

REMOTE WORK FROM THE EYES OF
REMOTE WORKERS: UNDERSTANDING
THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK IN
THE 21ST CENTURY

A Master's Thesis

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Bilkent University 2022

To my dear family



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CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines remote work as a labour process in which remote workers make sense of social life and themselves through their work. In this regard, it aims to contribute to the conceptualisation of remote work in the context of the changing nature of work in the 21st century. More specifically, this study asks the following question: “How and under what conditions does remote work transform the meaning of work for remote workers?” This question will be explored through an examination of the working experiences of remote workers in Turkey. With this aim in mind, a critical examination of the meaning of work in modern and contemporary social theory, as well as the recent discussions on the digitalization of work will be provided. In this thesis, the experiences of remote workers are obtained as the main data of the study which is analysed by adopting a methodology inspired by ‘grounded theory’ approach. Under this methodological framework, 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with remote workers in Turkey. Among the interviewees, there are freelancers, full-time employees and business owners working in sectors that are suitable for remote work in terms of the digitalizability of the work. In the end, this study argues that remote work does not enable a full emancipation from negative work conditions as is widely argued; however, it is also not possible to say that remote workers are simply the passive sufferers of relations of exploitation beyond their control. Rather, it is argued that remote workers are engaged in an attempt to liberate themselves from the existing social and economic conditions with a desire to

construct what they consider to be ‘better’ living and working conditions for themselves under the unique circumstances of the 21st century.

Keywords: Work And Society, Remote Work, Digitalisation, Social Theory, Grounded Theory



ÖZET

UZAKTAN ÇALIŞANLARIN GÖZÜNDEN UZAKTAN ÇALIŞMA: 21. YÜZYILDA İŞİN DEĞİŞEN DOĞASINI ANLAMAK

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Bu çalışma bir emek süreci olarak uzaktan çalışmayı, uzaktan çalışanların çalışma dolayımı ile toplumsal yaşamı ve kendilerini anlamlandırma süreçleri çerçevesinde inceler. Bu doğrultuda uzaktan çalışma deneyiminin, 21. Yüzyılda çalışmanın değişen doğası bağlamında kavramsallaştırılmasına katkıda bulunmayı hedefler. Böylece tez şu araştırma sorusunu sorar: “Uzaktan çalışma, çalışmanın anlamını uzaktan çalışanlar için nasıl dönüştürmektedir?” Bu soru, Türkiye’de yaşayan uzaktan çalışanların çalışma deneyimlerinin araştırılması yoluyla incelenecektir. Bu doğrultuda modern ve çağdaş sosyal teoride işin anlamının ve işin dijitalleşmesi hakkındaki tartışmaların eleştirel incelemesi sunulacaktır. Bu tezde, uzaktan çalışanların deneyimleri temel veri kabul edilmiş ve ‘temellendirilmiş kuram’ ilkelerinden esinlenilerek analiz edilmiştir. Bu yöntemsel çerçeveye dayanarak, Türkiye’deki uzaktan çalışanlar ile 18 adet derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. Katılımcılar arasında, işin dijitalleşmesi bağlamında uzaktan çalışmaya elverişli olan çeşitli sektörlerde serbest çalışan, tam zamanlı sözleşmeli çalışan ve kendi işinin sahibi olan çalışanlar bulunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu çalışmada uzaktan çalışmanın, yaygın bir şekilde söylendiği üzere, negatif çalışma koşullarından tamamen özgürleşmeye olanak sağlamadığı gibi basitçe uzaktan çalışanların kendi kontrolleri dışındaki sömürü ilişkilerinin pasif mağdurları olduğunun da söylenemeyeceği iddia edilmektedir. Bundan ziyade, uzaktan çalışanların 21. Yüzyılın özgün koşullarında kendilerince ‘daha iyi’ yaşam ve çalışma

koşulları kurma arzusu ile kendilerini mevcut sosyal ve ekonomik koşullardan özgürleştirme çabası içinde oldukları iddia edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çalışma ve Toplum, Uzaktan Çalışma, Dijitalleşme, Sosyal Teori, Temellendirilmiş Kuram



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
Aims and Objectives of the Study	3
Some Methodological Remarks and Layout of the Study	4
 CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE AND NATURE OF WORK	9
1.1. Introduction.....	9
1.2. Defining Work: A Brief Overview.....	13
1.3. Technology and Work: The Future of Jobs.....	15
1.4. The Changing Nature of Work.....	18
1.4.1. Work as a Temporal and Spatial Experience.....	20
1.4.2. Recent Studies on Remote Work	22
1.5. Conclusion.....	27
 CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS: A GROUNDED THEORY INSPIRED QUALITATIVE STUDY	30
2.1. Introduction	30
2.2. Data Collection.....	32

2.3. Data Analysis	33
2.4. Participant Profiles	36
2.5. Conclusion.....	38

CHAPTER 3: STUDY FINDINGS: PRESENTING THE EMERGENT THERORY 40

3.1. Introduction	40
3.2. Defining Remote Work: How Come?	42
3.2.1. The Availability of New Technologies.....	43
Professional Relationship with Technology	44
Personal Relationship with Technology	50
Considerations and Concerns About Automation Technologies	51
3.2.2. Digitalizability of Work.....	53
3.2.3. Self-Discipline	56
3.2.4. Discussion.....	59
3.3. Desired Lives: Self-Evaluation as an Inner Search for Oneself.....	61
3.3.1. Autonomy Regarding Temporal and Spatial Arrangements.....	62
3.3.2. Actualizing one's Self-Potential	68
3.3.3. Capacity to Change: Deciding One's Own Future	73
3.3.4. Core Concerns: A Meaningful Life of One's Own.....	75
3.4. Undesired Lives: Self-Evaluation as a Challenge to the Outer Restrictions.	79
3.4.1. Limits and Pressure: Plaza Life	79
3.4.2. Standardization and Hierarchy.....	84
3.4.3. Precarity	88
3.4.4. Core Concerns: Disowned Obligations and the Outside.....	91
3.5. Actual Conditions.....	94
3.5.1. Work-Life Balance.....	95
3.5.2. Productivity – Exhaustion.....	100
3.5.3. The Socio-Economic Conditions: Employment Types.....	102
3.5.4. Core Concerns: Sense of Belonging to Society and Work	105
3.6. Conclusion: “Work never ends”	109
Being Stuck vs. Being Stretched.....	111

CONCLUSION	113
REFERENCES	119
APPENDICES	128
Appendix A: Interview Questions	128
Appendix B: List of Interviewees	132



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of Interviewees.....	132
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Theoretical Model: The Meaning of Work for Remote Workers.....	42
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INTRODUCTION

Work, in today's society, is a mystery. No other realm of social existence is so obscured in mist, so zealously concealed from view ("no admittance except on business") by the prevailing ideology.¹
John Bellamy Foster, 1997

Work, in the broadest sense, can be described as the activities that human beings perform in order to maintain their existence in their relation to nature and societies. On the one hand, it is quite easy to obtain insights about work because it is all we have been doing throughout history. On the other hand, it is a challenge to engage with the huge literature about work. This thesis aims to understand, in general, the role of work in worker's efforts to make sense of themselves and their society through their work via their daily working experiences by considering the evolving forms of work in the 21st century. More specifically, this study tries to understand what kind of transformation has been occurring in the organisation of work in the 21st century and how it changes the way workers relate themselves to their work. In this sense, remote work, as a growing trend in contemporary society, can provide crucial insights about the shifts in the temporal, spatial and organisational regulations of work as well as the changes in the meanings attributed to it in the contemporary world.

¹ John Bellamy Foster, 1997, Introduction in Henry Braverman, 1998, Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century.

Two main reasons can be identified why the examination of remote work provides a suitable ground for analysing the changing nature of work in the 21st century. Firstly, we can consider that “each distinctive mode of production or social formation will embody a distinctive bundle of time and space practices and concepts” (Harvey, 1989: 204). In that sense, remote work which basically alters the traditional ways of organising work in certain temporal and spatial limits, appears as crucial in understanding the distinctive time and space practices in the contemporary world. Secondly, the discussions on the changing nature of work in the contemporary world is commonly shaped around the conceptualisation of *immaterial labour*, which produces the informational, cultural and affective content of economic goods (Lazzarato, 1996; Hardt & Negri, 2000: 293), as an increasingly predominant type of labour. Here, since remote work is mostly suitable for sectors based on informational, cultural and intellectual production, its examination provides significant data about the nature and organisation of that kind of immaterial labour in the 21st century.

At this point, it is also necessary to identify the basic characteristics of the 21st century which constitutes the context in which the examination of remote work will be based on. The primary condition in the 21st century that enables remote work and affects the changing nature of work is, for sure, the developments in the digital technologies. Therefore, digitalization is one aspect of the historical context of remote work which enables the blurred limits of time and space and also leads to immaterial production to become more prominent. Secondly, there is a wide debate over the loss of significance of work in understanding social relations (Rifkin, 1995; Sennett, 1999; Beck, 2000). This debate constitutes the second aspect of the contextual framework of this thesis in which the narratives of remote workers about the meanings they attribute to the work might allow us to engage with this idea from a critical perspective.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

In line with the conceptual and contextual framework presented above, this thesis asks the following question: How does remote work transform the meaning of work for remote workers? With regards to this research question, the question of what the meaning of work is for remote workers will be examined in three steps. Firstly, how remote workers view the conditions and key requirements in contemporary world that allows the emergence of remote work will be identified. Secondly, I explore how remote workers conceptualise the unique conditions of remote work in terms of time-space and the nature of work. Finally, I aim to reach an abstract conceptualisation of the meaning of remote work for remote workers on the basis of the first two explorations.

It can be argued that a comprehensive analysis of work in relation to material conditions of social relations requires an investigation on the political economy of remote work. However, the narrow scope of this thesis takes remote work as a social experience and tries to explore the inner worlds of meaning of remote workers that is constructed through their work, rather than focusing on the political economic conditions and consequences of remote work for relations of production in the 21st century. That is exactly why the meaning of work for remote workers will be analysed from a *sociological imagination* perspective which “enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals” (Mills, 1958: 5).

In line with those considerations, the main purpose of this thesis is to grasp the experiences of remote workers. More specifically, I aim to present the narratives of remote workers in Turkey – including freelancers, full-time employees, and business

owners from various sectors – on the possibilities, actual experiences, and the role of remote work in their lives in a way to facilitate understanding work today.

Some Methodological Remarks and Layout of the Study

The research design of this thesis is inspired by principles of grounded theory. Mainly the reason why grounded theory is selected as the methodological approach of this study is that it refers to the discovery of theory emergent from and grounded in the data which allows the exploration of a complex phenomenon in applied contexts that may have not been captured fully by theory (Mills & Birks, 2015), and a close integration with data in building a grounded and tightly woven theory that closely approximates the reality it represents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 57). Accordingly, grounded theory principles enable us to examine remote work from the eyes of the remote workers in a way to explore the conceptualisation of remote work as a labour process and an emerging trend in the 21st century, aiming to reach a contextual and conceptual framework of the phenomena as addressed by remote workers. As is suggested in grounded theory principles, at the final level it is aimed to reach a theoretical abstraction that is uniquely evolved from the data through a conceptual rendering of the material (Glaser, 1978: 84).

However, it shall be noted that the methods applied in this thesis are not fully compatible with grounded theory mainly in two reasons. Firstly, the mentioned theory that is evolved from and grounded in the data under the narrow scope of this thesis is not, for sure, a comprehensive and wholistic theory of work which could fully conceptualise remote work in the 21st century. Rather, the theoretical model that will be presented in this thesis constitutes an attempt to reach a meaningful abstraction

with the conceptual rendering of the data by establishing relevant and analytical links to existing theoretical literature on the meaning and changing nature of work.

Secondly, the Straussian approach to grounded theory argues a more structured methodology and a closer integration with literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and this thesis applies their framework for coding procedures accordingly. Yet, I shall state that the main claim of this study is not providing a brand-new conceptualisation of work; rather, it is an attempt to mapping out the original data obtained under this thesis in a way to present a meaningful abstraction by systematically engaging with the conceptual and theoretical debates in the existing literature.

On the basis of these methodological and conceptual considerations, the first chapter of this thesis presents a literature review which is laid out as a conceptual and theoretical tool to better organize the data and to engage with the debates on the meaning and changing nature of work. In a way, it is aimed to bring the perspectives of remote workers to those discussions. In line with that, three main discussion topics are identified in order to deepen the conceptual framework of the examination of remote work. Since this study aims to explore the meanings attributed to work by remote workers, firstly the literature on social theory regarding the meaning of work is mentioned.

Secondly, as mentioned above, since one of the main aspects of the contextual framework of the emergence of remote work is the developments in digital technologies, the literature on the work-technology relationship is provided by focusing on the discussions on automatization and the changing status of being qualified with the transformation of required skills in labour processes. In brief, two main approaches are identified (Argın 1982), which are technological optimists who

argue that technological developments will bring employment and wealth (Mark, 2014; Srnicek, 2017;); and pessimists who make prognoses on the dissolution of paid labour with high unemployment rates (Benanav, 2019; Rifkin, 1995; Gorz, 1982). Ultimately, an approach that considers technology as resulting from human decisions and social processes is adopted in this study (Mundlak & Fudge, 2020).

Thirdly, the discussions on the changing nature and meaning of work with the effects of social, economic, and technological developments that have altered the organisation of the societies especially after the 1990s up to the present. Also, the literature on the new conceptualisations of labour in *post-industrial societies*, issues about the organisation of time, the boundaries between public and private spheres are mentioned as remote work refers to a significant shift in the traditional temporal and spatial arrangements in working life. Finally, the recent literature on remote work is overviewed. At the end, a definition of remote work is accepted as the starting point of this study which refers to situations where the work is fully or partly carried out on an alternative worksite other than the default place of work which has different implications for dependent workers and independent workers (ILO, 2020). In addition, since it is aimed to examine remote work as a newly emerging trend, the conceptualisation of remote work in this thesis excludes *industrial home-based piece workers* which refers to “goods production undertaken by homeworkers either as part of, or replacing, factory production, but also artisanal production, such as in the making of handicrafts that dates back to pre-industrial times” (Dedeoğlu, 2020).

In the second chapter of this thesis, the methodological procedures followed for data collection and data analysis are presented. Firstly, I discuss the reasons for the selection of grounded theory methodology, its various implications and alternative

approaches. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on the data collection and analysis processes.

Under the guidance of literature review and methodological procedures inspired by grounded theory approach, the third chapter of the thesis presents a theoretical model in order to map out the narratives of remote workers on the question of what remote work means for them. This model consists of three levels in parallel with the research question of this thesis that aims to understand the views of remote workers about the conditions that make remote work possible and the self-evaluation of remote workers in their making sense of their work and the society. Thus, the first level of the theoretical model refers to the informants' views about availability of digital technologies, digitalizability of work and self-discipline.

The second level of the model presents the self-evaluation of remote workers about the meanings they attributed to remote work. This level is constructed in three axes which are derived from the narratives of interviewees: desired lives, undesired lives, and actual conditions. Furthermore, in order to present and analyse those narratives in a meaningful and analytical manner, three main issues are identified: the temporal and spatial arrangements of work, realizing one's self-potential and the capacity to change and decide about one's own working conditions and the future.

Finally, the third level of the model refers to the core issues evolving from each axis which enables this study to reach an abstract level of analysis in the conceptualising remote work from the eyes of remote workers in the 21st century. At this level, the core issues are categorised as follows: the desire to have a meaningful life of one's own, disowning obligations associated with the "outside", and the concerns regarding the sense of belonging to society and work.

In this regard, as opposed to the arguments regarding the loss of significance of work in contemporary societies, it is seen that work still constitutes a significant element in workers' construction of their self-identity and their social relations. Moreover, it constitutes a fundamental element of the worker's struggle for having a meaningful life. It is not possible to argue that remote work entails a total emancipation from negative working conditions that are usually associated with traditional temporal and spatial limitations and pressure. Rather remote work has become a unique ground for struggle for a meaningful life, which is mainly characterised by the diffusion of work in nearly every aspect of daily life.

In the end, I would like to underline how limited the attempt put forward in this study is to represent an aspect of changing nature and meaning of work in the 21st century by looking at how remote workers in Turkey make sense of their work and themselves. At the same time, those limitations might provide perspective for future studies. Firstly, the questions regarding the boundaries between private and public life, the material conditions of experiencing time and space, the organisation of domestic work and the meaning of immaterial production are all fundamental subject-matters of feminist critique. Certainly, this thesis is missing in terms of such a critique that would provide a fundamental contribution to the analysis of remote work. Secondly, the main question of the meaning of work in constructing social relations and individual selves provides insights to a comprehensive ontological examination of work in the contemporary world.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE AND NATURE OF WORK

1.1.Introduction

The nature and organization of labour is undergoing a significant transformation in our age. The debate on the changing nature of work and society has further developed in the light of the globalisation process and accelerating technological developments in the 1980s and 1990s. When it comes to the 21st century, the transformation processes are complicated by multi-dimensional global problems. With the Covid-19 pandemic, such global problems have deepened.

In that historical context, the role and meaning of work for society and individuals have become the subject of an increasingly lively debate. More specifically, remote work has become an emerging trend in the organisation of labour. In this regard, it constitutes a fruitful area of study in questioning the meaning of work which is a fundamental constituent of society and individual selves. This thesis examines the meaning of remote work in terms of how remote workers relate to it in making sense

of themselves and their connection to society. This examination brings about further questions on work. New questions arise about the conceptions of time and space, and the possibilities new technological advances open up for organizing labour under the conditions of the 21st century. Ultimately, this opens the door to questions about the role of work in relationships that workers establish with life itself.

Accordingly, this thesis narrows down the issue of the changing nature of work in the 21st century to the remote work as experienced by remote workers in their struggle for self-realization and giving meaning to their life and work. Here, it should be noted that the current literature on remote-work is highly affected by the outbreak of Covid-19 and the rise of remote work as one of its consequences. However, since this thesis addresses remote work in the general context of the changing nature of work under changing technological and social conditions in the 21st century rather than the immediate obligations resulting from pandemic precautions, it excludes the debates on remote work in relation to Covid-19 pandemic.

While examining work from the eyes of remote workers three main questions have emerged: (1) What is the meaning of work as a social role and individual activity? (2) Considering the striking changes in the organisation and nature of work, what is the relationship between work processes and technological change? (3) What are the experiences of remote workers today that might enable us to track the transformations and the possibilities of new forms of work?

This literature review is laid out as a conceptual and theoretical tool and guide to better organize the data and analyse it in a way to engage and respond to the existing literature on the relationship between work and society in the broadest sense. In specific, the main issues are identified that should be understood at a deeper level in

order to construct a grounded theory not only in the data obtained for the purpose of the research, but also in the relevant literature which I hope this thesis will provide a meaningful contribution to. In other words, the literature was reviewed with two main purposes in this thesis. Firstly, it was applied to be able to pick the most relevant and key issues from the data, which were quite a lot in the beginning of the data analysis. Therefore, the literature was appealed to as a guide with the aim of mapping out the data in a simple, clear, and grounded way. Secondly, it was realized that some core issues that arose at each level of the theoretical model required a deeper and further theoretical examination. Basically, the issues addressed in the final stage of each level led the research to go back and dig in the literature further. Hence, my aim is to construct the study in a way to link the literature provided in this chapter up to conceptual discussion points addressed in final stage of each level of the theoretical model.

This study takes *work* as the core background concept of examination to reach a grounded perspective on remote work. Therefore, the examination shall start with a question on the meaning and conceptualisation of work itself. Since work is one of the fundamental humans' activities and has a history which is basically the history of humankind, the question regarding the meaning of work is far from being understood at once as a whole history of philosophical, political, and social thought. The main sociological approaches, themes, and methods on the question of work and society are presented by Tracey Warren and Tim Strangleman (2008) and a comprehensive literature review on the meaning of work starting from modern social theories to contemporary discussions on the "end of work" is done by Selcan Peksan (2018).

There is no doubt that understanding work as the activity of humankind and the essential component in establishing social relations requires considering it in a historical context. In line with this, understanding the meanings attributed to work and the transformation of its nature with historically varying forms of social relations will enable us to understand the changing nature of work in the 21st century, specifically in relation to remote work which is the main purpose of this thesis. However, under the narrow scope of this study, the historical overview of the meanings of work is narrowed down to a short overview of modern concepts in industrial societies and the latter discussions in *post-industrial* societies starting from 1970s to understand the transformation of the meanings attributed to work with the changes in the social structures.

In addition, since the subject matter of work is essential in social and behavioural sciences, the literature on conceptualization of work is accumulated under a variety of disciplines including different perspectives such as chronological examinations (Applebaum, 1992); studies in economics and political economy (Spencer, 2008); organizational theory and management (Pollard, 1965; Stearns, 2007); the anthropological studies of work (Kasmir & Gill, 2022); and its philosophical and sociological examinations (Grint, 1998; Budd, 2011; Vallas, 2012).² Of course, the issue of exploring the meaning of work is handled in many other fields such as history, literature, geography, industrial relations, theology, etc. (Warren & Strangleman, 2008:3).

² These cited works are some pioneer studies which may provide systematic coverage of the major theories of work in the scope of mentioned disciplines.

Given the main concerns of this study, this thesis aims to understand work from a rather sociological perspective. Still, as mentioned before, the main body of this study consists of the experience of remote work as expressed by remote workers. In this sense, a *sociological imagination* defined by C.W. Mills is adopted which basically refers to a perspective “which enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals”³ (1958: 5).

1.2. Defining Work: A Brief Overview

In the broadest sense, we may put forward industrialization as a form of “social organization” under the dominance of factory system of production (Hirsztowicz, 1985: 1). In line with this, *Fordism*, which is also referred as *mass production* or *assembly line* has become the dominant mode of production in which workers do repetitive work in compliance with the division of labour, continuity, and productivity. This brought about the separation of mental work from manual work in terms of the “need for workers engag[ing] directly in production since it divests them of time-consuming mental functions and assigns these functions elsewhere...The production units operate like a hand, watched, corrected, and controlled by a distant brain” (Braverman, 1998: 86).

³ “The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise. To recognize this task and this promise is the mark of the classic social analyst. It is characteristic of Herbert Spencer - turgid, polysyllabic, comprehensive; of E. A. Ross - graceful, muckraking, upright; of Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim; of the intricate and subtle Karl Mannheim. It is the quality of all that is intellectually excellent in Karl Marx; it is the clue to Thorstein Veblen's brilliant and ironic insight, to Joseph Schumpeter's many-sided constructions of reality; it is the basis of the psychological sweep of W. E. H. Lecky no less than of the profundity and clarity of Max Weber. And it is the signal of what is best in contemporary studies of people and society.” (1958:6)

This radical change in the organization of society which also transforms the meaning and forms of working is mainly discussed by classical social theorists Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber (Warren & Strangleman, 2008). The Marxian school of thought exceeds the scope of this thesis to cover all controversies and fractions in detail. Still, it may be stated that Marx's contribution to the conceptualisation of work is that he focuses work as the "natural essence" of human which is a paradigmatic turning point in theories of work (Marx, 2007). Here, independent from the specific social relations and modes of production, work is attributed a meaning which is a natural essence of human existence, which makes the labour process both completely natural and humane (Harvey, 2010).

When it comes to late modern critiques in 20th century up to 1970s, new schools of thought have been developed which brought criticisms to very foundations of modern societies, such as scientific thought, rationality, and technology. Hence, the fundamental discussions in social theory between 1950s to 1970s were shaped with the criticisms to the capitalist system of production which entered a political and economic crisis with a widespread discontent; the search of meaning of work and freedoms; and the critique to consumption-based societies. In this context, The Critical Theory, better known as the Frankfurt School, develop their theories in those main themes of critique to positivism in social sciences, of the instrumental rationality that is dominant in the modern societies, and the cultural aspects of blind domination in modernity which brings the critical concept of culture industry. (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002).

In sum, starting with the industrialization period, work has taken the form of a social obligation under technical and rational instruments of organization of work and

societies in general. In this sense, modern social theory which attempts to critically analyse modern societies focuses on the rapid change in the nature of work and problematize its outcomes in organizational, ethical, social, and economic level.

1.3. Technology and Work: The Future of Jobs

When it comes to 1970s -1990s the development of information technologies, robotics, and other developments which are commonly referred as “new technologies” have brought the new forms of labour process including new fields, techniques and skills required in labour markets. Moreover, the recession in capitalist mode of production starting in 1970s have come with deep and fundamental changes in “labour processes, consumer habits, geographical and geopolitical configurations, in state powers and practices, and the like, abound” (Harvey, 1989: 121). As discussed by many, the crucial effect of the new technologies in so-called Third Industrial Era (Rifkin, 2011) is the development of new kinds of machines that can perform functions similar to human contribution to service and information sectors, in addition to the machines that basically replace the manual power.

Regarding the recent analysis and prognoses about the role of digital technologies in the 21st century economies and societies two main approaches can be identified (Argin, 1992). The first is the theories that attribute to digital technologies, now called the Fourth Industrial Revolution, an unprecedented significance and expecting a sea-change in the definition of work and societies (Mason, 2015; Bastani, 2019). Second approach argues that the effects of technological developments follow a similar road throughout the history of industrialisation, and capitalism always finds a new path to overcome the historically unique technological crises by re-regulating the capital accumulation regimes (Huws, 2015; Wilson, 2004). As Atmaca (2022) points out, for

some the development of automation technologies will enhance the precarious conditions of flexible and underpaid works with low rates of employment (Spencer, 2018; Benanav, 2019).

On the other side, there is some extensive research conducted by international organisations and big companies. For instance, in the executive summary published by McKinsey & Company in 2017, it is estimated that “almost half the activities people are paid almost \$16 trillion in wages to do in the global economy have the potential to be automated by adapting currently demonstrated technology.”⁴

However, according to a more recent OECD research Policy Brief on The Future of Work published in January 2021, it is estimated that only 14% of jobs are at high risk of automation, but the report warns that the risk is higher for low-educated workers since the employment growth is much lower in low-educated occupations. (OECD, 2021). These statistics can be appealed in tracking how automation and technological change is treated by the global capital.

In sum, main arguments and approaches concerning the future of work under the effects of automation and digital technologies are mentioned by presenting two camps in which some attribute a unique significance to new technologies suggesting that they have a potential to replace most forms of human labour, while the other argues that transformative capacity of technology is not unique to new technologies and current work-based capitalist society is adapting to this transformation with more flexible, precarious and underpaid working conditions.

⁴ A Future That Works: Automation, Employment and Productivity. (2017). Retrived from: McKinsey & Company: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/Digital%20Disruption/Harnessing%20automation%20for%20a%20future%20that%20works/MGI-A-future-that-works-Executive-summary.ashx>

Apart from the concerns about the future of work in terms of the volume of employment and the aftermath of occupations, another discussion topic is the changes in the required skills and qualification, and even the status of being qualified within transforming work definitions and labour markets. Here, as well, the optimist and pessimist views can be identified.

On the one side, there is the approach that considers qualification as marketable skills “as a form of capital in which workers make a variety of investments” (Acemoğlu & Autor, 2010). This definition basically refers to the concept of *The Theory of Human Capital* which is commonly used in labour economics. In parallel with this understanding, one view mainly asserts that the technological developments increase the need for more qualified workers, which, in turn, will create *gradation* in workforces. The leading figures who develop the gradation theses in *post-industrial* societies are Alain Touraine (1969) and Daniel Bell (1974).

On the other side, the perspective of *degradation theses* highlights that the integration of new technologies to the production processes will substitute the qualified workforce and decrease the need for skilled workers. Harry Braverman, who develops a detailed analysis on degradation processes in 20th century (1998).

In this section it is aimed to briefly overview the two main discussion topics, automation, and the role of qualification in work and technology relationship. In the final section of this chapter, the recent debates on those prognoses about the future of work and technology after 1980s up to present will be provided in order to reach locate the question regarding remote work in a historically meaningful framework.

1.4. The Changing Nature of Work

The debates over the loss of significance of work in understanding social relations with the effects of technological, economic, and social changes have become much more intense after 1990s. In fact, these issues constitute the ground for the main matter of curiosity of this thesis which mainly aims to provide a sight on the changing nature of work in the 21st century from the eyes of workers and to what they experience and how they make sense of the present conditions through their work. In this regard, this chapter will firstly provide the new quests in social theory in light of the controversies on work. Secondly, a brief overview of the theories on experiencing time and space in relation to work which constitutes a major ground for discussing remote work. Finally, an overview of very recent studies on remote work, and some other relevant research on freelancing, will be presented which constitutes the main set of literature that this study hopes to make a meaningful contribution to.

