

## Division of Childcare and Housework among Men and Women during COVID-19 lockdowns<sup>1</sup>

### Headlines

- Housework responsibilities increased greatly in European households during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The increase in childcare responsibilities was particularly significant. This put a massive burden on working parents, especially mothers.
- Although many fathers contributed as well, mothers were far more likely to increase their workload. Mothers also increased their workload by more hours than fathers. As a result, the gender gap measured in the number of hours spent on unpaid duties shows a significant increase when compared to the period before the pandemic.
- None of these gaps can be explained by dissimilarities in men's and women's working conditions, or by the time availability of men and women in general. Instead, it is very likely that traditional gender roles continue to play a crucial role in shaping the division of work between the partners.
- If experienced for a prolonged period, the extreme double burden of paid employment and work in the home can have detrimental effects both for wellbeing and employment. It therefore requires policy attention.
- Although mothers were worse affected, attention also needs to be paid to those fathers that made significant contributions to work in the home.

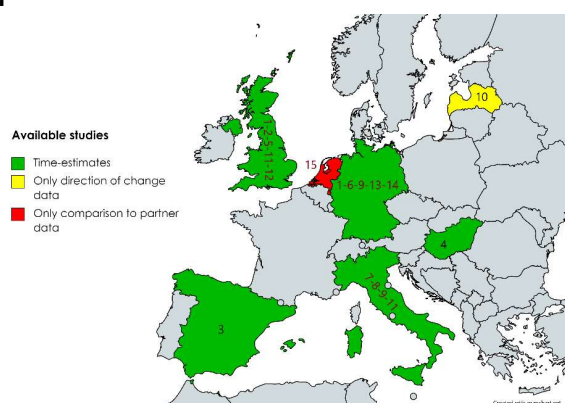
### Background

No one was fully exempt from the many effects of the COVID-19 lockdown measures in Europe. However, there is no doubt that households with children faced particular challenges. Childcare institutions and schools were physically closed for many weeks and even months in 2020 and 2021. This meant that parents had to find ways of providing care and learning support to their children alongside their own everyday work and other activities. School closures and quarantines of individual classes or schools continue to take place, so it is crucial to understand how such situations change family life, and in particular how they affect the gendered division of unpaid work.

This policy brief relies on a systematic review of research papers from various EU Member States and the UK that report findings from online surveys on how men and women organised their lives during the first lockdowns. In particular, the surveys all provide information on the amount and division of unpaid work carried out during the lockdowns between heterosexual couples who live with children (see the Quick Guide for a summary of our methodology).

The various papers we reviewed all used somewhat different methodologies, and their results are therefore not directly comparable. Despite its limitations, a review of the sort we carried out is particularly valuable, as there is no single cross-country study available that would provide a full comparative overview from Europe on this topic. Questions relevant to this issue were only introduced into Eurofound's 'Quality of Life During COVID-19' survey in June/July 2020<sup>2</sup>, when several Member States were already out of the first lockdown or had begun summer vacations. This means that that survey makes it impossible to assess the lockdown's direct consequences on childcare and housework.

**Figure 1. Countries with lockdown studies reviewed for this policy brief**



*Note: numbers in the map are references to the papers as listed at the end of the policy brief.*

<sup>1</sup> This policy brief has been prepared by Zsuzsa Blaskó and Jordi Sanjuán-Belda, JRC Unit I.1 in collaboration with DG Justice. The authors would like to thank their colleagues, Francesco Berlingieri, Elizabeth Casabianca and Minna Nurminen, as well as colleagues at DG Justice for their valuable comments on the draft. This brief can be downloaded from [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/crosscutting-activities/fairness/fairness-policy-briefs-series\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/crosscutting-activities/fairness/fairness-policy-briefs-series_en)

<sup>2</sup> More information about the Living, working and COVID-19 data can be found at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/covid-19>

Figure 1 highlights the countries from which at least one survey study was identified and used for the present analysis. Three types of studies were included: (i) studies collecting estimates of time spent on the various activities; (ii) studies asking respondents to report whether they increased their time spent on unpaid duties; and (iii) studies that asked the respondents to compare their relative share of work in the home to their partner's share of work in the home before and after the lockdown. We have information from six EU Member States plus the UK, and for several of these countries more than one study is available.

