



Transforming Work

2nd Seminar on Socioeconomic Ethics

2021-2023

Summary

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Introduction

On the track of socio-economic ethics seminars started in 2019-2021 with the programme on “Digital footprint: servitude or service?”, the Pablo VI Foundation has held a new multidisciplinary debate in 2021-2023 on the transformations underway in the world of work, with the intention of listening and conducting an updated Christian reflection on “the new things”. Like the previous one, the seminar was directed by Domingo Sugranyes.

Participants included up to 40 experts, from various professional backgrounds and with different sensitivities, both in terms of their economic vision and their philosophical or cultural references. They reflected on the transformation of work due to the technological revolution, globalisation and its effects; flexibilisation, teleworking, new business models, and how this has impacted, not only on concrete realities, but also on labour and social relations, labour legislation and social dialogue, the model of subsidies, and the concept of care, conscientization and social dialogue, and how this has impacted not only on concrete realities, but also on labour and social relations, labour legislation and social dialogue, the subsidy model, and the concepts of care, awareness, health and accessibility.

The group included sociologists, trade union representatives, economists, entrepreneurs, psychologists, technologists, philosophers and theologians meeting every month for two years in a series of sessions divided into four phases: the first dealt with the transformation of work from an ethical, economic, sociological and cultural point of view. The second analysed how this change is taking place in specific sectors such as tourism and low cost travel, agriculture and food, industrial sectors, the so-called “ignored work” (personal care, domestic work and unpaid work) and labour relations in the service

sector. A third phase focused on cross-cutting issues, such as

workers’ health and emotional balance, conciliation and accessibility, labour legislation and social dialogue, subsidies, relocations and migrations. And in a final phase, the group focused on the conclusions contained in this document.

This seminar was supervised by a Board of Directors composed of **Txetxu Ausín Díez**, Senior Scientist at the CSIC Institute of Philosophy; **Luis Hernando de Larramendi** (†), Honorary President of Acción Social Empresarial, who died in February 2022; **Francisco Javier López Martín**, former Secretary General of CCOO Madrid; **Paul Dembinski**, economist at the Observatoire de Finance in Geneva; **Lorenzo Fernández Franco**, Professor of Sociology at the Complutense University of Madrid; **Alfredo Pastor Bodmer**, economist and Professor Emeritus at IESE; **María Elena Sanz Isla**, General Director of People and Organisation at Mapfre; **Msgr. Joseba Segura Etxezarraga**, economist and Bishop of Bilbao; **Domingo Sugranyes Bickel**, Director of the Permanent Seminars of the Fundación Pablo VI and **Jesús Avezuela Cárcel**, Director General of the Fundación Pablo VI. The Committee of Experts was made up of a group of up to 40, with personalities such as **Inma de Benito**, Director of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport of the CEOE; **Raúl Flores**, Technical Secretary of FOESSA; **Andreu Cruañas**, President of ASEMPELO; **Mariano Guindal**, journalist of La Vanguardia; and **José Manuel González- Páramo**, economist and member of the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, among many others.

During the sessions, particular consideration was given to the issue of precarious or ephemeral employment; flexible contractual formulas, on a pro-

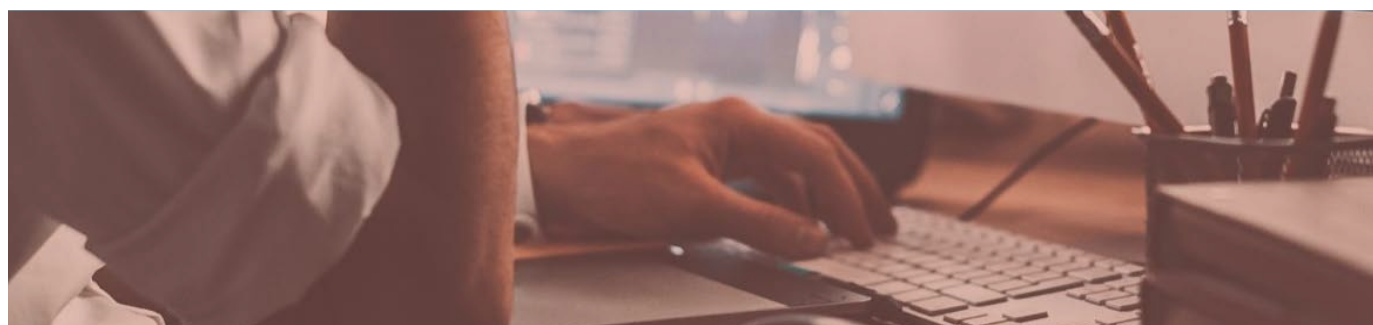
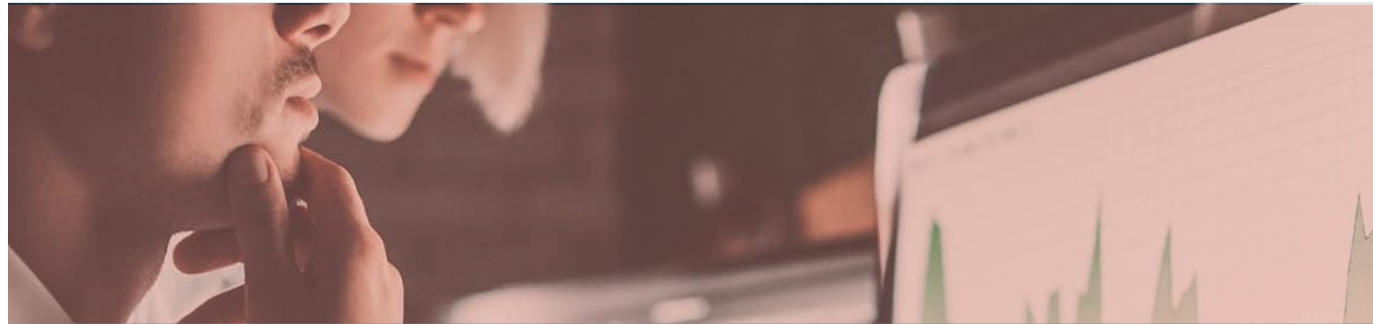
The Pablo VI Foundation has held a new multidisciplinary debate in 2021-2023 on the transformations underway in the world of work

ject or term basis, with working conditions that are not always in line with the needs of the jobseeker.

The debate was also aimed at understanding, in this new context, the evolution of social dialogue and changes in the organisations representing the social partners. Reflection was also aimed at understanding, in this new context, the evolution of social dialogue and the changes in the representative organisations of the social partners.