In his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* David Harvey mentions an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking starting in 1970s (2005). He defines neoliberalism as a theory of political-economic practices which “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade...which have led deregulation, privatisation, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision” (2005: 3). He further notes that this process has an aspect of “creative destruction,” which links to the emergence of so-called *information societies* and the rising effects of technological mixes:

The process of neoliberalization has, however, entailed much ‘creative destruction’, not only of prior institutional frameworks and powers (even

challenging traditional forms of state sovereignty) but also of divisions of labour, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life and thought, reproductive activities, attachments to the land and habits of the heart. In so far as neoliberalism values market exchange as ‘an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action, and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs’, it emphasizes the significance of contractual relations in the marketplace. It holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market. This requires technologies of information creation and capacities to accumulate, store, transfer, analyse, and use massive databases to guide decisions in the global marketplace. Hence neoliberalism’s intense interest in and pursuit of information technologies (leading some to proclaim the emergence of a new kind of ‘information society’). These technologies have compressed the rising density of market transactions in both space and time. They have produced a particularly intensive burst of what I have elsewhere called ‘time-space compression’. The greater the geographical range (hence the emphasis on ‘globalization’) and the shorter the term of market contracts the better. This latter preference parallels Lyotard’s famous description of the postmodern condition as one where ‘the temporary contract’ supplants ‘permanent institutions in the professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, family, and international domains, as well as in political affairs. (Harvey, 2005: 3-4)

The quotation above points out several fundamental discussion topics that will enable this study to understand remote work in the context of changing technology, ways of life and thought, the contractual relations and the experience of time and space in the 21st century conditions. However, it shall be noted that not all theories agree on the conceptual and ideological analysis of this historical turn which mentioned as neoliberal turn by Harvey (2005). Accordingly, the analyses of the changing role and organisation of work, hence the views of class societies vary in social theories developed after 1990s.

One commonly used concept in these later theories is *precarity* which addresses the lack of security in social and working life after 1990s (Standing, 2011). Another important school of thought, which is referred as Autonomists, take information as the central productive element in post-industrial societies and intend to rethink Marxist concept of labour in the new historical era, suggesting that new *immaterial* forms of labour are becoming increasingly predominant in post-industrial societies (Sayers,

2007). In line with those conceptualisations, scholars have developed arguments about work becoming growingly an intellectual activity (Berardi, 2009) and information systems and communication are becoming the pillars of the production processes (Hardt & Negri, 2005). Lazzarato (1996) refers to this as *immaterial labour*, which has also been partly criticized in the subsequent literature.

Due to the very nature of work which depends on human beings' relations with nature, human experience of time and space is a fundamental area of investigation which links to the human experience of work. Therefore, in the next section, some considerations about work in relation to time and space will be provided, which also appears as central issues in remote workers' experiences expressed in the scope of this study.

1.4.1. Work as a Temporal and Spatial Experience

There is no doubt that the quests regarding time and space in relation to the human existence from a historical perspective is inevitable in understanding work as a human way of establishing a unique connection with nature and society. David Harvey, commences his analysis on the experience of time and space in the *Condition of Postmodernity* with an introduction of what these basic categories mean for postmodern theories:

Marshall Berman (1982) equates modernity (among other things) with a certain mode of experience of space and time. Daniel Bell (1978, 107-11) argues that the various movements that brought modernism to its apogee had to work out a new logic in the conception of space and motion. He suggests furthermore that the organization of space has 'become the primary aesthetic problem of mid-twentieth century culture as the problem of time (Bergson, Proust, and Joyce) was the primary aesthetic problem of decades of this century'. Frederic Jameson (1984b) attributes the postmodern shift to a crisis in our experience of space and time, a crisis in which spatial categories come to dominate those of time, while themselves undergoing such a mutation that we cannot keep pace. 'We do not yet possess the

perceptual equipment to match this new kind of hyperspace' he writes, 'in part because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space, I have called the space of high modernism'. (Harvey, 1989: 201)

Following that, he comes up with the clear argument that neither time, nor space can be assigned objective meanings independently of material processes, and only through the investigation of those processes we can properly ground our concepts of time and space (Harvey, 1989: 203). The mentioned investigation of material processes in the 21st century to understand remote work in relation to time and space would be a matter of another extensive research. Under the narrow scope of this thesis, the examination of remote work in relation to those categories is limited with the key questions used in the data collection process.

In this regard, four main issues are identified regarding work in the 21st century as a temporal experience. These are the problem of supervision, the prevalence of short-term employment forms, workers' perception of future, and the changes in the meaning attributed to time by workers which is related to the issue of work-life balance. There are a series of issues that comes to the fore while thinking about remote work such as the division between public and private spheres. Although there is a wide literature on this topic (Bora, 2004), it will not be extensively focused on here since this is a grounded theory inspired study. Instead, a very brief overview of the basic discussions on the temporal and spatial character of work will be presented. A more detailed elaboration will be provided in the third chapter in terms of the desire of autonomy over time and space expressed by informants participating in this study. Finally, it is worth noting that one major criticism in this context has been developed by feminist theory which basically reveals that personal is political. The contribution of feminist theory to the issue of the separation between private and public spheres, also the scope of the feminist literature is far beyond being summarized by this

renowned and striking slogan that marked the history of feminist thought. However, since the issue of remote work would be the subject-matter of a study on feminism per se, the gender aspect of analysis is excluded from this thesis.⁵

1.4.2. Recent Studies on Remote Work

The scope of remote work as a term used in both daily language and academic literature is far beyond being clear to indicate a certain type of employment or labour process. Therefore, a clarification is needed regarding the conceptualisation of remote work in this thesis. According to *Guidance for Labour Statistics Data Collection* report published by International Labour Organisation (ILO) in June 2020, four concepts are used interchangeably, although they are actually different terms. These concepts are remote work, teleworking, working at home and home-based work. A reference concept of *default place of work* is used to enable the conceptual distinction that refers to locations where the work would typically be expected to be carried out, thus the premises of the economic units. Accordingly, although there is no internationally accepted definition yet, “*remote work* can be described as situations where the work is fully or partly carried out on an alternative worksite other than the default place of work...[which] has different implications for dependent workers and independent workers” (ILO, 2020). Secondly, being similar to remote work, *telework* specifically refers to the “use of personal electronic devices such as a computer, tablet, or telephone (mobile or landline) to perform the work, [therefore] it is a subcategory of remote work” (ILO, 2020). Thirdly, *work at home* refers to work that

⁵ See, as a primary source, Louise Lamphere, “The Domestic Sphere of Women and the Public World of Men: The Strengths and Limitations of an Anthropological Dichotomy” (Perentice Hall, New Jersey: 1993). Also see, for a contemporary reference, Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy (Social Text: 1990). In addition, for a basic references on feminist contribution to understanding of time, see, Karen Davies, “Responsibility and Daily Life: Reflections over Timespace” (Routledge, New York & London: 2003), 133-148.

takes place fully or partly within the worker's own residence. The work at home category is independent of the default place of work, but these might overlap. Finally, “*home-based workers* are those who usually carry out their work at home, regardless of whether the own home could be considered as the default place of work”; thus, “home-based work is a subcategory of the category of work at home” (ILO, 2020).

Since the main purpose of this study is understanding the changing nature of work in terms of the availability of digital technologies, the transformation in the time-space worlds and workers sense of oneself, remote work is selected as the main concept to study among those four since it has the broadest scope.

Another consideration about this study's conceptualisation of remote work is that it is most commonly interchangeably used with *freelance work* which refers to self-employment (with/without employees), in which workers work for themselves, members of producers' co-operatives, and unpaid family workers. (OECD, 2022).

Since the types of employment contracts are also the unit of analysis of this study, the conceptual scope of remote work is applied which covers different implication for dependent and independent workers.

In addition, since the outbreak of Covid-19 amplified the phenomenon of remote work, it has been more common among a variety of occupations and sectors which were performed in default place of work previously. However, since this thesis addresses remote work in the general context of the changing nature of work under in the 21st century rather than the immediate obligations resulting from pandemic precautions, it excludes the performance of remote work only after Covid-19 pandemic.

Finally, the concept of *industrial home-based piece workers* is introduced in ILO's report on home-based workers in Turkey. It refers to "goods production undertaken by homeworkers either as part of, or replacing, factory production, but also artisanal production, such as in the making of handicrafts" to crucially indicate that "homework dates back to pre-industrial times and is not a new phenomenon" (Dedeoğlu, 2020: 9). Therefore, another concept "IT-enabled remote workers", which includes freelancers, teleworkers, or digital workers, is described as a separate category (Dedeoğlu, 2020: 5). Accordingly, this study recognise that industrial home-based piece is still common in developing world, particularly in Asia, across different supply chains. However, as discussed previously, it is aimed to examine remote work as a newly emerging trend, the conceptualisation of remote work in this thesis excludes industrial home-based piece workers.

In this framework, when the existing literature is reviewed on remote work, four main tendencies are identified. Firstly, an outstanding number of studies on remote work focus on the organisational aspect of the issue, mainly concerning the monitoring productivity with the help of new technologies (Jensen, Lyons, Chebelyon, Bras, & Gomes, 2020), the scope and structure of labour agreements which will possibly make it a win-win situation for employers and employees (Popovici & Popovici, 2020) even some studies published by state institutions and private companies on the issues of employee health, time management, company culture, gap between onsite and remote workers (Coffey & Wolf, 2018), (Sull, Sull, & Bersin, 2020).

Secondly, there are many studies that centres the outcome of remote work for workers, mainly in terms of job performance (Kiburz, 2016), worker's well-being and job satisfaction (Charalampous, Grant, Tramontano, & Michailidis, 2019), (Schall,

2019). There are also researches that focus on the aspect of life styles, identity construction and search for freedom (Beverly, 2019), (Ford, Milewicz & Serebrenik, 2019), (Klopotek, 2017). Thirdly, the non-academic articles, news and other visual sources constitute major part of the literature on remote work, most of them mentions the strategies and tips for better adapting remote work, increasing productivity and creativity, also the organisational possibilities from the eye of managers (Rose, 2019).⁶ Fourthly, as mentioned before, the majority of resources in the literature is related with either the transformation of working conditions by the proliferation of remote work as a Covid-19 pandemic precaution. In this sense, mostly studies topics are; the specific effects of remote work in certain sectors such as banking and finance (Eriksson & Petrosian, 2020), education (Pretti & Druston, 2020), public policy perspective on employment dynamics in remote work such as age, gender and income equality (Guillermo & Hossain, 2020), challenges and benefits of remote work in terms the future of occupations (Horton & al, 2020), also on employee well-being (Howe & Menges, 2019). There are also more wholistic studies on the future of work (Mundlak & Fudge, 2020).

Lastly, although not focusing on remote work specifically, several studies on working relations and the organisation of labour in Turkey in the 21st century has guided this thesis in terms of their elaboration of relevant data obtained from field research, their critical theoretical perspectives and analytic categories that are put forward to understand work and society relations in Turkey. The extensive research conducted by Erdoğan et al on the socio-psychological aspects of unemployment of white-collar

⁶ Of course, there are countless of short articles on this issue, but I only included one sample that clearly demonstrates how the issues of productivity, time management, and employee health are considered from the eye of a CEO, who argues to use “human-centered design to leverage technology for positive social change”.

workers in Turkey provides insights on the structural position of unemployment in capitals societies through experiences of precariousness (Bora, Bora, Erdoğan & Üstün, 2017). The field research about call-centre workers in Turkey presents a perspective of proletariat in the 21st century (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). The essays on the class, masculinity, and emotions of working class in Turkey provides a unique framework concerning work as an existential problem (Dinler, 2014). The filed research on the immaterial labour workers in Turkey provides an analysis on the outlines of immaterial labour and define how its mechanism works in Turkey (Uca, 2016). Lastly, a recent study on freelance workers “towards a post-fantasmic politics of class and work” put forwards a critical account of the neoliberal discourses on freelancing, and of the working and living experiences of freelancers in Turkey (İlyas, 2022). In sum, the general tendency in literature on remote work is focusing on the possibilities and limitations of remote work from a perspective management/organisational theory or public policy. Thus, this thesis aims to contribute to the literature in terms of studying remote work by adopting the perspective of sociological imagination in order to grasp the meaning of remote work for remote worker in terms of their search for a meaningful life and make sense of themselves through their work, in the broader context of the changing nature of work in the 21st century. In other words, the unique contribution of this study will be locating remote work and its experiences withing the wide literature on social theory on work and the discussions regarding the end of work in the 21st century. In addition, different than the alike studies focusing on freelancing⁷, this study provides a wider data that includes a variety of sectors and occupational areas. Finally, this

⁷ There is also a wide literature on specifically freelance workers in which most of them focus on a certain sector or profession, mostly on journalism and translation; and a variety of them adopts an identity-based perspective in which the implications of remote work from a cross-gender and cross-ethnicity perspective.

study aims to make a unique contribution to the literature on the changing nature of work in the 21st century in terms of its implementation of methodological principles of grounded theory.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the literature under three topics that is related with the examination of remote work in terms remote workers experiences. These are the questioning of the meaning of work in a historical context, the basic debates over the relationship between technology and society, and the changing nature of work in post-industrial societies that brings us that of in the 21st century in which remote work represents a specific form of it. The lay out of the literature review follows two courses: Firstly, it is aimed to reach the subject-matter of this study, which is remote work, through a conceptual abstraction departing from the meaning of work, which is the core concept of this thesis, and theoretically analysing its fundamental dimensions. Those dimensions, which are the availability of digital technologies and the changing nature of work, are evolved from the data analysis and structured based on the existing literature as per the grounded theory principles. Secondly, since the purpose of this study is understanding remote work in the 21st century, a historical course is followed while providing the main discussions.

Accordingly, the meaning of work as attributed in the scope of modern social theory and its critiques are presented, and this brings the question of work as a relationship between human beings and nature.

This examination, however, largely skips the works of classical social theorists such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Hannah Arendt and György Lukács, whose works are already discussed in numerous other works. In this study, work and labour will be

used interchangeably as human activities which are undertaken at the social level, as well as having a fundamental role in making sense of one's own self; and as the basis of social relations and constructions beyond being a necessity to sustain life. In addition, the term *employment* will be used to refer the actual working conditions regulated under specific employment agreements, and the terms *profession* and *occupation* will be applied to address the specific job definitions.

Then, the basic debates over the relationship between technology and work are provided under the topics of automation and the meaning of being qualified are discussed which sets the ground for the discussion on the changing nature of work in post-industrial societies. At the end, rather than that of a technological-determinist approach, that of which considers technology as resulting from human decisions and social processes is adopted in this study (Mundlak & Fudge, 2020). Therefore, the questions arising from the impact of technologies on work such as forms of supervision, the role of qualifications and the future of automation are analysed in terms of the work relations while analysing the data.

Finally, the theoretical and conceptual discussion on the changing nature of societies, that of work after 1990s up to present are provided in the scope of the discussion regarding the end of work in social theory. In addition, as a crucial dimension of remote work, the temporal and spatial aspects of work as an experience is discussed. As a result, a definition of remote work is reached as a starting point in which it refers to situations where the work is fully or partly carried out on an alternative worksite other than the default place of work which has different implications for dependent workers and independent workers (ILO, 2020).

Since a history of political, social, and philosophical thought is the main addressee of the quests on the meaning of work in a historical context, for sure, a vast literature is left out from this study. Basically, an examination of the appearances of work and its meanings starting in pre-modern period, a complete view on the literature on work as a problem of existence, a deeper analysis on the relationship between technology and society, and a grounded examination of the socio-economic dynamics of the 21st century is missing in the theoretical examination of this thesis. In addition, the contribution of feminist theory and the wide literature it opens path to re-think remote work in terms of reproduction, domestic work, and the analysis of experiencing time and space from the gender perspective. Those limitations point out future contributions to the literature.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS: A GROUNDED THEORY INSPIRED QUALITATIVE STUDY

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological issues in the current study and provides the methodological procedures followed for data collection and analysis. The chapter commences with a brief discussion on the selection of the grounded theory methodology, and implications of alternative approaches towards grounded theory are considered. An account of the steps I took for the data analysis is provided. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion on the data collection and analysis processes.

This thesis is a qualitative study that is inspired by grounded theory principles. By taking into consideration the fact that any definition of qualitative research depends on its historical context, its generic definition can be suggested as it

...is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the

world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self...This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin, 2008, p. 311).

As the purpose of the study is exploring remote work as an emerging trend in labour processes, I tried to make sense of this social phenomenon in terms of the meanings remote workers bring to it. More specifically, I selected grounded theory methodology due to three main reasons:

Firstly, grounded theory principles are designed to “build theory, rather than only testing existing theories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 57). The reason I adopt this methodology in this study is because there is a lack of comprehensive theories or paradigms that directly address remote work as an emerging trend in relation to current technological setting and the status of intellectual labour.

Secondly, grounded theory is initially defined as “the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analysed in social research” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 1).

As the emergent theory is grounded in the data, it is different than other qualitative methods in that it has the potential to a deep exploration of “complex phenomena in applied contexts that have not yet been captured fully by theory” (Zafeiriou, 2017: 37)⁸. Accordingly, the grounded theory principles enable to examine remote work from the eye of remote workers in a way to explore the meanings attribute to remote work by remote workers and the actual conditions of remote work as a temporal and spatial experience through which workers make sense of themselves and the social relations surrounding them.

⁸ (See also: Birks & Mills, 2015; Miller, 1995).

Finally, as will be discussed later in this section, the structured design of grounded theory must not be closed to interpretation. On the contrary, Strauss and Corbin highlight that creativity is a vital component of the grounded theory method which manifests itself in the ability of the researcher to aptly name the categories, make free associations needed for generating stimulating questions and of coming up with the comparisons that led to the discovery (1990: 27). Moreover, the constructivist approach is based on interpretation and highlights the acknowledgement of the involvement of “participants’ complex, multi-layered and actively constructed worlds as experienced and interpreted by them to the research process” (Zafeiriou, 2017: 34)⁹

2.2. Data Collection

As suggested by Glaser and Strauss, I initially used purposeful sampling to set the framework of the thesis, in line with the general aims of the study (1967). In this regard, I conducted two pilot interviews with participants who are working remotely due to their jobs (i.e., not because of the measures against the Covid-19 pandemic), which constituted the initial criteria for the sampling process.

As the research progressed through constant comparative analysis, I used emergent codes and categories to decide what data to collect next. In other words, the purposefully collected initial data directed further data collection, which enabled me to elaborate the data in a deeper way to find new connections. As Glaser suggests, theoretical sampling aims to reach saturation, elaboration and integration of any codes and categories into the emergent theory (1992: 1022). For example, as the interview process continued, it appeared that being a “solo or self-employed worker” might

⁹ (See also: Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Charmaz, 2014).

affect the labour processes of the participants. Therefore, more solo workers were pursued to be interviewed. Likewise, translators were specifically contacted to collect data on the translation sector, most of whom consist of remote workers or freelancers and are highly open to the effects of automation technologies.

All data were collected through audio recorded interviews. Semi-structured interview format was used. A snowball sample technique is used as informant selection method. I applied to my own contacts and the network of the participants in expanding the sample. Therefore, the range of the informants remained narrow to a certain extent. Accordingly, the range of residency cities of participants could have been wider. The same is true for age and socioeconomic class. Therefore, the informants I interviewed may not be perfectly representative of remote workers in Turkey.

2.3.Data Analysis

Open coding is the first stage of theoretical analysis within grounded theory.

Accordingly, it is the first step of this study for “interpreting and analysing data by identifying the properties and dimensions of it” (Strauss &Corbin, 1990: 61). In this stage, data is divided into segments and naming those segments creates codes. The naming of codes is done either by the researcher or the participants. Mostly, in the level of open coding, direct quotations are used which is referred to as *in vivo* code. (Mills & Birks, 2015). In the process of open coding, I firstly transcribed all recorded interviews. Then, I broke down the transcriptions into bits and pieces to enable codes to emerge in the way to fit the data.

According to Strauss and Corbin, the second stage of grounded theory is axial coding (1990). This stage refers to “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways” (1990: 96) to discover connections between emergent codes. A core

category is selected as the axis of the coding process and the researcher explores how the other categories are related to that.

As the data collection process progressed, I observed that the narrative of the participants could be categorized in three levels. At the first level, participants define the meaning of remote work to address the conditions that make remote work possible and identify the characteristics of the labour process in remote working. At the second level, which constitutes the main body of the data, certain codes emerged that presents the experiences of remote workers regarding their relationship with work, and the process of making sense of life through work. At the second level, the emergent codes are analysed in three axes. The first axe refers to the living and working practices participants are trying to avoid; the second axe refers to the living and working conditions they desire, and the third axe refers to the actual conditions of their working processes. Those axes are labelled as *desired lives*, *undesired lives*, and *actual conditions*. Finally, at the third level the abstract explanation of the phenomena is studied with the aim of reaching the core categories through the theoretical discussion of the obtained data, which leads the process the final phase of the data analysis, selective coding.

Selective coding, which is the final phase of the data analysis process, aims to reach “the description to a theoretical level through conceptual rendering of the material” (Glaser, 1978: 84). In this stage, researcher goes back to data and applies theoretical sampling, as discussed above, with the intention of generating theory. In this stage,

the frame of connections between categories is analysed; therefore, this is the phase when the theory emerges.¹⁰

Under the narrow scope of this thesis, I am fully aware of the limits and finiteness of the theoretical model emerged from the data analysis I conducted. Nevertheless, it is remarkable to observe the organic process of coming up with new questions and explanations grounded in the data at hand by following a systematic way of organizing it. It was both theoretically and academically motivating to experience the emergence and transformation of thoughts in parallel with the accumulation of data which also directs the research process to certain examinations in the existing literature.

During data analysis, I observed the possibilities of reaching a theoretical saturation. As I conducted more interviews and obtained more data, I observed that certain questions were answered in certain ways by nearly all participants which have a counterpart in the literature. Moreover, since some links are set between the emergent categories during data collection rather than waiting the end, I could compare, justify, and develop possibly meaningful connections that is grounded in the data. Also, since I basically directed my research questions to the research participants due to the nature of my research method, I could observe the transformation of my own questions as I needed to re-formulate them to push the participants to think with me. While I was reading through the transcribed data, I realized that I unwittingly clarified

¹⁰ For a recent study that uses a similar methodology in research about refugees in Turkey, see: Lara Schroeter, “Layers of Liminality: A Grounded Theory Study of Refugee Women in Ankara, Turkey”, (2019).

certain definitions and made some generalizations as the researcher. In the end, I hope I could present the meanings brought to work by remote workers participating in this study as they expressed, through which, I believe, arose from meaningful dialogues beyond simply answers to questions.

2.4. Participant Profiles

Below is a brief profile of 18 remote workers who kindly participated in this study. Pseudonyms are allocated to each to protect their identity. I shall be referring to the informants with these pseudonyms throughout this dissertation. See Appendix B for a detailed table of participant profiles.

Tansel is a 51-year-old experienced and qualified full-time software developer. He is graduated from engineering in a high-ranked university and have working experience in one of the largest software companies in Turkey. He works remotely since 2015

Kerim is a 30-year-old employee in an e-mail marketing company. He is also a freelance web designer who has his own web design company. He defines himself as a self-learner in the software industry.

Hakan is a 39-year-old civil engineer, who hasn't been engineering for a while. He is engaged in web design. He makes a clear division between engineering, as his "job", and the other activities that enable creativity and freedom.

Hazal is a 41-year-old worker in a local NGO on woman's rights. She is graduated from the department of Business Administration. She has worked in the culture and entertainment sector for 10 years.

Merve is a 29-year-old journalist. She is graduated from Journalism. She is also a bachelor student in a social science department. Currently, she is also doing freelance editing.

Zeynep is a 39-year-old accountant in a local NGO on woman's rights. She has a high-school degree. Currently, she is a single mother. She has been working remotely since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2019.

Cemre is a 30-year-old digital marketing specialist. She has a master's degree in Industrial Engineering. She has 7-year experience in corporate life. Currently, she owns her own digital marketing company through which she is consulting small businesses.

Pınar is a 24-year-old customer care specialist in a cosmetics company. She provided remarkable notes on the transformation of advertising sector with digital technologies and the current dynamics of "new-age" advertising sector.

Begüm is a 30-year-old fashion designer. She is graduated from Faculty of International Trade. She has an online shop. She talked about the current conditions of hand-made production in our age as well as the digital marketing strategies.

Bahar is a 32-year-old designer. She is graduated from Faculty of Trade. She has working experience in corporate/plaza companies for over 5 years. She has also established a start-up after quitting. She sells her products online.

Gaye is a 33-year-old book editor. She is graduated from a social science department. She had been working in a publishing house for many years, and she is a freelance editor since 2015.

Sanem is a 28-year-old freelance translator and private English teacher. She is graduated from a social science department.

Aysel is a 44-year-old translator and international relations officer in an NGO. She is also a single mom.

Nazan is a 45-year-old project coordinator in a voluntary organization conducting projects with international NGOs. She has lots of experiences in corporate companies in trade sector.

Deniz is a 37-year-old translator and project coordinator. She is currently doing piece works in funded projects.

Umut is a 46-year-old freelance conference interpreter and translator. He has a master's degree in Philosophy. He is earning his life mainly with interpretation and other secondary occupations.

Mert is a 34-year-old product engineer, graduated from Management. Currently, he is working in an international software company. He has a quite rich working experience in office life within corporate companies.

Çağla is a 33-year-old content manager in a software company for less than one year. She is graduated from Sociology. She has longer experience in remote work in smaller businesses in publishing.

2.5. Conclusion

Under the scope of this thesis in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 remote workers in Turkey from a variety of working areas, socio-economic

status, and social backgrounds, with the purpose of exploring their self-evaluation on their way of making sense of life through their work.

Since remote work is not specific to a single form of employment agreement, I intentionally reached freelancers who work for themselves, registered employees in certain companies, and business owners who started their own businesses. It should be also noted that some participants fall into several of these categories at the same time. Overall, out of 18 interviewees, 9 of them are registered employees in certain companies, 4 of them have their own business (for some as a side-job), and 8 of them are freelancers (as side jobs for some of them). In addition, since the main focus of this study is the self-evaluations of remote workers, it is also important to identify whether they prefer to work remotely as an intentional decision or they do it as a part of their employment agreements compulsorily. However, it is a matter in itself to identify the path that leads one to a certain occupation. Still, I may note that only two of the interviewees (Çağla, 33, Content Manager) and (Deniz, 37, Freelancer) stated that she would prefer not to work remotely. Also, only one of them (Zeynep, 39, Accountant & Project Assistant) work remotely due to Covid-19 pandemic, and she mentioned the challenges of being home all the time as a single mom. Although we cannot seek for fully consistent statements and feelings, the rest of the interviewees stated that they are glad to be remote workers while addressing certain disadvantages of it. A detailed analysis of the conditions varying among different types of employment agreements and the effects of them on remote workers perception of remote work will be provided later in the theoretical model.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY FINDINGS: PRESENTING THE EMERGENT THEORY

Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences.¹¹

Walter Benjamin, 1968

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to answer the following question: “How and under what conditions does remote work transform the meaning of work for remote workers?” In the broad sense, the question of what the meaning of work for remote workers is examined. In the deeper level of the analysis, how the informants view the conditions of possibility and key requirements of remote work is questioned. As this thesis aims to engage with the late discussions on the changing nature and future of work, it is important to examine the key requirements of remote work according to remote

¹¹Walter Benjamin, 2007, *Illuminations*

workers. In this regard, participants were asked to identify the key requirements for working remotely and the qualifications that workers should develop which enables remote working. Accordingly, the first level of the theoretical model is set as the *key requirements and conditions of possibility* of remote work as identified by remote workers.

The second level of the theoretical model constitutes a major part of the interviews which refers to the working experiences of interviewees and their evaluation of their living conditions through their work. In this sense, the second level is set as the *self-evaluation* of remote workers which is categorised under three axes: *desired lives*, *undesired lives*, and *actual conditions*. Each axis has three sub-categories which are linked to each other in order to reach a wholistic theoretical model. Those categories are derived from participant's own comments. Accordingly, the main lines of axes are about the changing relationships to time and space with the new possibilities coming with new technologies, the role of creativity and personal interests in the changing nature of work in the 21st century and working conditions that varies in regard to the employment types.

