should alternate periods of rest and leisure with periods of work.

For telework in pandemic times, the emotional and affective factors linked to social isolation, and to efforts to match professional and personal demands, increase the loss of energy and may increase diseasing changes. Due to that, teleworkers must develop a wide range of social, affective, and instrumental skills, capable of protecting them against the risks of diseasing, while keeping them productive.

The demands for learning in a context of compulsory telework can be organized in terms of skills acquisition, improvement of social skills and social support, care with the context of home office, in addition to the use of additional resources to support the consistent redesign of work. Short training programs can support the development of telework-related coping skills in this time of fight against the pandemic.

Workers' and managers' learning demands

By incorporating the compulsory remote work as a protective measure to workers, and a measure to keep everyday activities in times of social isolation, the measures for coping with the COVID-19 resulted in changes to the work design, and brought about learning demands crucial to perform telework. Table 1 summarizes some of these needs.

Table 1

Workers' learning demands

Time management
• Work panning focusing on goals achievement.
• Establishment of priorities, methods, and sequence tasks accomplishment.
• Select the most suitable time to perform the housework.
• Estimate time to perform tasks, mainly the most complex ones that demand more concentration.
• Identification of situations in which tasks accomplishment depends on the synchronous interaction
• Inclusion of synchronous work meetings in the tasks planning.
• Adoption of strategies and tools for asynchronous tasks performance to minimize the lack of face-to-
Care with environmental comfort and well-being
• Care with comfort and ergonomic suitability of the work environment (home office), identifying and
• Identification and removal of environmental risks of stress, such as interruptions, noise, distractions
• Identification of signs of fatigue, and seek breaks to recover energy.
• Planning of resting and leisure periods during working hours, to try to recover energy.
Use of communication tools
• Use of different media to communication with supervisors, coworkers and other people (internal or
• Seek for synergy of efforts to perform tasks that demand interdependent work.
Seek for social support
• Active seeking for social support from coworkers and supervisor to minimize the negative effects
• Adoption of strategies to deal with social isolation through information actions to interact with
• Show care and concern about the health and well-being of the remote team members.
Conciliation work-family-work
• Establishing boundaries between working hours and housework hours.
• Seeking for balance between family caregiving, work, and resting periods.
• Manage and overcome the work-family-work conflict.

Managers lacking previous experience with telework management report demands for learning technical, social and affective managerial skills. Some public and private organizations reported shortage of telework management tools or systems that led managers to seek for different solutions to maintain communication with and manage their teams' remote tasks.

Some of the technical skills reported were the need for managing the work flow, productivity, goals, and remote team coordination. Compulsory remote work demanded managers to learn instrumental skills to use a wide range of communication tools and tools to manage tasks delivery and goals achievement.

The social and affective skills of managers in times of compulsory telework are key factors of support to overcome challenges posed by home office and the work-family conflicts (Hammer et al, 2007, Hammer et al, 2009). Table 2 shows these learning demands of managers.

Table 2

Demands of learning and managerial development

Technical and Instrumental Skills
• Productivity measurement, establishing and monitoring the goals achievement by remote teams.
• Management of the work flow and deadlines.
• Coordination of interdependent activities that demand collaborative work and coordination of efforts to
• Hold productive meeting mediated by synchronous work technology
• Management of remote work to share information, assign tasks, plan activities, monitor and assess
Social and affective skills
• Skills to handle people in situation of crisis in home office, understanding emotions, feelings, and
• Seek and offer constructive feedback in telework situations.
• Adoption of practices of encouragement, motivation, seek for engagement of the remote team.
• Identification of verbal and non-verbal signs of anxiety and of suffering from coworkers in their
• Negotiation of goals, considering the home office conditions and family environment.
• Adopt fair procedures to assign tasks among the remote team members.
• Be willing to rethink the work goals, making them more feasible in the home office context in times of
• Show empathy and understanding about the challenges faced by teleworkers to accommodate work and
• Foster non-exhaustive work shifts that include resting periods.