The presentations, summaries and conclusions will be the subject of a full publication (book and podcast series). Each session, summarised on the website of the Fundación Pablo VI, can also be followed in its entirety on the YouTube channel. The aim is to ensure that the conclusions can be translated into policies that favour innovative initiatives, which are generally applicable in society, including vulnerable groups, so that the common good increasingly materialises as a space in which everyone has the real capacity to participate.

Participants



Board of Directors

It is composed of renowned figures in the fields of economics, politics, and philosophy (see page 8). Its aim was to supervise the seminar strategy, monitor the seminar and validate the training activities carried out.

Committee of Experts

It is composed of a group of up to 40 specialists and experts from multiple disciplines. On a monthly basis, they have participated in discussions on the proposed thematic blocks (see pages 10-13).

Staff

In drawing up these conclusions, the essential work of synthesis was carried out by the journalist Pablo Casado, who was responsible for the follow-up and summaries of each session. The support of the communications, technical and administrative departments of the Fundación Pablo VI was also key.

Board of Directors

1. **Txetxu Ausín Díez**, Senior Scientist, Institute of Philosophy, CSIC.
2. **Jesús Avezuela Cárcel**, General Director of the Pablo VI Foundation.
3. **Paul Dembinski**, Economist, Observatoire de la Finance, Geneva
4. **Lorenzo Fernández Franco**, sociologist and retired Professor of Sociology of Business and Human Resources, Complutense University, Madrid
5. **Francisco Javier López Martín**, ex-Secretary General, CCOO Madrid
6. **Alfredo Pastor Bodmer**, Economist, Professor Emeritus, IESE Business School
7. **María Elena Sanz Isla**, General Manager of People and Organisation at Mapfre
8. **Joseba Segura Etxezarraga**, Economist, Bishop of Bilbao
9. **Domingo Sugranyes Bickel**, Director of the Seminar

Committee of Experts

1. **Rafael Allepuz**, Associate Professor in the Dept. of Applied Economics, University of Lleida
2. **Javier Anitua**, ex-partner, Russell Reynolds
3. **José Manuel Aparicio**, theologian, University Comillas Pontifical
4. **Agustín Blanco**, Director of the *J. M. Martín Patino Chair for the Culture of the Encounter*, Comillas Pontifical University
5. **Fernando Bonete**, Director of the Expert Degree in Circular Economy and Sustainable Development CEU - Expansion, CEU San Pablo University
6. **José Luis Calvo**, Director of Artificial Intelligence, Sngular
7. **Antonio Cano**, Technical Area Manager, ADAMS Training
8. **Alfonso Carcasona**, CEO, AC Camerfirma
9. **Nuria Chinchilla**, Professor of Managing People in Organisations and holder of the *Carmina Roca and Rafael Pich-Aguilera* Chair in Women and Leadership, IESE Business School
10. **Fernando Chocarro**, agri-food sector manager
11. **Andreu Cruañas**, President, ASEMPLEO
12. **Inma de Benito**, Director of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, CEOE
13. **Carlos de la Higuera**, Partner, Arizmendiarieta Foundation
14. **Marta del Castillo**, Head of Projects, Department of Education and Training, CEOE
15. **Bruno Estrada**, Coordinator of the General Secretariat, CCOO
16. **José Luis Fernández Fernández**, *Iberdrola Chair of Economic and Business Ethics*, Comillas Pontifical University
17. **Lucila Finkel**, Sociologist, UCM
18. **Raúl Flores**, Studies Coordinator - Communication Area, Cáritas Española
19. **Fernando Fuentes**, Deputy Director General of the Pablo VI Foundation
20. **Santiago García Echevarría**, Emeritus Professor of Business Economic Policy, Institute of Management and Business Organization, and Honorary Professor at the University of Alcalá.
21. **Raúl González Fabre**, Lecturer, Universidad Pontificia Comillas
22. **José Manuel González Páramo**, Economist and member of RACMyP
23. **Mariano Guindal**, journalist, La Vanguardia
24. **Arturo Lahera**, Lecturer in Ergonomics and Sociology of Work, UCM
25. **Enrique Lluch Frechina**, Economist, University CEU Cardenal Herrera
26. **Francisco Martínez**, , businessman, Centesimus Annus Foundation
27. **Olga Martínez**, Associate Lecturer, UCM and Associate Lecturer, UDIMA
28. **Amparo Merino**, Professor of Labour Law and Social Security Law, University of Castilla-La Mancha
29. **Cynthia Montaudon**, Director of the Observatory of Competitiveness and New Ways of Working, School of Business, UPAEP University
30. **Gloria Montilla**, Director of Training for Employment, ADAMS Training
31. **Melania Moscoso-Pérez**, Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, CSIC
32. **Iago Negueruelo**, Minister of Economic Model, Tourism and Labour, Government of the Balearic Islands
33. **Íñaki Ortega Cachón**, Director of the education area Executive Directive of Llorente & Cuenca
34. **Almudena Pérez**, Project Manager, ADAMS Training
35. **Juan Luis Paramio Salcines**, Senior Lecturer, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
36. **Juan Pablo Riesgo**, socio responsable de EY Insights y Socio de People Advisory Services, Ersnt & Young
37. **José Luis Zofío**, Professor of Fundamentals of Economic Analysis, Univ. Autónoma de Madrid

Programme of meetings of the Committee of Experts

1st Phase: INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

09.12.2021 “Transforming work”: economic meaning and ethical questions

Introduction: **Domingo Sugranyes**, Director of the Seminar

Lecture: **José Luis Zofío**, Professor of Fundamentals of Economic Analysis, UAM

13.01.2022 “Work is changing”: sociological and cultural phenomenon

Lecture: **Olga Martínez**, Associate Professor at the UCM and Associate Professor at the UDIMA

Commentary: **Txetxu Ausín**, Senior Scientist, Institute of Philosophy, CSIC

2nd Phase: SPECIFIC APPROACHES TO WORK TRANSFORMATION

17.02.2022 The tourism sector and low cost travel

Lecture: **Inma de Benito**, Director of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, CEOE

Commentary: **Agustín Blanco**, director de la Cátedra *J. M. Martín Patino de la Cultura del Encuentro*, Universidad Pontificia Comillas

24.03.2022 Agriculture and food

Lecture: **Fernando Chocarro**, directivo sector agroalimentario

Commentary: **José Miguel Corberá**, Assistant Professor of Commercial Law, Universitat Politècnica de València, CEGEA