At the third level, my aim is to address the core issues that arise from the associations between those codes evolved in this study with the purpose of reaching a theoretical saturation. The core concerns are identified for each axe which appears as the main issue in remote workers' narratives under the scope of this thesis. As Strauss and Corbin suggest (1990), a diagram is developed for the conceptual visualisation of data. The theoretical model can be seen in the Figure 1.

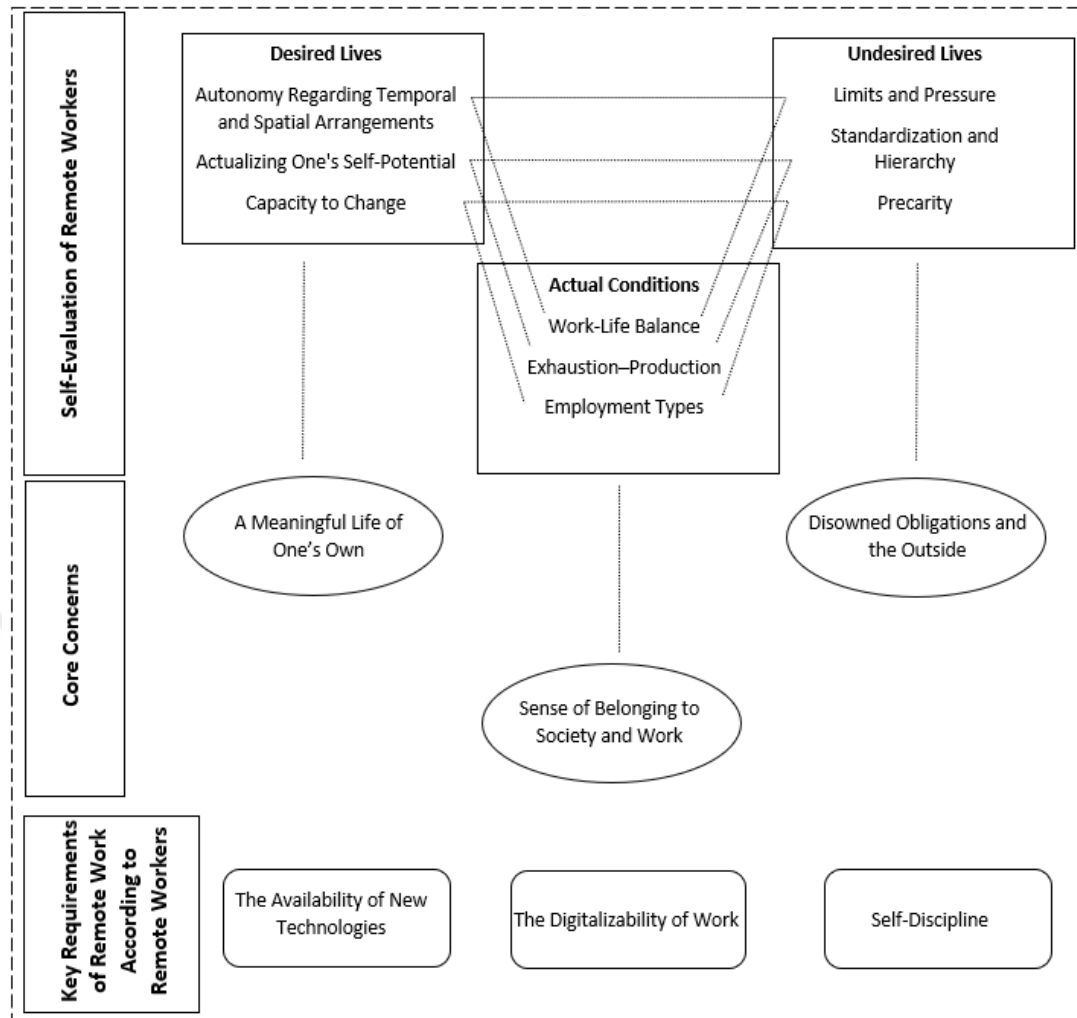


Figure 1. Theoretical Model: The Meaning of Work for Remote Workers

3.2. Defining Remote Work: How Come?

Participants were asked to identify the conditions that make remote work possible and specify the qualifications that remote workers should develop in order to sustain their work. At this first level of the theoretical model, two main discussion topics emerged from the data. Firstly, technological developments, digitalization and automatization are highlighted by participants as the main conditions that make remote work possible. At this point, late discussions regarding the effects of rapid technological and scientific developments on the future of work emerge as a relevant literature that should be focused on.

Secondly, almost all participants mentioned certain personal skills and qualifications that are required to be developed by remote workers. Here, the construction of the labour process itself is described as a personal process; in fact, it is directly associated with the construction of oneself. In this regard, the codes emerging from interviewees' remote work definitions remarkably paved the way to the discussions on the meaning of being qualified in parallel with the changing meaning of work with the effects of new technologies.

Since it has a rich political and ideological background, the examination of the effects of social and technological developments on the nature of work and the forms of labour processes give rise to various theoretical approaches in the relevant literature. Those approaches were discussed in the first chapter of the thesis which are mainly divided into two camps that view social consequences of technological developments from an optimistic and pessimistic perspective (Argin, 1992). In parallel with the discussion on the social consequences of technological developments, that on the future of automatization and gradation were also provided in the literature review. In light of those, this section provides three conditions and key requirements that make remote work possible in the 21st century as identified by remote workers. Those conditions include (a) the availability of new technologies, (b) the digitalizability of work, (c) self-discipline.

3.2.1. The Availability of New Technologies

“[Digitalisation] kills a profession first, then revives it [in a new form].” (Merve, 29, Journalist & Social Media Manager)

As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis, one of the main dynamics that lies behind the discussions on the radical changes in the forms of work and

employment is the rapid developments in artificial intelligence, robotics, automatization, and other technological advances. With regards to those developments, it is commonly argued that the “traditional” ways of working that we are used to will disappear and they will be replaced by newly emerging jobs and working conditions. In fact, new conceptualizations, and terms such as *digital labour* (Fuchs, 2014), *gig economy* (Ness, 2022), *platform capitalism* (Srnicek, 2017) or *sharing economy* (Arcidiacono, Gandini, & Pais, 2018), and alternative labour forms and labour agreements such as freelancing, zero-hour contracts and remote work have already been commonly discussed and practiced.

In regard to that, when participants of this study were asked to indicate the main conditions which enables them to work remotely, all stated that certain technological facilities are a “must” for practicing their professions and the “digital” side of their job descriptions makes it suitable to work remotely.

Professional Relationship with Technology

To the question about the conditions required for working remotely, almost all interviewees responded as “internet” at the first blush. Basically, they stated that the internet provides the necessary connection to conduct and convey the work without the need for any physical medium or another person. Most of them immediately mentioned certain software and applications such as *Google, Trello, Slack, Instagram, WhatsApp, Photoshop, Zoom*, etc., and as hardware tools, they stated that basically computers and phones do all the work. Commonly, they mentioned the digital facilities that enable remote workers to do their work, share them with others and come with colleagues together for co-working. In that sense, Aysel (44), who works as a translator in an NGO, explained that “most jobs can be done as place-free,

without a central office, as long as there is an internet connection”¹². There is also no need for a determined time period to be together during that time. Those potentials of temporal and spatial flexibility that are enabled with certain technological development addresses the necessary ground for remote work.

A remarkable aspect of the role of technology in remote workers professional lives is that a certain quality of the required technological facilities is crucial for them to be able to perform their jobs. As most of the participants stated, an inadequate technological tool causes not only bad quality of work, but it also rather prevents them to do their jobs. At this point having access to those developed facilities, most of the time they are the most updated ones, becomes a matter that shapes the whole labour process.

Of course [I need a good computer]. Because, for example, I have a good computer right now. I have been using this computer for the last 5 years but had a hard time buying it. Of course, you can't work on a bad computer because you are in a place where the era is very fast. In other words, if the PDF opens in 15 minutes, you can no longer do that job¹³. (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

Kerim (30), a web designer who works for a company as well as getting freelance works independently, mentioned that working in a village where his family lives in is impossible since the internet connection is very low¹⁴.

Regarding this issue, I questioned whether the access to those high-quality technological facilities is provided by the employers, if any; and if it is not, what kind

¹² İnternet bağlantısı olduğu sürece çoğu işin mekânsız, merkezi bir ofis olmadan yapılabilceğini düşünüyorum ben. (Aysel, 44, Translator)

¹³ Tabii ki. Çünkü mesela şu an kendince iyi bir bilgisayarım var. Son 5 yıldır bu bilgisayarı kullanıyorum ama alırken çok zorlandım. Tabii ki kötü bir bilgisayarda çalışamazsın çünkü çağın çok hızlı olduğu bir yerdesin. Yani 15 dk'da PDF açılıyorsa sen artık o işi yapamıyorsun demektir. (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

¹⁴ I go to the village to get some rest, be in nature for 1-2 months. The Internet is so bad, I'm suffering. I had to stay for 2 months last year, I couldn't. I said I wouldn't stay this long next year. (Kafa dinlemek için, doğa falan köye gidiyorum 1-2 ay. İnternet çok kötü, eziyet çekiyorum yani. Geçen sene 2 ay kalmak zorunda kaldım, dönemedim. Seneye bu kadar kalmam dedim yani.)

of challenges remote workers face to provide the necessary equipment for themselves. Here, a distinction between those who work for themselves, as a freelancer or business owner, and those who work as an employee is necessary to understand the specificity of remote work apart from starting one's own business. The problem of having the necessary capital at hand to own your own business is given in a capitalist mode of production. However, since remote work is beyond a working strategy for the business owners, but a labour process in which those who don't work for themselves are increasingly involved, a question arises about the changing dynamics between workers and capital. Out of 18 informants participated to this study, except those who started their own businesses and freelancers who work for themselves, 9 of the participants were employed. Out of those, 5 are not provided computers by their company, 3 are provided, but they mentioned that only after they declared to their company that they needed computers, companies provided them with such facilities. Aslı (24) mentioned the facilities provided by the company as a "kind gesture" and Aysel (44) said that she got the computer from the office with her own will. The remaining 2, both of whom work for software companies, are provided with computers by their employers. In addition, none of the remote workers are provided by fees of internet, mobile phones, or electricity that they used for working purposes.

Let me put it this way, when I got the job, I had a computer, but it was falling apart. After the Turkey Office opened, they made a gesture and gave me a company computer. They gave it to a few more people with me. There are only 10 of us. But because I work from home, they don't do anything to compensate me for this because my Internet bill or electricity costs have increased. In addition, I'm talking to customers through our hot-line, and they don't pay my phone bill.¹⁵ (Aslı, 24, Customer Care Specialist).

¹⁵ Şöyle söyleyeyim, ben işe girdiğimde bir bilgisayarım vardı ama dökülüyordu. Türkiye Ofisi açıldıktan sonra bir jest yapıp bana bir şirket bilgisayarı verdiler. Benimle birlikte birkaç kişiye daha verdiler. 10 kişiyiz zaten. Ama evden çalışıyorum diye benim internet faturamı ya da elektrik masraflarım arttı diye bana bunu kompanse etmek adına bir şey yapmıyorlar. Ya da müşterilerle konuşuyorum, hot-line'ımız var, telefon faturamı ödemiıyorlar.

The regulation stipulated by the law on remote working entered into force in March 2021. According to the regulation, the temporal and spatial arrangements including the supply of working equipment are left to the private agreement between employer and employee (T.C. Resmi Gazete, 2021). In sum, it can be said that there is no formal regulation regarding the supply of the working equipment to remote workers which puts extra burden on their shoulders that was not charged to them if they worked in an office.

No, unfortunately [they don't cover my domestic expenses]. But I took the computer I am using right now on my back and brought it to home. I said I'm taking this. I will work from home 5-6 days a week. Then, I said I couldn't bring it back, and the employer said 'okay, don't bring it'. There is no such a thing, of course, but still...¹⁶ (Aysel, 44, Translator)

Beyond being a necessary facility, new technologies are said to be the life itself, as shaping the whole production process, business relationships, the content of products and the distribution methods. For example, Aslı (24), who works for the operations of the social media advertisements of a beauty brand, mentioned that she was required to prove her activity on social media platforms in her personal life in order to get the job. She said that in the recruitment process, she was evaluated in terms of how much she incorporates technological developments into her life (Aslı, 24).¹⁷ Another participant who starts her own business in sustainable fashion design said that her brand is founded on an alternative and eco-friendly way of production, in which raw materials are only accessible by new technologies and technological developments:

¹⁶ Yok, maalesef. Ama şu anda kullandığım bilgisayarı kucaklayıp getirdim eve. Dedim ben bunu götürüyorum. Haftanın 5-6 günü evden çalışacağım. Sonra ben bunu geri getirmeyeceğim dedim, 'getirme' dedi. Öyle bir şey yok da tabii, işte.

¹⁷ Technology is my life. When I got the job, I was asked: 'How many hours a day do you spend on social media, on which social networks are you active?' (Hayatım teknoloji. İşe girerken bana sorulan şey şuydu: 'Günde kaç saatini sosyal medyada geçiriyorsun, hangi sosyal ağlarda aktıfsın?')

Especially on the raw material side, technology is actually my life... Is it possible to produce raw materials by consuming less water or to do something without badly affecting animals or any other living thing? Thanks to technological developments in the world, many savings can be made. Many things can be changed that will affect both world's energy and animals. This is exactly what our brand feeds on. So yes, technology is very important to me.¹⁸ (Begüm, 30, Fashion Designer)

In terms of the transformation of jobs with new technologies participants mentioned the changes that their professional fields go through in the the 21st century. For example, Merve (29), a journalist and social media manager, mentioned the digitalization of jobs specifically in journalism. She highlighted the disappearance of printed press and new ways of accessing news and the rise of the *fake news* to address the up-to-date discussion on *post-truth*. She stressed that digitalisation kills a profession first, then revives it in a new form¹⁹. Likewise, Aslı (24) mentioned a method of advertisement in social media marketing called “user generated content” which directly uses the posts and comments of customers which can also be examined under the post-truth discussion in the sense that the individual production and distribution of information.

It should be noted that not all participants agree that their professional practices would be impossible without technological advances, nor do they accept technology as a “friendly tool” that makes life easier. For instance, Bahar (32), who is a designer, tells

¹⁸ Özellikle hammadde tarafında teknoloji benim hayatım aslında. Çünkü, bahsettiğim gibi işin daha az su tüketerek hammadde var etmek ya da hayvanlar ya da başka bir canlıyı etkilemeden bir şeyler yapmak mümkün mü tarafında olduğum için...Dünyada teknolojik gelişmeler sayesinde birçok tasarrufa gidilebiliyor. Hem enerji hem de hayvanları etkileyecek birçok şey değiştirilebiliyor. Zaten markamız da tam olarak bundan besleniyor. Dolayısıyla, evet teknoloji benim için çok önemli.

¹⁹ Digitalisation kills a profession first, then revives it in a new form...There is the concept of gatekeeping in journalism. The reporter trusts his source, writes his news... The probability of that news being false is very low, almost none. But the internet is not such a place. As the internet develops, you write and share at the speed of light to keep up with information. No one can confirm it. (Çünkü dijitalleşme mesleği bir kere önce öldürüyor sonra yeniden diriltiyor...Eşik bekçiliği kavramı vardır gazetecilikte. Muhabir kaynağına güvenir, haberini yazar...Yani o haberin fake olma ihtimali çok az, yok yani. Ama internet öyle bir yer değil. İnternet geliştikçe enformasyon hızına yetişmek için ışıık hızıyla yazıyorsun, atıyorsun. Onu teyit edebilecek kimse yok.)

the story of digitalisation of marketing in which producers must be active in certain digital platforms to reach the customers while those platforms function to make the producer dependent on the digital advertising by allocating more and more budget to that. She basically sums up by saying that “yes, technology contributes [to making work easier], but this contribution is not that friendly”²⁰.

Similarly, when I asked Gaye (33), a book editor, whether she thinks that technology is the most essential condition that enables her to work from home as a freelancer, she immediately responded: “No, it is all about one’s own intellect”²¹. Then she told the story of one of her professors who has been, as she described it, freelancing since 2000. She said that he would carry all the *tracing papers*²² on his back and carry it home; then he would come and go until all the work was done. She said that:

For sure, it was harder at those times...Not harder actually but took more time and requires the muscle force. Of course, *Google* is a big advantage, but is it a must for us? My professor would probably say no as a freelancer since 2000²³. (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

Although she did not specify the perks of working manually in book editing, she stressed that this depends on the nature of work, and in all costs, she definitely needs a computer even if she does not have internet connection.

Finally, a commonly voiced problem during the interviews concerned the invasion of the personal lives of remote workers by their work life due to the technological

²⁰ O yüzden teknolojinin evet katkısı var ama çok arkadaşıl değil.

²¹Hayır. Bu da tamamen dediğim gibi insanın kendi zihni ile alakalı bir durumdur.

²²A kind of paper with low opacity which is used for typesetting purposes in publishing sector.

²³ Tabii ki şu ankinden çok daha zor... Daha zor demeyeyim de çünkü bence aynı zorluk. Sadece süreci uzatıyor ve belki kas gücü gerektiriyor... Tabii ki *Google* çok büyük avantaj. Bunlar avantaj ama zorunluluk mu? Bence Hocay’la yapıyor olsaydın bu görüşmeyi 2000 yılından beri freelance çalışan biri olarak “yoo” diyecekti sana muhtemelen.

facilities that made them “always available.” 2 participants even mentioned their future projects on developing alternative platforms/applications for professional use only, to prevent the intervention of working life to the personal life. This issue will be examined in detail later under the category of work-life balance.

When I have time, I'd like to write a policy document about where, when how and under what conditions we will use digital tools while communicating with each other. There really needs to be limits on these, otherwise it is a life that violates people, feeds their worries, and puts work-related issues into every life-related process. My home is not a place to rest then. Our office coordinator was writing at 3 a.m. Of course, she knew I wasn't sleeping, but do I want to receive a text at 3 a.m.? My work should not be penetrated into every aspect of my life.²⁴ (Hazal, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

Personal Relationship with Technology

As stated previously, this thesis examines technological developments and digitalisation with an effort to better understand work in the 21st century in terms self-evaluation of remote workers in a wholistic way which represents their position as workers in social and individual being in today's society. Therefore, their personal interests, life habits and routines were also addressed throughout the interviews. In relation to the examination of work and technology relationship, I basically asked how they get along with technology. Accordingly, I observed that the interest in technological developments is rather personal. Which means that even if the person is engaged in certain technological tools in an excessive level for professional reason, s/he might not necessarily prefer to engage with or be enthusiastic about technology at a personal level.

²⁴ Benim zamanım olduğunda, 5 ay sonra bu proje bittiğinde dönüp bir politika belgesi yazmak isterim. Dijital araçların nerede, ne zaman, nasıl, hangi koşullarda kullanacağımıza dair, birbirimizle iletişirken. Gerçekten bunlarla ilgili sınırlar gerekiyor yoksa insanları ihlal eden, endişelerini besleyen, hayatla ilgili her sürecin içerisine işle ilgili bir done sokan bir hayat yani o zaman. Dinlenecek bir yer değil o zaman evim. Ofis koordinatörümüz gece 3'te yazıyordu, uyumuyor olduğumu biliyordu tabii ama ben acaba gece 3'te mesaj almak istiyor muyum? Hayatımın her alanına pantere edilmemeli benim iş.

By the way, that's a very good question that you ask personal and professional relationship separately. Now, I'm a person who wouldn't even use a smart phone if I wasn't doing this job. I mean, I haven't figured out how fax machines, remotes, etc. still work. These are still magic to me. But of course, because I'm doing this job, I have 13 Instagram accounts open on my phone right now.²⁵ (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

On the other hand, some of them have special interest in new developments, software, and programmes regardless of whether those are related to their jobs or not. For example, Sanem (28), a translator, said that she loves to tamper around different software and programmes just for fun²⁶.

Considerations and Concerns About Automation Technologies

Another concern of remote workers is falling behind the rapid technological changes and being unable to acquire new digital skills required in the job market. In parallel with this issue, the discussion on the future of automation technologies and the speculative arguments on the mass unemployment were raised in the interviews. Due to the nature of their jobs, one of the professional groups that most commonly engage with those discussions is translators. When those participated in this study were asked about the future of the translation sector, they said that although it is accepted that the developments on the artificial intelligence have proven to be helpful in managing a major part of the job, there is still a relevant discussion on the contribution of the human element to the field. In addition, Sanem (28) stated that the fact that

²⁵ Çok güzel bir soruymuş bu arada. Kişisel ve profesyonel olarak sorman. Şimdi şöyle, ben eğer bu işi yapmıyor olsam smart phone bile kullanmayacak bir insanım. Yani faks makinası, kumanda falan bunların hala nasıl çalıştıklarını çözmemiş değilim. Bunlar hala benim için magic. Ama tabii bu işi yaptığım için şu anda telefonumda 13 tane instagram hesabı açık mesela.

²⁶ I really love it. I also tamper around with software technologies for a while. There are online videos, etc., but I don't think I can be very good at that. I just like learning to use different programmes. Let me look at Excel, what's new with Photoshop... In that sense, I love computers and technology (Severim, çok severim. Yazılım işini de bir ara kurcalamıştım. Online videolar falan var ama çok o konuda becerikli olabileceğimi sanmıyorum. Daha çok değişik programları kullanmayı öğrenmek gibi. Durup dururken bir Excel'e bakayım ne varmış, Photoshop neymiş gibi. O anlamda seviyorum bilgisayarı ve teknolojiyi.)

technology reduces the workload for translators, there is already a dramatic decrease in wages of translators.

Of course, [translators] might disappear in 10 years. But there will always be a need for a literary translator, they will not be able to do it. Machine Learning, for sure I understand it. But philosophy, literature, they will never be able to do the interpretive translation. So, I think we are safe.²⁷ (Aysel, 44, Translator)

Tansel (51), a software developer stated that he knows that because of the automatization systems he develops, people are losing their jobs. He also mentioned the difficulties of getting a job in his field after a certain age since young people are considered as being more open to new technologies, which have become a crucial skill.

There are people who lose their jobs because of the automatizations I develop. Probably our boss is selling this system by promoting that you're going to employ 1 people now, while you used to employ 4 people²⁸. (Tansel, 51, Software Developer)

Hence, apart from the considerations on the disappearance of certain professions in the near future, there is also a concern about falling behind in terms of newly required digital skills in certain fields that are open to change in parallel with rapid development to a great extent. Accordingly, Kerim (30), a web designer, mentioned his fear of “being too old for his jobs when he becomes 40” in a near future due to fast evolving nature of the sector.

Once you're 40 and a company fires you, it's going to be very difficult to get a new job. Everyone is trying to create a young, dynamic team. If it were me, I

²⁷ [Çevirmenlik mesleği] yok olabilir tabii bir 10 yıl içinde. Ama her zaman bir edebiyat çevirmenine ihtiyaç olacak, onu yapamayacaklar. *Machine Learning*, eyvallah, anlıyorum ama felsefesi edebiyatı, yorum gerektirecek çeviri yapamayacak hiçbir zaman. Yani bence *we are safe*.

²⁸ Benim yaptığım otomasyonlar nedeniyle işsiz kalan insanlar oluyor. Muhtemelen eskiden 4 kişi istihdam ederken şimdi 1 kişi istihdam edeceksiniz diye satıyor bu sistemi patronumuz.

would do the same. I would like to do so right now. We always act through these kinds of considerations.²⁹ (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

3.2.2. Digitalizability of Work

“We pay out of the grey matter.” (Umut, 46, Interpreter &)

When I first decided to study on remote work it was early 2019 before the Covid-19 breakout in Turkey in March 2020. At that stage when suddenly everyone started to work from their homes, I needed to clarify that my purpose is understanding the changing nature of work in the 21st century in parallel with changing technological and social conditions. Hence, this directed me to question and identify what kind of professions and occupational fields that are prone to move into remote work. In order to obtain the initial data which would be wide enough to examine a large scale of sectors, I searched for those who have been working remotely before the pandemic. Some of occupations that I thought that would be suitable for this study were information and communication related professions, software development, data analysis, translation, and publishing. Therefore, the presupposition about the nature of jobs that are prone to remote work was that they required the use of intellectual labour and, except for certain technological facilities, there is no need for any physical tool or human companion to perform them.

Taking this definition as the starting point, interviewees were asked to identify what makes their jobs suitable for remote work as well as what they thought the common characteristics of works done remotely were. All participants pointed out that remote

²⁹ 40 yaşına geldikten sonra bir firma seni işten çıkardığında yeni bir işe girmen çok zor olacak. Herkes genç, dinamik ekip oluşturmaya çalışıyor. Ben olsam ben de öyle yaparım. Şu anda da öyle yapmak isterim. Hep bunların düşüncesiyle hareket ediyoruz.

work is possible depending on the nature of the work and job definitions. More specifically, they mentioned that it should be possible to do and share the tasks via digital tools and that the work process should not require physical contact with other workers. In addition, it is highlighted by most of the interviewees that the main characteristic of their work is that it involves both production and processing of information.

Therefore, the second condition for remote work emerged as the digitalizability of the work. This category consists of three requirements. Firstly, the work should be about producing, processing, or conveying some form of information by its nature. Thus, the conceptual discussion of remote work is linked with that of intellectual labour to a considerable extent. Umut (46) summarizes it by saying that:

Exactly, we're people who work with their intellectual labour. Among translators, there is a saying that 'we pay out of the grey matter, brother'. That's what they say in a more polite way.³⁰ (Umut, 46, Interpreter & Translator)

At this point, this analogy of paying out of the grey matter, opens the debate over the transformation of labour to a rather immaterial mental activity. As Umut explains how interpretation depends on the usage of grey matter, which is a common biological possession of all humankind, the question could be raised: From where all other types of work pay out from?

The second characteristic that constitutes the nature of remote work is that those production processes should be suitable for being carried out by digital technological

³⁰Kesinlikle, kafa emeğiyle çalışan insanlarız, ya da zihinsel emekle çalışan insanlarız. Tercümanlar şey diyor, 'biz gri maddeden yiyoruz kardeşim'. Böyle şeyler söyleniyor yani daha kibar bir şekilde.

tools. This also makes it possible to sustain the work without coming together with other people physically. As Nazan (45) puts it,

There are things that cannot be done without socialization. For example, this [distance education] doesn't seem to work. Or if you are a factory worker who are in an actual production process [it is not possible]. We provide such a skilled and qualified workforce; we are operational after all. Even if we are producing something, what we produce is digital things, files, etc. So other than that, nothing can be done remotely anyway. What needs to be produced physically cannot be done remotely.³¹ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Thirdly, as the outcome of such a close and nested relationship with new technologies, it brings a certain attitude towards the rapid technological developments as a part of professional qualifications. In parallel with the concern about being unqualified after a certain age, most of the informants mention that they must follow the new developments all the time as a professional responsibility. Kerim (30) who works in a digital marketing company explained it by comparing his situation with that of his wife who has a more “traditional” job:

You must follow [technological developments in your field] constantly. Otherwise, you wouldn't be able to work today. So, if I was still stuck with the knowledge from 5 years ago, I wouldn't be of any use to the company. It's not like my wife who is a literature teacher, for example. She doesn't need to improve herself because literature is always the same. You keep telling the same things. History, for example, is always the same, you cannot change it. Our industry is very different, you must improve yourself every day³². (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

³¹ Sosyalleşme olmadan olamayacak şeyler var. Mesela bu [uzaktan eğitim] olmaz gibi. Yani zaten fabrika işçiliği gibi fiili olarak üretimin içindeyseniz [olmaz]. Biraz böyle nitelikli iş gücü falan, hizmet sunuyorsunuz sonuçta, operasyonel yaptığınız için... Ya da bir şey üretiyorsak da ürettiğimiz şey dijital şeyler dosyalar bilmem neler falan. Yani bunun dışında doğrudan hiçbir şey zaten uzaktan olamaz. Fiziki olarak üretilmesi gereken şey zaten uzaktan olamaz.

