

Household division of labor during the two waves of COVID-19 in Italy

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Household division of labor and COVID-19

- The Covid-19 pandemic has increased housework, childcare and home-schooling worldwide.
- In countries where the division of family work within the couple was traditionally unbalanced, an additional substantial burden has fallen on women.
 - Ex. Italy first lockdown
- The pandemic and subsequent home working may also represent the opportunity for increasing fathers' involvement in the family, thus rebalancing traditional family arrangements.
 - Is this effect visible? Second wave

This paper

- We conduct a survey on a representative sample of Italian working women who are interviewed during the two waves of COVID-19 (April 2020 and November 2020).
 - Questions also referred to partners
- Goal:
 - Measuring the gender gap in Housework, Childcare, Distance Learning and its evolution over time
 - Assessing the role of working arrangements of both partners (working from home, at the usual workplace, stop)

Overview of our results

- First wave COVID-19: the gender gap in household care related activities increased
- Second wave COVID-19: the gender gaps decreased but remained higher than before COVID-19.
- The time spent on housework, childcare, and home schooling by women do not depend on their partners' working arrangements. Conversely, men devote less hours to housework and home schooling when their partners are at home.
- Even if working-from-home and/or non-working men spend more hours on family work, the increased time spent at home does not seem to lead to a reallocation of couples' roles in housework and children care.

Related papers

- The «she-cession» (Alon et al., 2020)
- Unbalanced division of labor during COVID-19 amplifies the she-cession: Spain (Farré and Gonzalez, 2020), UK (Sevilla and Smith, 2020), Italy (Del Boca et al., 2020 and Mangiavacchi et al., 2020). A comparative analysis on Italy, UK, US (Biroli et al., 2020)
- Del Boca et al. (REHO, 2020): we focus on the outbreak of the pandemic and show that most of the additional housework and childcare associated to COVID-19 fell on women, even though childcare is more equally shared within the couple than housework
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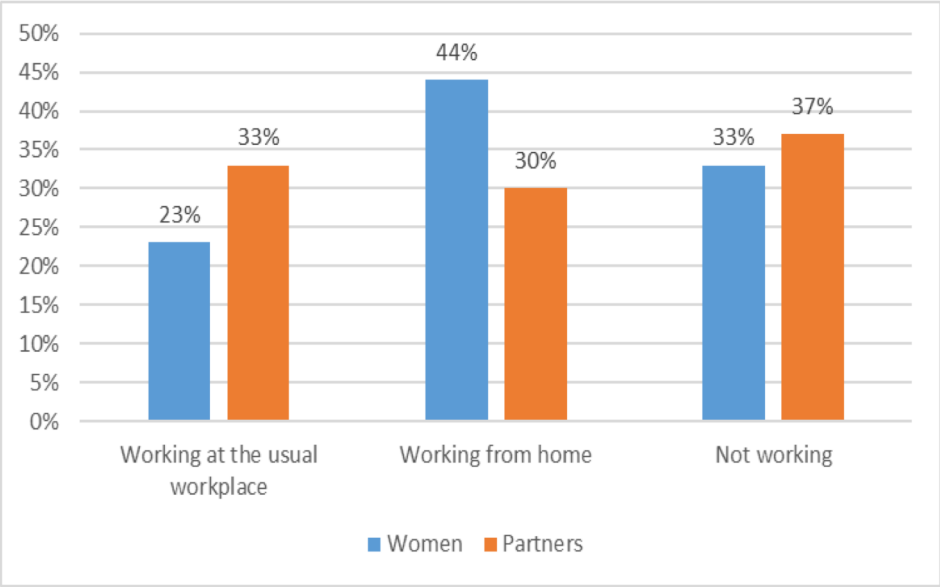
The sample: Summary statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	44.96	9.50	26	65
Having a degree	0.46	0.50	0	1
North	0.55	0.50	0	1
Centre	0.20	0.40	0	1
South	0.25	0.43	0	1
Having children	0.55	0.50	0	1
Having a partner	0.72	0.45	0	1
Working at the usual workplace	0.58	0.49	0	1
Working from home	0.24	0.43	0	1
Not working or other	0.18	0.38	0	1