Recommendations

Compulsory home office in social isolation times brought a wide range of challenges and sudden changes in work design, mainly on social characteristics and place to perform tasks. Workers and human resources managers are advised to invest in the development of knowledge and skills that allow them to (re)design telework, specially to:

1) negotiate achievable goals and monitor them through indicators; 2) dialog about the ergonomic and technology conditions of home office, preventing additional stress and conflicts; 3) provide multi-functionality tools (synchronous and asynchronous collaborative work, video calls, repository of documents). The use of asynchronous work tools (wikis, database shared on the cloud, messaging tools, work management) and synchronous work tools (technology-mediate virtual meetings) are crucial to coordinate the interdependence of tasks with demands, goals, and work schedules and conditions in home office; 4) schedule virtual meetings to times suitable to workers engaged in the activities; 5) learn new ways to manage time, and to balance work-family; 6) develop new skills to provide affective and emotional support to coworkers. For example, one can encourage virtual meetings that promote affections, where people can talk about amenities, preferably through video conferences; 7) develop new skills of social support. Express concern about the health and well-being of coworkers and managers. The materialization of this feeling through the verbalizations of the team members may be comforting, mainly for those who are alone during the pandemic; and, 8) provide constructive feedback. Empathy and the ability of talking in private with the worker, on the right time and in a constructive way, are supportive conditions to this practice.

The learning and development of such social, affective, managerial and instrumental skills is taking place informally, by trial and error, seeking tutorials and observing other people. This learning, however, can be expanded by the offering of integrative programs of training and promotion of well-being and quality of life at work. These programs could be structured and delivered as mini courses, live speeches, virtual chats with teleworkers, improvement of systems of information, document processing, and delivery management, as well as the dissemination of guidance on the proper use of media to facilitate the remote work.

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Creating New Solutions for Work and for Workers in Response to the Pandemic

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The creativity of workers has been highly sought in different types of organizations because it is a driving force for innovation, especially in organizations that are located in highly competitive environments and need to identify a differentiation in order to hold a prominent place in the market in which they operate. Cantwell (2006) says that innovation creates capacities for organizations to sustain growth in a competitive environment.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 and the consequent crash in the world economy has created a unique situation, which has forced companies to respond to the crisis, trying to survive this period (Kuckertz et al., 2020). Social isolation, imposed as a measure to contain the pandemic, threatens the existence of many companies, forcing entrepreneurs to deal with the effects of the crisis and the adoption of measures to guarantee the future of their organizations and the maintenance of jobs.

Public institutions, in turn, are faced with the need to innovate in order to respond more effectively to the needs of society. Cavalcante and Cunha (2017, p. 15) highlight that this concern has been increasingly frequent "in response to the constant economic, political, social, and technological changes in a more globalized and networked world". They also add that the expectations of citizens, as well as the typical problems of the public sector, especially "tight budgets", lead to the need to create innovations.

Even with the recognition of its importance, expressing creativity at work is not a simple thing. Creativity, by itself, has been conceived by different authors (Bruno-Faria, 2007; Mitjans Martinez, 1997; Stacey, 1996) as a complex phenomenon, given the conjunction of multiple aspects that characterize it. More than ever, the definition of creativity as a phenomenon that generally implies producing something new, including discovering new ways of doing things or solving problems, seeing old problems in new ways, or becoming aware of new problems (Unsworth, 2001), proves to be current. This characteristic has been seen as an important resource for coping with the current risks and challenges and also as a way to overcome the difficulties imposed by the environment (Oliveira & Nakano, 2011).

Factors associated with the expression of creativity

Alencar (1999) identified a set of factors at the individual level that can act as barriers to the expression of one's creativity, such as inhibition / shyness; lack of time / opportunity; social repression; lack of motivation. Bruno-Faria and Veiga (2015) also list a set of factors in the work environment that can favor the expression of creativity, and other aspects that can be unfavorable to it. The factors favorable to creativity were: characteristics of the physical environment, climate among co-workers, freedom of action, challenging activities, support from the immediate manager, and organizational strategies and actions in support of new ideas. As to unfavorable factors, we have an excess of duties and a shortage of time; inadequate managerial performance; communication difficulties between areas and levels of the organization, and lack of flexibility in the organization's rules and norms.

On the one hand, individual factors, on the other, work environment factors, as well as the interrelationship between these factors. From a more macro point of view, strategically planning organizational actions in order to create a culture of innovation that, in turn, depends on an environment conducive to creativity, has been emphasized by Bruno-Faria and Fonseca (2015).