³² [Alanınla ilgili teknolojik gelişmeleri] sürekli takip etmek zorundasın. Aksi halde bugün çalışmıyor olursun. Yani hala 5 sene önceki bilgiyle kalmış olsaydım şirkete hiçbir faydam olmazdı. Şey gibi değil, eşim edebiyat öğretmeni mesela, onun kendisini geliştirmesine gerek yok çünkü edebiyat hep aynı. Sürekli aynı şeyleri anlatıyorsun. Atıyorum tarih, o da hep aynı, değiştiremezsin. Bizim sektör çok farklı, her gün kendini geliştirmen lazım.

3.2.3. Self-Discipline

Richard Sennett, in his elaboration of the culture of new capitalism, mentions a “specter of uselessness” which is a threat shaped by “global labour supply, automatization and the management of aging” (2006: 86). He argues that:

The second challenge concerns talent: how to develop new skills, how to mine potential abilities, as reality’s demands shift. Practically, in the modern economy, the shelf life of many skills is short; in technology and the sciences, as in advanced forms of manufacturing, workers now need to retrain on average every eight to twelve years. Talent is also a matter of culture. The emerging social order militates against the ideal of craftsmanship, that is, learning to do just one thing really well; such commitment can often prove economically destructive. In place of craftsmanship, modern culture advances an idea of meritocracy which celebrates potential ability rather than past achievement. (Sennett, 2006:4)

As he mentions, developing certain skills and being able to be qualified in a variety of fields rather than an insistent expertise is highlighted very commonly during the interviews. In addition to that, nearly all informants insists that the capacity to develop and improve certain skills by oneself is a must for remote work. Two main reasons can be inferred from the narratives of participants. Firstly, the whole process of work has become a lonely time since there is no one around related to work. Thus, as Kerim (30) puts it, “whether or not it is freelance or full-time job, you have no one to ask anything. You should search and find out everything by yourself”³³. In that sense, the ability of “knowing how to learn it” has become a fundamental skill. In this regard, the relation to knowledge with the changing status of its accessibility via technological facilities is a related discussion topic. Hakan (39) mentions how important knowing how to learn is as follows:

³³ Uzaktan çalışan insana bir iş verildiyse, freelance de olabilir tam zamanlı şirketten de verilmiş olabilir, yanında kimse yok. Yani sorabileceği kimse yok. Kendisi araştırıp bulmak zorunda.

I thought about that kind of anxiety [about falling behind the technological developments] for web design, I haven't done that for years. I opened it and saw that I could get back to a certain level within one day. It provides you a self-confidence. I learned how to learn. So, I'm saying, if something comes along, I know that I can actually handle it. A new phone, software, you can learn it, it's not that hard. That's because I know how to look for it, thanks to YouTube.³⁴ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

The second reason of the necessity for developing self-discipline is related to the supervision mechanism in remote work, which is quite different than office work because the strict temporal and spatial limitations and the physical existence of someone who sits with the worker to tell him/her what to do have disappeared.

Therefore, being a remote worker becomes a trust issue and a matter of personal character overall. According to that, I asked all informants if/when they owned their own business, what kind of workers they would recruit. As a response, nearly all explained how important it is to know a person well to employ him/her. Respectively, Sanem (28), Hazal (41) and Aysel (44) mentioned the necessity for an office only if the workers are not capable of self-disciplining themselves:

But I don't know if I recruit someone when I'm not quite sure in their abilities or character... Then, I probably would have wanted to work at an office rather than working from home, I'm not sure though.³⁵ (Sanem, 28, Translator & English Teacher)

I think that the office obligation should not be applied or reduced for people who have reached a certain qualification. In other words, if a person has developed her/his self-discipline after 35, technology now allows it [to not to go to office]. Incredibly, you can do anything from *Google Drive*. When the whole team can use these tools together, the office feels a bit non-sense.³⁶ (Hazal, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

³⁴ O kaygıyı web tasarım için düşünmüştüm, yıllardır yapmıyordum. Açtım baktım. O da özgüven getiriyor. Bir gün içerisinde tekrar belli bir seviyeye çıkabildiğini görmek. Öğrenebilmeyi öğrenmişim. O yüzden diyorum, karşına çıkarsa aslında birçok şeyi yapabileceğimi biliyorum. Yeni bir telefon, yazılım çıksa öğreniyorsun, çok zor şeyler değil. İşte Youtube sayesinde, araştırmayı biliyorum çünkü.

³⁵ Ama birisini çalıştırsam ve yeteneklerine veya karakterine çok güvenmiyor olsam, bilmiyorum... O zaman muhtemelen evden çalışmayı değil şirkette çalışmayı isteyebilirdim, emin değilim ama.

³⁶ Belli bir yeterliliğe varmış insanlara ofis zorunluluğunun olmaması gerektiğini ya da daha azaltılmış uygulanması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Yani 35'inden sonra bir insan zaten kendi disiplinini

Most of these white-collar jobs can be done this way [remotely]. They take us to the office for nothing. That discipline and control mechanisms become concrete in that space, in the office. But I can do it on my own, I trust myself.³⁷ (Aysel, 44, Translator)

Whether a worker is dependable, work-oriented, and responsible are commonly demanded qualities for nearly all kinds of work. However, what specifically mentioned about remote work is the whole personal character of someone, including his/her ethical/political standpoint, the self-sufficiency in managing his/her responsibilities and high level of competence in time management. Beyond being work-related qualifications, skills and traits that are more personal are looked for. Hakan, a freelance web designer puts forward the question of “who are you?” in a sense of addressing a *network society* (Castells, The Rise of The Network Society, 2000).

But in design sector, when they're assigning you a project, they need to know what you do, or whether you will be able to do it in a timely manner, or you are a regular person or not. Who are you? Or will you help with bringing something down? So, you need the network to get the freelance work.³⁸ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

Finally, in line with associating remote work with a matter of putting forward who you are and also in terms of addressing it as a lonely process, when asked about the key personal requirements for remote work, Çağla (33) mentioned her introverted personality which makes it easier and more suitable for her to work remotely as compared to others who need more socialisation and interaction with other people.

sağlamışsa artık teknoloji buna izin veriyor. İnanılmaz yani, Google Drive'dan her şeyi yapabiliyorsun. Bu tool'ları bütün ekip ortak kullanabildiğinde ofis biraz boş bir şeymiş gibi geliyor.

³⁷ Bu beyaz yaka işlerin çoğu bu şekilde [uzaktan] yapılabilir. Bizi boşu boşuna götürüyorlar oraya. İşte o disiplin ve denetleme mekanizması o mekânda, o ofiste somutlaşıyor. Ben yaparım onu, güveniyorum kendime.

³⁸ Ama tasarım gibi işlerde, bir proje verdikleri şeylerde senin ne iş yaptığını bilmesi gerekiyor karşı tarafın. Ya da o işi o tarihte yapabilecek mi? Düzenli midir, değil midir? Kimdir? Ya da parada bize kolaylık sağlar mı? O yüzden network şart sana freelance iş gelebilmesi için.

Likewise, Cemre (30) said that she creates a wonderful world of her own, as a person who is not very good at interpersonal relationships.³⁹

I think a very extroverted person, which I'm not, might have difficulties in working from home. Those who would be more suitable for remote work might be those who are rather introverted, but it sounds like antisocial, let's say [people] who love solitude. Even if not exactly like that, the type of person who does not feel a great deficiency in life when not interacting that much, and those who don't need a lot of socialization may be more suitable.⁴⁰ (Çağla, 33, Content Manager)

3.2.4. Discussion

At this first level of the theoretical model, the underlying conditions that shapes the current organisation forms of labour which makes it suitable for remote work are questioned. As identified by remote workers participating in this study, those appeared as the availability of new technologies, the digitalizability of work and self-discipline. Obviously, new technological facilities are a must for making some temporal and spatial limitations less important, which distinguish remote work from other traditional labour processes. In addition, it is identified that certain sectors, which are most commonly dependent on intellectual, informational, and cultural production are more suitable for digitalization, and hence for remote work. What the personal experiences tell us about the outcomes of this digitalisation process is that, overall, the effects of technology on working conditions and worker's perception on their work and their future, is not identical for all remote workers. First of all, although the availability of technological facilities is a must for their work, not all

³⁹ It cannot say that I am a very warm person in human relations. That's why I built a wonderful world for myself in the digital sphere. (Çok da insan ilişkilerinde sıcak bir insan olduğum da söylenemez. O yüzden dijital ortamda harika bir dünya kurdum kendime.) (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

⁴⁰ Yani çok dışadönük bir insanın, öyle değilim ben, evden çalışırken zorlanabileceğini düşünüyorum. İçe dönük değil aslında içe dönük deyince biraz daha asosyal gibi oluyor, daha böyle yalnızlığı seven diyelim. Tam olarak öyle de olmasa, biraz daha böyle çok fazla sosyalleşmeye ihtiyacı olmayan diyebilirim ya da etkileşime girmese de hayatında çok büyük bir eksiklik duymayan devam edebilen insan tipi olabilir.

remote workers are provided these facilities by their employers. Rather, they are mostly expected to access those tools by themselves. At this point, the lack of regulation, social rights and security is a significant part of being a remote worker. Secondly, the speculations on the disappearance of most jobs due to automatization and the anxiety about falling behind the necessities of the time are commonly mentioned. However, on the other side of the coin, most of the informants expressed their confidence about their capability to cope with the rapid changes of the time. This is simply because they feel that they are already integrated to those changes, in other words, being a remote worker is an indicator of keeping up with the changing nature of work in the 21st century. Therefore, the experiences conveyed in the scope of this study reflects the struggles of who caught by the heavy storm of the time, rather than that of the ones left out the age to hold on to life.

I am absolutely happy and doing a job I love. Especially the concept of e-mail marketing, it won't go away may be during my lifetime. Its popularity will not decline. This is how it goes now. Television and radio advertisements are over, they are ending gradually. For example, let me ask you, when was the last time did you sit down and watch TV?⁴¹ (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

Lastly, the experience of remote work is often described as a personal journey throughout the interviews. Therefore, the successes and failures are viewed as the outcomes of one's endeavours, and the living conditions and struggles are mentioned as personal choices. Gaye (33) summarizes it very neatly, what most of the participants answered the question on what makes them work remotely, and do it in a sustainable way:

I think it's all about a person's relationship with himself/herself. Now, if you don't have the experience of staying with yourself and being able to control your own

⁴¹ Kesinlikle mutluyum, sevdiğim bir işi yapıyorum. Özellikle e-mail marketing dediğimiz kavram önümüzdeki...belki benim ömrüm boyunca gitmeyecek. Revaçta olması azalmayacak yani. Artık bu. Televizyon, radyo reklamları bitti, azalarak bitiyor. En son ne zaman oturup televizyon izledin desem mesela sana?

mind, it doesn't really matter where and how you work. Because, in fact, producing something for life requires focusing despite all the buzz of daily life, despite that thing that is constantly talking in your head. Now you may not be able to do this in an office, or you may not be able to do it at home. I think it totally depends on the person's experience with himself/herself.⁴² (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

That is why the second level of the theoretical model is set out as the self-evaluation of remote workers on how they cope up with the necessities of the time within their struggle for reaching a meaningful life form they envisage.

3.3. Desired Lives: Self-Evaluation as an Inner Search for Oneself

The second level of theoretical model is mainly constructed with the narrative of remote workers regarding their working experiences, life aspirations and questionings. Their narrative is divided into three axes which are linked with each other in an organic way that evolved from the data.

The first axis is categorized as *desired lives*, which refers to the remote workers' ideas about the possibilities of remote work as an alternative labour process in reaching one's own potential in a meaningful life. The main question in mind at the theoretical level is the changing role of work in searching for a meaning in social and individual existence. The transformation of the role of work in social life together with the approaches to work as a response to those developments are provided in the previous chapter. In light of those considerations, the narrative provided under this section is mainly about how remote workers make sense of their social and individual existence and search for a meaning in life through their work. These narratives will be analysed

⁴² Bence şöyle, insanın tamamen kendi ile olan ilişkisi ile alakalı. Şimdi sen kendinle kalma ve kendi zihnine kontrol edebiliyor olma deneyimine sahip değilsen nerede ve nasıl çalıştığının hiçbir önemi yok aslında. Çünkü aslında hayata bir şeyler üretebilmek, gündelik hayatın bütün uğultusuna rağmen kafanın içinde sürekli konuşan o şeye rağmen odaklanmayı gerektiriyor aslında. Şimdi bunu bir ofiste de yapamayabilirsin evde de yapamayabilirsin. Bu tamamen insanın kendisi ile ilgili olan deneyimine çok bağlı bence.

along three main lines, which are derived from the data. Those lines are basically three main considerations that emerged in narratives of remote workers about their desired lives: setting one's own rules in terms of temporal and spatial arrangements, realizing one's self-potential, and making one's own decisions regarding working life and one's own future.

3.3.1. Autonomy Regarding Temporal and Spatial Arrangements

As mentioned in the first chapter, a new round of *time-space compression* with the emergence of more flexible modes of production (Harvey, 1989: iix) was identified as the main conceptual framework for discussing remote work as a temporal and spatial experience. One of the main aspects of work in the time-space context is that the supervision mechanisms have become concrete in a certain space, such as an office, and in a certain period of time, such as working hours. Therefore, with regards to that flexibility, it is seen that the desired change in temporal arrangements in labour processes is mainly about the emancipation from those temporal and spatial limitations. In other words, the desired working life promises working from anywhere and anytime at workers' discretion.

About the autonomy regarding temporal arrangements, nearly all participants mentioned the sense of freedom as long as one adequate time-management skills:

But as I said, the idea of remote work was in my mind since the beginning, I really wanted that. Because the idea that anyone can produce their work wherever they want, regardless of any place, felt very free and very good. Time management is something that can be learned over time, you just have to expose yourself to it. In the first month you falter slightly, in the second month you start working, in the third month you recover.⁴³ (Begüm, 30, Fashion Designer)

⁴³ Ama dediğim gibi en başından remote fikri aklımdaydı, zaten bunu çok istiyordum. Çünkü herhangi bir mekândan bağımsız olarak herkesin istediği yerde işini üretebilmesi fikri çok özgür ve çok iyi

In addition, it is quite commonly stated that having autonomy regarding use of time enables workers to allocate more time for their own interests, and personal lives, or arranging working times according to their internal clocks, which do not always comply with traditional working hours:

For the first year [of remote working], I really became a person who could not work during the day because I never wanted to set the alarm. I didn't want to accept the things that were imposed on me. Maybe I am just such a person. Not everyone gets a clear mind at the same time periods in a day. Some are better early in the morning, while others are better late at night. In other words, some minds can work better when it is completely quiet in the city. I tried this, I only worked at night for a year. I received e-mails from publishing houses: "You sent a file at half past 5 in the morning. Is there a problem? Are you sick?" No, I just sleep during the day.⁴⁴ (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

Accordingly, most of the participants mentioned that they are grateful for having a certain degree of autonomy over time as a consequence of remote work.

For example, the fact that there is no bureaucratic permission process to go somewhere, and that there is no restriction when I want to travel within the city, outside the city or internationally, makes me very comfortable. I can make my own plan plans for the future according to calendar that is special to me. Cooking, enjoying eating, chatting with my friends for long hours, or being able to schedule some political activities as I want, these are the things that make me very comfortable. That's why I'm 95% very satisfied [with my job].⁴⁵ (Tansel, 51, Software Developer)

geliyordu. Zaman yönetimi de zamanla öğrenebilen bir şey sadece buna kendini maruz bırakman gerekiyor. İlk ay hafif bocalarsın, ikinci ay yapmaya başlarsın, üçüncü ay kurtarırsın.

⁴⁴ İlk bir sene gerçekten gündüzleri çalışamayan bir insan oldum çünkü alarm kurmak istemedim hiç. Bana dayatılan şeyleri kabul etmek istemedim. Belki de ben böyle biriyimdir. Herkesin zihninin açık olduğu saatler aynı değil. Kimisi sabahın erken saatlerinde daha iyi, kimisi gece geç saatlerinde iyidir. Yani tamamen şehir sessizliğine kavuştuğunda zihni daha iyi çalışabiliyor. Ben bunu denedim, bir sene sadece gece çalıştım. Yayınevlerinden şöyle mailler aldım: "Sabaha karşı 5 buçuk'ta dosya yollamışsınız. Bir sorun mu var? Hasta mısınız?" Yo, hayır gündüzleri uyuyorum sadece.

⁴⁵ Mesela bir yere gitmek için bir bürokratik izin sürecinin olmaması, şehir içi, şehir dışı, uluslararası seyahat etmek istediğimde bir kısıt olmaması çok rahatlatıyor beni. Geleceğe dair de kendi istediğim gibi bir takvimle istediğim planları yapabiliyorum. Yemek yapmak, keyifli yemek, uzun saatler boyunca arkadaşlarımla sohbet etmek veya politik faaliyetlere istediğim gibi takvim ayırabilmem, bunlar elimi çok rahatlatan şeyler. Bu yüzden %95 çok memnunum.

One of the participants, Mert (34) who is a product engineer as a full-time employee in an international software company, even mentioned that they have limitless days of paid leaves as long as they can finish the tasks that they are given. More interestingly, he said that this was not impossible to manage such that he even took 3 weeks off in 2 months.⁴⁶

However, not all remote workers have such a flexibility in terms of temporal arrangements; in fact, most of the full-time employed remote workers have certain time schedules that they need to comply with in their working lives. Kerim (30) explained this issue by saying that

It depends on the team you work with. I need to work 9 to 6 since I am directly working with customers, and they work at that time. However, the software team is more flexible. They just need to complete 8-9 hours a day, and they can spread it through the day by working, for example, 4 hours in the morning and 5 hours in the evening.⁴⁷ (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

In addition, unless they have no obligations in terms of temporal limitations, some of the participants mentioned that they personally prefer to work between regular working hours as a strategy to discipline themselves and not to lose the control:

In my opinion, even though one's first working experience is remote work, there is a working method we know somehow. This is about going out for lunch in the afternoon, getting up early in the morning, and your shift ends at 5 p.m., etc. I think that even if it is at home, it has to be adhered to in some way so that one can establish an order.⁴⁸ (Begüm, 30, Fashion Designer)

⁴⁶ I said I will go for a long-run and took 2 weeks off. Then I came back and took 1 more week. There is no limit, you can take a leave whenever you want. And these are paid leaves. (Uzun vade gidiyorum ben dedim 2 hafta tatil aldım. Sonra geri geldim aradan bir ay geçti, gittim 1 hafta daha tatil aldım. Belli bir dönemi yok istediğin zaman alabilirsin. Ve ücretli tatiller.) (Mert, 34, Product Engineer)

⁴⁷ Ekipten ekibe değişiyor. Ben 9-6 çalışmak zorundayım, çünkü benim muhabatım müşteri. Müşteri de bu saatlerde çalışıyor genelde. Ama yazılım ekibi biraz daha esnek, diyelim 4 saat öğleden önce çalışıyor, 5 saat akşam çalışıyor, böyle yayıyor yani günlük.

⁴⁸ Şöyle bence, her ne kadar hayatında ilk defa çalışmaya başlayıp da direkt evden çalışmaya başlamak olsa bile bir şekilde duyduğumuz bildiğimiz bir çalışma yöntemi var. Bu da öğlen yemeğe çıkıyorsun, sabah erken kalkıyorsun, akşam 5'te mesain bitiyor gibi. Bence evde olsa bile buna bir şekilde sadık kalınması gerekiyor ki o düzeni oturtabil.

Likewise, Hakan (39) mentioned that he once took his flatmate's working-hours as a reference point to manage his own time although he had not such a limitation while working as a freelancer.

At least I got a flatmate with a more regular job. I got a teacher. Why? He was going to work during the day, and I had a mentality that I could work at those times. You see, I was trying to put myself in an order again. I was scheduling myself in accordance with that person's working hours. Let him leave the house, and I will work then. When he come at the evening, my shift is over, we go and have a drink. That's what I had in mind at the time.⁴⁹ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

Those comments demonstrate how remote workers depict the life they aspire in relation to the issue of controlling the temporal aspects of their work life. Other issues regarding the prevalence of short-term agreements, work-life balance, and the perception of future, which are also related with remote work as a temporal experience will be elaborated.

About remote work that enables autonomy regarding spatial arrangements, similar with the approaches towards the temporal arrangements, remote workers often mentioned the sense of freedom in their lives. Mostly, they highlighted that remote work is not only about working from home, but also working from anywhere you want:

So, what I'm actually trying to do is not just home but doing this job from wherever I want. So, I can stay in Artvin for 3 months, I can stay in Çanakkale for another 3 months, I can go and stay in the Netherlands as a tourist. But I can do this job wherever I want, wherever there is internet. So that was my main point.⁵⁰ (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

⁴⁹ Hiç olmazsa daha düzenli işi olan bir ev arkadaşı aldım. Öğretmen aldım. Niye? O gündüz işe gidiyordu ben de bunları çalışabiliyordum o zaman gibi bir mantığım vardı. Aslında yine kendimi düzene sokmaya çalışıyordum farkındaysan. O birisinin iş saatine göre programlıyordum. O evden gitsin ben çalışayım. Akşam geldiği zaman da benim mesaim biter gider bir şeyler yer içeriz kafası.

⁵⁰ Yani benim aslında yapmaya çalıştığım şey sadece ev değil, istediğim yerden bu işi yapmak. Yani ben 3 ay Artvin'de de kalabilirim, 3 ay Çanakkale'de de kalabilirim, gidip Hollanda'da da turist olarak kalabilirim. Ama istediğim yerde internet olan her yerde ben bu işi yapabiliyorum. Dolayısıyla asıl olayım buydu yani.

About working wherever they want, all mentioned different options, some say that they can easily go to their family houses for months. Some mentions making spontaneous decisions to go to a trip and, if they feel like it, they have the chance to stay longer where they go. Another informant, Umut (45, Interpreter & Translator) provides a variety of alternative places to work as a remote worker, in a way to make room for more free time in his life, by getting the small jobs out of the way piece by piece.⁵¹

Others tell about the alternative collective working places, which have been increasingly popular in big cities, especially in Istanbul. Those spaces are specifically designed for workers who do not have a determinate place of work. Kerim (30) explained how those places work in detail. He said that he preferred to go there since those places provided the chance to socialize with people from a variety of sectors. However, it is also not as relaxed as a regular coffee, thus the productivity is not negatively affected. In addition, it gave him a place to go in the morning just as going to the office. In terms of having a more productive time outside of the office, Hazal (44) made a similar comment by saying that because of her position at work, everyone had a question to ask her during the workday, which made it difficult to work in the office for her.⁵²

⁵¹ I'm in the cabin, the other interpreter is working, so I put a piece of music in my ear and translate, or I do it while waiting in line at the airport, I do a bit before the meeting starts. I try to leave as much free space in my life as possible. Let's say I'm getting it out of my way. For example, I did a lot of translation on municipal buses. (Kabindeyim, diğer tercüman çalışıyor, ben de kulağıma bir müzik takıp yazılı çeviri yapıyorum, ya da havaalanında sıra bekliyorum o sırada yapıyorum, toplantı başlamadan önce biraz yapıyorum. Mümkün olduğu kadar hayatımda özgür alan bırakmaya çalışıyorum. Aradan çıkarıyorum diyebiliriz. Mesela ben belediye otobüsünde de çok çeviri yaptım.)

⁵² But I was working in a place where everyone was asking me questions and I was not able to do my own work. I'm a home-loving person anyway, I'm very domesticated. I work very comfortably at night, towards the morning. Nobody should be around. So, working from home is suitable for me. (Ama mekânda ben herkesin bana soru sorduğu bir düzlemde çalışıyordum ve ben kendi işimi yapamıyordum. Ben evcimenim bir de zaten, çok evcilim. Geceleri çok rahat çalışıyorum, sabaha karşı. Hiç kimsenin olmaması lazım. O yüzden bana ev çalışması uygun.)

Finally, the main point addressed by most of the remote workers who like to be at home is that home is basically the place where one is the only rule-maker and regulator. Therefore, apart from being able to manage their personal spatial and temporal environment, they also describe home as a distinct closed area in which remote worker set his own world isolated from the rest of society. The elaboration regarding the outside world will be done later in data analysis. Still, the fundamental motto behind embracing remote work as a desired life can be formulated as “my house, my rules”. In parallel with that, Cemre (30) mentions how remote work has transformed people’s relations to their homes in a positive way in which they put more effort to make it cleaner, more liveable, and more personal, like “the return of human beings to the scenario in which they are primitive, human, not slaves anymore”:

During a one-hour break, cooking your own food, cleaning your own house, and doing something about yourself. Or I've been involved in this [working from home] for years, but even the people I thought they wouldn't be close to might turn to themselves [when working at home during pandemic], a little more and ask what I'm doing and why, am I happy with what I'm doing? That is the return of human beings to the scenario in which they are primitive, human, not slaves anymore. As I said in the other [the office], when I'm not hungry, food is there in front of me, when I'm hungry, there is no food at home, or I am being accountable for going to the toilet. That is very strange to me. But when at home, people return to themselves. Here, people who have nothing to do with it started to grow plants or something, and that kind of stuff.⁵³ (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

This powerful expression puts forward how remote work, more specifically work at home, can be conceptualised in terms of returning back to a human essence in which

⁵³ Bir saatlik bir molada gidip kendi yemeğini yapıp, kendi evini temizleyip, kendinle ilgili bir şeyleri kendin yapmak. Ya da ben yıllardır bunun [evden çalışma] içindeyim ama hiç yakınından geçmeyeceğini düşündüğüm insanlar bile [pandemide evden çalışırken] biraz daha kendilerine dönüp ben neyi ne için yapıyorum, yaptığım şeyden mutlu muyum diye sorabiliyor. Yani, aslında insanın kendi ilkel, insan olduğu senaryoya geri dönmesi kölelik sisteminden. Diğerinde [ofiste] dediğim gibi aç değilken önüme yemek konuyor, açım evde yemek yok, ya da tuvalete gidiyorum laf ediliyor falan. Garip bir ortam. Ama evde olduğunda insanlar kendilerine geri dönüyor. İşte hiç alakası olmayacak insanlar bitki falan bakmaya başladı. Ne bileyim, bu tip şeyler işte.

human beings set the limits and rules for their lives by themselves. Here the meaning of home is the personal and autonomous world of the worker. In fact, this definition addresses a very relevant discussion about the changing social role of home with the effect of the emergence of home-based work (Gurstein, 1991: 165). Moreover, in parallel to the point stated by the participant above, one camp in the literature states that home-based work leads to a return to a “Utopian time when family and work responsibilities were intermingled” (Gurstein, 1991: 177) and with the re-emergence of home as a “central unit in society with enhanced economic, educational and social functions” (Gurstein, 1991: 165).⁵⁴ On the other side, critiques directed to these optimistic prognoses argue that “individuals in these homes will lead increasingly more fragmented and isolated forms of existence, ultimately contributing to the disintegration of community life” (Gurstein, 1991: 165)⁵⁵. Mainly the optimistic view can be questioned whether the domestic dynamics are that friendly and peaceful considering gender relations, economic inequalities, and work-life balance. Also, further analysis is required to see the availability of such homes, as spatial facilities, for all remote workers. Those considerations will be addressed later in this chapter while discussing the *actual conditions*.

3.3.2. Actualizing one’s Self-Potential

The second concern that shapes remote workers’ narratives on their desired lives is about actualizing their potentials in areas they feel qualified and confident or are interested in. At this point, it is remarkable that nearly all are aware of what they are good at, and what kind of improvements they need to better realise themselves in the future. Accordingly, a common concern is about the role of creativity in their personal

⁵⁴ (See also: Nilles, 1976; Toffler, 1980; Mason & Jennings, 1982)

⁵⁵ (See also: Castells, 2000; Robins & Hepworth, 1988)

and working lives. As discussed in the first chapter, an important issue that gives rise to new conceptualisations of labour since late 20th century is the presupposition that information has become the central productive element and production has turned in to a creative, intellectual activity in post-industrial societies (Berardi, 2009). In parallel with that, it can be stated that nearly all informants participating in this study are engaged with a certain kind of cultural, intellectual, and informational production through their work. In this sense, all mentioned the role of creative and intellectual action in their lives in terms of their struggle to enjoy their creative potential either in a professional or personal level. For example, Gaye (33) explained her story of becoming a freelancer back in 2015 with the intention of enabling herself to realise her creative capacity:

It happened like this, 2015 was a year when very few people survived as freelancers, and that's when I decided I wanted to do it. Because I thought it could be more creative for me. Because I think publishing also requires a creative mind. Therefore, I interpret this as a bold step to improve myself further⁵⁶ (Gaye, 33, Book Editor).