28.04.2022 Work and automation in industrial sectors

Lecture: **Miguel López-Quesada**, Director Corporate Communication, Marketing & Institutional Affairs - Office of the Chairman, Gestamp

Commentary: **Íñaki Ortega Cachón**, Director of the Executive Management Education Department at Llorente & Cuenca

26.05.2022 Ignored work: personal care, domestic work, unpaid work

Lecture: **Raúl Flores**, Coordinator of Studies - Communication Area, Cáritas Española

Commentary: **José Manuel Aparicio**, theologian, Comillas Pontifical University

23.06.2022 Industrial relations in services

Lecture: **Juan Pablo Riesgo**, Partner in charge of EY Insights and Partner in People Advisory Services, Ernst & Young

Commentary: **Jesús Avezuela**, General Director, Pablo VI Foundation

3rd Phase: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- 15.09.2022 **Emotional integration and participation in the company**
- Lecture: **Juan Mancisidor**, Deputy Director General of FABRIKA, High Performance Centre for the Cultural Transformation of Businesses
- Commentary: **Elena Sanz Isla**, General Manager of People and Organisation, Mapfre
- 13.10.2022 **Subsidies or job promotion?**
- Lecture: **Alfredo Pastor**, Economist, professor emeritus, IESE
- Commentaries: **Andreu Cruaños**, President, ASEMPLEO,
Member of the Executive Committee, CEOE
- Mariano Guindal**, journalist, La Vanguardia
- 10.11.2022 **Labour law and social dialogue in the transformation of work**
- Lecture: **Fabian Márquez**, President of Arinsa
- Commentary: **Arturo Lahera**, Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Work & Ergonomics,
Complutense University of Madrid
- 15.12.2022 **Lifelong learning**
- Lecture: **Lucila Finkel**, Sociologist, Universidad Complutense Madrid
- Commentary: **Almudena Pérez**, Project Manager, ADAMS Formación
- 12.01.2023 **Timetables, work-life balance, accessibility**
- Lecture: **Nuria Chinchilla**, Professor of Managing People in Organisations, IESE Business School
- Commentary: **Francisco Javier López Martín**, former Secretary General, CCOO Madrid
- 23.02.2023 **Relocations, migrations, supply chains**
- Lecture: **Paul Dembinski**, Economist, Observatoire de la Finance, Geneva
- Commentaries: **Ignacio de la Torre**, Partner and Chief Economist, Arcano Partners
- Mercedes Fernández**, Director of the University Institute of Migration Studies,
Comillas Pontifical University
- 30.03.2023 **Work, right and obligation. Decent work” in the digital era**
- Lecture: **Raúl González Fabre**, Professor, Universidad Pontificia Comillas
- Commentary: **José Luis Calvo**, Director of Artificial Intelligence, Sngular

4th Phase: CONCLUSIONS

- 11.05.2023 **Human work, the key to the social question**
- Lecture: **Mons. Joseba Segura**, Economist, Bishop of Bilbao
- Commentary: **Domingo Sugranyes**, Director of the Seminar
- 22.06.2023 **Final session: presentation of conclusions and recommendations**
- Presentation of conclusions and recommendations: **Domingo Sugranyes**, Director of the Seminar
- Round table moderated by **Jesús Avezuela**, Director General of the Fundación Pablo VI,
with the participation of:
- Mons. David Abadías**, Auxiliary Bishop of Barcelona
- Begoña Cueto**, Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Oviedo
- Celia Ferrero**, Vice-President of the Association of Self-Employed Workers ATA
- José Manuel González Páramo**, Economist, member of the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.
- María Lladró**, entrepreneur and author of *Valuismo. Reinventing the global economy*
- José Moisés Martín Carretero**, Director of Red2Red Consultores



Summary and recommendations

Introduction: a challenge for reflection on social ethics

In broad terms, the labour situation in Spain is well-known¹: those registered as participants in the labour market add up to 23.6 million people, 58.6% of the total population over 16 years of age. Unemployment among 16-24 year olds is 30,2%². These figures reveal a **persistent mismatch between labour supply**, with training that is not always adequate - especially insufficient vocational training - **and business demand that is not always sufficiently dynamic and innovative**.

The composition of employment presents an uneven picture: of the total labour force, 3.5 million are public employees, a figure that is rising sharply. Self-employed entrepreneurs without employees number 3.3 million. By sector, the largest share of employment is in services (76.3%), compared to 13.7% in industry, 6.4% in construction and 3.6% in agriculture. Micro-enterprises (self-employed without employees, or companies with less than 10 employees) represent 93% of the total number of enterprises and occupy 29% of the active population³. Active foreigners account for 14.4% of the total, with 19.9% unemployment in this segment.

Out of a total population of 47.6 million people (including children and teenagers), more than half of the individuals do not participate in the labour market: students, young people who neither study nor work, retired people, and all those employed in domestic work. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that all employment is work, but not all work is employment.

Reflection on work must take into account the unpaid work, which is mainly the fact of women in our society, who deal with the care of children, the elderly and the disabled: it is estimated that paid health and social services account for only a minority of care, compared to approximately 130 million hours of unpaid care work provided by 16 million women in the home, often in addition to employment outside the home⁴. Economically, about half of the population is dependent on the other half, which is in paid employment.