Based on the reviewed evidence, this policy brief shows that parents across Europe had to cope with an extensive unpaid workload during the lockdowns. This workload came on top of their usual activities, including paid employment. Typically, the additional tasks were divided unequally between men and women, with women taking the lion's share, almost irrespective of whether they carried on working in their paid job or not. Considering the length of school closures in many European countries so far – and the possibility of further school closures – there is a risk of long-term damage to both the wellbeing and labour-market prospects of these women. Household burdens may well explain a large part of the gender gap in wellbeing identified in several early COVID-19 studies<sup>3</sup>. However, it is important to acknowledge that many fathers also took up a significant amount of unpaid work at home. More than ever, attention therefore needs to be paid not only to the gender gap in housework and childcare but also to the increasing gap in time availability and in wellbeing between parents and non-parents.

## Findings

### *The amount of additional workload*

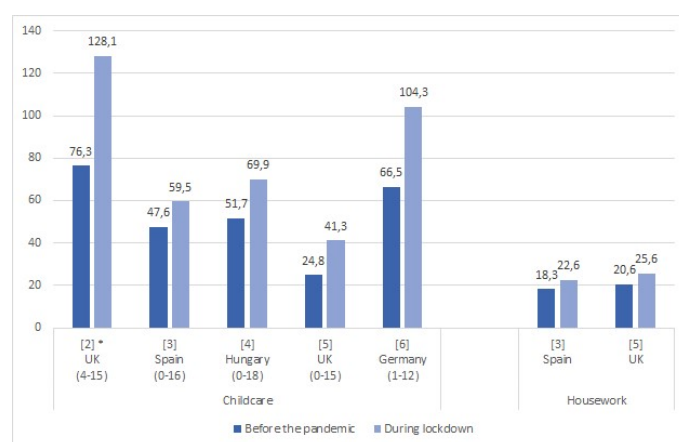
The 15 papers reviewed consistently report a substantive increase in the overall amount of time that parents spent on unpaid work during the pandemic-related lockdowns. This applies to household chores and even more to childcare including children's home-schooling. This finding was largely consistent across the countries studied and the methods applied.

In several studies, respondents were asked to give an estimate of their daily or weekly hours spent on the various activities, i.e. to actually quantify the time spent on the tasks. To calculate the overall workload in a household (if this overall workload was not given), we aggregated the mean number of hours reported by men and women for each study. From this, we can conclude that the average time spent weekly on childcare during the first lockdown was between 41 and 128 hours (n=7)<sup>4</sup> per household. We can then compare these data with pre-pandemic estimates, derived either from data collections before the pandemic (e.g. 6) or from information collected through retrospective questions included in the lockdown survey (e.g. 4). Comparisons to such data imply an average increase of 12 to 52 hours per week (n=5) allocated for childcare during the lockdowns. Strikingly, in two cases, the reported additional weekly hours spent on carework correspond to

roughly a week of a full time job. Furthermore, the two studies collecting data on household work also point to notable changes, with household work rising from an average of 18-21 hours to 23-26 hours per week (n=2).

Figure 2 presents the overall number of hours spent on childcare and housework by heterosexual couples before and during the lockdown, as reported in the various studies. The variations in the number of hours measured in the various studies are remarkable. This can potentially be attributed to a range of factors, including: (i) methodological differences; (ii) differences between the populations covered; and (iii) cultural and structural differences across the countries (e.g. in the share of working mothers). Still, without exception, all studies show a proportional increase in the average number of hours spent on unpaid work before and during COVID-19, that represents a clear and striking growth in workload. Expressed in percentages, we find that the overall time spent by parents on childcare increased by 25-68% (n=5) between the pre-lockdown and lockdown periods. These figures, coming from a range of different contexts within Europe, leave no doubt that the shock was substantial and is worth further investigation.

