

Motivation

- Already before COVID-19 gender inequality in the labour market (access, pay, working conditions)
 - Parents / mothers struggled to reconcile work and family
 - COVID-19 measures severe impact on demand for paid and unpaid labor
- ⇒ **What are the consequences for gender equality in employment?**

Covid-19 has significantly set back women's economic prospects, report finds

Respondents to Rethink Ireland survey say need to provide childcare in pandemic halted own progress

COVID-19: Women's paid work hardest hit by child care closures



What do we know?

It depends on the country, the used data and the questions asked. Some evidence that...

- **women's and particularly mothers' economic position has been weakened (hour reduction, unemployment etc.)** (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020 for US & UK; Foucault & Galasso, 2020 for AUT, BR, CA and some EU countries, Kugler et al. 2021 for developing countries) + **mother's engagement in unpaid work has increased** (Del Boca et al., 2020; Farré et al., 2020; Giurge et al., 2020; Shafer et al. 2020).
- **Country differences** could be observed with respect to changes in women's employment patterns (Kugler et al 2021).

Research Questions

1. **Which gender-specific labour market inequalities** have emerged during the first year of the pandemic, and do individual factors account for the observed inequalities?
2. **Are particular groups of women** (mothers and those working in a vital occupation) especially affected by the pandemic?
3. Do the observed gender gaps **differ across countries** and in how far can the **length of school and childcare closures** account for the observed differences?

Why might women's employment be differently affected than men's?

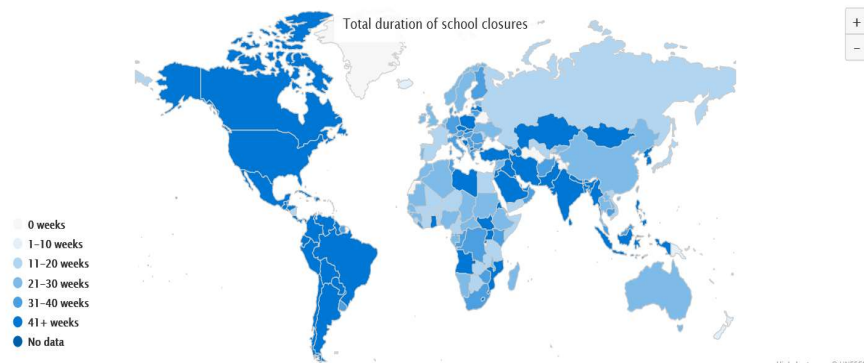
Women's pre-pandemic positioning in the labour market

- Clustered in female dominated sectors/ occupations with less stable / favourable working conditions / informality
- Some female-dominated sectors have been hit hard by the lockdown measures (tourism, retail, food services, etc.)
- Some female-dominated sectors have been defined as essential / vital and have been excluded from implemented COVID-19 restrictions / received support
- Women's role as mother and care provider
 - presence of children impacts labour supply of parents (especially mothers) worldwide (Besamusca et al., 2015; Goldin, 2006).
 - Women / mothers still take on lion's share of unpaid work
 - Childcare provision can render work-family conflict and support women's employment

Why might the gender gap differ across countries?

Countries have reacted with lockdown measures such as school closures at different speeds (during first and following waves)

For instance school closures (length per week) varied in the first year of the pandemic between:



Data

Continuous, online **WageIndicator Survey of Living and Working in Coronavirus Times (LWCV)**

⇒ started in March 2020 / still ongoing (**focus on March 2020-June 2021**)

⇒ **24 countries**, 5 continents, focus on employed individuals aged 15-78

Three analytical samples based on DVs:

1) increased workload: N= 10649, 2) decreased workload: N= 10739, 3) working from home: N= 10793