But, how does one plan in the current situation, when the intervening factors go beyond the regional or national context and affect everyone? What about the work environment in a pandemic context? Any strategic planning, however flexible, in which different scenarios were considered, did not foresee a pandemic that would send people from all over the world back to their homes, in order to protect themselves and those nearby. How can one be creative in this new reality? What factors can favor creativity or act as barriers? In principle, it seems that there are only barriers.

Remote work emerges as an alternative for organizations to continue their activities, many *lives* are made for leisure and with a huge supply of information about COVID-19 and how to deal with it, especially at work, in the country's current scenario. Various technological tools are offered for virtual meetings. There is so much information that a worker encounters and, at the same time, such a lack of information, in the sense of a repertoire of possibilities extracted from previous experiences, to turn to and face the current difficulties, since this reality is unusual for all workers. In addition, insecurities arise in terms of payment at work and workers' rights. Every day the unpredictable knocks at the door. How can the worker deal with this situation, since it is not just a matter of learning how to deal with remote work, but of reconciling household activities with work, with no possibility of prior planning for this?

Let's reflect on a more optimistic approach. Initially, we would like to highlight the concept of the individual that underlies the idea of creativity that we are considering. Starting from the principles of Gonzalez Rey's (1999) theory of subjectivity, and of creativity as configuration, defended by Martinez (1997), human individuals are active, intentional, singular beings capable of transforming a reality based on their creativity, while they also transform in the interactions they carry out throughout life. Reflection at this point becomes essential, in the sense of seeking alternatives to face these new challenges. A challenge, as stated earlier, that is considered as favoring creativity, even

though we are aware of countless barriers such as an excess of activities (domestic and organizational) and the manager who also was not prepared to engage in remote work. Added to the belief that it is possible to prevail, is the idea of strategies for creativity in the work environment, suggested by Moraes and Lima (2010, p.138), as "efforts undertaken by the individual to favor the creation of new and useful ideas in the resolution of work problems", in order to believe that workers are able to jointly seek strategies to deal with the new reality, even if devastating, and find fulfillment. What are the repercussions for well-being and mental health?

The role of creativity in promoting well-being and mental health in times of pandemic

Periods like this, which require quick and precise responses to unforeseen situations, can benefit from the use of creativity (Pearson & Sommer, 2010). This is because such a construct has increasingly shown itself to be an essential characteristic in this moment of transformation that we are going through. It allows the daily and constant confrontation of the new, the adaptation to the accelerated pace of changes, the search for solutions to challenges, also allowing people to transform themselves, adapting to new contexts (Neves-Pereira & Alencar, 2018). Accordingly, this text aims to analyze how creativity and proactivity can benefit the work and the workers affected by the pandemic, identifying the possible contributions of this characteristic in this context of crisis.

In the current context, individuals need to learn how to generate ideas, adapt, innovate, and solve problems as they are faced with uncertain circumstances (Ambrose, 2016), allowing problems to be transformed into challenges and opportunities (Runco, 2016). In the organizational and work context, this has been considered a vital element for companies to prosper in environments marked by constant changes, responding to challenges and unforeseen situations (Rocha & Wechsler; Zhou & Hoever, 2014).

Likewise, proactivity is defined as actions directed and focused on the future, and involves an attitude of going beyond the tasks assigned and having a long-term perspective (Shin & Eom, 2014), allowing individuals to identify opportunities, to act on them, show initiative, and persevere until a significant change occurs (Gong, Cheung, Wang, & Huang, 2012). In conjunction with creativity, proactivity can favor the increase of the creative performance of employees and the team, through the identification and manipulation of opportunities in the environment, as well as the development of new work methods to improve their performance.

Global crises such as the one we are experiencing due to the new coronavirus can be interpreted as opportunities to face new challenges and growth, both for organizations and their employees. Thus it is important, more than ever, that managers incorporate creativity as an important element in the process of planning and response to the crisis. This is because the increase in levels of creativity in organizations not only generates creative and innovative changes for the company, but also changes in the individuals and their behavior, especially in relation to increasing their well-being (Rasulzada & Dackert, 2009).