**Figure 2. Overall amount of total childcare/housework before and after the lockdown, in weekly hours per couple**



Notes: numbers in [] provide references to the paper from which the figure comes. Ranges given in () refer to the age of children whose parents were included in the sample. Figures are not directly comparable across countries due to different methodologies applied.

\* This UK study (2) is the only one that asks the respondents to fill in: (i) a time-use diary reporting what activities they did during each hour of the day; and (ii) a diary about their child's time use, reporting who the child was with during each time slot. Daily hours are derived from those diaries. In contrast, the other studies ask the respondents to give an overall estimate of the time they spend with their child on a daily/weekly basis.

### *How did men and women adapt?*

Most unpaid work – both household chores and carework – has traditionally fallen on women. This was no different in the pre-pandemic period in Europe. From the beginning of this pandemic, there was therefore little doubt that

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Etheridge, B. and Spanting L. (2020): The gender gap in mental well-being during the Covid-19 outbreak: evidence from the UK. ISER Working Paper series 2020-8; <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/publications/working-papers/iser/2020-08>; Hipp, L. and Bünning, M. (2020). "Parenthood as a driver of increased gender inequality during COVID-19? Exploratory evidence from Germany." *European Societies* 23 (2020): S658 - S673. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2020.1833229>; Möhring, K., et al. (2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic and subjective well-being: Longitudinal evidence on satisfaction with work and family. *European Societies*, 23(sup1), S601-S617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2020.1833066>

<sup>4</sup> 'n' refers to the number of studies taken into account to provide the figures.

this traditional division of work would continue. And indeed, in most cases, women continued to take the main responsibility for the increased workload of unpaid work<sup>5</sup>. In addition to confirming this expectation, the lockdown surveys also give further details about the extent of the increase in workload for both women and men.

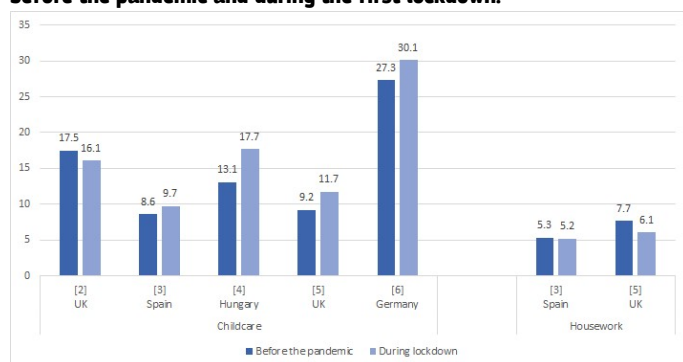
How much time did men and women spend on unpaid work during the lockdown? Estimates from the reviewed surveys suggest that women in this period spent an average of 27-72 hours a week (n=7) on childcare and helping children with education, while they also devoted 15-27 hours a week to housework (n=3). Compared to pre-lockdown measurements, these figures represent a massive average increase of 7-20 hours per week, corresponding to a change of 23-56 % for childcare (n=5) and an increase of around 2 hours for housework (n=2).

At the same time, men also increased their contribution. Compared to pre-pandemic times, when on average they spent 8 to 29 hours on childcare every week (n=5), during the first lockdown they spent between 15 and 56 hours (n=7). Over the same period, housework performed by men increased from 6-7 hours per week to 9-10 hours per week (n=2). These figures represent an increase of 30-91% (n=5) in time spent on childcare and housework – with 3 out of the 5 studies reporting an increase of close to 90%. In other words, men took up fewer additional unpaid working hours than women, yet these changes represent a higher relative increase than was the case for women (according to 4 out of 5 studies), as men originally did fewer hours of unpaid work in the home than their female partners.

