DIFFERENT WORKPLACE, DIFFERENT RULES?: ROUTINES AND RULES WHEN WORK IS CARRIED OUT FROM THE HOME

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Different Workplace, Different Rules? : Routines and rules when work is carried out from the home.

Introduction

Recent years have seen a number of developments in the way in which work is carried out. Remote working, where employees carry out some, or all, their work away from the normal workplace has become increasingly prevalent in many countries. This increase has been influenced by three main factors; developments in information and communication technology (ICT), globalisation and greater concern with work-life balance (Kelliher & Richardson, 2011). Technological developments have facilitated work to be carried out remotely, by allowing certain aspects of the work environment to be replicated in other locations (e.g. access to data) and by enabling communication and collaboration amongst employees in different locations. Increased global integration means that employees may be part of teams made up of individuals based in different countries and in different time zones. Where employees work in geographically distributed teams, whether they are present in the workplace or are elsewhere may have little impact on their ability to do their job, since they are not co-located with their team members. Furthermore, where team members are located in different time zones, there may only be a small window of time when all team members are available at work for immediate/direct interaction. In these circumstances, employees may increase their availability, but do so working remotely, in order to avoid extended hours at the workplace. Finally, growing concern for balancing work and non-work activities may mean that employees may wish to work remotely for some or all of their working time, for example in order to reduce commute times, or to accommodate activities in their non-work lives.

This paper is concerned with examining the behaviours and expectations of remote workers. It is argued that when work is carried out away from the physical environment of the workplace, organisational routines and rules may exercise less influence on employee behaviour. Data are presented on how remote workers enact their working day when working from home, and how organisational routines and rules influence this enactment. The paper focuses on employees who work remotely for part of their working week and seeks to examine how the conduct of work carried out at home may differ from work carried out in the workplace. The paper draws on data from a wider study concerned with the implementation of flexible working practices in six organisations and focus on remote workers in one case study organisation. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Organisational routines can be described as recurrent behaviour patterns, procedures and dispositions (Becker, 2008) and are widely acclaimed to be ubiquitous in organisations. Rules, whether formally prescribed, or informally agreed upon, delineate the type of behaviour deemed acceptable or appropriate within organisation (Desai, 2008). The findings presented here document a number of ways in which employees adopt different routines and where different rules apply when they work remotely. For example, the findings show that employees adopted different modes of self presentation when working remotely, often adopting a more casual style (including dress, hairstyling, shaving etc). Second, remote employees often reported scheduling their working day differently and exercising greater

discretion over their time, than when based in the workplace. For example, there was evidence of employees interspersing work with activities such as, exercising, carrying out domestic tasks and running errands during what was notionally working time (albeit in many cases counter-balanced by carrying out work beyond normal hours at the workplace.) Third, there was evidence of work being carried out in different sometimes less formal settings, such as at kitchen tables and on sofas and in gardens and on balconies. The findings show that many respondents greatly valued the opportunities to adopt different rules and routines from those of the workplace. In this paper the reasons why what is expected and what is acceptable behaviour changes when the location of work changes is explored and the more general implications for the organisation and control of work are discussed, in the context of growing use of remote and virtual working in globalised organisations.

Different Work Place: Working from home

Examining the behaviour and routines of remote workers rests on the assumption that these will differ from those exhibited by workers at the workplace. Behind this is the idea that the 'private space' of home may result in different approaches to work than when in the 'public space' of the workplace. Giddens (1991) observes that a divide between a public and a private life is a feature of modern day society. Prior to the industrial revolution work was often located at, or near, the home and as a result the distinction between work and non-work activity was less clearly demarcated. Similarly, the notion of set working time, as distinct from non-working time was less developed and since people often worked alongside family members the distinctions between work and non-work activity were less clearly drawn (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2007). By contrast, some commentators would suggest that today developments in information and communication technology, particularly wireless technology, have meant that the divisions between public and private lives have been eroded, since the employee can, at least in theory, be ever available to their employing organisation, regardless of when and where they are located. However, the same technology can also mean that the employee can also be ever available during working time as a consumer, a carer, or as friend for non-work concerns (Wajcman, Bittman and Brown 2008).

Pfeffer and Sutton (2007) examine the idea that work is or should be separate from the rest of life and argue that many organisations expect people to behave differently and to take themselves more seriously at work than in other parts of their life. They argue that work is routinely treated as being different from the rest of life and that workplaces prescribe rules about what people ought to do and how they ought to be. In other words in exchange for payment, employees are expected to submit to constraints on what they think, feel and do and as such their individuality and their non-work concerns are subordinated to those of the workplace. Working from home however challenges this separation, since work and non-work are co-located and may be more closely integrated. It may also offer some possibility for humanising work.