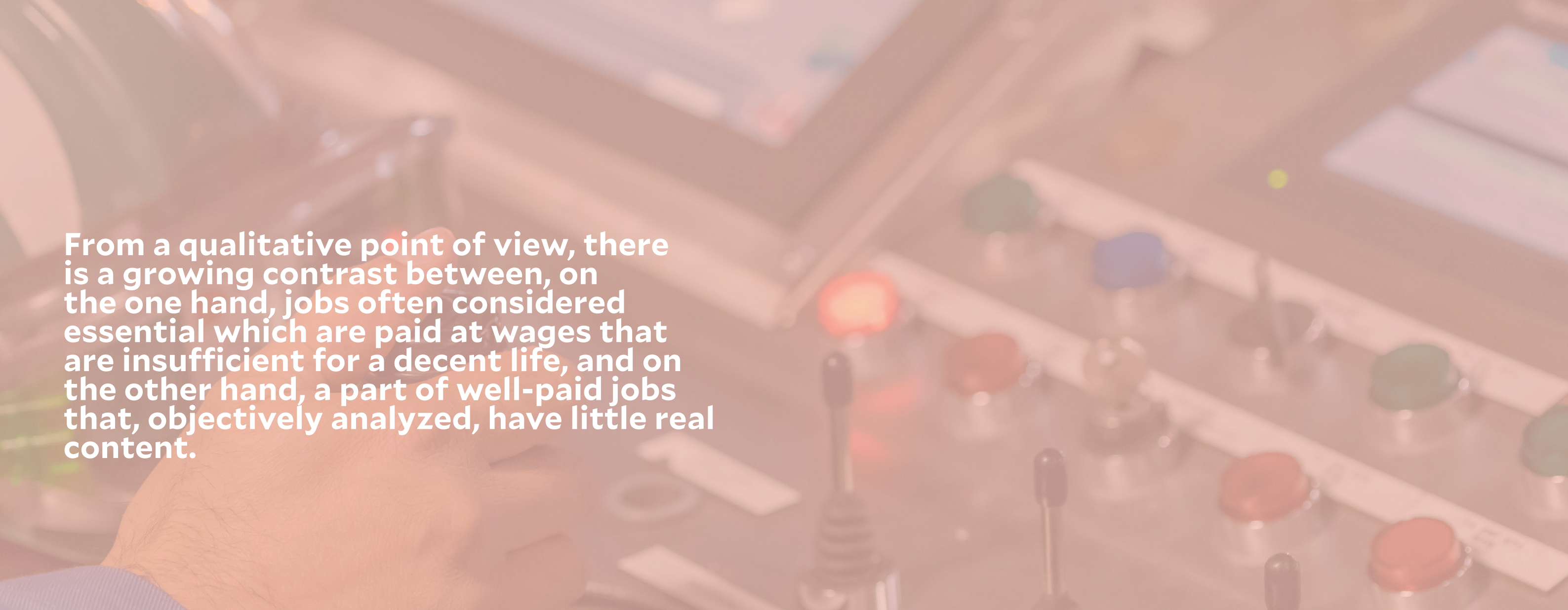
The employment figures mask a duality: on the one hand, people in stable employment with fixed incomes, but with working hours that are tending to increase; and on the other hand, workers in an unstable or precarious situation. A large part of the working population has low salaries: in 2020, 66% of workers earned less than twice the official minimum wage⁵. Management by digital platforms tends to increase precarious employment situations. The public sector often offers stability, but also suffers from insufficient wage levels. The recent labour lawreform has helped to reduce the precariousness of employment in statistical terms, but the realities of intermittent work and low wages are more difficult to correct, because they depend on the type of activity, the productivity of work, the supply and demand of workers and, more deeply, on the criteria for valuing the different areas of activity, which are not always related to their usefulness. The official response (across-the-board increase in the minimum wage, irrespective of geographical and sectoral differences) is the subject of controversial debate and its effects on employment are uncertain.

1 Source: INE, EPA first quarter 2023
2 State Secretariat for Employment and Social Economy. Youth and Labour Market Report. June 2022
3 Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. SME figures March 2023

4 María Ángeles Durán, *The Invisible Wealth of Care*, 2018
5 INE 2020



Out of a total population of 47.6 million people, more than half of the individuals do not participate in the labour market



From a qualitative point of view, there is a growing contrast between, on the one hand, jobs often considered essential which are paid at wages that are insufficient for a decent life, and on the other hand, a part of well-paid jobs that, objectively analyzed, have little real content.

The more stable and better paid jobs often correspond to longer working hours, beyond the legal working hours. There are doubts about the effectiveness of these long working hours, as productivity studies show in comparison with more disciplined countries in Northern Europe. Excessive working hours have consequences for family life and contribute to a dramatic “demographic winter”, as does delayed childbearing due to the late age of economic emancipation. A vicious circle can be observed between increased consumption needs - status and housing prices - and increasing working hours and dedication to work. Work tends to encroach on private life and

leisure and makes work- life balance difficult, a problem that particularly affects women as they continue to bear the brunt of domestic work.

From a qualitative point of view, there is a growing contrast between, on the one hand, jobs often considered essential (care, health, transport, ...) which are paid at wages that are insufficient for a decent life and, on the other hand, a part of the well-paid jobs that, objectively analysed, have little real content (the so-called *bullshit jobs*⁶) and are only maintained by the power of the companies where they are based. However, **many jobs, whether or not they are really**

6 David Graeber, 2018

useful, are threatened by technological transformation and the automation of tasks. At the same time, in sectors of activity such as tourism and construction,, companies are finding it difficult to recruit the skilled workers they need.

In the uncertainty that many are experiencing in the face of the job market, anxiety and serious psychological fatigue are on the rise, especially among young people. Increasingly, doubts are being raised about work as the main place for human fulfilment.

In addition to the source of income to cover basic or derived needs, **work has hitherto been regarded as a**

normal form of participation in public life. Does the current transformation make it possible to maintain this idea, or should we look to other activities and other forms of life for the full human fulfilment of a “good life”? This is a question of prime importance for any reflection on social ethics and, in particular, a challenge for the development of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Five dynamics of transformation

1

Automation and digitisation

2

“Produce what sells”

3

**Relocation, decarbonisation,
international competition**

4

Back to social concertation

5

Meaningful work?

1. Automation y digitisation



The duality of the labour market is a cause of inequality, partly corrected by the general rise in the standard of living, the availability of new equipment and consumer goods, and the relative reduction in their price. The transformation brought about by the automation of tasks and, more recently, by digital technology brings with it profound changes in the content of work. Studies show that digitisation already affects a high percentage of jobs, especially among routine tasks, both manual and cognitive, and that new jobs are created, without it being possible to predict the net effect on employment. For a large part of the working population, especially the most vulnerable, concentrated in administrative tasks, the digital revolution is traumatic and requires learning new skills if they are to remain in employment. Workers in non-routine, less vulnerable jobs are distinguished by specific human qualities (ability to cope with new situations, curiosity, leadership skills and the ability to inter-act). The effects of digitisation on the level of wages are not unambiguous: its influence is negative when automation is a substitute for human labour, and can be positive when the technology

is complementary and increases labour productivity. Is digitisation an unstoppable process, and are there limits to the replacement of human labour by automated processes? The latest developments in “generative artificial intelligence” herald an even more profound revolution than we already know. For the first time, computer systems will be able to take on tasks for which we have hitherto needed human language and reasoning. This means that even highly specialised professions such as engineering, law or medical diagnostics could be overrun by machines capable of greater precision and efficiency.

Looking at the situation in different sectors of activity, operators all say the same thing: international competition is such that companies cannot ensure their economic sustainability without using the most advanced technologies. The drama, and the critical question, lies in the fact that in many cases, faced with this situation, companies have to resort to the quickest solution (mass early retirement) instead of providing in-house training in good time, which would enable most people to prepare for new jobs.