### What happened to the gender care gap?

With both men and women spending significantly more time on unpaid work during the lockdowns than before, a question arises: what were the changes in the gender gap in the contribution to unpaid work in the home? Out of the 5 studies that make such a calculation possible, 4 suggest a clear *increase in the absolute size of the childcare gender gap as measured in hours*, with the difference between mothers' and fathers' contributions growing from 27.3 to 30.1 hours (6); from 13.1 to 17.7 hours (4); from 9.8 to 11.7 hours (5); or from 8.6 to 9.7 hours (3). The only study that reports a small decrease in the absolute gender gap (from 17.5 to 16.1 hours) is (2). We can thus conclude, that during the lockdown mothers on average spent at least 1.5-, but possibly even 4 hours more with their children every day than fathers did. In contrast to the childcare gap, the gender gap in household work remained unchanged, or even decreased (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3 Absolute gender gap: difference between the number of weekly hours women and men devoted to childcare/housework before the pandemic and during the first lockdown.**



Notes: numbers in [ ] provide references to the paper that is the source of the data presented. Figures are not directly comparable across countries due to different methodologies applied.

However, these changes correspond to either an unchanged- (3, 4) or even a reduced *relative gap* (2, 5, 6, 7) in unpaid work. Findings show that women

took care of around 59-71% of overall childcare duties before the lockdown, and that this share was slightly reduced (albeit via a significantly increased overall workload in hours) to 56-67% during the lockdown. This is because fathers increased their contributions by a smaller number of hours, still proportionally to a greater extent than their partners.

### Variations behind the averages

Although they highlight some major trends, the average figures presented above still mask significant variations across different family types. The challenges faced by the various households – and the solutions available to them – depended on a number of factors, in particular the age of the children, the level of the parents' education, and the employment situation of both parents. As stated earlier, the different methodologies allow for comparisons of a limited scope only. Nevertheless, we highlight below some of the main trends – also relying here on studies that do not report numbers of hours, but that instead describe the household's adaptation through other measures.

#### **The presence of younger children implied particularly high workloads**

An obvious source of variation in the figures presented above is the age of the children in the household. Studies that made distinctions by the age of the child/children confirms that in general, younger children required much more parental support. An Italian study finds that parents with a child aged up to 10 were the most likely to report a substantial increase in their workload, even after controlling for several other factors (8). Other studies identify the most significant workload increases for parents with children aged 3-5 (6) or even aged 0-4 (5). On the number of children in the household, from the few studies that considered this issue (6, 7, 8, 15) it is unclear whether having more children implied either significantly more work (6, 8) or a different division of labour (7, 15).

#### **Women, but especially working mothers, were heavily overloaded**

As discussed, on average, women took on much more additional unpaid work hours than men during the lockdown. This reflects both the higher share of women experiencing an increase and the higher additional workload taken up by them. All the reviewed studies that asked respondents to state whether or not their childcare (8, 9) and housework duties (8, 9, 10) had increased, identified significantly more women than men reporting an increase, with at least 60% of the women reporting an increase in the various studies.

Although non-working mothers spent the most time on childcare and housework (5, 7), working mothers were still significantly involved in unpaid duties. Overall, the extent to which mothers took up responsibilities in the home depended less on their own work situations than was the case with fathers. This means that fathers were less likely to take on more home responsibilities if they were already working outside the home, whereas women took on additional home responsibilities almost irrespective of whether they were already working outside the home. This suggests that time availability was not a significant factor in determining women's investment into childcare and home-schooling their children (2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 – only in IT; 13).

This indicates that mothers made a massive increased effort, regardless of whether they were working remotely or from the workplace, or even if they had a paid job at all. For example, a study in the UK (2) finds that working mothers spent as much time on unpaid activities as fathers without a job. Women's relative share of the various household tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry was also barely affected by changes in the time constraints they faced. A joint sample of Italian, UK and US respondents showed that more than half of the women, whose paid workload remained unchanged – or even increased – during the lockdown still did most of the increased amount of cleaning and cooking (11).

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Blasko et. al. 2020, 'How will the COVID-19 crisis affect existing gender divides in Europe?', EUR 30181 EN, Publications Office of the European Union,

Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-18170-5, <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC120525>

Some studies also find that teleworking mothers made particularly great effort to combine paid work with an extensive amount of childcare and educational support. A Hungarian study (4) finds that (other factors being equal) teleworking mothers devoted 7 hours more to childcare per week than mothers who worked from their workplaces. In the UK, teleworking mothers were increasingly likely to do most – or even all – childcare and housework, irrespective of the work situation of their partners (12). And in Italy, teleworking mothers were just as likely to increase the time they spent on childcare as non-working women (8).