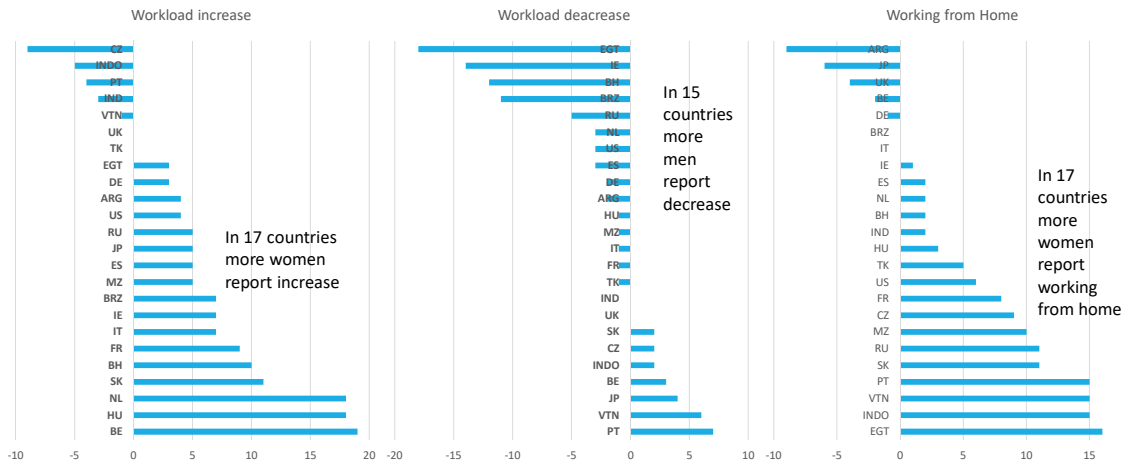
Further measures

- **IVs: Micro:** child in HH (yes=1), working in a vital occupation (yes=1); **macro:** weeks of full and partial school closures (UNESCO 2020)
- **Controls:** education, age, partner, health, urbanization, type of employment, working hours, size of company, permanent contract and day of completing the survey

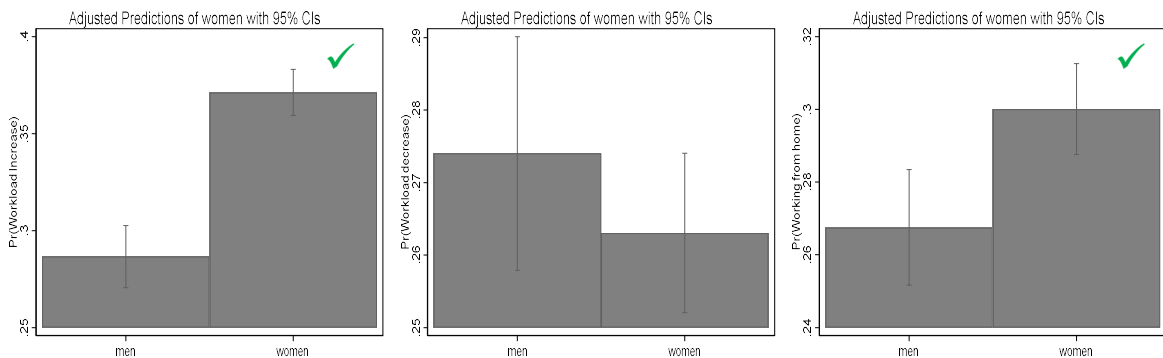
Analytical strategy

- Logistic country fixed-effects models with robust standard errors, estimation of three models (baseline / with controls / with interactions)