Digitisation, together with the spread of teleworking in the COVID19 pandemic, has many other consequences for the organisation of companies. Company boundaries are blurring as subcontracting and freelance work increase. This means that the terms of the traditional employment contract no longer represent the totality of employment relationships, which calls for a broader approach to the employment relationship as a bilateral commitment between worker and company.

The balance of these transformations from a social point of view is ambiguous. On the one hand, there is an increase in labour and geographic flexibility, which meets the expectations of part of the population. **For others, on the other hand, it increases uncertainty and anxiety about the possible loss of employment,** with the consequent threats to physical and mental health. The key to the response lies in large part in radical public and private investment in continued education, the main factor being the willingness of workers themselves to adapt and to receive training.

2. “Produce what sells”

From the analysis of different sectors of activity, another common feature emerges, which influences the evolution of work: if traditionally the farmer or small entrepreneur “sold what he produced”, today the approach has been reversed: the entrepreneur “produces what sells”. **The power is in the hands of demand, be it that of the final assembler** (for example in the automotive industry), **the consumer** (in the textile industry or tourism) **or the large distribution companies** (in agriculture and the food industry). In production chains or networks, where parts of the final product are produced at different locations and in different countries, the key to the process is often held by a leading company, which dominates research and design on one hand, and the brand and distribution on the other. These companies have more elements of control and therefore more responsibility for a fair distribution of added value throughout the

Uncertainty about the future content of work also calls for a review of education prior to entry into working life, with a greater presence of humanities and general training, to the detriment of the acquisition of skills considered immediately useful for employment that may soon become obsolete. The challenge is important, because it often seems that young people not only lack the general knowledge to manage change, but also that the channels of transmission, the language for the formation of personality and moral capacity, have been cut off and need to be recovered.

As in any process of accelerated transition, there is a danger that the part of the working population that does not keep pace will be irreparably marginalised. The major reconversion effort required is far from being accepted in society. **The changes required imply a more determined approach and more substantial investment, both in continuing education programmes and in building a social shield** to prevent the definitive marginalisation of many, who are reduced to inactivity and passive dependence on benefits

supply chain, and for ensuring that workers are remunerated decently at all stages.

The demand for greater fairness in the supply chains leads to the introduction of value sharing clauses, such as those promoted by the EU in the agri-food sector; the generalisation of practices and regulations of this type would make it possible to correct the imbalances in the conditions of the most vulnerable sectors, such as agricultural production, traditional industrial processes, or transportation. But this raises an oft-repeated question: how is the value added between capital and labour shared? **In our system of imperfect markets**, often distorted by insufficient competition and the excessive power of a few large operators, **the distribution of income between shareholders and workers does not depend on the productivity of each factor** (the productivi-



ty of capital is not a clearly defined concept), **but on permanent bargaining**. Demographic developments change the terms of this bargaining: low-wage competition, especially from Asia, is becoming less intense as population growth slows, and this may increase the bargaining power of workers.

Another question that often arises is: to what extent is the consumer willing to pay a sufficient price so that all actors in the supply chain receive a reasonable income? There is a widespread contradiction on the part of consumers between the expectation of high quality services and the demand for low prices. The question of how to address this question implies a broader ethical reflection on consumption, which touches on deep-rooted issues such as a critical analysis of materialism and individualism, and must find its way into education programmes.

In theory, the increased power of demand leaves consumers with an unparalleled ability to impose

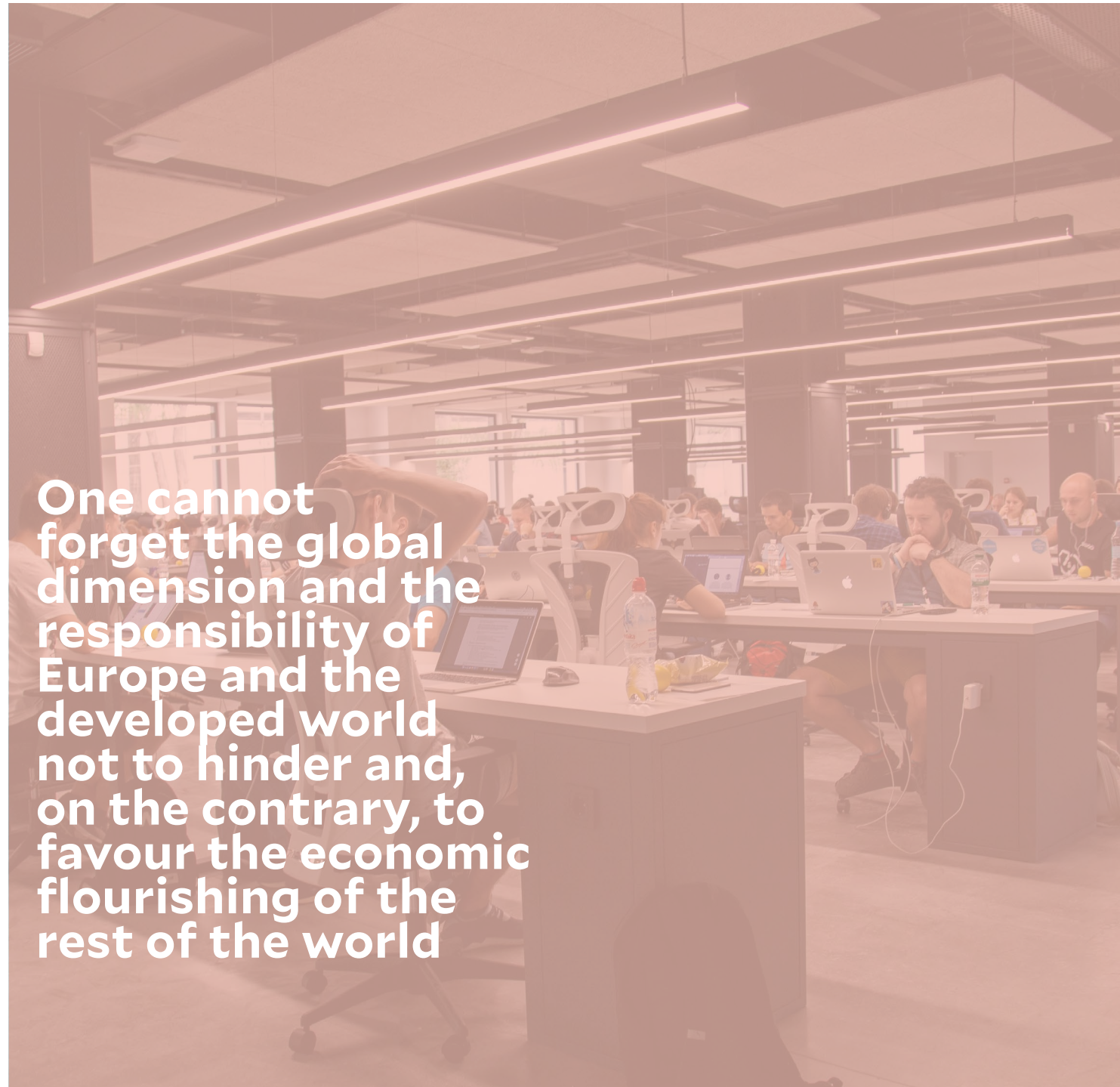
labour and ecological quality standards throughout the production chain. In order for consumers to exercise this power, it would be necessary to educate them in the ethics of consumption, allowing them to discern and make choices in the face of the insistent invitations of brands and the great variety of supply.