#### **More educated mothers devoted longer hours?**

A couple of the studies that looked at variations by level of parental education found either that: (i) mothers with a higher education degree added the most additional hours to their (already high) childcare efforts (4); or (ii) were the most likely to increase the time spent with their children during the lockdowns (8). Both studies suggest that these effects were irrespective of the working conditions of these women, i.e. educated mothers' extra efforts were not due to the greater likelihood of them working from home. Parental support can significantly impact children's learning outcomes when schools are closed. This means that the additional investment made by the most educated mothers is likely to have contributed to increased learning inequalities during the lockdowns. However, this may not be a universal pattern, as in Germany no such trends were shown (6).

#### **Men increased their contribution – especially if they had time available**

Men's contribution to childcare and housework was more sensitive to their time availability than was the case for women. As shown in Germany (13), men's share of housework and childcare was inversely related to the number of hours they spent in paid employment. Fathers were most likely to take on additional work in the home if they lost their paid jobs or were furloughed. In such situations, their share of childcare and housework increased significantly, and a somewhat more balanced division of unpaid work was achieved (e.g. 2, 4, 7, 8). Nevertheless, even those men that lost their jobs only rarely became the main caregivers in the family, and women often continued to do at least as much work at home as their non-working partner (see next section).

The contribution made by teleworking fathers was roughly halfway between that of men without a paid job and those that continued to work from their workplaces. Although teleworking mothers still spent considerably more time on unpaid duties than teleworking fathers (e.g. 1), men who worked remotely also increased their contribution. However, some studies find that teleworking fathers got more involved in work in the home, but only in childcare (4, 13).

#### **Reversed gender roles appeared in a small, but non-negligible number of households**

Predictions regarding the lockdown's effects suggested that in several households a more equal division of unpaid work – or even a reversal in traditional gender roles is likely to occur. This seemed especially likely in cases when the father lost his job, or when only he could work remotely while the mother continued to work from the workplace. Given that women are overrepresented in several essential jobs, such a move to a more equal division of work in the home was expected to be to be relatively common.

Evidence from the research gives some support to the claim that the model of the father as main caregiver increased somewhat during the crisis. However, the reported prevalence of this model – as well as its observed growth – varies greatly depending on: (i) how we define 'main caregiver'; (ii) the survey sample; and (iii) other factors. For example, an Italian study (7) reports that the percentage of fathers acting as main caregivers grew from 28.1% to 34.8% during the lockdowns. This study also showed that such an arrangement was most likely to occur when the father stopped working

during the pandemic. In the UK, there was an even more dramatic increase in the share of households with men as the main caregiver, rising from 2.6% to around 20% (5). However, according to a German survey, the share of couples where the men took care of most – or even all – childcare duties increased slightly from 3% to 5.5% (13). In the Netherlands, the share of fathers that did more carework than their partners grew from 6.8% to 10.2% (15).

#### **The gap can only be explained by persistent gender roles**

In most of the studies, an attempt was made to identify the main factors behind the gender gap, as expressed in either the overall level of time spent on unpaid work, or in the increase in the time spent on unpaid work. Without exception, the research concludes that women's dominant role in unpaid work could in no way be explained by the various factors, such a survey could consider, including women's: (i) sometimes greater likelihood of working from home; (ii) greater likelihood of being out of work; and (iii) level of education. Overall, findings indicate that gender differences in time availability do not account for mothers' increased readiness to devote very long hours to their children when schools and childcare institutions are closed. These findings therefore suggest that traditional gender roles continue to play a crucial role in shaping the division of work between partners.

Additionally, some research also looks at the income contribution of the couples, and investigates how the relative levels of the partner's income (1) or the changes in this income (9) are linked to men's and women's contribution to unpaid work. In the UK (1) and Italy (9), findings show clear gender differences, i.e. women in both countries are more likely than men to respond to their relative losses in income by becoming more involved in childcare. However, this is not the case in Germany (9), where the division of work in the home is more closely related to the bargaining power of the partners irrespective of their gender. This suggests that asymmetric income losses (with women more likely to suffer a loss of income than men) can provide at least a partial explanation for the gender gap in this country.