Gaye also mentioned that how much she loved to be engaged with a totally intellectual activity, which makes her feel like rewarded, and fully satisfied⁵⁷. On the other side, however, not all interviewees agree on the perks of having a job which requires a creative mind is actually enabling oneself to be more creative. For instance, Hakan (39), who has graduated from engineering and shifted his career to web

⁵⁶ Şöyle oldu, 2015 yılı çok az insanın freelance hayatta kaldığı bir yıldır ve ben o zaman bunu yapmak istediğime karar verdim. Çünkü benim için daha kreatif olabileceğini düşünüyordum. Çünkü yayıncılık aynı zamanda kreatif bir zihin gerektiriyor bence. Dolayısıyla kendimi daha fazla geliştirmek için cesur bir adım olarak yorumluyorum bunu.

⁵⁷ I don't feel what appears to be the mental fatigue. Reading books is to search for a meaning. So, if I really fall in love when a file is sent to me... You know, there is a sense of victory in some professions, I feel that way. (Zihinsel yorgunluk olarak gözüken şey bana öyle gelmiyor. Bu insanın anlam arayışı, kitap okumak. Yani ben gerçekten bana bir dosya gönderildiğinde çarpılıyorsam... zafer kazanma duygusu vardır ya bazı mesleklerde, öyle hissediyorum.)

designing, film directing and venue management, says that he definitely doesn't prefer to introduce himself as a director as his profession, since he wants to put his job separated from his creative productions:

That's why engineering is my main job, and I specifically try not to turn others into my jobs, I mean, the things I produce. It seems to me that profession is something you should say as a sociological status. It is your adjective, like a label on you... I don't dream of making bigger things, bigger movies. My creativity should always remain at this level. But, of course, there is a completely ego-related side in what you are producing. It is my product.⁵⁸ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

Similarly, Nazan (45) explains how one can draw a line between one's job and one's main field of specialisation. She argues that:

From our childhood, we think that profession and field of specialisation should always be the same. But...what you earn money from and what you are really interested in may be different from each other. Therefore, as a source of income, I don't care if my profession is defined as a profession or not. Apart from that, I have my own formation, I have a way of seeing the world. I am an economist... That's what I feel really full of. Apart from that, I have many other talents. And by combining these skills with that knowledge and other knowledge of life, I reach the sources of making money, which we can call a profession, temporary or permanent... Maybe it's because my field isn't something like jewellery, or anything like that. For example, in sociology or political science you don't have a specific profession, it provides you a formation.⁵⁹ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Since the starting point of this thesis is questioning the meanings attributed to work by remote workers, I aim to elaborate on to what extent remote workers make sense of

⁵⁸ Yani o yüzden mühendislik asıl meslek, diğerlerinin de zaten meslek olmamasına çalışıyorum, ürettiğim şeylerin. Meslek o sosyoloji içinde söylemen gereken bir şeymiş gibi geliyor bana. Sıfat, üzerindeki şey... Daha büyük şeyler, daha büyük filmler yapmak gibi hayalim yok. Benim yaratıcılığım hep bu düzeyde kalmalı. Ama üretirkenki şeyin tamamen tabii bir egosal yanı var. O benim ürünüm.

⁵⁹ Şimdi meslek ile uzmanlık ya da alan bunların hep aynı olması gerekiyor gibi düşünüyoruz çocukluktan itibaren. Ama...para kazandığınız şey ile asıl ilgilendiğiniz şey birbirinden farklı olabilir. Dolayısıyla para kazandığım kaynak olarak mesleğimin, bir meslek olarak tanımlanıp tanımlanmaması çok umrumda değil. Onun dışında benim kendi formasyonum var, sahiplendiğim bir görme biçimim var. Ben iktisatçıyım... Benim asıl dolu hissettiğim şey orası. Onun dışında bir sürü başka yeteneğim var. Ve bu yeteneklerimi o bilgiyle ve hayatın başka başka bilgileriyle de birleştirerek meslek diyebileceğimiz para kazanma kaynaklarına ulaşıyorum, bunlar geçici olabilir, sürekli olabilir...Belki de benim alanım doğrudan kuyumculuk falan gibi bir şey olmadığı için böyle. Mesela sosyoloji, siyaset bilimi falan da öyle yani belirli bir mesleğin olmuyor formasyonun oluyor.

life through their work examining both their aspirations and actual experiences in working life. In brief, it will be argued that with the changing nature of work in the 21st century, cultural, informational, hence creative activities are also included in production processes. This leads to an expansion of the meaning of work in one's world of meaning. When it is analyzed together with the working conditions, it is seen that the relationship between workers and their own creative capacities has become an issue of relations of production. Therefore, concerns and desires regarding creative activities have begun to take a central place within work relations, rather being personal interests beyond production relations with obligations. In this sense, when I asked Hakan (39) who mentioned his will to separate his job as an engineer and his more creative activities in areas of web design and cinema, he said that he wants to preserve his freedom in the latter areas:

It's my job, but I give an evasive reply. Because I'm not a very good designer actually. I preserve my freedom. If I say I am a director now, I may not be able to direct very well if I get a job from there. Because I've always been a freelancer. That's why the artistic part outweighs me, while doing my own work. Because I provided my freedom with the income I made from engineering or by renting out my diploma. I'm actually trying to be freer [in creative action]. Now being a director and directing... Look at the directors of the series, it's a very straightforward job. If you go and look, they are simply administrators who has no creativity, straightforward people who try to manage 50 people in the set environment. That is all what you call a director. They write budgets, or something. We overestimate the word director.⁶⁰ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

⁶⁰ Mesleğim, ama kaçamak oynuyorum. Çünkü çok iyi bir tasarımcı değilim aslında ben. Özgürlüğümü koruyorum. Şimdi ben yönetmenim desem bana oradan iş gelse çok iyi yönetmenlik yapamayabilirim. Çünkü ben hep serbest çalıştım. O yüzden sanatçılık kısmı daha ağır basıyor bana, kendi işlerimi yapmakta. Çünkü özgürlüğümü ben mühendislikten yaptığım gelirle ya da diplomamı kiraya vererek sağlıyordum. [Yaratı faaliyetlerde] daha özgür kalmaya çalışıyorum aslında. Şimdi yönetmen olup yönetmenlik... Dizilerin yönetmenleri de yönetmen baktığın zaman. Ama çok düz bir iş o. Gitsen baksan hiçbir yaratıcılığı olmayan, dümdüz, set ortamındaki 50 kişiyi idare etmeye çalışan bir idareci aslında yönetmen dediğin de. Bütçe yazıyorlar falan. Yani kafamızda çok büyütüyoruz yönetmen lafını da.

Similarly, when I asked to Nazan (45) whether or not it is possible to combine one's personal areas of interests and professions, after she explained why they are usually separated, she said that it is something possible for the privileged:

This unfortunately leads to inefficiency. That's why thinkers, writers, poets, artists, academicians, they are always the children of the rich. To be able to do that, you should be in a situation where you don't need to earn money. If you go and work in constructions like crazy, you won't be able to read that much. It is a problem of inefficiency and time. So not everyone can do it, only privileged people can.⁶¹
(Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Those two answers on why it is not possible to reach one's own creative potential while performing it within the boundedness of work relations addresses the question regarding how those relations are organized and how they affect the actual working experiences. These will be evaluated in the third axis of the theoretical model under *actual conditions*.

Finally, Gaye (33) summarizes how the creative capacity of workers are eroded within corporate relations and how remote work - here she mentions specifically freelancing - has emerged as an alternative trend to change those relations:

So, if I'm going to edit a book, I want to choose it myself, and If I were a graphic designer, it would be the same. I worked in an advertising agency for a very short time as a copywriter, and my motivation for entering to that job was purely that: To produce something from scratch for a different brand each time. Okay, very nice. But at some point, you enter a phase in which you can't choose anymore. Or you have to do what you are told as how it is told. That's where the creativity comes to an end. I don't associate it with being a writer or reading books. If I were a graphic designer, they would probably force me to draw the clouds in white, and I wouldn't be able to decide whether they should be in any other colour. Among graphic designers, many of them also started

⁶¹ Bu da işte ne yazık ki şuna yol açıyor, verimsizlik. O yüzden şey vardır ya düşünür yazar şair, çizer, akademisyen hep zengin çocukları olur. Sizin bunu yapabilmeniz için paraya çok ihtiyacınız olmaması lazım. Sizin deliler gibi gidip inşaatlarda çalışırsanız o kadar okuyamazsınız. Verimsizlik ve zaman kullanım sorunu. Yani herkes de bunu yapamaz, çok istisnai insanlar yapabilir

freelancing. I think this is the reason behind the growth of this trend. As of 2017 we have grown as a mob⁶². (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

3.3.3. Capacity to Change: Deciding One's Own Future

In order to understand the views of remote worker in remote working, I asked them whether they prefer their current jobs and working remotely on purpose in order to understand their engagement with their jobs. In general, most of them have a story in which they quitted their previous jobs since they did not feel satisfied or had various problems which made them unwilling to continue to work. At this point, I questioned what they are looking for in a job, or what makes remote work more preferable in seeking their aspirations. What makes some jobs undesirable will be discussed under the second axis of the theoretical model, *undesired lives*. Regarding their aspirations in looking for a job, they generally mention the conditions in their corporate lives in which they did not get a voice either regarding the work they do, or their future. This feeling of not having an out leads workers to seek an alternative in which they can decide and shape their futures more freely.

For example, Begüm (30) and Bahar (32), who both quitted their previous jobs in a big

⁶² Yani eğer bir kitabın editörlüğünü yapacaksam bunu ben seçmek istiyorum. Atıyorum grafik tasarımcı olsaydım da böyle olacaktı. Ben bir metin yazarı olarak reklam ajansında çok kısa bir dönem çalıştım ve girme motivasyonum tamamen şuydu: Her defasında farklı bir marka için sıfırdan bir şey üretecek olmak. Tamam, çok güzel. Ama bir noktada şeye geliyorsun, seçemiyorsun. Ya da sana söyleneni söylendiği gibi yapmak zorundasın. İşte kreatifliğin kaybolduğu nokta o. Bunu yazarlık ya da kitap okumakla bağdaştırmıyorum. Grafik tasarımcı olsaydım da bana muhtemelen bulutları zorla beyaz çizdireceklerdi ve ben onların başka bir renk olmasına karar veremiyor olacaktım. Onların da çoğu freelance şeyine başladı. Bu işin büyümesinin altında da bu yatıyor bence. Biz bir grup olarak büyüdük 2017 itibariyle.

company and started their own businesses, mentioned that they desired to have a say about their works and a chance to improve themselves and shape their futures as they wished.

Actually, my previous job was in a very big company, and it was my first job experience. And when I started, I realized that a big company isn't quite something for me. You don't have a lot of say, the system is very ossified, so it seems like it takes a lot of effort to change things.⁶³ (Begüm, 30, Fashion Designer)

Although I have just stated that I wanted to leave corporate life at the point where it no longer supports my personal view of life, as I said, that life already has a comfort in itself. Because it's clear that what you have to do, it's clear when you have to do it. As long as it is okay, it's okay, you don't need to do anything else. Because there is nothing that you should improve further. So, you don't have that consciousness. Therefore, since I am the only person in every action and every decision now, in my own business, I had a hard time with this at first. But that's exactly what it is, that's what I want.⁶⁴ (Bahar, 32, Designer)

Likewise, Cemre (30) mentioned how she felt stuck in İstanbul and looked for a way out. She decided to quit her corporate job and started a business, specifically a remote one, in order to have the mobility which will enable her to move wherever she wants:

I was born and raised in Artvin and İstanbul is a very big city for me in every way. Too many cars, too many clothes, too many people... Everything is too much for me. I always give the example of Artvin's population, which is 25 thousand, and that of only İstanbul University is 75 thousand. So, it doesn't work for me. In this context, I had to do something professionally to get out of İstanbul, because when I look at job postings about my job in other small cities, I don't have any. No. So I had to start my own business. After installing this, I will apply to the Netherlands in June.⁶⁵ (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

⁶³ Aslında önceki çalıştığım yer çok büyük bir şirketti ve benim ilk iş tecrübem orasıydı. Ve başladığımda büyük bir şirketin pek de benlik olmadığını fark etmeye başladım. Çok fazla söz hakkın olmuyor, sistem çok kemikleşmiş, dolayısıyla bir şeyleri değiştirmek çok çaba gerektiriyor gibi.

⁶⁴ Her ne kadar az önce benim kişisel hayat görüşümü artık desteklemediği noktada kurumsal hayattan ayrılmak istediğimi belirtmiş olsam da o hayatın dediğim gibi kendi içinde zaten bir konforu var. Çünkü ne yapman gerektiği belli ne zamana kadar yapman gerektiği belli. Okay olunca okay, başka bir şey yapmana gerek yok. Çünkü sürekli üzerine katmanı gerektirecek bir şey yok. Öyle bir bilincin yok yani. Dolayısıyla kendi işini kurmak adına gerçekleştireceğim her eylem ve her kararda tek kişi olduğum için ilk etapta bununla ilgili zorlandım. Ama bu tam olarak öyle bir şey, istediğim bu.

⁶⁵ Ben Artvin'de doğup büyüdüm ve İstanbul benim için her açıdan çok büyük bir şehir. Çok fazla araba, çok fazla kıyafet, çok fazla insan... Her şey çok fazla benim için. Hep şey örneğini veririm Artvin nüfusu 25 bin, İstanbul Üniversitesi 75 bin. Olmuyor yani. Bu bağlamda da benim İstanbul'dan çıkmak için kurumsal anlamda bir şeyler yapmam gerekiyordu, çünkü diğer küçük şehirlerde kendi

At this point, mobility in a spatial sense associated with remote work can be extended to ‘mobility’ in one’s life decisions, in the sense of a capacity to change one’s living conditions, and hence the future.

Moreover, the desire to leave the country and also the feelings about the urban life as mentioned by Cemre (30) above and also voiced commonly by other participants, opens a new discussion on the sense of belonging to society which will also be elaborated under *actual conditions*.

3.3.4. Core Concerns: A Meaningful Life of One’s Own

The first axis of the theoretical model addresses the narratives of remote workers about their future aspirations, work-related expectations, desires and self-evaluations regarding their own capacities and capabilities. In this regard, they commonly mention their lifelong questionings on what kind of a life they want to live and what is the role of work in that life.

From the data obtained for this study, three main considerations have emerged in such a search. Firstly, since work itself is a temporal and spatial experience, they mention that the sense of autonomy over temporal and spatial arrangements in working life brings a sense of freedom. By referencing to Torsten Hägerstrand, a pioneering figure in time-geographic analysis of social relations, we might think about individuals as “purposeful agents engaged in projects that take up time through movement in space” which enables us to explore individual biographies as “‘life paths in time-space’ within finite time resources and the ‘friction of distance’” (Hägerstrand, 1975 as cited

işimle ilgili iş ilanlarına baktığımda yok. Yok yani. O yüzden de kendi işimi kurmam gerekiyordu. Bunu kurduktan sonra haziran ayında Hollanda’ya başvuru yapacağım.

in Harvey, 1989: 211). In that sense, seeking autonomy regarding time and space addresses a search for the autonomy over determining one's life-path by oneself.

The desire for actualizing one's self-potential has emerged as a second consideration. As discussed under the key requirements of remote work, it can be stated that informational, cultural, and intellectual works are more prone to organized remotely since they are also digitalizable. In that sense, one's self-potential about intellectual, artistic, and scientific creativity has become a matter of professional life per se. That is why, examining worker's relation to their own creativity and intellectual capacity becomes more and more important under the conditions where people drive, so to speak, their entire existence to work. Accordingly, the desire of discovering and realizing the self-capacity together with the desire for a free practicing of this potential have appeared as the second consideration of remote workers.

Finally, in parallel with the considerations regarding temporal and spatial autonomy and reaching the self-potential, remote workers mention their willingness to have the right to make changes both in their lives and working relations. In a sense, they address sense of mobility in both time and space, which will provide them a mobility in their life-paths.

In the end, contrary to the arguments on the loss of significance of work in social and individual relations, it is seen that remote workers have a lot to say about what kind of meaning they are looking for in themselves through their work. When describing "ideal" working conditions or jobs, each points out something meaningful, either for the common good or for their own selves, which could pullulate from certain kind of a

work. In parallel with the common sense, many of the informants mention that they care less about the money than their well-being and having a peaceful life⁶⁶:

I've always had something, and I've felt this way before being fired, losing a job, or even being unable to find a job. It is not independent of the conditions of the country. I know what the conditions of the country are. But I guess I never felt like I would lose my job or be entirely safe. At my worst, I had a feeling like I can do something with my own skills and make a living anyhow and make that money. Yes, I'm not rich, but it has been never my first thing. I think money can be made somehow. Peace peace peace.⁶⁷(Çağla, 33, Content Manager)

However, 'happiness' is not the only motivation in searching for a meaning in life through work. For example, Hakan (39) says that work is an act of resistance, in parallel with his conception of work as a survival strategy. In that sense, a possible meaning of work cannot be happiness in life, rather serving for a good future/society and interacting with other people:

No. For example, if you ask, I will say I am unhappy. I mean, because I never had a definition of happiness, I never dreamed of a job. An area where you constantly expend energy and take a stand against something, something you are forced to do does not actually make you very happy. I do not do the social opposition on purpose, I do it reflexively. But now I'm looking at it, what I need to do is, yes, the act of shooting something, organizing something gives me pleasure. Of course, every film I make has a counterpart, it progresses by touching someone... These are mostly things that have been put forward for common good⁶⁸. (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

⁶⁶ Benim hayalim şuydu, stresi mümkün olduğunca az mutlu olacağım bir iş. Ben hep bugüne kadar iş değiştirmelerimin %95'i mutlu olmadığım içindir. Orada ben mutlu değildim, o işte mutlu değildim. İnsanlarla bir şekilde anlaşamadık, uymadı, ben uymadım onlar bana uymadı vs. bu tamamen huzur benim kafamdaki ideal işim. (Mert, 34, Product Engineer)

⁶⁷ Bende hep şey vardı, daha önce işten çıkarılma, işini kaybetme, hatta iş bulamama gibi durumlarda da böyle hissettim. Ülkenin durumundan da bağımsız değil. Ülkenin de ne durumda olduğunun farkındayım. Ama sanırım hiç ne işimi kaybederim ne de tamam güvendeyim gibi hissim olmadı. En kötü kendi becerilerimle bir şey yapar ve her türlü bir şekilde kendimi geçindiririm ve o parayı kazanırım gibi bir şeyim vardı. Evet zengin olmam ama zaten ilk şeyim de hiç o olmadı. Her türlü kazanılır para diye düşünüyorum. Huzur huzur huzur.

⁶⁸ Yok. Yani mutlu musun desen mutsuzum derim mesela. Yani çünkü hiç mutluluk tanımım olmadı. Hayalimdeki meslek de hiçbir zaman olmadı. Sürekli enerji harcadığım, karşı duruş sergilediğin bir alan, mecbur kaldığın bir şey aslında çok mutlu etmez. Bilerek yapmıyorum aslında, toplumsal karşı duruşu refleks olarak yapıyorum. Ama şimdi bakıyorum aslında yapmam gereken şey evet bir şey çekme eylemi, bir şey organize etmek bana keyif veriyor. Yaptığım her filmin bir karşılığı tabii ki var, birilerine dokunarak ilerliyor... Bunlar çoğunda toplumsal fayda için ortaya atılmış şeyler.

Likewise, Bahar (32) mentioned how he turns his workspace to a collective “awareness workshop” with the aim of coming together with others and realizing that everyone can create and the space in life for doing something totally belongs to them, including every step of the production process:

In these workshops on awareness, I am trying to show that (work of one's own) can be created and doable. Because I think it's all about noticing. That is what we personally feel the pain of. I'm saying something independent of work and power right now. We can act in a monotonous or reactive manner about our relationships without being aware of it. I think the points where we can look at what we feel, what we do, why we do it, maybe dare to do this or create space-time actually make us who we are⁶⁹. (Bahar, 32, Designer)

Very similar to Bahar's point of view, Hakan (39) identified what satisfies him in life as coming together with people sharing similar ideological standpoints in life, create a common space in which production is possible with a wholistic attitude towards work including control over both intellectual and manual aspects of it:

Therefore, the areas where I can realize my own ideas will satisfy me. Or creating a new space with the people with whom you have ideological commonalities will satisfy me. Or creating a new space with the people with whom you have ideological commonalities will satisfy me. Yes, I am a producer. Constantly producing projects, generating ideas, making films. But due to my engineering, I am a person who can also edit it, can shoot, can write, and can find its own fund.⁷⁰(Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

In a sense, they address an imagination of an alternative common space, may be an alternative way of establishing the *social being*, in which work and production available for everyone with its every aspect, and it produces for the common good.

⁶⁹ Zaten (kendine ait bir işin) yaratılabilir, yapılabilir olduğunu da bir şekilde göstermeye çalışıyorum bu farkındalık atölyelerinde. Çünkü bu tamamen bence fark etmekle ilgili. Bireysel olarak zaten sancısını duyduğumuz şey aslında o ya. İşten güçten bağımsız bir şey söylüyorum şu anda. İlişkilerimizle ilgili farkında olmadan, tekdüze veya tepkisel davranışlarda bulunabiliyoruz. Ne hissettiğimize ne yaptığımıza, neden yaptığımıza bakabildiğimiz, belki buna cesaret edebildiğimiz ya da alan-zaman yaratabildiğimiz noktalar aslında bizi biz yapıyor bence.

⁷⁰ O yüzden kendi fikirlerimi gerçekleştirebileceğim alanlar beni tatmin edecektir. Ya da ideolojik olarak ortaklaştığım insanlarla birlikte yeni bir alan yaratmak beni tatmin edecektir. Evet, üreten birisiyim ben. Sürekli proje üreten, fikir üreten, film çeken. Ama mühendisliğimden kaynaklı bunun kurgusunu da yapabilen, çeke de bilen, yaza da bilen, fonunu da kendini bulabilen birisiyim.

3.4. Undesired Lives: Self-Evaluation as a Challenge to the Outer Restrictions

The second axis of the theoretical model is set as the *undesired lives* which consists of remote workers' self-evaluation and approaches towards the social, economic, and political conditions they are facing. In that sense, while the narratives on desires set the ground for the search for meaning in work, that of which is undesired points out a critique of work experience. As explained earlier, the theoretical model is constructed in such a way to link the axes to each other in three main lines on setting the rules of the working life, reaching to self-capacity and capacity to decide one's own future. On the basis of that, three main considerations emerged from the narratives of remote workers on their undesired lives: limitations over temporal and spatial arrangements; being suppressed in working life through standardisation, hierarchy and ethical dilemmas; and uncertainties about the future.

3.4.1. Limits and Pressure: Plaza Life

The reason why remote work provides a fruitful area of study on the question of the changing forms and conditions of work in the 21st century is that it allows altering some fundamental elements of working life that we used to know. In the simplest sense, the notion of "going to work" has begun to lose its meaning since work has become something that comes with/to you with the more flexible temporal and spatial organization of working life. On the other hand, the traditional way of working, in a certain place within certain temporal limitations, is still the most common way of organizing work currently. Therefore, thinking about and describing remote work always comes with a comparison with the traditional rules and regulations. This is also what emerged from participants' comments when they are asked to elaborate

remote work as an emerging trend. In general, working remotely is described as the opposite of what is widely called as *plaza life* or *office work*.

In that sense, the overall tendency when comparing remote work with plaza life or office work appears to be emphasizing the advantages of remote work. The main argument in considering remote work as an advantage, or an “opportunity”, is that it emancipates workers from the meaningless and exploitative rules and regulations of the common working life. Also, those rules and regulations are mostly about the working-hours and the socialisation process established within the limited rules of offices and plazas. As discussed previously regarding the desire to have a voice on one’s own life, it can be said that the limitations of plaza life or offices are described as what takes this from workers’ hands. In line with that, Kerim (30) explains how he deliberately avoids working in an office and why plazas are coming to an end:

But in the future, I believe that these plazas or something, maybe in 10 years, will come to an end. Perspective is changing. People no longer find it strange to work remotely. Until now, companies have entered those high-rise buildings with name badges just for prestige. Those elevator lines... I have hardworking relatives in those buildings, the man's shift ends at 5, but he can only take the elevator at 6. It's literally torture to people. Some of them go out at 12 o'clock and some at 1 o'clock so that there is no crowd on the way to lunch. It's a real mess, there's no need for such things. Our life is not just about work. Our life and health are important. First of all, time is important, so why would I waste my time with such things? Managers need to know this now. ⁷¹(Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

⁷¹ Ama ileride ben inanıyorum ki bu plazalar falan belki bir 10 seneye kalmaz azalarak bitecek. Bakış açısı değişiyor. İnsanlar artık yadırgamıyorlar uzaktan çalışmayı. Zaten şimdiye kadar şirketler sadece prestij için o yüksek yüksek binalara yaka kartlarıyla girdiler. O asansör sıraları falan... O binalarda çalışan akrabalarım var, adamın mesaisi 5’te bitiyor, 6’da asansöre binebiliyor ancak. İnsanlara resmen eziyet. Öğlen yemeğe giderken yoğunluk olmasın diye bir kısmı saat 12’de bir kısmı saat 1’de çıkıyor, Resmen kargaşa, gerek yok böyle şeylere. Hayatımız işten ibaret değil yani. Yaşamımız, sağlığımız önemli. Her şeyden önce vakit önemli yani, vaktimi niye harcayacağım öyle şeylerle? Yöneticilerin bunu bilmesi lazım artık.

One thing that is remarkable in his comment is that he makes a prediction about the disappearance of plazas in 10 years, which is mainly because it is not efficient and desirable anymore. As he expressed at the end, he invites the administrators to realise that offices don't enable productivity anymore. In fact, he suggested me to look at some surveys demonstrating how remote work increased the level of efficiency, as a contribution to this thesis. In a way, as mentioned in the literature review, he conveyed the approach which examines remote work in terms of efficiency and manageability, looking from the eyes of the "manager" of working processes, rather than the worker.

More importantly, as is seen, in the centre of Kerim's criticism there is the issue of the confiscation of time. It is remarkable that when work is defined in the limits of that plazas, as described above, everything that is related with work, including the social status attributed to work and the time allocated to it, has become meaningless and unworthy. Quite interestingly, later in the interview, he admits that he constantly thinks about work, even during his leisure time.⁷² This fact can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it can be said that unless one loves his/her work, which Kerim does, as he expressed so very clearly above, allocating the majority of one's time to work doesn't seem to be an issue. But when it is suppressed and limited with outer restrictions, it becomes suffocating and simply a waste. However, another interpretation is also possible by which one can argue that while being in the office bring to surface the suffocating and appropriating features of working relations,

⁷² So, I'm constantly thinking about work. For example, even when I am free, I switch to the computer. Even if I'm not doing anything on the computer, if I'm not designing, I'm sitting and researching news about the industry. (Yani sürekli iş düşünüyorum. Mesela boş kaldığımda bile bilgisayara geçiyorum. Bilgisayarda hiçbir şey yapmıyorsam bile, tasarım yapmıyorsam oturuyorum sektörle alakalı haberler araştırıyorum.)

remote work masks these conditions and makes them invisible, even makes them seem like some personal traits of one's own. In line with the latter interpretation, Nazan (45) stated that:

The fact that you are working shift does not mean that you are not working at home. In other words, many people working shift were also working remotely. But it was not named. It was like, "I have work, I couldn't finish my work, let me continue at home".⁷³ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Still, most of the participants agree on the fact that the pressure on the working hours makes work less meaningful:

The thing is very interesting to me and I guess I will never understand it, maybe I will understand one day if I become an employer. Fully filling 8-9 hours of working hours. So, for example, if I have a responsibility to write for 5 hours that day and produce 5 units of something, and if I can produce it in 3 hours or 5 hours, anyway, why do I sit there in the rest of the time, why do I get bored and try to focus on work? And why am I being forced to linger and do something other than work? I really can't understand this.⁷⁴ (Çağla, 33, Content Manager)

Apart from the domination over time in office lives, another commonly mentioned aspect of plaza life is its effect on one's whole lifestyle. That means, most of the interviewees mentioned that it is possible to be healthier, less stressful, and freer out of the obligations of the office life:

I don't like getting up early in the morning. I really don't like it at all. I don't like having to be somewhere at a certain time. I'm not the type to be late for an appointment, nor am I the undisciplined type But, the morning commute always scares me a little. I went to work a lot, I always went to school, but for example, when I wake up, I can put my coffee and think about what I will do today, without having to go out in a hurry, to get my coffee and go to the table at home, to leave the house and go to the grocery store and buy something and continue... Or to be

⁷³ Sizin mesaili çalışıyor olmanız evde çalışmıyor olmadığınız anlamına gelmiyor aslında. Yani mesaili 82edia828282 birçok insan uzaktan da çalışıyorlardı. Ama bunun adı konmuyordu. Bu şey gibiydi, "işim var, işlerimi bitiremedim, evde devam edeyim" idi.