In addition, creativity at work can transform the experience of workers regarding the importance of their work, increasing the belief that they can make a difference in their organizational context, by overcoming the challenges present in this environment and through the possibility of proposing changes (Tavares, 2016). An organizational climate favorable to creativity that encourages, supports, and implements new ideas can form a decisive element in this moment of crisis, increasing the probability that employees will feel more committed to the organization, presenting more positive mental states, such as happiness, enthusiasm, and optimism (Rasulzada & Dackert, 2009), important in the face of the crisis experienced.

The literature indicates that both creativity and proactivity are the result of a complex relationship between individual, social, and contextual factors; thus, for the worker to present creative and proactive ideas, in the work environment, various aspects must be considered (Egan, 2005); however, it is worth mentioning that context has a central role (Aggarwal & Bhatia, 2011). In this direction, Shalley et al. (2004) argue that there are four factors that promote creativity, with one factor being individual (skills, motivation, creative self-efficacy, personality) and three contextual (a. organizational factors, such as organizational culture and organizational climate; b. social factors, such as relationship with leaders and peers; c. work-related factors, such as autonomy and work characteristics).

Considering that the manager has an important role in creating a work environment that promotes creativity, there are actions that can be taken by him/her, such as: creating an environment that enables learning, promotes dialogue, and encourages collaboration (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Tierney et al., 1999). Efforts to help the worker must include organizational and managerial commitment, but also the individual efforts of the workers, through a support structure for well-being in the organization (Quevillon, Gray, Erickson, Gonzalez, & Jacobs, 2016).

It should be emphasized that autonomy is a pillar of creativity (Volmer et al., 2012; Wang & Cheng, 2009), thus, allowing workers to think about the best way to do their work can facilitate the emergence of creativity and proactivity. In addition to these aspects, feedback and rewards are relevant, and managers must monitor and guide their subordinates when objectives and goals are being contemplated. It is worth highlighting that the reality experienced with the pandemic is unlike anything workers were accustomed to, so assisting them and recognizing their progress, guiding their mistakes, are fundamental for the results to be those expected by the organization. Moreover, workers will be more confident about the way they are doing their jobs and more likely to experience well-being at work.

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The impacts of COVID-19 on Workers' Careers

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The COVID-19 global pandemic brings challenges, reflections and opportunities to the future of work and to various groups of people active on the labor market, such as entrepreneurs, self-employed individuals, employees, or public servants. This text aims to discuss the implications of the pandemic on workers' careers and emerging theoretical concepts for researchers and career counselors, as well as to ask attention for the effect of social differences and consequent injustices on career development in a post-COVID context.

The impact of the pandemic on the Brazilian economy

Before discussing how the pandemic will affect workers' careers, it is necessary to look at how it is already affecting the economy, work bonds and job security in the short term and how it will affect these in the medium and long term. There is no doubt that a global recession can be expected in the near future, in both developed and underdeveloped countries, with different consequences for their population, as well as diverse strategies for overcoming it and stimulating growth (Rudolph et al., in press).

The Brazilian economic crisis that started in mid-2014 was not resolved; the economic growth was meager, around 3% across the last three years without recession (2017-2019). Without consistent growth indicators, aligned to few technological advances, a declining industrial system, continued loss in the quality of the educational system and a collapsing social apparatus, the scenario triggered by the recent coronavirus pandemic in Brazil is not really optimistic for the near future.

Recent socioeconomic indicators point the cancellation of investments, companies closing doors, a falling GDP, a devaluation of the national currency and the growth of unemployment. According to IBGE data, the number of people who applied for unemployment insurance increased 39% compared to March and the expectation is that this number will be even higher when calculated in the second quarter of 2020. In addition, "the Ministry also disclosed that 6.2 million people were subject to the provisional measure that allows the reduction of wages and the suspension of the employment contract - a way to avoid the extinction of more jobs[1]", which is accompanied by a loss of income and a drop in the family consumption, feeding back the recession process.

In the best scenario - if the vaccine and/or a drug are discovered soon and the virus is controlled - it is possible that this unemployment will be temporary and that the entrepreneurs will be able to retake their business as well as the workers return to their former jobs. However, if the pandemic crisis persists, it will be possible to observe not only small companies, but also multinationals closing permanently, causing a long period of unemployment, socioeconomic crisis and uncertainties in Brazil and in the world.