#### **Differences between countries are likely but unknown**

The present discussion highlights the common trends identified from the various country studies. These common trends are important, as they reflect patterns across different cultures and structural settings. However, the different methodologies used in the surveys mean that it is often not possible to determine whether differences in some of the findings are the result of how the study was designed or whether they highlight real cross-country variations in how households adapted to the lockdowns. Still, it is most likely that adaptation to the lockdowns was not fully uniform across Europe. This lack of uniformity can be seen from the few studies that rely on a comparative data collection in two or more countries. Out of the 15 studies reviewed here, only three (1 – UK, DE, US; 9 – DE, IT; 11 – IT, UK, US) collected data in a standard way in different countries, thus allowing for a direct comparison across the findings.

For example, one study (9) shows that Italian men and women were much more likely than Germans to increase their time spent on housework when the lockdown was introduced, although time spent on childcare increased by a roughly similar amount in both countries. Furthermore, although women were more likely to 'strongly' increase their contributions than men in both activities (housework and childcare) and in both countries, the gender gap was particularly large in Germany, where mothers were twice as likely to strongly increase their childcare time than fathers. Interestingly, another comparative study finds significantly greater gender gaps in time spent on helping children's home-schooling in Germany than in the UK (1). These examples point at likely cross-country variations in the trajectories that different European countries – especially those belonging to different gender regimes – might take because of the crisis.



## Policy recommendations

From this review, a number of policy recommendations can be made.

- Firstly, by quantifying the very high amount of workload that households with children are forced to handle, this review highlights the need to avoid closing childcare institutions and schools as long as a pandemic situation allows.
- Secondly, the review has shown that women's continued role as the main contributor to childcare and housework – even in such extreme circumstances – is often unrelated to their employment responsibilities. This indicates a strong need to combat gender stereotypes and promote the greater involvement of men in childcare and housework.
- Thirdly, a careful re-consideration of employers' practices is needed, that takes the multifaceted nature of telework into account. This pandemic has shown that working from home can be both a blessing and a curse – especially for women with children who tend to use remote work as a way to balance extreme workloads. The possible negative consequences of working from home should be mitigated by employers: (i) offering to combine telework options with flexible working arrangements such as flexitime; and (ii) removing discriminatory workplace practices that penalise teleworking colleagues. Measures should also to encourage more men to take up telework options and thus to strengthen their paternal role – a positive change that the crisis has shown us to be possible.

## List of studies included in the review

*Numbers in (brackets) correspond to the references included in the text.*

With numbers of hours quantified

- (1) Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin, M., & Rauh, C. (2020). Inequality in the impact of the coronavirus shock: Evidence from real time surveys. *Journal of Public Economics*, 189, 104245. doi: 10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104245.
- (2) Andrew, A., Cattán, S., Costa Dias, M., Farquharson, C., Kraftman, L., Krutikova, S., Phimister, A. & Sevilla, A. (2020). The Gendered Division of Paid and Domestic Work under Lockdown. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Discussion Paper No. 13500.
- (3) Farré, L., Fawaz, Y., González, L. & Graves, J. (2020). How the COVID-19 Lockdown Affected Gender Inequality in Paid and Unpaid Work in Spain. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Discussion Paper No. 13434.
- (4) Fodor, É., Gregor, A. Koltai, J. & Kovács, E. (2021) The impact of COVID-19 on the gender division of childcare work in Hungary, *European Societies*, 23(sup1), S95-S110, DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2020.1817522.
- (5) Hupkau, C., & Petrongolo, B. (2020). Work, care and gender during the Covid-19 crisis. *Fiscal studies*, 41(3), 623-651. doi: 10.1111/1475-5890.12245.
- (6) Kreyenfeld, M. and Zinn, S. 2021: Coronavirus and care: How the coronavirus crisis affected fathers' involvement in Germany. *DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH* VOLUME 44, ARTICLE 4, PAGES 99-124 DOI: 10.4054/DemRes.2021.44.4.
- (7) Mangiavacchi, L., Piccoli, L., & Pieroni, L. (2021). Fathers matter: Intrahousehold responsibilities and children's wellbeing during the COVID-19 lockdown in Italy. *Economics & Human Biology*, 42, 101016. doi: 10.1016/j.ehb.2021.101016.