Organisational Routines

The term routine is frequently referred to in common parlance to refer to a habitual pattern of behaviour and are generally easily recognised. In organisations Hodgson (2008) argues that they are vital to organisations and Becker (2008) suggests that that they are an integral part, since they form the building blocks of organisations and that they capture the typical ways in which organisations accomplish their tasks. Nelson and Winters (1982) have linked the idea of routines to genes and suggest that they represent the genes of the organisation. Nevertheless, organisational routines have only received relatively limited research attention and there have been few attempts to examine whether routines persist and whether their influence remains outside of the physical boundaries of the organisation. The studies which have examined organisational routines have not always shared a consistent definition and therefore the phenomena under consideration may be subject to some variation. In an attempt to provide some clarity Becker (2008) suggests that the term organisational routines has been used to refer to three main concepts, namely recurrent behaviour patterns; rules or procedures and dispositions, although acknowledges that these are related concepts. They are also seen to be linked to other influences on behaviour in organisations, such as institutions, norms and conventions.

Routines are also closely related to the notion of habit, in that habits are the individual level building blocks from which organisational routines emerge (Knudsen, 2008). Generally speaking routines are seen to exist in groups and organisations, whereas habits refer to individuals (Cohen et al, 1996; Dosi et al, 2000). Hodgson (2008) argues that routines operate through triggering individual habits. A habit he suggests is 'a propensity to behave in a particular way in a particular class of situations' (2008:16). Although habit and behaviour are not seen to be the same thing, repeated behaviour is the manifestation of a habit. Strength of habit is seen to be demonstrated by the degree to which behaviour is repeated in a particular context (Wood & Neal, 2007). As such a stable context providing opportunities for frequent repetition of the behaviour are necessary conditions for a strong habit (or routine) to develop. Habits are considered to be socially acquired and may be replicated by others. Replication is likely to occur either where there is an incentive for imitation (which may or may not be conscious) and may be stronger in times of organisational difficulty or uncertainty. Under these circumstances the incentive to imitate individuals who are perceived to be successful may become stronger (Knudsen, 2008).

Hodgson (2008) argues that routines play similar roles for organisations that habits play for individuals and goes on to argue that there are not behaviours per se, but rather are dispositions towards particular behaviours. Thus, they are 'stored behavioural capacities or capabilities (2008:23). Routines are seen as depending upon a group of individuals displaying similar habits. Behaviour cues by some group members trigger specific habits in others. Knudsen (2008) suggests that both habits and routines share the common characteristics of being persistent; they multiply and often contain ready-made solutions to frequently occurring problems. As such, in periods of culture change the changing of habits and routines becomes important. He offers a definition of routines as being a

> 'sequence of individual habits, with the execution of one habit triggering the next, such that a group of people acquires a common disposition to behave or think in a particular way in a particular class of situations' (p.131).

Thus, they are driven by individual habits which are enabled by a particular organisational context. It has also been observed that since routines involve co-ordination within a group of people (one persons action trigger a disposition in another person), they become self-reinforcing (Winter, 2005) and therefore may be hard to change once established. Routines have implications for control and order in organisations by prescribing ways to behave. They may take the form of formal prescription, but alternatively may not be codified or officially sanctioned procedures, and be informal and tacit. In these circumstances they may represent a more subtle means of influence.

Examples of organisational routines may include modes of self presentation, organisation of work and workspaces. Pratt and Rafaeli (1997) suggest that organisational dress comprises the clothing and artefacts (jewellery, name badges etc) that an employee wears whilst at work and that this represents a means for organisations to exert control over employees (Joseph, 1986). Organisations are seen to supersede individual control, by requiring certain modes of dress. Dress is often seen as a symbol of organisational identity and culture (Pratt and Rafaeli, 1997). Pfeffer and Sutton (2007) also observe that many organisations require employees to dress in pre-ordained attire at work. They suggest that requiring formal approaches to dress from employees serve as a reminder to employees that they are expected to subordinate their individuality to the organisation. By way of example, they refer to the expected IBM mode of dress of blue suit, white shirt and tie.