Descriptives – Gender gaps across countries



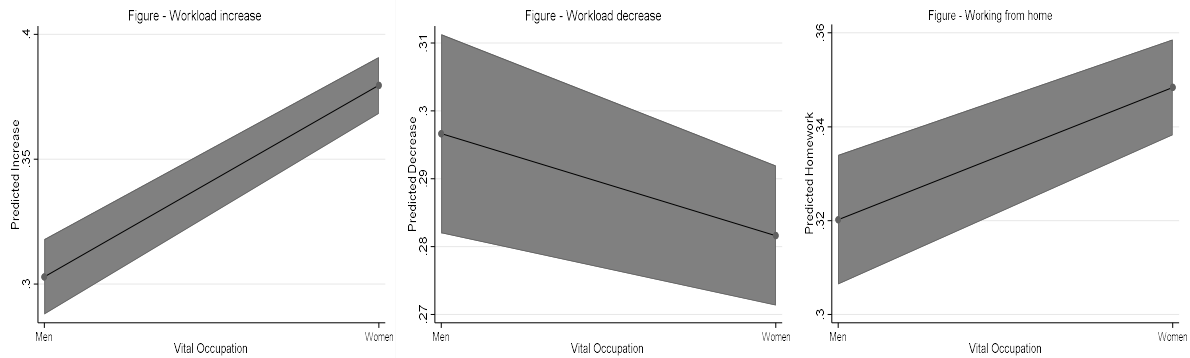
Are women affected?



- Yes, but only for workload increase (37% ♀ vs 29% ♂) and working from home (30% ♀ vs 27% ♂)
- Cannot be entirely explained by compositional differences

LWCV 2020-2021 including all independent and control variables

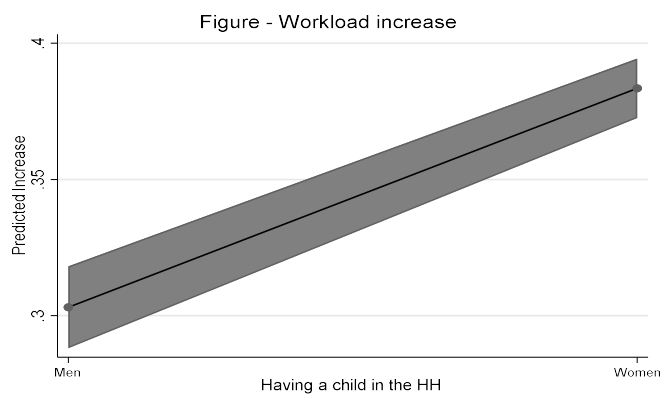
Do these effects vary for women in vital occupations?



- Yes, 8% more women report workload increase, 1,5% less women report workload decrease and 3% more women report working from home (in comparison to men in vital occupations)

LWCV 2020-2021 including all independent and control variables

Do these effects vary for mothers?



- Yes, but only for workload increase!
- 8% more women with children report workload increase in comparison to men

LWCV 2020-2021 including all independent and control variables

Does length of school closure explain cross-national variation in the gender gaps?

- Less evidence within our sample
- Results for mothers show no association between length of school closure to increase or decrease in workload or working from home
- Results for women in vital occupations show that workload increase is less severe for those working in countries with longer school closures
 - Might be explained through support system for workers in those occupations (in some countries emergency childcare etc.)

Conclusion

- **Did gender inequalities** emerge and can they be explained?
 - YES, but not for all considered outcomes (increase in workload and working from home)
 - Cannot be completely explained by socio-demographic and workplace-related characteristics.
- **Are particular groups of women** especially affected by the pandemic?
 - YES, **women in vital occupations** (increased workload and working from home / less decrease in workload); **mothers** (increase in workload)
- Do observed gender gaps **differ across countries** and in how far can the **length of school and childcare closures** account for the observed differences?
 - YES (partly), in countries in which the partial or full school closure was long, the workload increase of women in vital occupations was less pronounced.

Limitations & outlook

- **Long-term consequences?** Focus on short-term consequences, question remains what will happen in the long run with access, wages, pensions of women?
Retraditionalisation?
- **Representativity?** WageIndicator Survey of Living and Working in Coronavirus Times (LWCV) is a volunteer survey (selectivity of the sample)
⇒ inclusion of post-stratification weights (education and age)
- **Things to still to do**
 - Extension to more countries possible (currently restrictive selection)
 - Testing of various macro indicators (death/infection rates / pre-pandemic labour market conditions)