With question on increased/unchanged/decreased amount of work

- (8) Del Boca, D., Oggero, N., Profeta, P., & Rossi, M. (2020). Women's and men's work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 18(4), 1001-1017. doi: 10.1007/s11150-020-09502-1.

- (9) Nevena Kulic, Giulia M. Dotti Sani, Susanne Strauss & Luna Bellani (2021) Economic disturbances in the COVID-19 crisis and their gendered impact on unpaid activities in Germany and Italy, *European Societies*, 23(sup1), S400-S416, DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2020.1828974.
- (10) Lonska, J., Mietule, I., Litavniece, L., Arbidane, I., Vanadzins, I., Matisane, L., & Paegle, L. (2021). Work-Life Balance of the Employed Population During the Emergency Situation of COVID-19 in Latvia. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.682459.

With question assessing time spent compared to the partner

- (11) Biroli, P., Bosworth, S., Della Giusta, M., Di Girolamo, A., Jaworska, S., & Vollen, J. (2021). Family life in lockdown. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 687570. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.687570
- (12) Chung, H., Birkett, H., Forbes, S., & Seo, H. (2020). Working From Home and the Division of Housework and Childcare Among Dual Earner Couples During the Pandemic in the UK. Preprint. SocArXiv. doi: 10.31235/osf.io/4esf7
- (13) Hank, K., & Steinbach, A. (2021). The virus changed everything, didn't it? Couples' division of housework and childcare before and during the Corona crisis. *Journal of Family Research*, 33(1), 99-114.
- (14) Hipp, L., & Bünning, M. (2021). Parenthood as a driver of increased gender inequality during COVID-19? Exploratory evidence from Germany. *European Societies*, 23(sup1), S658-S673. doi: 10.1080/14616696.2020.1833229
- (15) Yerkes, M. A., André, S. C., Besamusca, J. W., Kruijen, P. M., Remery, C. L., van der Zwan, R., ... & Geurts, S. A. (2020). 'Intelligent' lockdown, intelligent effects? Results from a survey on gender (in) equality in paid work, the division of childcare and household work, and quality of life among parents in the Netherlands during the Covid-19 lockdown. *PloS one*, 15(11), e0242249.

## Quick Guide

We used the Scopus database to identify relevant papers with our search limited to economics, social sciences and psychology. Only papers written in English were considered. We searched in titles and article keywords, applying the combination of the following keywords: 'COVID' OR 'Coronavirus' AND 'housework' OR 'childcare' OR 'caregiving' OR 'work-life' OR 'father' OR 'time use' OR 'unpaid work' OR 'gender gap' OR 'gender inequality' OR 'gender roles' OR 'gender' AND 'labour' OR 'gender' AND 'division' OR 'gender' AND 'work' OR 'gender' AND 'household' OR 'women' AND 'survey' OR 'household' AND 'work' OR 'care' AND 'parents' OR 'care' AND 'gender' OR 'care' AND 'work'.

This search yielded a total of 548 documents. After reviewing the abstracts, many of them were discarded and a selection of 58 articles was left that met the purposes of the research. Of these, 27 refer to either an EU Member State or to the UK. From these 27, we limited the scope to the studies that used one of the three following methods: (1) studies that asked for specific time estimates for childcare/housework or both; (2) studies that asked about perceived direction of change in time spent on these activities; and (3) studies that asked the respondents to report the relative time spent on these activities compared to their partner before/during lockdown. We excluded two studies as they reported the average number of childcare hours including for people without children. In the UK, we identified three different studies based on the same survey. In this case, we selected the one that presented the results in a way that provides the most room for comparison with other studies. Finally, three studies using non-representative samples were also excluded. The final selection thus includes altogether 15 studies as listed here.