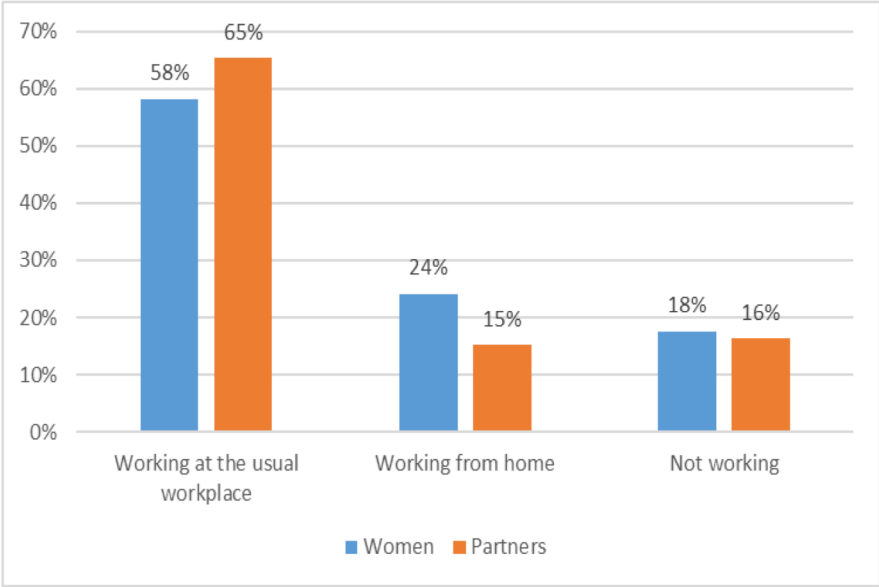
Obs: 699

Working arrangements