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[1] https://exame.com/economia/6-numeros-mostram-o-dramatico-impacto-do-coronavirus-na-economia/

How will careers be affected?

In recent years, a new career conception has been established and the contemporary career definition is no longer associated with a logic of progressive growth in a single organization, but to a sequence of career cycles, eventually in multiple organizations, so that each cycle represents sets of a person's work experiences throughout his/her life (Hall, 2004). It is known that unemployment is a multicausal phenomenon - surrounded by global, historical, economic, and social determinants - and people who face repeated and/or long periods of unemployment tend to experience negative effects on the development and progression of their careers (Schmillen & Umkehrer, 2017).

Such negative effects are due to the fact that unemployment leads to a decrease in important personal and career resources, such as, for example: psychological capital (self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism), technical skills (professional knowledge and skills) and social skills (decreased network development and professional social support), essential for objective and subjective career success (Rudolph et al., in press; Spurk et al., 2019).

Even for those who will not be unemployed, the pandemic has represented a shock in their careers and in their professional roles, accompanied in most cases by situations of tension, change, insecurity in their occupational status, in addition to negative effects on well-being and performance labor (Lee, Huang & Ashford, 2018). Therefore, in the search for an effective adaptation to a context of uncertainty, processes of change and career transition are triggered (Akkermans et al., 2018; Rudolph et al., in press).

Additionally, it is highlighted that the pandemic crisis impacts careers in a very different way, as there are variations associated with contractual job modalities (formal x informal work), gender, ethnicity, and productive sector. For example, professionals linked to the sectors of tourism (airlines and hotels), leisure (cinema, theater, restaurants) and beauty are being negatively affected at the moment, while sectors such as distance learning, online entertainment, remote work tools, nutrition, health and telemedicine experience an increase in their demands[2].

In contrast, the current job insecurity can also lead and has already led some professionals to engage more actively in their careers. Many have assessed the relevance of their career choices, in a world with less social interactions and greater information technologies, seeking to plan and explore new alternatives. In addition to assessing changes in occupations and sectors, several workers have sought to strengthen their networks of professional and personal contacts and have invested in continuing education and training to increase their social-emotional skills and employability (Spurk et al., 2019; Rudolph et al., in press).

Social justice, Protean career and sustainable career

In a scenario of greater uncertainty and less support from organizations, institutions and the government, understanding aspects of career and professional development becomes a challenge for society, as well as for career counselors. In this context, we discuss three concepts that facilitate a discussion and dialogue on career development and intervention, i.e. professional guidance for social justice (Hooley & Sultana, 2016), the concept of protean careers (Hall, 2004) and the notion of sustainable careers (De Vos, Van der Heijden, & Akkermans, 2020).

The neoliberalism and the Fourth Industrial Revolution[3] raised the level of individual pressures for continuing education, learning new skills and self-managed conceptions of careers. These challenges could be handled more easily In Brazil by those keeping higher social positions, but such challenges were difficult to deal with by a large group of the population struggling with the fulfillment of basic needs for survival. In this scenario, vocational guidance for social justice (Hooley & Sultana, 2016), in addition to discussing access to decent work for all, underscores the need for public policies to generate employment, involving a special focus on less enriched socioeconomic classes. Thus, the increase in structural unemployment and the consequences of the pandemic require equitable policies in continuing education and incentives for quality training and hiring of professionals from minority groups (young people, the elderly, blacks, women, LGBTQ+ population).

A second structuring and guiding axis is the protean career conception, which values the individual nature of self-management and career direction (Hall, 2004). In a VUCA[4] world, protagonism and the internal locus of decision are fundamental characteristics for professional maintenance and growth. The protean career model assumes that when the individual guides his professional development based on personal values and interests, intrinsic motivation is cultivated, which can lead to a greater commitment and engagement of the professional with the desire to innovate, learn and grow in her/his career. It should be noted that the protean career concept indicates the need for self-management not only in professional development decisions but also in maintaining balance for dedication to family and social roles, which is now being reinforced by the COVID-19 crisis (Hirschi, Steiner, Burmeister, & Johnston, 2020).