⁷⁴ Şey çok ilginç geliyor bana ve ben bunu hiç anlayamayacağım sanırım, belki işveren olursam bir gün anlarım. 8-9 saat çalışma saatinin tam tamına doldurulması. Yani mesela benim günlük atıyorum 5 saat yazı yazma 5 birim bir şey üretme sorumluluğum varsa ve ben bunu 3 saatte ya da 5 saatte, her neyse, üretebiliyorsam geri kalan zaman içerisinde ben neden orada oturup, kendimi sıkıp bunaltıp işe odaklanmaya çalışıp, ya da oyalanıp iş dışında bir şey yapmak zorunda bırakılıyorum? Gerçekten bunu anlayamıyorum.

able to say that I am very bored today, I can do this in the evening and go for a walk, frankly, gives me a sense of freedom.⁷⁵ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Departing from what Nazan says about the traditional expectations from a worker, such as getting up early in the morning and being present in a certain place of work, the meaning of having a job today can be questioned in a broader sense by applying the perspective of those who don't have a job which obliges the worker to meet those expectations. In other words, the daily practices Nazan mentions above which is elaborated as a sense of freedom could be quite the opposite from the eyes of an unemployed. That means, having a cup of coffee in the morning and thinking about "what to do today" and going for a walk after feeling overwhelmed at home could be expressed with the same wording but in a much more depressing sense by an unemployed person. At that point, the usual dichotomy between freedom and obligations in making sense of a daily practice appears as a question mark.

However, this is not to argue that one should be grateful for having a job under any conditions, but to question the complexity of the relations that determines the feeling of having a job or not. The questioning of the relations established within the limited period of time and space within a workplace is also discussed by interviewees of this study from a critical perspective. They point out those relations as mostly hierarchical, oppressive, and ethically problematic. That narrative leads us to the second consideration in the undesired lives which also includes the concern of not being able to reach the self-potential.

⁷⁵ Ben sabah erken kalkmayı hiç sevmiyorum. Gerçekten hiç sevmiyorum. Belirli bir saatte bir yerde olma zorunluluğunu sevmiyorum. Randevuma falan geç giden birisi değilim disiplinsiz birisi de değilim. Fakat sabah işe gitmek şeyi her zaman beni biraz zorlar. Çok işe gittim hep okula gittim ama mesela uyandığım zaman telaşla dışarı çıkmak zorunda olmadan kahvemi koyup bugün ben neler yapıcım diye düşünebilmek, kahvemi alıp evde masaya geçmek, arada evden çıkıp bakkala gidip bir şey alıp devam edebilmek falan... Ya da ya bugün çok canım sıkkın birkaç saat, bunu akşam da yapabilirim diyip bir yürüyüşe çıkabilmek bana özgürlük duygusu veriyor acıkası.

3.4.2. Standardization and Hierarchy

“A kind of strange nuisance coming from top to down.” (Mert, 34, Product Engineer)

As cited previously from Aysel (44), the relations of discipline and control mechanisms become concrete in a space, the office, within the working life. On the basis of that, most of the participants mentions specific kinds of relations in a workspace which makes it undesirable. Those are commonly about the hierarchical relations, which also links to the issue of the lack of merit-based understanding, the ethical and political environment which usually conflicts with workers worldview, hence deprives workers from applying their own state of mind and causes standardisation. Gaye (33) said that she was very much enthusiastic the first time she started to work in a publishing house but got disappointed when faced with the corrupted hierarchical pressures there:

Now, for example, I remember very clearly the first day I started working in a publishing house and I was incredibly happy. In other words, we will prepare my teachers' books inside, and people that I could not imagine before are sitting in my next room. So, you can't believe it. It was very fascinating to me. And you think everything will go on like this. But it's not, it's an institution and there's a man at the helm and at the end of the day you have to do whatever that man wants.⁷⁶
(Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

Likewise, Tansel (51) who currently works as a software developer in an international company, and have a long working experience in a governmental organisation previously, mentions how, in fact, working regularly, in an office, could be more preferable if working conditions and relations in that institutional context weren't that bad:

⁷⁶ Şimdi ben mesela yayınevinde çalışmaya başladığım ilk günü çok net hatırlıyorum ve inanılmaz mutluydum. Yani içeride hocalarımın kitaplarını hazırlayacağız ve benim daha önce hayalini kuramadığım insanlar yan odamda oturuyorlar falan. İnanamıyorsun yani. Benim için çok büyüleyiciydi. Ve her şeyin böyle devam edeceğini düşünüyorsun. Ama değil, orası bir kurum ve oranın başında bir adam var ve o adam ne isterse onu yapmak zorundasın günün sonunda.

Working otherwise, I think, is more advantageous for the general. In other words, it is more advantageous for the employees in general. I would prefer to work that way. But working conditions are unfortunately not very preferable. There are serious problems with merit. I had to work with people I had to report to but found very inefficient. They have always changed, and I did not make any effort to come to such positions, I did not want to, I did not accept suggestions either. But even being in such an environment is very uncomfortable for me. The unqualified in the public sector become a manager at work, the targets they set with insufficient knowledge, the projects and calendars imposed without evaluation by employees who can evaluate the situation much better and who are more competent in the field, cause a lot of trouble for the employees.⁷⁷ (Tansel, 51, Software Developer)

As Tansel addresses, one of the means of pressure in workplaces where hierarchical power relations are dominating the ways of working is setting unrealistic deadlines which makes realising a work properly, hence causes alienation and loss of enthusiasm:

Here I am freer, in the other there are things like; top management, promises made to senior management... You can't promise that a mobile application will be developed, okay, I'll take it out in a week. You will go and talk about it first. The man gives a deadline and says it ends in 10 days. Is something like this possible? Very tight timelines are coming. You are trying to do 5 projects in a row. There are no people on the team. It doesn't grow. Then those at the top put pressure on the managers. Your manager puts pressure on you, you go, you put pressure on your own employee. A strange affliction from top to down.⁷⁸ (Mert, 34, Product Engineer)

⁷⁷ Diğer türlü çalışmak bence genel için daha avantajlı bir şey. Yani çalışanların geneli için daha avantajlı. Ben de o şekilde çalışmayı tercih edebilirdim. Ama çalışma koşulları maalesef pek tercih edilebilir değil. Liyakatle ilgili çok ciddi problemler var. Ben rapor vermek zorunda bırakıldığım ama çok liyakatsiz bulduğum insanlarla çalışmak durumunda bırakıldım. Onlar hep değişti, benim de o tür görevlere gelmeye dair bir çabam olmadı, istemedim zaten, önerileri de 85edia etmedim. Ama yani öyle bir ortamın içinde bulunmak bile çok rahatsızlık veriyor bana. Kamuda 85edia858585, işte müdür olur amir olur, onların yetersiz bilgiyle koyduğu hedefler, durumu çok daha iyi değerlendirebilecek çok daha alana hâkim çalışanlarla değerlendirme yapmadan dayatılan proje ve takvimler, çalışanlar üzerinde çok sıkıntı yaratıyor.

⁷⁸ Burada daha özgürüm, diğerinde şöyle şeyler var; üst yönetimler, üst yönetimlere verilen sözler... Bir mobil uygulamada bir geliştirme yapılacak, tamam ben bunu bir haftaya çıkartırım, diyerek söz veremezsin. Sen bunu önce gidip konuşacaksın. Adam bir deadline veriyor ve diyor ki 10 güne biter bu. Ya böyle bir şey mümkün mü? Çok sıkışık timeline'lar geliyor. Üst üste 5 tane proje yapmaya çalışıyorsun. Ekipte insan yok. Yetişmiyor. Sonra işte müdürlere üst taraftakiler baskı yapıyor. Senin müdürün sana baskı yapıyor, sen gidiyorsun kendi çalışanına baskı yapıyorsun. Yukardan aşağı gelen bir tuhaf bir sıkıntı.

Therefore, office is commonly labelled as a means of pressure, as a disturbing place which makes home a great alternative to it:

I'm not very open to the office anyway. The office can become a pressure channel. I used to see this a lot in the association. My partner at work would come late at that time. The woman would storm the whole office. Something very disturbing for the office environment. Office environment can make you very open to mobbing, hierarchy, and many other things.⁷⁹ (Hazar, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

Another dimension of these repressive relations embodied in the workplace is the political and ethical dilemmas that workers are facing when their work contributes to something, they don't feel they belong to or agree on personally. In this respect, there is a certain doubt about to what extent working remotely can overcome those political and ethical dilemmas by only altering the spatial and temporal arrangements. At this point, the attitude shaped towards such a concern is rather going out of strictly instructional and corrupted sectors and create autonomous areas of work, if there is any chance to do so. For example, Hakan (39) who does freelance web designs for several NGO projects explained how he intentionally stays away from those kinds of institutional sectors to be able to stay freer:

Frankly, I am disgusted after entering those environments. Everyone has an ego, everyone has a project, it's a situation where everything revolves around money or egos. I chose not to go there instead of going there because I would get distance from the cinema. Because I know what it is. The same goes for construction sites. I have always worked in big companies. I know very well where those coins were taken from, I was standing on the top layer. That's why I was kicked out because of the steepness. Cinema is also bad in Turkey. Production is also bad; the TV series industry is also bad. As tempting as it may be, its exploitation and poor production are also bad. And you won't be able to do anything original. That's why, as I said, I always chose these to stay away and stay original.⁸⁰ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

⁷⁹ Ya ben zaten ofise çok açık biri değilim. Ofis bir baskı aracına dönebiliyor. Dernekte bunu çok göürdüm. İşteki partnerim geç gelirdi o zamanlar. Kadın bütün ofiste fırtınalar estirirdi. Ofis ortamı için çok rahatsız edici bir şey. Ofis ortamı seni mobbinge, hiyerarşiye ve bir sürü şeye çok açık hale getirebiliyor. Ve sen danışma 86edia8686, dayanışma 86edia8686, acil yardım hattı vs. değilsen bir ofiste yapılan işler ne kadar olabilir ki? Evde de yapabilirsin.

⁸⁰ O ortamlara girdikten sonra tiksiniyorum açıkçası. Herkeste bir ego, herkesin bir projesi var havaları, her şeyin para ya da egolar üzerinden döndüğü bir durum. Ben oraya gidip sinemadan soğuyacağıma

Furthermore, participants mention how political and ethical dilemmas embedded in the working relations make workers feel ashamed, guilty or hypocritical for being a part of those institutional or sectoral structures, beyond feeling only a sense of uneasiness. For instance, Bahar (32) who starts her own business on the basis of eco-friendly design, talked about how she felt ashamed while working in a big company which she thinks commits a crime against nature:

Because if you ask me what my reason is, even this alone may be a reason: it is a telecommunication company, now 5G will come, for example, but I am also a person who has read about the real harm of this to the nature a long time ago and is ashamed of it. So, I didn't want it anymore. To take part in such a fiction in any way, to take a role.⁸¹ (Bahar, 32, Designer)

Similarly, Tansel (51) explained how he couldn't bear to be a part of a project that he found ethically very problematic:

For example, while working [at my old workplace], I also became aware of projects that I did not find politically correct. How can I say? For example, the task of preparing the "Big Brother" style applications as a project was given to a group that I was included. I felt very uncomfortable with this. So, if it's going to be used in a way that I think is morally right, then I feel great pleasure, but even being in the other is a great discomfort.⁸² (Tansel, 51, Software Developer)

In sum, the traditional workplaces which are offices, plazas, institutional places are described as environments that allow the practice of hierarchical power relations,

gitmemeyi tercih ettim. Ne olduğunu biliyorum çünkü. Şantiyelerde de aynı şeyler geçerli. Ben büyük firmalarda çalıştım hep. O paraların nereden alındığını ne olduğunu çok iyi biliyorum, en üst katmanda duruyordum. O yüzden diklikten dolayı atıldım. Türkiye'de sinema da kötü. Üretim de kötü, dizi sektörü de kötü. Ne kadar cazip de gelse sömürüsü de kötü üretimi de kötü. Bir de özgün hiçbir iş yapamayacaksınız. Ben o yüzden dediğim gibi uzak kalmak, özgün kalmak için hep bunları seçtim.

⁸¹ Çünkü benim sebebim ne diye sorarsan, tek başına şu bile bir sebep olabilir: orası bir telekomünikasyon firması, şimdi 5G gelecek mesela, fakat ben aynı zamanda bunun doğaya gerçekten zararı ile ilgili okumaları çok zaman önce yapmış ve bundan hicap duyan bir insanım. Artık istemedim yani. Herhangi bir şekilde öyle bir kurgunun içerisinde yer almak, rol almak.

⁸² Mesela [eski iş yerimde] çalışırken politik olarak doğru bulmadığım projelerden de haberdar oldum. Nasıl söyleyeyim, "Big Brother" tarzı uygulamaların proje olarak ön hazırlığının yapılması görevi benim de olduğum bir gruba verilmişti mesela. Bundan çok büyük bir rahatsızlık duydum. Yani eğer ahlaken doğru bulduğum şekilde kullanılacaksa o zaman büyük bir keyif duyuyorum ama diğerinin içinde yer almak bile çok büyük bir rahatsızlık veriyor.

various kinds of mobbing, and ethical and political pressures. As a result, as Çağla (33) puts it, more regulation in such institutional frameworks addresses more mobbing since the individual existence of workers means nothing in those places⁸³. This framework drawn by remote worker participants presents a powerful story about how remote workers struggle to preserve their political, ethical, and personal standpoints in life against the pressure and domination surrounding them within the complexity of working relations. In that sense, the possibilities of remote work bring to that struggle appears as a crucial discussion point, in terms of to what extent it forces back work from those oppressive relations, as it gets workers away from workplaces.

3.4.3. Precarity

Work in contemporary social theory is commonly discussed in terms of it is becoming more and more insecure, short-term, and precarious, by which an *age of insecurity* is addressed (Tweedie, 2013). Apart from the debate over whether it has brought the complete end of the kinds of lifeworks, which people can surely identify their professions that will last for a lifetime (Fevre, 2007; Doogan, 2001), it can be said that widely practiced short-term employment types feed the feeling of insecurity. Accordingly, as becoming more and more widely practiced, remote work also covers that kind of short-term, temporary employment types. Here, it shall be noted that, this age of insecurity doesn't exclusively address a specific type of employment, but a

⁸³Therefore, since I have the chance to see different companies, I think mobbing happens mostly in corporate companies. It seems to me that those rules are window dressing. You feel like the company doesn't really need you, you're not valuable to them. Therefore, your wishes, expectations or needs are in no way important to companies.

(Dolayısıyla farklı şirketleri de görme şansım olduğu için bence en fazla mobbing kurumsal şirketlerde oluyor. O kurallar sanki vitrinmiş gibi geliyor bana. Şöyle hissediyorsun, şirketin aslında sana ihtiyacı yok sen onlar için değerli değilsin. Dolayısıyla senin herhangi bir şekilde isteklerin beklentilerin ya da ihtiyaçların hiçbir şekilde şirketler için önemli değil.) (Çağla, 33, Content Manager)

wider form organizing social labour in every aspect of working life. Therefore, the issue of precarity is a matter of concern for all. When looking at the data, it is also clearly seen that the sense of insecurity constitutes a major part of a worker's views about the future, and it directs them to develop certain approaches in their current life for securing themselves. Also, the sense of precarity constitutes a part of the narrative on undesired lives since no informant mentioned any redeeming aspect of it.

In this framework, the narratives on precarity have two main aspects: the feelings about the future, and the strategies to cope with the sense of insecurity in current lives. Regarding the former, anxiety and concerns regarding future emerged as the core issue. At the end of each interview, I specifically asked participants to elaborate on the future by letting them to decide whether it is the future of work, technology, themselves, or society. By this question, I aimed to see what kind of framework they constituted during the interview by combining their own worldviews. As a result, I get the answer of "I am feeling anxious" in an instant in nearly all interviews. When they elaborated, nearly all painted a picture in which the future of contemporary society hand in hand with the developments of technological field makes them insecure about their own as well as their children's future:

I am very worried, unfortunately I am very worried. I would love to say I am hopeful, but I am also very concerned for future generations. I am very concerned about the economy. University students work hard, they try very hard to get somewhere. But when they graduate, there is nothing they can do. There are many examples of this around us. They work as sales clerks, they work as cashiers. Then the same cliché on everyone's lips: "Is this why I went to university?" This is a bit related to the situation of the country, there are some general global situations related to them as well. It's too complicated over there.⁸⁴ (Zeynep, 39, Accountant & Project Assistant)

⁸⁴ Çok kaygılıyım, maalesef çok kaygılıyım. Umutluyum demeyi çok isterdim ama gelecek nesiller açısından da çok kaygılıyım. Ekonomi alanında çok kaygılıyım. Üniversite öğrencileri çok emek veriyorlar, çok uğraşıyorlar bir yerlere gelebilmek için. Ama mezun olduklarında yapabilecekleri hiçbir şey yok. Çevremizde bunun çok örneği var. Tezgâhtarlık yapıyor, kasiyerlik yapıyor. Sonra herkesin

This part of the interviews are the ones that I got most straightforward and clear answers, in which participants say “of course, I am worried”, as such there is a reality that no one doubts about it but may be little differences in terms of slightly more optimistic⁸⁵ and pessimistic⁸⁶ attitudes towards this strong feeling of insecurity.

When it comes to strategies developed in order to deal with the instable and insecure conditions, they commonly mentioned how important it is to have more than one occupation, skill, or area of interest; so that if one of them lets them down, they can easily turn to the other. Hakan (39) mentions this shift in professional life from expertism to “rather staying in a more horizontal level in terms of expertise” as a survival strategy:

I have one thing; I don't specialize in anything. As I said, I am also aware of the disadvantages of making steep progress in one area in Turkey. It can also be a survival strategy. There is a country that is constantly struggling with economic crises. One day the construction industry collapses, one day the service sector collapses. When the service industry collapses, I can escape to construction sites. When I get bored of the construction site, I can present my project to the art sector and stay there for a year. That's difficult. It requires a lot of energy in terms of energy, it is a very tiring thing. But I feel safe. Because I don't cling to just one area⁸⁷. (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

dilinde aynı klişe: “Ben bunun için mi okudum?” Bu biraz ülkenin durumu ile de alakalı genel küresel bazı durumlar var onlarla da alakalı. Çok karışık ya orası.

⁸⁵ Ya bu konuda teorik bir iyimserliğim var. Ama pratik olarak çok iyimser değilim. Pratikte kısa vadede çok iyimser şeyler olacağını düşünmüyorum. Ama teorik olarak durum iyidir. İşte klasik “iradenin kötümserliği aklın iyimserliği.” (Umut, 46, Interpreter & Translator & Musician & Text Writer)

⁸⁶ İradenin iyimserliğini falan yitirdim ben. O yüzdem kötümserim, kimseye yaimamaya çalışıyorum, en büyük hedefim bu. Ben çok kötümserim, hiçbir umudum yok. (Aysel, 44, Academic & Translator)

⁸⁷ Bende şöyle bir şey var, ben hiçbir konuda uzmanlaşmıyorum. Dedğim gibi Türkiye’de tek bir alanda dik ilerlemenin dezavantajlarının da farkındayım. Biraz da hayatta kalma stratejisi de olabilir bu. Sürekli ekonomik krizler içerisinde boğuşan bir ülke var. Bir gün inşaat sektörü çöküyor, bir gün hizmet sektörü çöküyor. Hizmet sektörü çöktüğünde şantiyelere kaçabiliyorum. Şantiyeden sıkıldığım zaman sanat sektörüne projemi sunup bir sene de orada durabiliyorum şu an. Bu zor. Enerji olarak çok büyük enerji gerektiriyor, çok yorucu bir şey. Ama kendimi güvende hissediyorum. Tek bir alana tutunmuyorum çünkü.

Similarly, Hazal (41) said that he suggests her younger friends to improve themselves in various fields rather than one main profession⁸⁸. Also, Kerim (30) said that he does freelance work outside of his full-time job, and he must do that since he has to think of himself at some point.⁸⁹

In parallel to that, according to the participants, having a full-time, secure job makes them feel more confident and secure about future:

But generally, if you have a shift job like this, it is also an insecurity, like a fixed-term employment contract, but you feel more secure, something you feel more confident, such as corporate belonging. When I say corporate belonging, I do not mean commitment to an institution. Something more obvious happens both in socializing and when answering the question where you work. You also have a job, and now there is a situation where you look more positively towards the future, as I will work here for a few more years. It's the kind of thing that makes you feel better, less insecure, and lessens your fears and worries⁹⁰. (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

3.4.4. Core Concerns: Disowned Obligations and the Outside

“You start not to compromise yourself after a while. That’s why life narrows you down more and more until you get sucked into your own house at the end.”⁹¹ (Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

⁸⁸ Türkiye hiç toparlamadı o anlamda. Ben o yüzden çevremdeki herkese onu diyorum. Elinde bir meslek olup kendi başka şeylerde de geliştirmek zorundasın. Dil bilen arkadaşlarımda başka yerlerde çalışırken çeviri yapması gibi. (Hazal, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

⁸⁹ Evet, freelance işler de alıyorum çünkü bir yerde kendimi de düşünmem gerekiyor. (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

⁹⁰ Ama genellikle hani böyle mesaili bir işiniz varsa, belirli süreli iş sözleşmesi gibi -yine bir güvencesizliktir burada ama- daha güvende hissediyorsunuz, kurumsal aidiyet gibi bir duyguyu daha net hissettiğiniz bir şey. Kurumsal aidiyet derken bir kuruma bağlılık açısından da demiyorum. Hem sosyalleşmede hem de nerede çalışıyorsun sorusuna cevap verirken falan daha belirgin bir şey oluyor. Bir de bir işin var ve artık birkaç sene daha burada çalışırım gibi böyle geleceğe dönük daha şey baktığınız bir durum oluyor. Kendinizi daha iyi, daha az güvencesiz hissetmenizi sağlayan, korkularınızı, endişelerinizi biraz daha azaltan türde bir şey oluyor bu.

⁹¹ Because programming your life yourself is a very difficult thing. I like other people's programming. But I also experienced many of its disadvantages. Taking orders or being managed from above. It's a bit of a personality thing, I couldn't do it. Because I was too steep there. I was fired 3 times, resigned 2 times in my life. Because as I said, it's about personality. You start not to compromise yourself after a while. That’s why life narrows you down more and more until you get sucked into your own house at the end. (Çünkü hayatını kendin programlamak çok zor bir şey. Başkasının programlaması daha çok hoşuma gidiyor aslında. Ama onun da dezavantajlarını çok yaşadım. Emir almak veya üstten

In the first axis of this study, the desires of remote workers were identified as their desire to hold onto their worldviews, creative capacities, and future aspirations in unique ways of their own. This second axis presented the specific conditions, identified by remote workers, against what they are struggling for holding on their self-potentials. As in categorising them as opposite forces in terms of desired and undesired lives, those two narratives emerged from remote workers' expressions constitute a certain kind of bargaining between what they are seeking and what they are trying to avoid. In such a framework, Hakan's (39) above cited expression presents an impressive way to sum up the role of remote work in such a bargaining relationship: not sacrificing oneself at the cost of narrowing down up to one's own house. Here, the house might address one's inner self, where both meaning, and a meaningful work is tried to be located. Such a formulation, which associates the home with the inner forces of a self, leads to a formulation of the outside world as the locus of restrictions and pressure. In that sense, a narrative on society "out there" emerges from the data where stress, disrespect, peer pressure, and dirt⁹² are associated with the society at large.

Accordingly, Nazan (45) who lives in an island in the Sea of Marmara, explains why she enjoys working from home:

yönetilmek falan. Ya o biraz kişilikle alakalı bir şey, yapamadım. Orada da çok dik çıktım çünkü. 3 kere kovuldum, 2 kere istifa ettim hayatımda. Çünkü o kişilikle alakalı dediğim gibi. Kendinden taviz vermemeye başlıyorsun bir süre sonra. O yüzden hayat seni git gide daraltıyor aslında, kendi evine sokuyor bir şekilde.)

⁹² Totally personally, I'm a person who washes my hair every day if I go out. But now I can take a shower from Sunday to Sunday just like when I was a kid because my hair doesn't get dirty. (Tamamen bireysel olarak ben her gün saçını yıkayan bir insanım eğer dışarı çıkıyorsam. Ama şu anda çocukluğumdaki gibi pazardan pazara duş alabiliyorum çünkü saçım kirlenmiyor.) (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

For example, I don't like things, I've moved away from city center, I can say that I don't like being together with people anymore. I don't feel comfortable with the crowd, getting on things, getting into vehicles, going to a certain environment with a certain style of dressing every day. For example, you don't want to wear make-up at all, but you have to wear make-up. So, you have to think about society all the time. You need to establish a lifestyle in which you have to think about the people around you. You can't go out to drink at night either because you're going to work early the next morning. You can't say that there was a great conversation that night and I stayed with my friends.⁹³ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Similarly, Cemre (30) mentioned how she traded her relatively expensive house rent for the luxury of not taking the bus every day:

I always rent a house almost right across from school or work because I don't like to mingle with people on public transport or something. Because, with a real estate agent and a deposit of 2 thousand liras, a total of 6 thousand liras. For 6 thousand liras, I will definitely not take the metrobus 5 days a week.⁹⁴ (Cemre, 30, Digital Marketing Specialist)

Finally, Çağla (33) mentions how everyone feel estranged from the society that is confronted on the streets:

I get mad at everyone when I go out every day. I also get angry with the woman who passes in front of me in the market. When I call someone, if I don't get a proper answer, I question why she doesn't answer properly. When someone doesn't really love their job and does it properly and there is a problem for it, when no one fixes it. That's what we're all experiencing. So, when I see disrespect all the time, I get more and more estranged⁹⁵. (Çağla, 33, Content Manager)

⁹³ Mesela şeyi de sevmiyorum, merkezden de uzaklaştım, insanlarla bir arada olmayı da artık sevmediğimi söyleyebilirim. Kalabalık, bir şeylere binmek, araçlara binmek, belirli bir ortama belirli bir giyim kuşam tarzını her gün tutturarak gitmek, bunlarla rahat hissedemiyorum. Mesela hiç makyaj yapmak istemiyorsunuz ama makyaj yapmak zorundasınız. Yani sürekli toplumu düşünmeniz gerekiyor. Etrafınızdaki insanları düşünmeniz gereken bir hayat tarzını oturtmanız gerekiyor. Gece içmeye de gidemezsiniz, ertesi sabah erkenden işe gideceksiniz. Ya o gece çok güzel bir muhabbet vardı arkadaşlarımla kaldım diyemezsiniz.

⁹⁴ Her zaman okul ya da iş neredeyse hemen karşısında ev tutarım çünkü toplu taşıma falan insan arasına karışmayı sevmiyorum. Çünkü, 2 bin liralık bir ev emlakçı ve depozito ile 6 bin lira toplam. 6 bin lira için haftanın 5 günü kesinlikle metrobüse binmeyeceğim yani.

⁹⁵ Her gün dışarı çıktığımda sinirleniyorum herkese. Markette sırada önüme geçen kadına da sinirleniyorum, birini aradığımda düzgün bir cevap alamazsam acaba neden düzgün cevap vermiyor diye sorguluyorum. Birileri işini gerçekten severek ve düzgün yapmadığında ve bunun için problem çıktığında, bunu kimse düzeltmediğinde... Yani hepimizin böyle yaşadığı şeyler. Sürekli saygısızlık gördüğümde, böyle git gide soğuyorum yani.