Along these lines, the EU is preparing legislation that will oblige any company with more than 500 employees to monitor labour and environmental standards throughout its production chain, so that its activities are compatible with international agreements on working conditions and climate change. Information about compliance with these standards will perhaps help consumers to make choices, but it will also probably mean a greater bureaucratic burden for companies and a move towards more protectionism, against free trade, with a consequent price increase for the consumer.

3. Relocation, descarbonisation, internacional competition

These discussions on quality standards herald a new era in international trade. The reorganisation of global production and trade chains is also necessary for reasons of security of supply. Along with the generalisation of remote work, this may reverse the trend towards job relocation: for some sectors it may be rational to repatriate activities, or to move jobs to previously “empty” areas that retain a relative labour cost advantage, with corresponding consequences in terms of migratory movements.

Indeed, the swings of globalisation result in movements of people, from the most skilled (brain drain) to the most humble and humane jobs (“global care chains”). **It is morally necessary to promote a vision that starts from the needs and possibilities of people, and not only from the demand of companies or society.** This can be developed into policies, supported internationally, to prevent less advanced countries from “squeezing out” their most capable citizens. It is also necessary to denounce the hypocrisy of “fences” and policies of fear of immigration in industrialised countries where the demographic deficit, the ageing of the population and the rejection of heavy jobs make it essential to accept large contingents of immigrant workers. Although this seminar has focused on the specific labour situation in Spain, one cannot forget the global dimension and the responsibility of Europe and the developed world not to hinder and, on the contrary, to favour the economic flourishing of the rest of the world. This is a dimension that, in particular, Christian social teachings always bear in mind.



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The ecological reorientation will certainly take place - more or less rapidly - and its effects on employment are also uncertain. In the industrial sector, the recent decision to set up a large car battery factory in Sagunto, with the creation of around 20,000 jobs, is a positive case in point, compared with others of the opposite sign. In the tourism sector, it is unimaginable that holiday trips to distant paradises will continue to increase indefinitely: there are insurmountable physical limits to the frequency of flights and fuel use. Occupation of coastal areas cannot increase indefinitely, especially when the hotel industry is promoting environmentally compatible conditions of stay. In fact, there is an interesting growth in rural tourism in our country. In agriculture, the importance given by consumers to sustainability requirements is giving rise to a certain “ecological fever”, with standards so complex that it is impossible to comply with them without losing competitiveness. In the face of excessively demanding legislation on the “green” label, industry insiders recommend a reasonable middle way: one that reduces the production of polluting waste to zero. All these movements are causes for the transformation of work.

In global economic terms, wage restraint in Spain is often read as an imposition of capital, which would have exerted more weight in the aforementioned permanent bargaining over income distribution. Without prejudice to further research in this respect, this reality can also be read in another light: in recent decades, many medium-sized Spanish companies have survived thanks to a shared effort of restraint, both on the part of workers and owners, in order to maintain the company’s activity and its capacity to compete internationally.

4. Back to social concertation


Social dialogue has seen increasing state intervention in recent decades. **Government-imposed rules, increased trade union centralisation and the media spectacle of polarisation in some negotiations have taken away room for manoeuvre and liveliness from social dialogue at the grassroots level, within the enterprise or in specific sectors of activity.** On the trade union side, some recognise the need to adapt bargaining structures and formulas to the new realities of work, so that everyone is effectively represented, including workers on flexible terms and the unemployed. On the employer side, there is a plea for realism in negotiations, something that trade union forces are often willing to understand in the common interest.

However, one cannot ignore a certain mismatch between the traditional tripartite structure (trade unions - employers - government) and the reality of work in transformation, which gives rise to poorly controlled situations, from the increasing frequency of psychological pathologies in companies to the proliferation of sub-sectoral workers' organisations capable of exercising paralysing power over entire areas of activity to defend their corporate claims.

In the face of a certain deterioration in social dialogue, there is a desire for permanent reform in many companies to ensure favourable conditions for collaboration, worker participation and family reconciliation. In this respect, the experience of cooperative groups, particularly developed in the Basque Country, is of significant relevance, as their statute and the will of their leaders cultivate a climate of dialogue and consensual adaptation to the needs of competitive production. **On the training front, cooperatives also set an example, since their members are by definition both workers and protagonists of the necessary changes, which favours a greater capacity for adaptation.** But these provisions should not depend solely on a certain legal status, such as that of a cooperative; rationality should lead any business to embark on the path of permanent humanistic reform and shared leadership in order to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

Rationality should lead any business to embark on the path of permanent humanistic reform and shared leadership in order to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

5. Meaningful work?



It is important to highlight the value of these experiences that lead people, not to survive without working or working without meaning, but to acquire the professional conditions of a decent job

Behind these changes lies another transformation with complex cultural and sociological roots: do people really expect fulfilment at work, or do they aspire to a different kind of life, a leisure that, paradoxically, they themselves find it difficult to fill with meaningful occupations?

Our culture takes it for granted that work dignifies. There are many examples of this. Jobs with a high vocational content, from primary and secondary education through the health professions to care for the elderly or research, are nurtured by selfless and deeply dignifying motivations, even if the corresponding remuneration is often far from reflecting their true social usefulness.