In line with the notion of a sustainable society, sustainable careers occur in social and non-traditional spaces. Over time, they are marked by individual interests and meanings aiming at creating and maintaining adaptive capacity in harmony with aspects of mental health, well-being and respect for environmental resources (De Vos, Van der Heijden, & Akkermans, 2020). As an example, during this crisis, it was possible to observe a significant number of people doing volunteer work in health services and in the community, discovering and reinforcing interests, values, psychological resources in this time of confinement at home.

Experts, artists and celebrities have already stressed that the "new normal" will not be and should not be going back to how we lived before, but rather, to live in a more

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[3] https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ind%C3%BAstria_4.0

[4] VUCA is the acronym for vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity e ambiguity

sustainable way. The crisis has also fostered people's reflection on the importance of dedicating more to life spheres such as physical and mental health, social connections with family and friends and cultivating solidarity, offering help to those who need it most, being closer to our less socially favored community (Hirschi et al., 2020).

What can I do in this scenario?

Based on what has been said, some suggestions are presented to professionals on how to act in this scenario to mitigate the effects of this crisis on their careers:

1. Respect yourself and assess your emotional health: each of us reacts differently in a crisis situation, especially on threatening situations. We must respect our reaction, whether it is more passive or more active, of denial or of confrontation. Before starting a career transition, assess and reflect on your mental health. At the same time, it is worthwhile to realize that the delicacy of the scenario presents itself as a good moment for self-knowledge and for questioning and further developing your socio-emotional skills.

2. Review your choices: many people who were already motivated to make a career transition are feeling this need more manifest since the beginning of the pandemics. Assess whether your current professional choices still reflect your values, whether there is an interest in relocating on the job market or making any career transition, and seek help from professionals who offer career guidance if you find that you are unable to carry out this analysis by yourself.

3. Be open to learn: after analyzing your choices, consider this period as essential to acquire and/or develop new skills, knowledge, whether in your area of expertise or not. The mastery of programs, applications and other virtual technologies becomes crucial. Openness to lifelong learning represents an essential competence for people of different ages, at any stage of their careers.

4. Expand, and strengthen your network: strengthening and broadening your personal and professional network is essential as it will help you in the process of emotional regulation (when realizing that you are not alone) as well as when signaling to your network that you are interested to make a career transition - looking for a new job opportunity - which can also help you to achieve it.

5. Take care of your work-life balance: The roles of worker, family and citizen are occurring in an overlapping way and often in the same place since the beginning of the confinement: at home. It is very important to plan and properly manage the time dedicated to each of these roles in order to take care for your relationships and other life domains.

6. Try to avoid standing still: if you are unemployed, volunteering can be a good way to develop personal resources, socio-emotional skills, assess work centrality and meaning for you during the crisis, feel active and connect to other people, in addition to exercising generosity and gratitude.

It should be noted that the attempt to classify groups of people of the same age group in generations is mistaken, because a myth has been created - not scientifically proven - that people belonging to the same age group have typical behaviors, attitudes and values (Rudolph & Zacher, 2020). This tendency to generalize is common due to the human need to find simple explanations, however the focus on stereotypes may not contribute to the understanding that the uncertainties in the world of work and careers,

intensified by the pandemic crisis, affects people of all ages differently (Rudolph et al., in press; Rudolph & Zacher, 2020).

For this reason, experts indicate that researchers and consultants in the field adopt the lifespan development perspective to understand if the efficacy of the individuals' personal and contextual resources (for example, emotional regulation, social support) to manage their careers and to deal with other demands imposed by the pandemic (for example, the increase in work demands) change with age (Rudolph & Zacher, 2020).

As a research agenda, it is suggested to examine whether and how the crisis has affected career experiences and trajectories. As described above, the effects of this pandemic are already resulting in worsening unemployment rates, career changes and greater involvement with volunteer activities. Researchers can also investigate how the crisis has altered psychological resources, attitudes, behaviors, aspirations and career choices and how these changes have affected their career development (Rudolph et al., in press).

Finally, at this moment, public policies and government actions must focus on controlling the spread of the virus through public health, economic and social development measures, as well as helping people to remain employed and financially support the most affected companies and the development of policies against exclusion of groups and minorities. The suggestions presented in this essay do not cancel out the impacts and losses of the pandemic, but they can reduce the negative effects of unemployment, open doors to new social and labor relations and help Brazilians develop their careers and personal lives.

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