In sum, the conditions that shape the undesired lives, as expressed by the participants, are associated with the hierarchical, oppressive, and suffocating social relations. Those relations become concrete in public workplaces as lack of meritocracy and unequal relations, which, in a wider sense, refer to corrupted and exploitative conditions at the institutional levels. Altogether, when combined with the unstable and insecure socio-economic circumstances, the feelings about future cannot be anything other than anxiety and fear. In the broadest sense, a sense of estrangement from the whole society is felt in offices, while using public transportation, and on the streets; hence, the outside is described as something to be avoided. As Hakan (39) puts it, this avoidance of the outside world for preserving oneself pushes a person all the way to the home.

3.5. Actual Conditions

Leaving the analysis at such a point would be arguing that there is a clear dichotomy, or a kind of external relationship between what is called the inside - which refers to the private houses as well as the inner world of workers - and the outside - which is basically the norms and rules of society. Obviously, such a dichotomy would address the escape from social relations in searching for meaning in a very loose and incomplete way. Still, in a sense, this relationship constituted between the inner and outer worlds have certain parallels with the conceptualisations of work as a relationship between the human essence and nature. However, a dichotomic way of thinking could lead one to ignore the relational aspect of the questions regarding both inside and outside. From a relational point of view, one may ask under what conditions the inner world - the home or the self-potential of the worker - is freed from the outer restrictions and what makes society undesirable in the contemporary

world. To this end, by referencing to Lukács's relational method of analysing the *social being* (Lukács G. , 1980) in its complexity of natural and individual being, *daily life* can be analysed which is basically where the social being is realized through labour.

From this perspective, in the third axis of the theoretical level, I tried to understand what is actually experienced, in the daily practice of remote work in order to analyse the forms of realisation of desired and undesired lives.

3.5.1. Work-Life Balance

In the daily practice of remote work, the issue of work-life balance refers, before all, the blurring boundaries between the temporal and spatial spheres of work and life. Simply, home, which is traditionally associated with private leisure time, becomes a place of work while the temporal limitation of working hours is arranged with the relatively autonomous decisions of remote workers. In that sense, the issue of work-life balance in remote work is a temporal and spatial issue.

In this context, a significant contribution by Tracey Warren (2015) to the literature on work-life studies should be noted, which basically states that in work-life studies there is a particular and narrow interpretation of the issue as a temporal imbalance, in the sense of too many working hours and too little life. However, this interpretation ignores the ones who do not have access to enough work by which they can afford their lives (Warren, 2015). Although work-life balance will be interpreted as a temporal imbalance here, this is because the subject-matter of this study is mainly workers from middle-classes, whose concerns are mostly about the invasion of their life by their work.

In that sense, in parallel with the narratives on the desired autonomy over temporal and spatial arrangements and undesired limitations, the main question is about how the time-space experience of remote workers effects their work-life balance in their actual experiences. Briefly, two main conclusions have emerged from the data. Firstly, as work itself has become a personal concern, the matter of too much work with too little life has become a matter of self-discipline. In a sense, the balance between work and life has become something to be managed by the workers themselves. Secondly, the intervention of digital technologies to working life makes the work-life imbalance worse.

In terms of its temporal management, as discussed previously regarding self-discipline, Kerim (30) explains how one must manage this issue in order to sustain his/her life, and how some of his colleagues cannot manage it.⁹⁶ Likewise, Bahar (32) mentioned that time-management is the core issue of sustaining remote work, and how she can deal with it by her related skills developed in time:

There is only one answer to this for me and that is time management. I think everything becomes much easier and more affordable at the point where you can understand time management very well and put it into your normal social life with trial and error. I would say time management. Digitally and manually, I'm a note freak. I have a deadline for everything. I can go on like this.⁹⁷ (Bahar, 32, Designer).

⁹⁶ You have to set it up very well. Otherwise, your private life and your work life will get mixed up. I'm trying to separate it as much as possible. There are also friends who cannot do it in our company. But I'm trying to do so, which I must do so. (Bunu çok iyi ayarlamak lazım. Aksi halde özel yaşamınla iş yaşamın birbirine karışır. Onu olabildiğince ayırmaya çalışıyorum ben. Şirketimizde yapamayan arkadaşlar da var. Ama ben yapmaya çalışıyorum ki yapmak zorundayım.) (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

⁹⁷ Bunun benim için tek bir cevabı var o da zaman yönetimi. Zaman yönetimini çok iyi kavrayabilip dene yanlı ile kendi normal sosyal hayatına bile yerleştirebildiğin noktada zaten her şey çok daha kolay ve hesaplı bir hale geliyor bence. Ben zaman yönetimi diyebilirim. Dijital ortamda ve manuel olarak not manyağım. Her şey için bir deadline'ım var. Bu şekilde devam edebiliyorum.

In terms of its spatial management, issues regarding the blurring boundaries between family life and work life is voiced by Kerim (30), where he mentions he prefers not to be at home during working hours with his wife and children since he feels like a housewife in that way:

My wife is very respectful to me in that regard, thanks to her. We also have a child who is 2 years old. They don't come through the door while I'm working. The child comes in between, leans on the door "dad dad!" but I don't make a sound, the little one doesn't understand yet. But my wife doesn't make any noise when I'm working. The door of my room is closed, she goes and sits on the other side. This makes me a little unhappy too. That's why I say I am not to stay at home for a long time, I say let's go out somehow. You get up at normal times, it's always the same... You come from the other room and enter the other. You are always at home. It will sound a bit macho, but you feel like a housewife all the time. So, I want to go out. So, I want going to work in the morning. But going to my job shouldn't be in the office like this. For example, coffee houses was very good in that sense.⁹⁸ (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

Here, as briefly mentioned previously in the literature review, the feminist contribution to the critique of the distinction between public and private life should be applied, regarding the crisis of a family man where he faces the complexity of domestic relations when he has to work at home, as cited above.

However, not preferring to working at home is not specific to men, Nazan (45) and Deniz (37) also mentioned the problem of not being able to distinguish the sphere of work and life spatially, which causes a psychological challenge.⁹⁹

98 Eşim o yönde bana çok saygılıdır sağ olsun. Çocuk da var 2 yaşında. Ben çalışırken kapıdan içeri girmezler. Çocuk arada geliyor, kapıya dayanıyor "baba baba!" diye ama ben ses vermiyorum, küçük daha anlamıyor zaten. Ama eşim ben çalışırken mümkün olduğunda ses çıkarmıyor. Odamın kapısı kapalı, o gidiyor öbür tarafta oturuyor. Bu biraz beni de mutsuz ediyor. O yüzden evde çok durmayayım diyorum, gideyim diyorum bir şekilde dışarı. Normal zamanlarda kalkıyorsun sürekli aynı... Öbür odadan gelip diğerine giriyorsun. Sürekli evdesin. Biraz maço gibi olacak bu tabir ama ev hanımı gibi hissediyorsun kendini sürekli evde. Yani ben çıkmak istiyorum dışarı. Yani sabah işime gideyim. Ama işime gitmek de ofiste böyle dört duvar arasında olmasın. Kafeler mesela çok iyiydi o anlamda.

99 In that respect, inseparability is something that prevents people from relaxing psychologically. In that sense yes, it's definitely a downside to working remotely. (O açıdan ayrıştıramazlık insanın

No, I hate it. During my undergraduate years, I always worked in the METU library. I don't know if you stayed in the dormitory, but for some reason I didn't like working in the study room. In other words, there had to be a distinction between where I live and where I work, and the study hall in the dorm would not appeal to me either.¹⁰⁰(Deniz, 37, Translator & Project Coordinator)

On the other side, as cited previously from Cemre (30), Çağla (33) and Gaye (33), there are comments on strongly preferring to be at home, which makes them more comfortable, productive, and free. In terms of that productivity, Hazal (41) mentioned how working at home made her get more work done as a freelancer, but it came with a cost such that her house does not feel like a place to rest anymore.¹⁰¹

Another side of the work-life balance is about its implications on the social life of the worker. Again, it is generally stated that it is a personal skill to manage one's social life, but most of the participants mentioned how hard it is to manage it since when the majority of the day is allocated to work it becomes a lonely process, which can have positive or negative effects depending on the workers preferences:

What would be the disadvantage? I don't talk all day. It doesn't open my mouth. I get up, eat, if there is no meeting, I am looking for something at work. But I do not open my mouth. But I do not open my mouth. I only open it while eating something while drinking water and that's it. It turns out that I did not speak until the evening that day. If the weather is nice, you want to go out, you want me to take a short tour and come. But you can do it, it's nothing. Doesn't seem too disadvantageous to me.¹⁰² (Mert, 34, Product Engineer)

psikolojik olarak rahatlamasına engel olan bir şey. Bu anlamda evet, uzaktan çalışmanın kesinlikle dezavantajı.) (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

100 Hayır, nefret ediyorum. Lisans yıllarımda da hep ODTÜ kütüphanesinde çalıştım. Yurtta kaldın mı bilmiyorum ama çalışma salonunda da çalışmayı sevmezdim nedense. Yani yaşadığım yerle çalıştığım yerin bir ayrımı olması gerekiyordu zihnimde, yurttaki çalışma salonu da bana hoş gelmezdi.

¹⁰¹ Evim dinlenecek yer değil. Bu kadar çok iş alamazdım ofiste çalışıyor olsaydım. (Hazal, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

¹⁰² Dezavantajı ne olur ki? Bütün gün konuşmadığım oluyor. Ağzımı açmadığı oluyor. Kalkıyorum yemek yiyorum, toplantı yoksa işte bir şeylere bakıyorum. Ama ağzımı açmıyorum. Su içerken bir şey yerken falan o kadar. Sesim çıkmamış meğer o gün akşama kadar. Hava güzelse işte canın çıkmak istiyor dışarı, hafif bir tur atayım geleyim istiyorsun. Ama yapabiliyorsun da bunu bir şey de yok. Bana çok dezavantajlı gibi gelmedi.

Lastly, as discussed under the topic of the effects of new technologies on the professional and personal life, it is commonly mentioned that the increasing inclusion of the digital technologies in the working life increases the invasion of the personal life by professional issues:

Look, I'm going to say something very important, has anyone said that? It's a matter of division, segregation of domains, it's not just about working remotely these business processes. That social media use, they have to live by taking care of the phone, there is a constant division that is, you can't help but see an e-mail coming to your phone, to be able to write anything, including private messages to private friends, at any time from WhatsApp, that is, digital. In the past, a fax would come to the company at night. You read it in the morning. When I went, incoming faxes were put on my desk. I used to read faxes received on my behalf. But there was no chance of him coming to you at night.¹⁰³ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

In sum, most of the interviewees mentioned how they are suffering from too much work invading their life spheres, both temporally and spatially. However, since it is elaborated as a matter of personal management of one's own life, the issue of excessive work tends to be evaluated as "workaholism" which is described as a rather personal trait.¹⁰⁴ Here the main question is what is the outcome ascribing the temporal and spatial limitations of the work to worker's own initiative? Is it something that makes the job more "personal" or more prone to invade the life of the worker?

¹⁰³ Bakın çok önemli bir şey söyleyeceğim bunu söyleyen oldu mu? Bu bölünme, alanların ayrıştırılması meselesi, sadece uzaktan çalışmayla ilgili değil. Şu sosyal media kullanımı, telefonla ilgilenerek yaşama hali var ya... Yani telefonunuza mail geliyor onu görmeden edemiyorsunuz, whatsapp'tan isteyen istediği saatte, özel mesajlar dahil, her şeyi yazabilir hale geldi, yani dijitalleşmesi bu sürecin. Eskiden bir faks gelirdi, ve gece gelirdi o faks şirkete. Siz onu sabah okurdunuz. Ben gittiğimde gelen fakslar benim masamın üstüne konmuş olurdu ben sabah geldiğimde okurdum onları. Ama size gece gelme ihtimali yoktu.

¹⁰⁴ Maalesef işkolik bir tarafım var. Yani senin çalışmana karakterim nasıl bir set vurur bilmiyorum ya da bu tarz öznel şeyleri de alıyor musun? (Merve, 29, Journalist & Social Media Manager)

3.5.2. Productivity – Exhaustion

In parallel with the imbalance between work and life, another issue of balance that remote workers have to deal with is the swing between the sense of productivity and exhaustion. Here, the dilemma of putting all of one's potential to work appears as the main problem again, as is touched in terms of the desire of remote workers to reach their self-potential as against the conditions what reinforces them. In other words, the fact that creativity and intellectual capacity has become a fundamental source of the social production, these have also become the main target of the objectification under the capitalists' relations of production.

Winnicott defines creativity as follows:

It is creative apperception more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living. Contrasted with that this is a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance with? the world and its details are being recognised but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation...with the idea that nothing matters and life is not worth living (Winnicott, 1991: 65)

This definition, which understands creativity as a way to find the motivation of life, even the reason for life may help to underline the intensity of remote worker's experiences in putting their creative capacity to work with the desire of self-realisation, meanwhile struggling against its confiscation. In that sense, I asked the participants who expressed that they turn their own personal interests in life into their professions about their experiences of such an intense way of production. We may recall here Hakan's (39) preference to separate his creative activities from his job to stay free. In a similar fashion, Hazal (41) talked about her struggle with burnout syndrome after she worked in a feminist NGO while feminism constituted a major part of her worldview, hence made her put forward all she had mentally and emotionally to work:

I also came out with burnout syndrome. My doctor told me to never work here. I'm not talking about the festival, but the feminist identity does not tell you to devote yourself to the festival, to work by keeping your private space out. There is no such thing, especially for someone like me. But it was taking a lot out of me. If I stayed a little longer and that job was closed, I would be in a situation where I could no longer do any other job and without any savings. Festivals are not jobs where you can get paid for 12 months anyway, because they don't last that long.¹⁰⁵ (Hazal, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

She summed up the possible consequences of the confiscation of one's creative and intellectual capacity, on top of working under insecure and unfair conditions. In the broadest sense, the question is about under what conditions one can reveal his/her potential in a way that this would not amount to such kind of a self-destruction? Of course, this study is far away from being able to answer this question. Nevertheless, it is only meaningful to ask because it takes us to the most fundamental discussions on the complexity of the relations that constitute the social being.

Finally, for sure, the narrative on productivity and creativity expressed by remote workers are not limited with those who end up with exhaustion. Gaye's (33) statement on how she felt very lucky to have a job that she loves, as cited previously, and how she associates even the daily practice of her job as a search for meaning in life, which is a rare thing to have.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, some of the participants didn't even mention the hardship of creation process, but only talked about how they managed to reach such a position in life, namely the sole controller of the production processes from the start

¹⁰⁵ Ben bir de tükenmişlik sendromu ile çıktım. Doktorum bana hiçbir şekilde burada çalışma dedi. Festival için söylemiyorum ama feminist kimlik sana kendini sadece festivale ayır, özel alanını dışarıda tutarak çalış falan demiyor zaten. Öyle bir şey söz konusu bile değil benim gibi biri için hele. Ama benden çok şey götürmeye başlamıştı. Ben biraz daha kalsam ve o iş kapansa ben artık başka iş yapamayacak bir durumda olacaktım ve hiç birikimim olmadan. Zaten 12 ay maaş alabildiğiniz işler değildir festivaller, o kadar sürmez çünkü.

¹⁰⁶ In other words, I entered this sector with my own choice, very willingly and lovingly. It's something very few people have, and I know I am lucky. (Yani şöyle, ben gerçekten kendi tercihimle, çok isteyerek ve severek girdim bu sektöre. Çok az insanın sahip olduğu bir şey bu ve gerçekten dilimi ısırtıyorum.) (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

to the end¹⁰⁷. This leads us to the next condition that shapes the actual practices of remote work: the role of socio-economic conditions and social rights and regulations in understanding the work relations.

3.5.3. The Socio-Economic Conditions: Employment Types

As clearly identified in the conceptual framework of this study, remote work is conceptualised as a labour process where the work is fully or partly carried out on an alternative worksite, not in the default place of work, which has different implications for dependent workers and independent workers (ILO, 2020). Therefore, remote workers among a variety of employment types, such as full-time employed, freelancer and business owner, were reached to understand how those socio-economic conditions affect to the different implications of remote work.

In this sense, it can be stated that there is a considerable difference in the way of expressions of remote workers from different employment types. The major differences occur in the views of future, the meanings attributed to being at home, hence the inner world of oneself, and the narrative on determining one's own life-path. In a sense, those three topics are in line with the three main lines of the theoretical model, which are time-space experiences, concerns regarding self-potential, and determination over one's own life-path. Therefore, it can be easily said that the implications of remote work significantly vary among different employment types.

¹⁰⁷ Üretim tarafını delege ettiğimde bana kalan taraf aslında ürün tasarlamak oluyor. Bunu ben yapmak istiyorum. Ham madde alışverişi, tedarikçilerle görüşme kısmı, bunu da ben yapmak istiyorum çünkü ürünün kalitesi malzemeden doğuyor. İşçilik de okay, bir numune oluşturabilirim. Onun dışında zaten dijital bir işi oluyor. Sosyal medya konusunda da kendimi geliştirmeye çalıştığım bazı konular var. O yüzden onu da ben yapmak istiyorum yani. (Bahar, 32, Designer)

Firstly, the narratives about time-management skills and self-discipline have greatly varied among those who has their own businesses and freelancers. Given that, for sure, self-discipline have a personal aspect that cannot be solely understood by socio-economic conditions, there is still a remarkable difference between remote worker's experiences with their time and space. Deniz (37) explained the issue of self-exploitation in freelancing which affects her attitude in life from her emotional status to her view of future:

Sometimes several jobs come in a row, sometimes none. Now, when you accept a few jobs, it's a hassle if you accept it, especially for someone with concentration problems like me. This is like a guarantee for times when there will be no work, but you should not accept. On the other hand, when you don't, you prevent a new job from coming. It's kind of a self-exploitation issue. This self-exploitation is a very intense thing in freelance work and a constant concern for the future. There is an emotional situation created by the fact that my life is so uncertain. The relationships you build with people also change; you can't stand to hear something vague. However, sometimes uncertainty is good.¹⁰⁸ (Deniz, 37, Translator & Project Coordinator)

Quite importantly, she also mentioned how a certain, limited time period that defines the working hours actually provides a ground for struggle against better working conditions. She said, such a situation where nothing is certain, the experience of time and space is like a fog, which one can neither touch nor regulate¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ Bazen birkaç tane iş geliyor üst üste, bazen de hiç iş gelmiyor. Şimdi, o birkaç işi kabul ettiğinde, hele benim gibi konsantrasyon sorunu olan bir insan için, kabul etsen bir dert. Hiç iş gelmeyecek zamanlar için bu aslında bir güvence gibi ama etmemen gerekiyor. Etmediğin zaman yeni bir işin gelmesini de engellemiş oluyorsun diğer yandan. Bir çeşit kendi kendini sömürü meselesi bu. Bu kendi kendini sömürü çok yoğun bir şeymiş freelance çalışmada ve sürekli bir gelecek kaygısı. Hayatının bu kadar belirsiz olmasının yarattığı duygusal bir durum da var aslında. İnsanlarla kurduğun ilişkiler de değişiyor, belirsiz bir şeyler duymaya tahammül edemiyorsun. Halbuki bazen de belirsizlik iyidir.

¹⁰⁹ In other words, if there is a working order other than piecework, the working hours are limited and there is nothing to struggle with right now. There is a fog in front of you (Yani parça başı çalışmaktan başka türlü bir çalışma düzeni olsa zaten çalışma saatlerinin sınırlandırılması ve şu an mücadele edilecek bir şey bile yok. Bir bulut var önünüzde.) (Deniz, 37, Translator & Project Coordinator).

Secondly, when I asked Zeynep (39) about whether she thinks her job is compatible with her skills and interest by being so focused on such an inner search in work, I was surprised by her immediate response:

As a matter of fact, you do not have the chance to work based on talents in today's conditions. Unfortunately. When we think about the country you live in, the environment, economic conditions, etc., we do what we can find.¹¹⁰ (Zeynep, 39, Accountant & Project Assistant)

As home is commonly related with one's inner world, also Sanem's (28) experience in her family house made me re-think to what extent a home is a sphere of privacy, peace and individuality, and under which conditions one can isolate herself/himself from the rest of the society:

If this was my own home only, I think I could work at home. I don't know, have to try it. But I live with my family. In the pre-Corona period, this was due to some factors such as various guests and neighbors' children.¹¹¹ (Sanem, 28, Translator & English Teacher)

Finally, with regards to the attitude toward determination over one's own future and life-path, it is observed that from the perspective of a full-time employed worker, it is easier to foresee the opportunities of the future, when it is compared with the self-exploitation mentioned by Deniz (37) previously. In that sense Çağla's (33) expression on her confidence about making money somehow in a lifetime was remarkable:

But the thing feels good to me, I realize that there are things I can do other than the education and training I have received, and it does not necessarily have to be insured or contracted in a corporate workplace, and not necessarily i have an employer. This is how I felt in situations such as losing or not being able to

¹¹⁰ Günümüz şartlarında çok yetenek bazında çalışma şansınız olmuyor aslına bakarsanız. Maalesef. Yaşadığınız ülkeyi ve çevreyi, ekonomik koşulları falan düşündüğümüzde aslında ne iş bulursak onu yapıyoruz.

¹¹¹ Burası tamamen kendi evim olsa ben evde çalışabileceğimi düşünüyorum. Bilmiyorum, denemek lazım onu. Ama ben ailemle yaşıyorum. İşte Korona öncesi dönemde bunun çeşitli misafirleri, komşu çocukları gibi birtakım etkenleri oluyordu.

find a job before being fired. It is not independent of the conduction of the country. But I guess I've never had a feeling that I'd lose my job or i will be safe. At my worst, I had something like doing something with my own skills and making a living anyhow and making money. Yes, I'm not rich, but it was never my first thing anyway. I think money can be made anyway. Peace peace peace.¹¹² (Çağla, 33, Content Manager)

Her comments can be evaluated in two terms: the confidence regarding finding something to do in life, as compared to Zeynep's perspective on "there is no choice", and the indifference about having a secure job which implies an inner sense of security independent from work, which is rarely observed throughout the interviews.

3.5.4. Core Concerns: Sense of Belonging to Society and Work

The main question of this thesis concerning the meanings attributed to work by remote workers can be examined with the sub-questions on how remote workers relate themselves to their work, how they relate their work to society and how they relate themselves to society. Finally, what is the role of remote work as a unique form of organising labour in this relation formation process. In short, this framework suggests investigation of the sense of belonging of remote workers to society and to their work. In the theoretical model presented in this chapter the ways of making sense of these relations are expressed by remote workers, which are categorised in terms of their conception of desired and undesired lives. In this final level, the actual experiences were tried to be mapped out which are shaped by their purposeful engagements with time through movements in space (Hägerstrand, 1975). Therefore,

¹¹² Ama şey bana iyi hissettiriyor sanırım, aldığım eğitim ve aldığım eğitim dışında bir şekilde yapabileceğim işler olduğunun farkına varmam ve illa kurumsal bir iş yerinde illa sigortalı ya da sözleşmeli olması, birisinin benim işverenim olması gerekmiyor. Daha önce işten çıkarılma işini kaybetme, bulamama gibi durumlarda da böyle hissettim. Hiç ülkenin durumundan hani bağımsız değil. Ama sanırım hiç işimi kaybederim ya da tamam güvendeyim gibi bir hissim olmadı. En kötü kendi becerilerimle bir şey yapar ve her türlü bir şekilde kendimi geçindiririm ve o parayı kazanırım gibi bir şeyim vardı. Evet zengin olmam ama zaten ilk şeyim de hiç o olmadı. Her türlü kazanılır para diye düşünüyorum. Huzur huzur huzur.

the unique possibilities of remote work have certain implications on how remote workers establish those engagements. In that sense, remote work appears as a suitable ground for “going away”. As it is discussed, this conception of “away” is most commonly away from public sphere, and there is another consideration of leaving the country to set a life abroad:

In fact, while I was establishing this business, I was always looking for a way to leave Turkey. Therefore, I always wanted people who will work remotely and who know this discipline in my team. And for this reason, I actually had remote in my head from the very beginning.¹¹³ (Begüm, 30, Fashion Designer)

When it is examined that why there is such a tendency of leaving the country, it clearly appears that they mention a lack of sense of belonging to society here, mostly due to the oppressive and unequal socio-economic conditions in Turkey:

So, I said to my roommate, look, you're too young, they're making you work so cheap, and you're so smart. I said apply for a master's abroad immediately and go. Being underpaid or something, this is a bad place. It's getting worse and worse for LGBTI people. Go, you don't have a very Turkish mentality anyway. I told her you're always something more, you have to go.¹¹⁴ (Hazal, 41, Mentor, Gender Specialist)

Similar to Hazal, Gaye (33) said that she is struggling with what she considered as difficult conditions for minorities in Turkey; however, she said she insisted on being from here and knowing about the difficulties of being a total stranger in another country:

The feeling of belonging to the country, city, home, is very important. Because the moment you feel that you don't belong, your connection with living is gone. Do I feel from here? In spades. I am from here. And I am a minority. Not so long ago, 3

¹¹³ Aslında şöyle, ben bu işi kurarken de hep Türkiye’den gitmenin yolunu arıyordum bir taraftan. Dolayısıyla remote çalışacak ve bu disiplini bilen insanları ekibimde istedim hep. Ve ona göre aslında en başında beri remote vardı kafamda.

¹¹⁴ Yani ben ev arkadaşşıma dedim ki bak sen çok gençsin seni çok ucuza çalıştırıyorlar ve sen çok zeki birisin. Hemen yurt dışına bir master başvurusu yap ve git dedim. Az ücretle çalıştırılma falan, kötü bir yer burası. LGBTİler için giderek kötüleşiyor. Git, senin zaten çok Türkiye’li bir mentaliten de yok. Sen zaten hep biraz daha şeysin, gitmen gerekiyor dedim ona.

years ago, we were exposed to ugly threats because of the things we wrote. These are the things you are entitled to, which can be used to live in some countries of Europe. I didn't want it then either... It's difficult in Turkey, but if you have an idea about immigration, life is difficult in Europe as well.¹¹⁵ (Gaye, 33, Book Editor)

As Gaye puts it very neatly that the sense of belonging is crucial in one's establishment of a bond to living, therefore for those who live in a society the attitude towards their work is also related with their sense of belonging. For example, we may recall Hakan's (39) description of the loss of expertise as a survival strategy, which demonstrates a certain kind of meaning attributed to work when one doesn't feel secure within a certain form of socialisation¹¹⁶.

However, on the other side, the constitution of the sense of belonging to work seems more complicated than that. Against the common argument in social theory that work has lost its status in contemporary world as a means of identity-construction, for some, it is the opposite in which the expectation of commitment to work goes beyond a professional level which turns the engagement of the worker with the work into a personal matter (Korczynski, Hodson, & Edwards, 2006) even if she/he has doesn't have an organic relation to that work. In this regard, Nazan (45) explained when one undertakes the management of a work it leads to an illusion as if that work belongs to the worker at a deeper level, whereas that person is still a paid worker in that production process facing the same capitalist relations of production.

¹¹⁵ Bulunduğun ülkeye şehre, eve, aitlik hissi çok önemli. Çünkü ait olmadığını hissettiğin an yaşamakla olan bağın gidiyor. Kendimi buralı hissediyor muyum? Hem de nasıl. Ben buralıyım. Ve ben bir azınlığım. Çok uzun zaman önce değil 3 sene önce çirkin tehditlere maruz kalıyorduk yazdığımız şeyler yüzünden. Bunlar, Avrupa'nın bazı ülkelerinde yaşamak için kullanılabilen, bunlar sayesinde sana hak tanınan şeyler. O zaman da istememiştim...Türkiye'de de zor tamam ama göçmenlik ile ilgili bir fikrin varsa hayatta Avrupa'da da zor.

¹¹⁶ But I think there should be side jobs in places like Turkey. I think that no one should have one job in order to survive. So, the more you multiply your skills, the better. (Ama Türkiye gibi yerlerde yan mesleklerin de olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Hiç kimsenin bir tane işinin olmaması gerektiğini düşünüyorum hayatta kalabilmek için. O yüzden yeteneklerini ne kadar çoğaltırsan o kadar iyi.) (Hakan, 39, Web Designer & Film Director)

You went and did it within a certain working hour, it's not like you came home with your head in peace. That's the way it is, the problems there, that's another weird thing about capitalism. This authority and this position also leads you to take ownership of the job. As if it were your own business. It leads to such a misconception. Because it is necessary to do this properly and operate the system smoothly. In that sense, I really feel like something between such a manager/coordinator/organizer or something. Because my phone is not silent from morning to evening.¹¹⁷ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

Therefore, all bring us to question on the erosion of identity on the basis of work in contemporary societies, supported with the arguments on the shortening period of working hours and decreasing volume of employment. Regarding that, the narratives of remote workers participating in this study have shown that there is no such an erosion, on the contrary, there is a struggle of managing the balance between work and life in a sense that the management of production process is transferred to the individual initiative to a large extent. This struggle contains with the issue of managing the volume of work to avoid self-exploitation, as well as its moral and intellectual value in one's life in a way to avoid burning out. In short, it can be stated that, work is becoming something *more* in the worker's life to the extent that it is not an identity like religion, ethnicity etc. but something deeply determining and shaping who you are.