But we must also recognise opposite trends in our society, which are not unrelated to the possibilities of technology: a further reduction in legal working time, such as the four-day week. **Some believe that the current technological revolution will mean, sooner or later, the end of human labour as we know it**, or at least the end of forced labour for the provision of necessities, **to the point of making the decoupling of**

work and remuneration unavoidable. These prospects suggest the need for a radical social transformation for which there are as yet no legal and institutional solutions, as can be seen, for example, in the impossibility of defining the third-party liability of autonomous vehicles. At the moment, in a transition phase whose duration is difficult to predict, we know more or less which jobs are disappearing, but we still know little about the new jobs that are emerging. These in turn may be replaced by increasingly powerful artificial intelligence software, in an unequal race in which human labour tends to be left behind.

Faced with these unknowns, some advocate as a radical solution the generalisation of a universal basic income (UBI), a proposal that for the moment seems utopian: the fiscal and income distribution changes that this would require could not be carried out without violence. The RBU approach would entail a more far-reaching reform than the introduction of social security at the end of the 19th century, with the added difficulty that its implementation would have to be carried out on shaky and uncertain ground in the face of the changes brought about by digitisation. But the-

re are experiences underway that open up new avenues, such as the minimum living income for the most needy (currently being implemented in Spain, but not without delays and difficulties) or the negotiated reduction of legal working hours. Although current developments do not yet show a reduction in paid work in the world, **the logic of replacing human labour with machines and software could in theory lead to a further reduction in the percentage of people in paid employment, which reinforces the need for reflection on leisure time and ways of redistributing employment income.**

But for now, there is still a non-utopian and much closer path, which has been little exploited in our country: that of policies that really intend to give everyone access to a job (and not to an income of inactivity). The unemployed receive subsidies - which sometimes act as disincentives to work - but little is invested in employment promotion policies. There are examples of such active employment policies in Europe that could be applied here as well. But for them to work, a closer and less bureaucratic approach to the employment services is needed, as well as transparent information

on achievements, which in Spain is the responsibility of the autonomous regional authorities. **In our country, several private, non-profit initiatives have fortunately been developed that carry out magnificent pre-professional and professional training work, directly linked to employment possibilities:** for example, the Caritas insertion companies; the professional training programmes of religious entities such as the Salesians or the Jesuits; and many other organisations that work with municipal, regional or private support (the latter is still insufficient). It is important to highlight the value of these experiences that lead people, not to survive without working or working without meaning, but to acquire the professional conditions of a decent job.

Recommendations

The debates held during the fifteen sessions of the seminar will be published in book and podcast form. The recordings of the sessions are available on the website of the Pablo VI Foundation. **The first objective of the seminar is fulfilled by giving the widest possible dissemination to these reflections, in order to feed an indispensable public debate on the transformation of work.**

Among all the ideas that were exchanged, the seminar's Board of Directors would like to highlight the following recommendations and submit them for discussion:

A. Promote studies and multidisciplinary meetings on work and productivity

1. Companies alone cannot prevent the growing social gaps created by the transformation of work. Nor can the state do so without business. It is essential to **promote public-private partnerships for the reconversion of employment to the digital environment**.
2. **The transformation of work affects everyone:** families, large and small businesses, education, administrations. Each sector tends to analyse its problems with “tunnel vision”. It is necessary to multiply the places of multidisciplinary debate in order to find effective responses.
3. **The sectors in which Spain excels should be the subject of specific strategic and improvement studies.** It is not so much a question of “changing the economic model”, but of doing better and increasing productivity in what we know how to do, as is already happening in the automotive sector, for example.
4. On these lines, a **collective definition and overall plans** (“White Papers”) **for the tourism sector and for the food business** are required.
5. A **national plan** is required **for the participatory study of remuneration related to the social utility of each activity**, to gradually promote an evolution of the criteria for measuring performance and success in these activities; and the collection of objective data on participation in labour productivity gains.
6. In the face of the polarisation marked by politics, it is necessary to **promote the advantages of concertation**, highlighting all the considerable capital of existing agreements between social partners and **promoting decentralised social dialogue**.
7. **Promote public debate on the productivity and capacity of Spanish companies to link production chains**, from product design and manufacture to marketing, without neglecting the analysis and improvement of the distribution of added value throughout the supply chain.

B. Disseminating lifelong learning

8. To provoke a **thorough review of the content of training, both initial and retraining**, orienting it towards basic human formation and general learning to prepare for change.
9. **Accelerate measures for the recognition of non-regulated training** (certificates of professionalism). and fight against the rigidity of training and the obstacles to real learning.
10. **Develop dual vocational training** and link it with lifelong learning.
11. **Introduce tax incentives and employment facilities for training** in all types of enterprises, especially small ones.
12. **Include the civic, social and personal dimension** in all training activities.
13. **Demanding that training funds are used up in companies** and overcoming the fear of malpractice through greater transparency.
14. Promote participation so that **workers are protagonists**, not subjects of their own training.
15. Promote the necessary legal measures for the **“portability” of training between companies**.

C. Revaluing jobs for their social usefulness

16. **Promote the support of machines in manual labour-intensive tasks**, e.g. in catering and agriculture.
17. Promote the supply of services along **lines of environmental, social and economic sustainability**, especially in tourism.
18. Promote legislation to simplify and make labour frameworks and categories more flexible, especially in non-industrial activities.
19. **Promote the extension of value sharing clauses in production chains**, negotiated between all parties.
20. **Improve the status and value of care activities**, without increasing regulatory rigidity.
21. Form working groups to **design new performance indicators in different sectors of activity**, including an assessment of social utility
22. **Improve the integration of part-time** and platform workers in trade union organisations.
23. Improve reporting and **enable comparability of corporate social performance**.

D. Protect and encourage

24. **To ensure that the unemployed are no longer forgotten in the social dialogue**, “silenced” by subsidies and demotivated.
25. Establish **public monitoring of the implementation of active social integration policies**, similar to those applied for the inclusion of workers with disabilities.
26. Promote an **open debate on the advantages and benefits of an orderly immigration** and immigrant integration **policy**.
27. **Fight** through controls and incentives **against the abuse of unemployment protection**.
28. **Fight against the abusive use of temporary contracts**, by adopting legal temporary enrolment formulas specific for sectors that need it (agriculture, tourism, artistic professions).
29. Force **public monitoring with data on active labour market policies**.
30. **Create bridges** and active insertion measures **between employment offices, social services and companies**
31. **Encourage the construction of a participatory social shield**, including through savings for supplementary pensions.