Pratt and Rafaeli (1997) focus on organisational dress as an organisational symbol and their study referred to the role of uniforms in a health care setting. Our concern here is not with the wearing of uniforms, but rather with the expectations about how employees will present themselves and habits/rituals that develop around these. Where employees are not required to wear a uniform, the questions of what to wear and how to present oneself for work, notions of acceptable business wear and standards of grooming (which may differ for men and women) presents itself. An organisational routine concerning workplace address can help address that problem. Similarly routines of how the normal working day is conducted solves the problem of how to schedule work, when to start, to stop, to break. A routine prescribes a day when one starts at a designated hour and continues until the designated end of working time, with standard breaks for coffee/tea/lunch throughout the day. For employees who work remotely, the question arises of whether the same routines will be adopted. To what extent does the physical confines of the organisation reinforce routines and does the reduction in collective demonstration of routines diminish their influence?

Methods

The data reported here are drawn from a larger study designed to investigate the implementation of flexible working in a number of organisations. The data presented in this paper are drawn from one case study organisation, EnergyCo. This organisation had, in the years in the run up to the case study implemented a programme where approximately one third of their employees became mobile workers. In practice this meant that individuals no longer had allocated working space in any of the company's premises, nor did they have an allocated landline telephone number. Instead they were allocated with equipment (laptop computer, phone, printer etc) which enabled them to work from an unallocated 'hot desk' located in company premises, their home or other 'public' environment. For the purposes of

this paper we focus on working from home. In practice the majority of respondents worked from home on a small number of days each week, often travelling to different offices during the rest of the week. Thus, they were not home workers for all of their working time, but worked at home on a regular basis for part of their working week. For some this operated on the basis of complete days and for others part of the day (e.g. working at home following a meeting with a client off-site instead of returning to the workplace).

Both the change to working arrangements in this company and the regular remote working, but for only part of their working week, are important in this case since this allow differences in routines both before and after the change to mobile working to be examined, but also for differences between working locations to be observed.

Data were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with 20 mobile workers and a focus group. Questions were designed to elicit their lived experiences of remote working focusing in particular on how they conducted their working day/part day when working from home. With the permission of the participants all interviews and the focus group were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. Transcripts were analysed using template analysis (King, 2004).

In the next section data are presented about self presentation, organisation of the working day and work space when working from home.

Findings

Being able to work from home for some of their working time engendered very positive feelings amongst many respondents. The familiar and private space of home was valued as a workspace and in general was also reported to be a more relaxing environment. For example,

> When you're at home you've got your own space. Simple things like you can go to *your* kitchen and having a cup of tea in *your own* mug. This is what I always say, things like that. I know that it's nothing but it's just so relaxing, so relaxing and kind of stress free really. (Emphasis added).

> Interviewee 2, Female

One interviewee recalled their feelings when they first started working from home on a regular basis,

> Initially it was … How do I describe it? It was … It was a real kind of perk in a way and … But also felt a little bit naughty almost working from home when I could have come into the office but there was no need at all so
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> Interviewee 6, Male

Not having to travel to work was also seen as helpful for employee well-being,

Well, first of all, not … levels of tiredness. I'm not as tired for driving. It's as simple as that really. I've been able to juggle, like I say personal life easier. …When you go throughout the week the fact that you are not in a rush every single day it just makes a huge difference overall to I think your job satisfaction, also personal satisfaction.

<div align="right">Interviewee 2, Female</div>

and

I suppose I feel because of the home situation and having such a young child, i.e. I want to be at home more.

<div align="right">Interviewee 1, Male</div>

Some employees also liked to balance their week, in such a way that if they were likely to have long or stressful days, for example where they needed to travel a long distance for a meeting, then they would often try to schedule the following day to be at home.

So the benefit for me is I can plan my week and I can balance my life and have the ability to say well if I'm going up to Manchester that day, I'll make sure I'm perhaps working from home the next ... and so most Fridays I'm able to work from home which makes a big difference to me.

<div align="right">Interviewee 4, Female</div>

The interview data suggest that organisational routines were not necessarily observed when employees worked from home. In particular our findings show that employees often adopted different patterns of dress and self-presentation, that they worked in different spaces and that they organised their working day in different ways than from when present in the workplace. We examine each of these in turn below.

Self-Presentation and Dress

Some staff indicated that when they worked remotely they did not observe the dress code that they would normally adhere to if they were going to work in the workplace. Instead they often opted for comfort and choosing to be less formal in what they wear. Staff reported being able to dress differently as a positive thing and some observed that it also saved them time. For example,

but when I'm at home for the day I do find … I don't spend as long getting ready 'cos I just chuck on a pair of jeans and no make-up, so you save that part of the day

<div align="right">Interviewee 5, Female</div>

Another interviewee who, although not a frequent home worker, commented that when she worked at home,

Obviously there are things like I wouldn't be bothering to put on a suit, all those kind of things.

