

Work, Care and Gender during Covid-19

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What's so special about the Covid-19 crisis?

- ▶ Covid-19 is hitting economy as hard as the deepest recessions, but the nature of this crisis is exceptional
- ▶ Lockdown measures have naturally hit service sectors with frequent interactions – retail, hotels, restaurants and leisure.
- ▶ Among workers not directly subject to lockdowns, hours losses linked to the (in)ability of working from home
- ▶ During strict lockdown, all education and childcare services were taken in-house.

Covid-19 and gender gaps

- ▶ Why does it matter for gender inequality?
- ▶ Women are over-represented in services
- ▶ but also in “critical sectors” (e.g. health and social care)
- ▶ and in occupations that can be performed from home
- ▶ Women also more heavily engaged in childcare and domestic work in general
 - ▶ Pre-covid-19: mothers in the UK were doing on average 16h childcare per week, against 8h per week done by fathers

What is the available evidence?

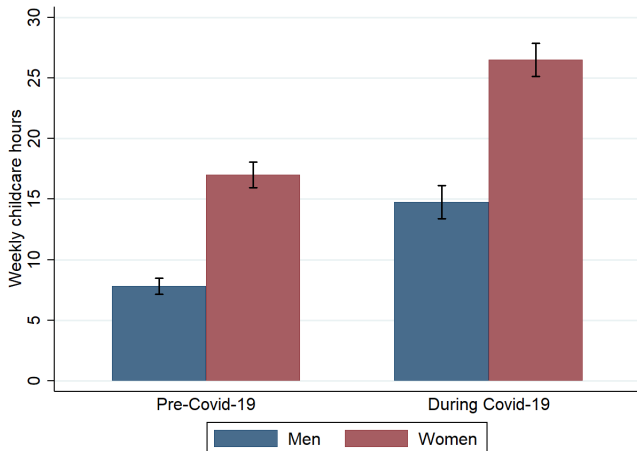
- ▶ Projections based on baseline employment patterns of men and women
- ▶ Real-time ad-hoc surveys
- ▶ Regular representative, large-scale surveys
 - ▶ e.g. Understanding Society, covid-19 supplement

Labour market outcomes (Jan-May 2020)

	Job loss	Furlough	Hours	Earnings
Men	4.4	30.1	-12.6	-50.3
Women	4.1	27.1	-9.8	-22.7
Difference	0.3	3.0	-3.1	-27.6

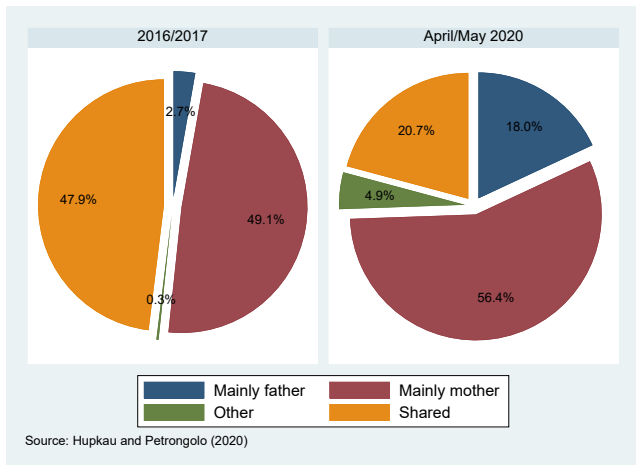
- ▶ Slight differences in favour of women completely explained by industry/occupation, i.e. women are more likely to work from home (even at baseline) and in critical industries
- ▶ Recently released HMRC data (July 2020) show slightly higher furlough rates for women than for men

Gender differences in childcare



- ▶ Overall amount of childcare went from 25 to 43 hours per week **on average**
- ▶ Gender differential increased from 9 to 13 hours

But heterogeneity is very important



- ▶ Share of household in which the father is the main childcare provider went from 2.7 to 18%!

Is there a legacy for the longer-term?

- ▶ Radical changes to organization of work and family life may produce long-lasting consequences via learning, habit formation and the evolution of social norms.
- ▶ Higher incidence of smart working – impacts on productivity and worklife balance
- ▶ Reversal of traditional gender roles in sizeable share of UK households, in which fathers took the role of primary childcare providers
- ▶ Gender norms only slowly evolving, but do respond to “forced” changes in work and society (e.g. male mobilization during WW2; introduction of father quotas)
- ▶ Should we expect lockdowns to ease the breakdown of traditional gender roles?
- ▶ (important: note differences between 1st and 2nd lockdown)