E. Reforming the company

32. Approach **redevelopment as a participatory task** in which all parties play a part.
33. Encourage creativity and innovation in the company through **participatory activation systems**.
34. Reaffirm **integrity** and **service vocation** as pillars of the company’s culture.
35. Systematically use **team-based transformation tools**.
36. Promote **participatory culture** in small enterprises.
37. Promote **management by objectives** as opposed to “presenteeism”.
38. Promote **effective family reconciliation measures** (working hours, maternity and parental leave, eradication of maternity harassment, flexibility of substitution).
39. Instilling **dialogue in the design of training** so that workers are protagonists.
40. Establish a **recognised social and family policy certification**, e.g. for submission to public tenders.

F. Preparing for work and leisure in the digital age

41. Generalise **digital user education and access to digital services**, inseparable from humanities and values learning.
42. **Value experiments with reduced working time through automation**, without a reduction in remuneration.
43. **Promote remuneration formulas decoupled from traditional employment**, but linked to “gratuitous” activities.
44. Generalise **flexible retirement** and promote pensioner activity.
45. To highlight the strength of **volunteering**.
46. Promote **critical culture in leisure activities**

Conclusions:

A Christian reading of the transformation of work

In 2013, the International Labour Organisation proposed the following definition: “Work comprises any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for own use. Work is defined irrespective of its formal or informal character or the legality of the activity”¹.

This conception of work is not limited to commercial or paid transactions, and encompasses any activity that tends to reduce scarcity of some kind. Even if task automation and robots were to eliminate the necessity of work for basic needs, there would still be a vast field open to human work, from organisational and institutionalisation tasks, to research, artistic creation and caring for the innumerable vulnerabilities in our environment. **In most parts of the world, informal work, not sanctioned by an employment contract, is nevertheless the determining economic factor for a large part of the population.** In developed Western countries, where generally about half of the population has a paid job, the other half is economically dependent on the employed workers, but also makes an irreplaceable contribution to their daily lives and to the well-being of the population as a whole, even if they are not paid.

Employment and work are not synonymous. In the sense of the above-mentioned definition, whatever the evolution of employment, work will remain the real way of human participation in collective life. **Unpaid work - family, voluntary - has an important role to play.**



It is of major social significance as it contributes to personal development, collective well-being and the production of essential goods and services, even if some of these are being transferred to the sphere of paid employment as a result of the weakening of traditional mutual aid structures.

In the Christian reading, work is seen, before being an individual task, as a community effort, as a joint human activity that seeks to transform the world in order to improve it. In its individual dimension, which is also important, work is linked to the idea of vocation, the call to contribute to bring this world to a point where it a little more closely resembles God’s dream.

A Christian reading of work can embrace a variety of different perspectives. These perspectives are not exhaustive and are not incompatible: : those which emphasise the personal- ethical dimension (duty, right and source of rights); those of a social nature (growth of the family and society); those which focus on the economic dimension (factor of production, creator of wealth and property titles); and those of a spiritual content (punishment or liberation, co-creation of the divine work). In 1891, after a long process of elaboration in think-tanks in various countries, in reaction to the abuses of industrialisation and the “unbridled greed”² of some owners, and confronted

with Marxist theories, the new Social Doctrine of the Church, strongly asserts the right of labour to fair remuneration and the social function of ownership. These principles gave rise to a doctrinal flourishing and, above all, to a multitude of educational and socio- economic institutions of Christian inspiration. One hundred years later, John Paul II recognized the legitimacy of the “social market economy”, of the “economy of enterprise” and of the appropriate use of profit to measure economic performance³, while at the same time strongly demanding decent working conditions, the right to rest and fair remuneration⁴. Gradually, perhaps too slowly and sometimes with a lack of concreteness, the teachings of the Church have nevertheless been incorporating the lived experience of workers and entrepreneurs, from real economic life, in order to formulate, on the basis of this analysis, guidelines for social ethics that are faithful to the permanent principles of the Christian social vision, but also fully up to date.


Today we face many uncertainties:
How will paid work evolve? Will products and services be created that require human labour and are the object of economic transactions and produce income distributed among the population? Or will other formulas for distribution independent of labour have to be invented? Christian thought is facing the challenge of a revolution no less profound than that of the first industrialisation. The current transformation of work, as described in the course of this seminar, raises new questions and new problems for Christian thinking: the risk of a fatal fracture between people who are fully adapted to the work of

1 Resolution 1 (2013) - International Conference of Labour Statisticians

2 *Rerum Novarum* n. 9

3 *Centesimus Annus* n. 33-35

4 *Laborem exercens* n. 19-22



the digital age and those who remain in “unproductive” and poorly paid manual jobs, or even without access to paid employment; the inadequacy of education and the loss of humanistic content and disciplines; the cultural vacuum in the face of idleness and a “free” time that is not known how to be used meaningfully and is a breeding ground for the proliferation of addictions.

In many poor countries, the problem of the “end of work” does not arise. However, for a large part of the population in rich countries, the possibility of work ceasing to be indispensable to solve the problems of basic material scarcity (because machines are available, or because other people work, and/or because authoritarian universal delivery formulas have been instituted) risks consolidating a fractured society. Above all, this would mean the loss of an essential instrument in the formation of the person to sociability and responsibility. **Work that involves obligation is key to learning social life and is distinct from work or self-expression activities.** In this sense, the current tendency to educate by enabling young people to achieve the highest possible level of satisfaction without effort or collaboration is seriously impoverishing and ill-preparing the population for the uncertainties of a changing and shifting situation on all fronts of future activity. The drift towards an exclusively consumerist occupation also brings with it a growing danger of social isolation. All this leads to radically question the discourses on the disappearance of work and its replacement by inactivity subsidy schemes.

And above all - Pope Francis insistently reminds us - these concerns of the dominant economies are not those of the majority of the world's population, for whom, on the contrary, the main objective remains to build modern productive and consumer networks, even if they are “not expected” in the spectral worlds of robots, post-work and transhumanism.

Faced with these contradictions, a Christian reading of the transformation of work requires us to look to a medium-term future, free from the polarised confrontations of the short term, and without falling into apocalyptic visions of the long term. It is a matter of “grounding” the fertile concepts of the Christian tradition, made of realism, of faith in the human person and in the collective capacity to improve the lives of all. **We need the inspiration of an updated Christian social doctrine, expressed with empathy and a critical sense.** And to contribute to its elaboration, we propose to continue the inductive effort towards new orientations of social ethics through transversal dialogues, along the lines of the ambitious recommendations we have formulated, in order to **face the main challenge: instead of taking away the problem by subsidising inactivity, to promote with imagination new opportunities for fulfilment in work.**



We need the inspiration of an updated Christian social doctrine, expressed with empathy and a critical sense

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