<div align="right">Interviewee 11, Female</div>

The use of 'obviously' implying that workplace routines would not be expected to apply to work from home. A member of staff reported that 'I can be walking around in my t-shirt and jeans all day in the house' (Interviewee 6, Male) and commented that some of his friends who did not have access to remote working were envious of his freedom to dress in a more relaxed way.

Dress and self-presentation for work also depended on the time of day, one member of staff explained that on the days that she worked from home she started work early and did the first part of their day before getting dressed,

> Wednesday and Friday I generally work at home … so a typical day would probably start for me starting work at six o'clock in the morning, going down doing probably an hour, an hour and a half's work, and then stopping and dare I say it, I'm in pyjamas.

> Interviewee 12, Female

It is noteworthy that a tone of apprehension is evident here, in terms of transgressing an organisational routine in relation to expectations about dress when working. Along similar lines this interviewee commented that if she had to go into the workplace unexpectedly for any reason, her home working style of dress was not appropriate for the office,

> When your laptops aren't working and stuff like that, that's a nightmare because you suddenly go, right … here I am in my grungy gear, not wearing smart office gear, I've planned the day, going to be working at home and oh gosh, right okay, so that can be a problem.

> Interviewee 12, Female

Organising the Working Day

Many respondents indicated that on the days or part days that they worked from home, they organised their work schedule in different ways and did not necessarily mimic the pattern of a day spent at the workplace. It was for example commonly reported that people worked at different times from the normal workplace schedule when they worked from home. It was also commonly reported that employees incorporated other, non-work activities into their working day. A number of reasons were offered for these changes to work routines and included simple personal preferences, balancing work and family activities, health and social relations.

Frequently employees talked about starting work earlier than they would if they were in the workplace. This was sometimes because they saved the travelling time to work and so started work at the same time that they would normally leave home to travel to work. Others described themselves as 'morning people' and worked in line with their own personal preferences. Being remote from the workplace offered freedom which might not have been available at the workplace, for example, due to security constraints, or the existence of workplace routines which the individual might have been unwilling to openly transgress. For example,

Definitely, yeah. I tend to get out of bed, log on, do a bit of work, then have some breakfast, chill out for a little bit, go back do some work, then … I kind of chunk out my day a little bit. Not … I don't plan it out as in okay 11.00 'til 12.00 I'm going to do my shopping and things like that. It's a bit more fluid. So yeah, I definitely structure my day in a considerably different way.

Interviewee 6, Male

Personally it's very important mainly to … like I said mainly to avoid time … wasted time commuting … I start working even earlier if I'm at home. I'll probably finish as late or if not more because you are just there really, so you don't have to rely on the car or traffic jams or something like that or any other disruption.

Interviewee 2, Female

If I'm working from home as an example, I will get up at the crack of sparrows and I'll be logged on and doing what I want to achieve probably from about six thirty in the morning… and then I'll work probably solidly without break and disturbance until about four o'clock, sometimes, unfortunately, probably without lunch because I'm just so engrossed in it.

Interviewee 1, Male

Respondents described a range of activities which they undertook in addition to working during the normal hours of work when they worked from home. These included dealing with family commitments such as getting children ready for and delivering them to and from school or nursery. For example, one interviewee described a complex pattern,

(starting at six), stopping at seven thirty and then getting my daughter up and taking her to school and everything else and then starting back again at nine o'clock, so then I would work through until about just before three and then I'll go and get my daughter from school and that's the same routine on Wednesdays and Fridays and then getting my daughter from school and then carrying on with work from about three thirty onwards until whenever. I probably stop about five o'clock and then I would pick up again probably about seven thirty when my daughter's in bed and do further work then, maybe another hour then, maybe an hour and a half, do a couple of hours or whatever, depending on what there is.

Interviewee 12, Female

Others spoke about how they took time out of normal working hours to do shopping or to undertake household activities. For example,

There are times when I'm working from home where I'll take a couple of hours out to do some shopping, dry cleaning, whatever round the house or something. But I'll always have the phone on me if people need to get hold of me. So I can step back into it as soon as I can.