In this framework, the idea that has been taking shape in my mind during the data collection process concerned the conception of the “outside” by remote workers in describing and, actually constructing themselves through their work, since the notion of “remote” is most commonly discussed as being away from the outer world. It was both surprising and exciting to receive a message from Deniz (37) a couple of weeks

¹¹⁷ Gidip belirli bir mesai saati içinde yaptın çıktın, kafan rahat evine geldin değil de. Bu böyle yani oradaki sorunlar işte kapitalizmin de bir tuhaf şeyi. Bu yetki bu pozisyon işi sahiplenmenize de yol açıyor. Sanki kendi işinizmiş gibi. Öyle bir yanılgıya da yol açıyor. Çünkü bunu hakkıyla yerine getirip sistemi tıkır tıkır işletmek lazım. O anlamda şu an birazcık böyle bir yönetici/koordinatör/organizatör falan arası bir şey gibi hissediyorum hakikaten. Çünkü telefonum susmuyor sabahtan akşama kadar.

after the interview, on her further evaluation regarding our conversation. Her framework helped me to put the concept more clearly in my theoretical thinking:

Hello again, the interview made me think again. I wanted to text to you. The reason for having such a mood (what I explained in the interview) as a remote worker and freelancer is that the work/workplace is out of public/losing its public. You are automatically excluded from all relationships in the "public". You have to face the pressure from the employer by yourself. Delayed jobs turn into your laziness instead of being a workload. A minimum level of dialogue with a colleague—even if not necessarily to organize or to cooperate—detaches the working experience from solitude, private space, individual and psychological processes. Even gossiping with your co-worker about your boss or another co-worker is "liberating."¹¹⁸ (Deniz, 37, Translator & Project Coordinator, 3 July 2021)

3.6. Conclusion: "Work never ends"

This thesis aims to understand how remote workers evaluate their work, themselves, and society from their own eyes. Therefore, a macro analysis by examining socio-economic conditions, implementations, and outcomes of it as a labour process are missing in this study. However, a nutshell review of how some of the informants view the broader economic context of their practices could be helpful to understand the issue more wholistically. Again, by conveying from the words of remote workers, there are two common aspects of remote work as a part of social organisation of labour. The first aspect is its functioning in terms of profit making, and the second is the ideology of remote work that enables its reproduction as an emerging form of relations of production.

¹¹⁸ Yeniden merhaba, görüşme beni yeniden düşündürdü. Sana yazmak istedim. Evde çalışan, freelance çalışan biri olarak böyle bir ruh haline (görüşmede anlattıklarım) sahip olmanın kaynağında işin/işyerinin kamusalıktan çıkması/ kamusallığını kaybetmesi yatıyor. "Kamusal"daki tüm ilişkilerden kendiliğinden dışlanmış oluyorsun. İşverenden gelen baskıyı tek başına göğüslemek zorunda kalıyorsun. Yetişmeyen işler, fazla iş yükü değil, senin tembelliğin haline dönüşüyor. İş arkadaşıyla asgari düzeyde bir diyalog imkanı -illa örgütlenmek, illa dayanışma olmasa dahi- çalışma deneyimini tek başmalıktan, özel alandan, bireysel ve psikolojik süreçlerden koparıyor. İş arkadaşınla patronun veya bir diğer çalışma arkadaşın üzerine yaptığın dedikodu bile "özgürleştirici"

Regarding the former, especially after Covid-19 when remote work has become a more common form of labour process, it is seen how it can turn into a new strategy of cutting costs. Furthermore, this strategy takes the worker away from the workplace, a public space in which the basic needs were met and leads the worker to the area of consumption even within the period of working time. Kerim (30) summarizes this process very clearly:

This is advantageous for companies. I'm throwing away, I'm an employee of the company, I'm going to the cafe. How much did I spend that day? For example, you buy a coffee for 20-30 liras. Drinking one coffee all day? You're there all day, shame on the employees there. If you drink 2, 3 coffees, it comes to 70-80 liras to 100 liras with the meal, maybe more. The company says, we will send you to a coffee house. Free coffee, cookies and other snacks are also available, within their service. It is also advantageous for the company. The biggest reason companies prefer such areas is cost. What I mean by cost is this: you have a company, you have a two-story office. You pay quarterly withholding, you pay taxes to the state.¹¹⁹ (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

Secondly, a widely voiced discourse on the changing nature of work can be identified in which “‘do what you love’ is now the unofficial work mantra for our time.”

(Tokumitsu, 2014). In parallel with the discussions above about adapting work as something inherent in one's own potential, creativity, and life aspirations, this mantra becomes questionable in terms of the fact that it can easily transform the way workers relate with love itself. In that sense, Kerim (30) further explain how remote work is proposed by the boss and how it feels like in terms of loving the work:

My boss always says: “Why do we need an office? We're trapped within four walls. Go travel, work on the beach, swim in the sea. The work is done somehow. The job isn't over. There is always work coming”. In summary, the main expectation of our company was that if the given work is done on time, it does not

¹¹⁹ Şirketler için bu avantajlı. Atıyorum ben şirketin çalışanıyım, kafeye gidiyorum. O gün ne harcadım? Mesela bir kahve alıyorsun 20-30 lira. Bir gün boyunca bir kahve mi içeceksin? Bütün gün oradasın, ayıp adamlara. 2,3 kahve içsen 70-80 liraya 100 liraya geliyor yemekle birlikte, belki daha fazla. Şirket diyor ki, seni belli başlı kafelere göndereyim. Kahven bedava, kurabiye falan da böyle atıştırma şeyler de çıkıyor, onların hizmeti dahilinde. Şirket için de avantajlı oluyor. Şirketlerin bu gibi alanları tercih etmesinin en büyük sebebi maliyet. Maliyetten kastım şu: bir şirketin var, iki katlı bir ofisin var. Üç ayda bir stopaj ödüyorsun, devlete vergi ödüyorsun

matter to company when it is done and where. As long as that job is done and finished. That's the thing. So I have to love my job. I love, but I have to love anyway. Otherwise, I can't make money. You can do something else, but doing what you love and improving on it is always very important... If you don't like the work you do, it won't be of good quality.¹²⁰ (Kerim, 30, Web Designer)

Here, loving what you do appears now as an obligation, which is necessary to practice what you do in a qualified, hence efficient way. Also, the normalisation of the fact that “work never ends” reveal how this obligation diffuses into every aspect of life, to an extent that there is no need to limit it with four walls.

Being Stuck vs. Being Stretched

Yes, I have concerns about the future. First of all, I have some concerns about the economic, sociological and political conditions and the climate created in the country. But you always plan B. I think that's why a person has been able to exist and reproduce so much in a very strange way of constantly adapting to the condition's person is in. Most of the people have a very fast adaptation ability. Now, this is a life like drifting in a river flowing like this, and swimming from one side or something. You're supposed to be swimming, but it's like the river has taken you somewhere else.¹²¹ (Nazan, 45, Project Coordinator)

By going back to the inner world of meanings and experiences of remote workers, we may recall the main subject-matter of this thesis once again under the light of these observations: how can we characterise the changing nature of work in the 21st century? At this point, to make sense of this change, a comparative way of thinking could be applied. This leads us to think about the “older” or “traditional” ways of

¹²⁰ Benim patronum hep şöyle der: “Ya ne gerek ofise? Dört duvar arasına kapanıyoruz. Gidin gezin, sahilde çalışın, denize girin. İş yapılır zaten. İş bitmiyor ki. Sürekli iş geliyor”. Özetle bizim şirketin ana beklentisi şuydu, verilen iş zamanında yapıyorsa, benim için ne zaman nerede yapıldığı önemli değildir. Yeter ki o iş yetişsin ve bitsin. Olay bu. Dolayısıyla işimi sevmek zorundayım. Seviyorum ama sevmek zorundayım da zaten. Para kazanamam aksine. Başka bir şey illa ki yaparsın da sevdiğin işi yapmak, onda gelişmek her zaman için çok önemli... Yaptığın iş kaliteli olmaz sevmezsen.

¹²¹ Evet gelecekle ilgili endişelerim var. Bir kere zaten iktisadi, sosyolojik, siyasal koşullar ülkenin içinde bulunduğu iklim açısından bir tık endişelerim var. Ama her zaman bir B planı yapıyorsunuz. İnsan çok tuhaf bir şekilde içinde bulunduğu koşullara sürekli bir uyum sağlama şeyinde zaten o yüzden bu kadar varolabildi çoğalabildi diye düşünüyorum. Çok hızlı bir adaptasyon becerisi var insanların bir çoğunun. Şimdi ister istemez böyle akan bir nehrin içinde hem sürüklenir hem bir taraftan kulaç atar falan gibi bir yaşam zaten bu yani. Güya yüzüyorsunuz ama nehir sizi başka bir yere götürmüş gibi bir şey oluyor.

working which were prevalent during the emergence of modern societies. From a critical perspective applied by remote workers in this study, that way of working is related with inhumane working conditions, strict limitations, inequality, exploitation of one's existence in space-time and one's self-potential. Basically, those are reflected as the conditions of what is *undesired* in a life. On the contrary, the *desired* life of remote worker is voiced as the control over one's time-space world, self-capacity, and one's life-path. There is a continuous co-existence of those forces mentioned in both desired and undesired lives, which characterises the *actual* experiences of remote workers as a matter of balance between work and life, desire and obligation, or productivity and exhaustion. In other words, there is a co-existence of the fear of being unemployed and taking over excessive amount of work, ability to realise the self-potential and the risk of burning out, autonomy over time and workaholism, desire to be open to future opportunities and worries about precarity. This co-existence of forces that pulls workers at their every angle may be conceptualised as *being stretched* as compared to *being stuck* between the cogwheels of capitalist production.

In the end, the phrase “work never ends” gains two meanings: it diffuses to the very inner world of the worker so that it is hard to get away from it, and it keeps its fundamental role in understanding social relations in contemporary world.

CONCLUSION

*'Life is duty and obligation, therefore love, too, is a duty. It's as if God sent it to me,'
she said, looking up at the sky, 'and told me to love'.*

You have a lunatic before you who has been infected by passion.

Ivan Goncharov, 1954¹²²

This was initially perceived as idleness. Even my friends from college said so, they still say it. People also wonder what will happen to this boy, what will he do. Because you're dealing with too many things. People wonders what I do at first, then I go and get an award [with a movie]. When we look at it from the outside, I seem very strange to many people. I seem weird even according to my parents.¹²³

(Hakan, 39, Web Designer)

The main concern of this thesis is the meaning of work in the formation of social relations. More specifically, the focus is on the role of work in the ways that workers make sense of themselves and the societies they live in. Departing from this point, the narratives of workers' reflections on the idea of a meaningful life, their evaluations of their works and their own potentials were taken as the main data in this study. This

¹²² Ivan Goncharov, 1954, Oblomov.

¹²³ Bu ilk başlarda aylıklık olarak algılandı. Üniversiteyi birlikte okuduğum arkadaşlarım bile dedi. Hala da diyorlar. Bu çocuk ne olacak, ne yapacak diye bir merak konusu da var insanlarda. Çünkü çok fazla şeyle uğraşıyorsun. İnsanlar ilk başta ne yapıyor ki bu diyorlar sonra gidip ödül alıyorum mesela [bir filmimle]. Dış gözden baktığımız zaman çok garip geliyorum birçok kişi için. Annem babam için de garip geliyorum

data is meant to help the researcher establish complex theoretical and conceptual links and to re-think the fundamental discussions in philosophical and political thought about the working experiences in contemporary world. In this regard, the subject matter of this thesis is quite exciting, but at the same time, it is a challenge to refine the rich ideas and feelings expressed by workers in a grounded manner by avoiding loose generalisations and engaging with the existing literature in a meaningful way.

The discussion over the changing nature and meaning of work in relation to the social, economic, and technological changes can be traced starting from modern social theories concerning the work-centred and industrial societies to the new conceptualisations of work in *post-modern* theories that considers the prevalence of informational technologies and immaterial production in *post-industrial* societies. These developments have given way to two main perspectives. There is a pessimist perspective on the future of work, which suggests that as a result of automatization technologies there will be mass unemployment where the majority of jobs will be outdated and the supervision mechanisms will become stricter (Benanav, 2019). In contrast, technological optimists think that new technologies will enhance the working conditions by eliminating most of the compulsory work (Srnicek, 2017).

In light of these developments, we can understand why remote work, as a labour process which has increasingly become widespread in recent decades, appears as a fruitful area of study. To begin with, as it alters the traditional ways of organising labour, remote work is widely seen as an alternative form of labour process which has the potential to give workers more autonomy over the rules and regulations of the working life. In relation to that, the examination of remote work allows us to explore what technological advances might entail regarding the re-organisation of work as a temporal and spatial experience, as well as to investigate how the changing nature of

work, in terms of work becoming more digitalized and immaterial, shapes the meanings attributed to work by workers.

By following the grounded theory procedures of open, axial, and selective coding a theoretical model is constructed which demonstrates how and under what conditions remote work transforms the meaning of work for remote workers, as expressed by themselves. According to the theoretical model, it is seen that there are three main key requirements that make remote work possible: the availability of digital technologies, the digitalizability of work and self-discipline. The first two conditions are widely referred in the literature. In addition to those, the emphasis on self-discipline was remarkable which points out the unique character of remote work where workers have a relative autonomy over time and space and, for most of them, a big part of their work depends on their own creative capacities. As a result, it is seen that the sustainability and possibility of remote work is described as an individual effort by almost all participants where the construction of working life has become nearly equal to the construction of the worker's selves. This is the first important finding of this study. It also allows us to expand the existing theorizations about the conditions of possibility of remote work, by showing that there is indeed a third key 'force' that is at work.

The contextual framework of remote work constitutes the first level of the theoretical model. In the second level, the self-evaluation of remote workers of their working and living conditions are analysed to map out their conceptualisation of remote work.

Here, three types of narratives were identified in expressions of interviewees. Firstly, in parallel with the understanding of remote work as a potentially alternative way of constructing work-society relations, they mentioned what kind of a life remote work could provide which would be a desirable life. Secondly, it is identified that the idea

of a desired life is expressed in a comparative narrative in which the negative working and living conditions are specified which points out the undesired lives. Here, it is seen that the narrative on the undesired lives refers to a powerful critique to oppressive, hierarchical, and precarious working conditions where desired life tells how an alternative way of working, which is potentially possible in remote work, enables a more autonomous life where workers could actualize their self-potential and decide on their own futures. This is the second important finding of the study, which indicates that the contrasting theoretical perspectives in the literature (pessimist versus optimist) find an echo in the subjective experiences of the workers.

At this point, it shall be noted that the categorisation of desired and undesired lives as separate categories apart from the actual conditions doesn't indicate a conceptual separation which would be incompatible with a relational perspective. Rather, a categorisation was made based on the use of languages in participants' narratives where they commonly mentioned the conditions, they "want to" achieve, that they "don't want to" comply with and that they encounter with in a daily basis.

Nevertheless, although this categorisation is made to provide an analytical tool in interpreting data, the *actual* side of desired and undesired lives requires to a deeper analysis which may provide insight for future studies.

At this stage of the analysis, the narratives of the remote workers point to a kind of dichotomy or a 'tension' between what can be called the 'inside' - referring to the private houses as well as the self-potentials of remote workers, and the 'outside' world - which is basically the norms and regulations identified within social relations. Such a dichotomy/tension might lead us to a loose conclusion that, for remote workers, if not for most individuals in modern societies, an escape from suppressive and traditional working conditions can be possible within the isolated and

autonomous boundaries of private homes. Such a conceptualisation can go parallel with the existing distinctions in social theory about human beings and nature, body and mind, or public and private spheres. In a way, clear divisions between material and immaterial, or manual and intellectual are also derived from such a perspective.

That takes the research to the third axis of the self-evaluations of remote workers which constitutes their experiences in daily working life under the actual conditions in the 21st century. In short, three main concluding remarks were identified. Firstly, it is seen that the relative autonomy of remote workers over their temporal and spatial practices is not a source of full emancipation for remote workers who are still subject to various material limitations. Therefore, the task of managing work-life balance becomes an obligation of the worker, who is expected to develop certain skills to enhance self-discipline, which can be related to the idea that the control of time is a core problem not only in capitalist production (L'Heuillet, 2022: 23) but in every sphere of modern social life (Foucault, 1991). Secondly, it can be stated that the 'comfort' of homes, as well as that in one's relation to his/her self-capacity, worth questioning in terms of the social and material relations that shape the working conditions. Thirdly, it is seen that remote work cannot represent the working relations in which temporal and spatial arrangements are flexible, by itself. Rather, different implications of it in terms of the employment contracts, social rights and economic status significantly determine how remote workers experience remote work as a temporal, spatial and social experience. Here, the core issue is the view of future where the normalisation of vagueness and precarity disable remote workers to enjoy their relative autonomy; rather they seem to exploit their own times by themselves.

However, those remarks are not to argue that remote work is nothing but a simple symptom of ever existing exploitative capitalist relations of production. Rather, in this

thesis I would like to emphasize the importance of the changes in working relations in terms of the emergence of new grounds to seek for a desired and meaningful life. In that sense, the narratives of remote workers on desired lives are significant to grasp what they are struggling for. Also, the powerful critique voiced against the existing relations of production as undesired lives puts forward a will to change and construct an alternative. In the end, the actual experiences of remote workers, as they are expressed in their narratives, indicate that they are stretched by the forces pulling them to reveal all their capacities, desires, fears and skills, while this self-realization effort co-exists with burnout, and autonomy comes with a self-exploitation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Note 1: Potential “follow-up” questions are given under each open-ended interview question.

Note 2: After the pilot interviews, some changes can be made to the interview questions below.

Part I

1. Can you tell me about yourself? (Bana biraz kendinizden bahseder misiniz?)
 - How old are you? (Kaç yaşındasınız?)
 - Where do you live? Do you share your apartment with anyone? (Nerede yaşıyorsunuz? Yalnız mı yaşıyorsunuz?)
 - Where are you graduated from? (Hangi bölümden/okuldan mezunsunuz?)
 - What do you do? (Ne iş yapıyorsunuz?)
 - Do you have any side jobs? (Herhangi bir ek iş yapıyor musunuz?)
 - Do you have any hobbies? Can you tell me about them? (Hobileriniz var mı? Varsa biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?)
2. Can you tell me about your job a little bit more? (Bana işinizden biraz daha bahsedebilir misiniz?)
 - How long have you been doing this job? (Ne zamandır bu işte çalışıyorsunuz?)
 - Can you tell me about your previous work experiences, if any? (Varsa önceki iş deneyimlerinizden bahsedebilir misiniz?)
 - How long have you been working from home? (Ne zamandır evden çalışıyorsunuz?)
 - Is your job related with your educational background? (Mesleğiniz aldığınız eğitimle ilişkili mi?)
 - Is it a registered and secure job? What are the conditions in terms of social rights? What kind of labour contract did you sign? (Kayıtlı ve sigortalı mı çalışıyorsunuz? Sosyal haklar anlamında iş koşulları nasıl? Ne tür bir iş sözleşmesi yaptınız?)
 - How is your relationship with your colleagues? (İş arkadaşlarınızla aranız nasıl?)
 - Do you have contact with or member of any professional organisations? If so, can you mention the activities in those grounds? (Herhangi bir meslek örgütüyle ilişkiniz var mı veya birine üye misiniz? Öyleyse, oradaki faaliyetlerden biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?)

3. Are you happy with your job? (İşinizden memnun musunuz?)

- Do you think this job is suitable for your knowledge and skills? (Bu işin sizin birikim ve yeteneklerinize uygun olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?)
- Are you satisfied with your earning? (Kazancınızdan memnun musunuz?)
- Is it a temporary job for you or do you consider it as a lifelong profession? (Şu anda yaptığınız iş sizin için geçici bir iş mi, yoksa bunu hayat boyu sürdüreceğiniz mesleğiniz olarak mı görüyorsunuz?)
- Are you worried about the future? (Gelecekle ilgili kaygılarınız var mı?)
- What is your dream job? Do you think you are (close to) doing your dream job now? (Hayalinizdeki meslek nedir? Şu anda hayallerinizin gerçekleştiğini ya da hayallerinize yakın bir iş yaptığınızı düşünüyor musunuz?)
- Do you think the work you do is beneficial (for other people, for the world, etc.)? Yaptığınız işin (insanlığa ve dünyaya?) faydalı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
- Do people around you make comments about your job, especially the fact that you are a remote worker? What do they say? (Çevrenizdeki insanlar sizin işiniz, özellikle de evden çalışıyor olmanız hakkında yorum yapıyorlar mı? Neler söylüyorlar?)
- Are you happy with working from home? (Evden çalışıyor olmaktan memnun musunuz?)
- When you start doing this job was it your choice to work from home? (If yes:) Why? (If no:) Why? (Bu işe başladığınızda evden çalışmak sizin tercih ettiğiniz bir şey mi? (Evet veya Hayır:) Neden?)
- Have the positive/negative expectations you had in the beginning been met? (Bu işe başlarken varolan olumlu veya olumsuz beklentileriniz gerçekleşti mi?)
- Can you compare remote working with non-remote jobs? (Evden çalışma koşulları ile ofis koşullarını karşılaştıracak olsanız neler söylerdiniz?)
- Which areas do you think are more suitable for remote works? Can you evaluate your job in this manner? (Sizce ne tür işler evden çalışmaya daha uygundur? Kendi işinizi bu çerçevede nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?)

4. Can you mention the advantages and disadvantages of working from home? (Sizce evden çalışmanın avantajları ve dezavantajları nelerdir?)

- How does it affect your time-management? (Zaman yönetiminizi nasıl etkiliyor?)
- How do you spend your free time? (Boş zamanlarınızda neler yapıyorsunuz?)
- Are you working literally at home, or do you use other place(s) to work? (Gerçekten evden mi çalışıyorsunuz yoksa çalışmak için gittiğiniz başka mekan(lar) var mı?)

◦ How does being at home affect your working life? Do you make special arrangements in your house to separate work and life? Does it useful for separating them mentally? (Evde olmak çalışma hayatınızı nasıl etkiliyor? Evin içinde işi ve özel hayatı ayırmak için mekansal düzenlemeler yapıyor musunuz? Bu düzenlemeler iş ile yaşamı zihinsel olarak da ayırmak için işe yarıyor mu?)

◦ Do you have children? Do domestic works, child/elderly/patient care affect your working life? (Çocuğunuz var mı? Ev işleri, çocuk/yaşlı/hasta bakımı gibi sorumluluklar iş yaşamınızı etkiliyor mu?)

◦ Do you think it is affecting your social life in a positive/negative way? (Sizce evden çalışıyor olmanız sosyal hayatınızı olumlu veya olumsuz yönde etkiliyor mu?)

◦ If you were to start your own business, would you prefer remote working? (Kendi işinizi kuracak olsanız, evden çalışma düzenini tercih eder miydiniz?)

Part II

5. Can you say that your work is related to technology? If so, how? (Teknolojiyle ilişkili bir iş yaptığınızı söyleyebilir misiniz? Öyleyse, bu nasıl bir ilişki?)

◦ Is the content of your job related with technology? (İşinizin içeriği teknolojiyle bağlantılı mı?)

◦ Is your job related with the production or distribution of knowledge in any ways? (Sice işiniz bilginin üretimi ya da yayılması ile herhangi bir biçimde ilişkili mi?)

◦ Do you think your intellectual capacity is a priority for your job? (If yes:) Why? (If no:)Why? (Entelektüel kapasitenizin işiniz için öncelikli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?)

◦ What kind of technological facilities do you use for your work? (İşiniz için ne tür teknolojik olanaklardan faydalanıyorsunuz?)

◦ How do the technological facilities you use affect your working life? (Sahip olduğunuz teknolojik olanaklar iş yaşamınızı nasıl etkiliyor?)

◦ What can you say about the future of your field of work, considering the course of technological developments? (Teknolojik gelişmelerin gidişatını düşündüğümüzde, iş alanınızın geleceği ile ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz?)

6. What are the challenges/new possibilities that current technological developments bring to your working experiences? (Günümüzdeki teknolojik gelişmeler, iş yaşamınıza ne tür yeni olanaklar veya zorluklar getiriyor sizce?)

◦ Do you think it has an emancipating capacity in terms of work? If so, is it realised today? (Teknolojinin çalışma hayatı için özgürleştirici bir potansiyel taşıdığını düşünüyor musunuz? Öyleyse, bu potansiyel bugün gerçekleşebiliyor mu?)

◦ In what ways does it bring new responsibilities and limitations to our working lives? (Teknolojinin iş hayatımıza getirdiği yeni sorumluluklar ve kısıtlılıklar neler?)

7. Outside of the work, how do you relate with technology? (İşiniz dışında teknolojiyle aranız nasıl?)

◦ Do you use social media actively? (Sosyal medyayı aktif olarak kullanıyor musunuz?)

◦ In what other ways do you engage with technology? (Teknolojiyle başka hangi yollarla ilişki içindesiniz?)

◦ Are you interested in new technological developments outside your work? (İşiniz dışında da teknolojik gelişmeleri takip ediyor musunuz?)

◦ Do you feel like you have to catch up with them and learn constantly? (Bu gelişmeleri kaçırmamanız ve sürekli yeni şeyler öğrenmeniz gerektiğini hissediyor musunuz?)

◦ What do you think about technology in general; do you see it as a constraining or empowering agent? (Genel anlamda teknoloji hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Kısıtlayıcı mı yoksa güçlendirici mi buluyorsunuz?)

8. What do you think about the future of technological advances in general? (Genel olarak, teknolojik ilerlemenin geleceği hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?)

◦ Do you have any concerns about it or do you think it opens the road to a better future? (Bu konuda sizi endişelendiren şeyler var mı yoksa daha iyi bir geleceğin kapılarının açılableceğini mi düşünüyorsunuz?)

◦ What kind of changes is it bringing to our social lives? What are the future possibilities? (Teknoloji toplumsal hayatımızda nasıl değişikliklere sebep oluyor sizce ve gelecekte başka neler olabilir dersiniz?)

9. Do you have anything else to add? (Eklemek istediğiniz başka bir şey var mı?)

Thank you! – Teşekkür ediyorum!

Appendix B: List of Interviewees

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education	Job Definition	Employment Type
Tansel	Male	51	Electronic Engineering	Software Developer	Employed
Kerim	Male	30	Computer Sciences (2 years)	Web Designer	Employed
Hakan	Male	39	Civil Engineering	Web Designer	Freelancer Business Owner
Hazal	Female	41	Cinema and Television	Gender Specialist, Mentor	Employed, Freelancer
Merve	Female	29	Journalism	Journalist, Social Media Manager	Employed, Freelancer
Zeynep	Female	39	High School	Accountant, Project Assistant	Employed
Cemre	Female	30	Statistics, Industrial Engineering	Digital Marketing Specialist	Business Owner
Aslı	Female	29	Public Relations and Advertising	Customer Care Specialist	Employed
Begüm	Female	30	International Trade	Designer	Business Owner (Start-up, Social Entrepreneur)
Bahar	Female	32	Trade	Designer	Business Owner (Start-up, Social Entrepreneur)
Gaye	Female	33	Political Science and Public Administration	Book Editor	Freelancer
Sanem	Female	28	Political Science and Public Administration	Translator English Teacher	Freelancer
Aysel	Female	44	American Literature	Translator	Employed
Nazan	Female	45	Economics	Project Coordinator	Freelancer
Deniz	Female	37	International Relations, Sociology	Translator; Project Coordinator	Freelancer
Umut	Male	46	Dramaturgy	Conference Interpreter, Translator	Freelancer
Mert	Male	34	Management Information Systems	Product Engineer	Employed
Çağla	Female	33	Sociology	Content Manager	Employed

Table 1. List of Interviewees