Interviewee 6, Male

Employees also took time out of work to spend time with family and friends. One respondents explained how working from home meant that she could have lunch with her partner who worked a very different schedule to her,

My boyfriend is actually working in A and E as a doctor, so his shifts are all over the place. He may work from 4pm until 1am for seven days and the fact that I can work at home on a Friday and just meet him for lunch for an hour and it's nothing; if you were at work, you'd have that hour, but it's just a really simple thing.

<div align="right">Interviewee 8, Female</div>

Organising the working day in a different way when working from home could also allow family activities to take place especially with very young children who might otherwise be asleep when their parent reached home. Some respondents however struggled with this to a certain degree, perhaps indicating a reluctance to act outside of organisational routines for family reasons.

Yeah. I think my wife would guide me that I should do, but I don't. We've got a 17 week old daughter and she's saying "You know, if you logged on at six in the morning, you've worked solidly, why can't we go swimming at four thirty" and I would naturally say "But the phone might go and I might need to be there and there's these…", you know, I suppose I conjure up a whole number of different reasons why I shouldn't do that.

<div align="right">Interviewee 1, Male</div>

Other respondents also recounted frequently taking relatively small amounts of time out of work to undertake day to day domestic activities such as doing the laundry or cooking. For example,

It takes me five minutes to put the washing on and then to pin it out on the line … I can put a stew in the oven in ten minutes and three hours later it's done and ready in the evening. So I do try and fit things like that in my day when I'm working from home and I don't pretend that I don't because I do and I think everyone else does.

<div align="right">Interviewee 7, Female</div>

and

And even tiny chores to be honest, you can do your laundry, … your bills everything, it just makes it easier and I think you do work better because you're not constantly thinking oh god I've got to go home and do that, I haven't done this. Normal day to day, everything, everyday thing that probably if you were at work you'd spend more time chatting to someone sitting next to you than you actually do doing your chores at home when you're there.

<div align="right">Interviewee 8, Female</div>

Taking time to rest during the working day was reported by one employee who had suffered ill health. On the advice of her doctor she took a nap in the afternoon and explained that this was easier from home since, you can actually go and lie down properly. (Interviewee 8, Female)

Equally some interviewees reported that if they were working from home it could change the decision of whether or not to call in sick to work. An employee may not feel well enough to

travel to the workplace, dress according to expected standards and organise their work according to a normal working day, but may feel able to do some work from home. One interviewee explained,

> Say I'm really not feeling well in the morning, whereas before I could have called in and really I just have to stay at home, when I'm not feeling well, I need to sleep for another hour and then I'm going to get up and I'll be online. Because partly when you're sitting at home ill, you often are capable of just logging on and doing the bits, getting stuff done

<div align="right">Interviewee 8, Female</div>

A variety of reasons were cited for taking time away from work when employees worked at home. These included maintaining relationships,

> I'm in a relationship with my girlfriend is … She does quite long hours as well. So I do generally most of the things around the house, so I can clear that out so. .. As hard working people we can enjoy ourselves together so without having the worries of I've got to paint this and do the shopping and that kind of thing.

<div align="right">Interviewee 6, Male</div>

Natural preference and bio rhythms were seen as a motivation for structuring the working day differently also,

> Absolutely because certainly my productivity is not as high in the afternoon as it is in the morning and it's also higher in the evening. So I find that I quite often split my day working early in the morning doing non-work things in the afternoon, fitting them in the afternoon around work commitments and meetings and teleconferences and then working later in the evening. So my overall day is longer but I'll miss out a chunk of work in the afternoon where I'm doing other things.

<div align="right">Interviewee 6, Male</div>

Others cited family commitments as reasons for taking time away from work,

> And the other thing is that I can get home at a good time, pick up my little boy at five, have a couple of hours with him before he goes to bed at seven, and then if I need to do any work extra in the evenings to make up any lost time or pick up any urgent emails then I'm able to do that.

<div align="right">Interviewee 7, Female</div>

Respondents indicated that it was generally seen to be acceptable to take time out during their normal working day to attend to other matters, so long as performance targets were met.

> I don't think anybody would bat an eyelid, you know if I … on my way home, or you know before collecting the boys if I went and did my weekly shop I don't think anyone would bat an eyelid if I'm delivering the goods …

<div align="right">Interviewee 5, Female</div>

Workspace

Some of the home workers in the study were able to designate a room in their homes for work and this was often set up to replicate the workplace environment. For some interviewees this was seen as an important means of facilitating remote working,

> I don't feel like I've got that challenge because I've got a small bedroom as a study and it's set up and I can just deliberately go in to it. I don't have any desk space at work… so therefore I've got a small filing cabinet which is at home so when I finish my working day, if I've taken notes out of my home filing system to take with me to work, I'll then be replacing those back into my filing system at home.

> Interviewee 1, Male

And

> I'm fairly fortunate especially seeing as I do a flat share in London, it's fairly rare. I managed to find one with reasonable rent and a little office… It's not my bedroom. It was in my old place, I had to use my bedroom or share the sitting room when I worked with someone else from EnergyCo and that's difficult because you can't both work at home, you know you've suddenly got your sitting room turned into this path of papers and stuff whereas now I have my little office and my flat mates are very accommodating and I tend to just have it for myself which is really good.

> Interviewee 8, Female

Others chose different spaces to work in at home which did not replicate the workplace environment,

> I actually work in the kitchen. I've got quite a large kitchen and I work in the kitchen and I'm just kind of like one end of the dining room table and it's fine, it works really well for me, but there's not anyone really around, so it's fine.

> Interviewee 12, Female

Sufficient space at home was seen to be important so that work did not invade home space develop habits of trying to work and interact with family at the same time,

> I feel much more comfortable with that way of working now, now that we've moved to a new home, because I've got that dedicated room which I can close the door and although I'll be very tempted to go and open and log back on, that's a lot better than the place we had previously where the only place to log on was in the lounge area…which in the evening, it was even more tempting because obviously it was just there. And I felt that just because my wife and Amanda (baby daughter) were sat over there and I was sat over here, I was kind of with her and actually that was quite bad, that was a really bad thing to have done from a relationship perspective.

> Interviewee 1, Male

Not having enough space to designate workspace at home was sometimes seen as a negative aspect,

No, our house isn't that big (for a separate work room) and I think that's something that within our company within EnergyCo that's something I don't think we make a lot of allowance for … people use their cars as an office and their houses as an office. You know if people want to meet up, well where do you meet? Do you meet in a café, do you meet at home, you know you've kind of lost that whole infrastructure of buildings,

Interviewee 5, Female

Discussion and Conclusion

The use of remote working has grown significantly in many economies in recent years. Whilst there have been many studies of teleworkers , often focusing on how working remotely affects their levels of performance and motivation, still relatively little is known at the micro level about how people who work from home actually conduct themselves whilst doing work at home. To what extent do the routines and rules of the workplace permeate the home environment?

This paper started from the premise that a physical removal from the work environment would be likely to result in different behaviours. It was postulated that work routines and rules may not have the same degree of influence when people work away from the workplace. In particular, the home, as private space, may be a location where other routines are enacted and other rules apply. As a result, when an employee works from home their behaviour may also be subject to a series of different, potentially conflicting, influences.

The paper presents data from a case study organisation where approximately one third of workers had become 'mobile' workers in recent times, whereby they no longer had allocated workspace in company premises. As a result, many employees started to work from home for part of their working time and thus this organisation provided an ideal context to examine how employees change their behaviour when they work at home and how they behave differently on home based and non-home based days. In semi-structured interviews employees were asked about their working day when at home. A number of differences emerged including self-presentation; organisation of their working day and choice of workspace. These differences illustrated a move away from the organisational routines practised at the workplace. Respondents reported adopting more casual, comfort-oriented modes of dress and self-presentation. They also reported organising their working days in different ways, most notably working at different times and breaking away from work to do other things. This involved both interspersing work with small tasks and also taking longer periods of time away from work. There was evidence of employees choosing to work in different types of spaces when working from home.

It is argued here that the routines and rules of the workplace have a less direct influence on employees when they work away from the workplace. First, the private space of home may have its own influences on behaviour, but that outside of the physical environment, workplace influences may exercise less control over behaviour. Since employees normally work on their own when they work from home and at least physically from colleagues, the

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collective aspect of routines may be less powerful. If routines are associated with organisations and with groups and habits with individuals (Knudsen, 2008), then when an individual works away from the organisation and the group, then habits, rather than routines may become more important. Existing habits from the home environment may also influence behaviour here. The maintenance of routines in a group or organisation relies upon individuals displaying similar habits (Hodgson, 2008) and so when individuals are remote from the workplace, the opportunity for behavioural cues from other group members to trigger routine related behaviour and for the routines to be reinforced (Winter, 2005) will be diminished. Of course there are other means, not just physical presence, which allow influence to be exercised between group members, but diminished opportunity for influence may be an important and overlooked consequence of the growth in remote working.

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