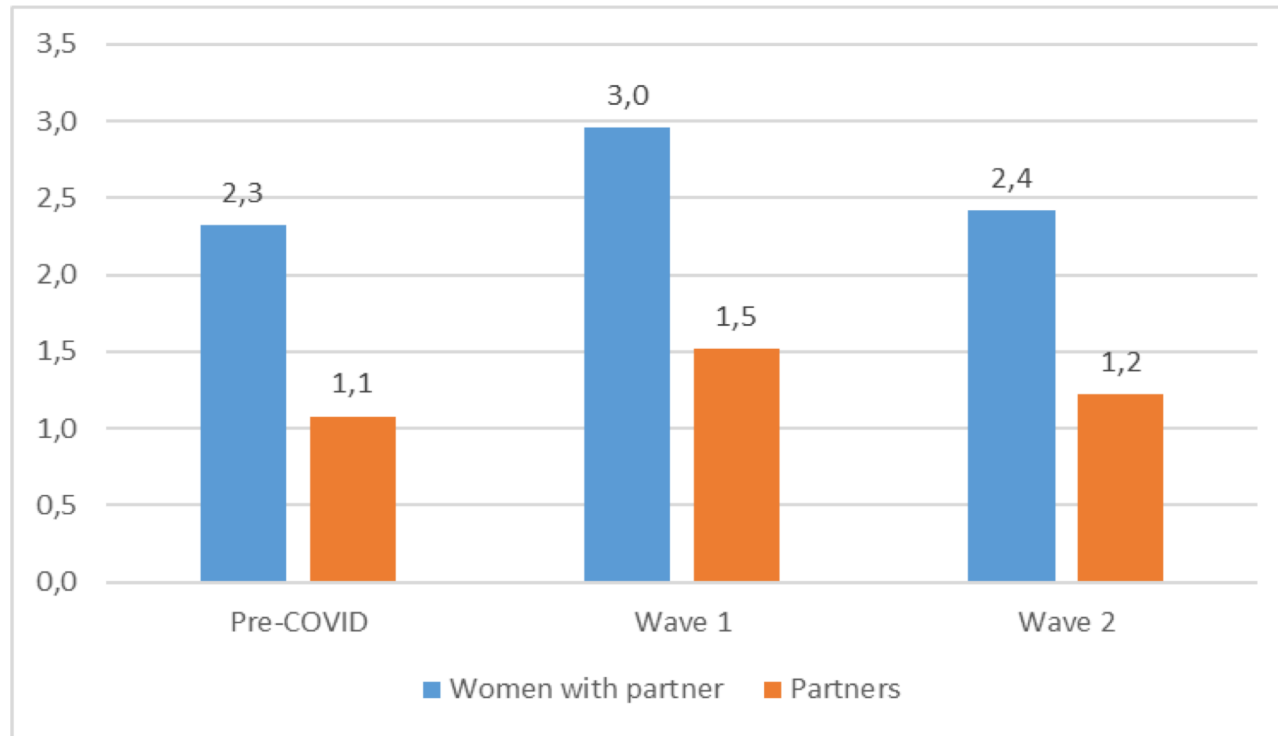
First wave



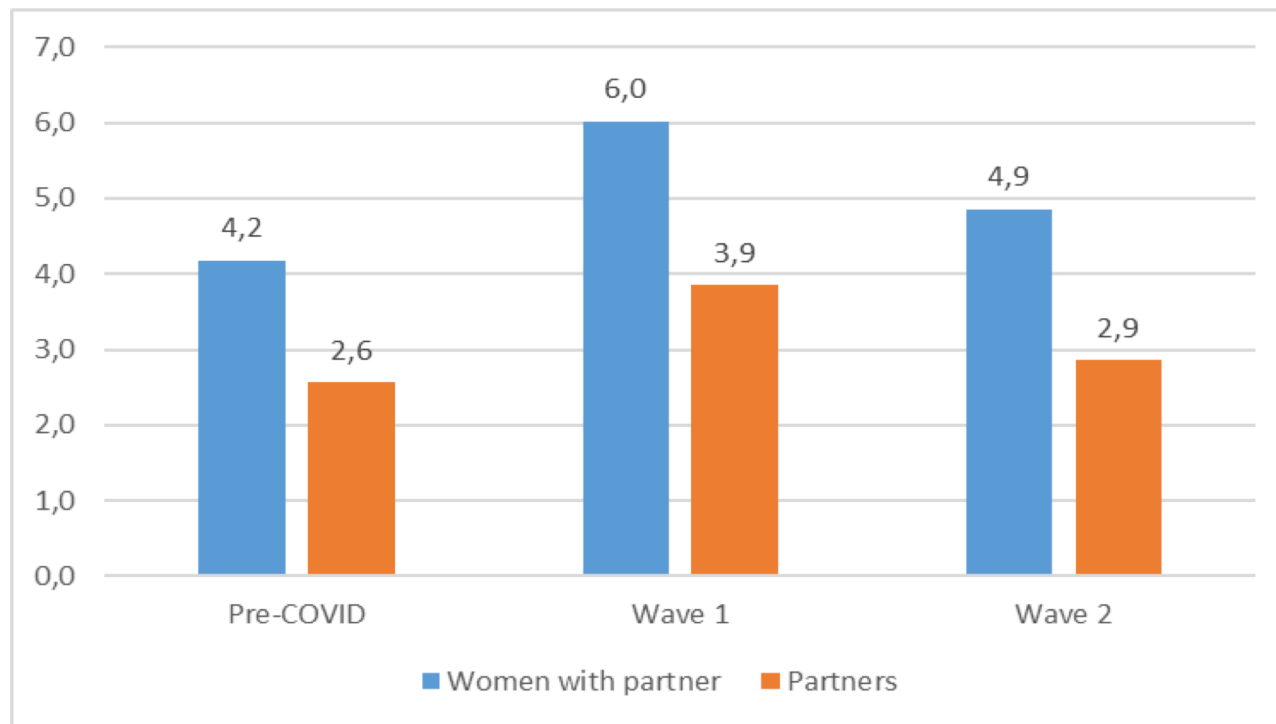
Second wave



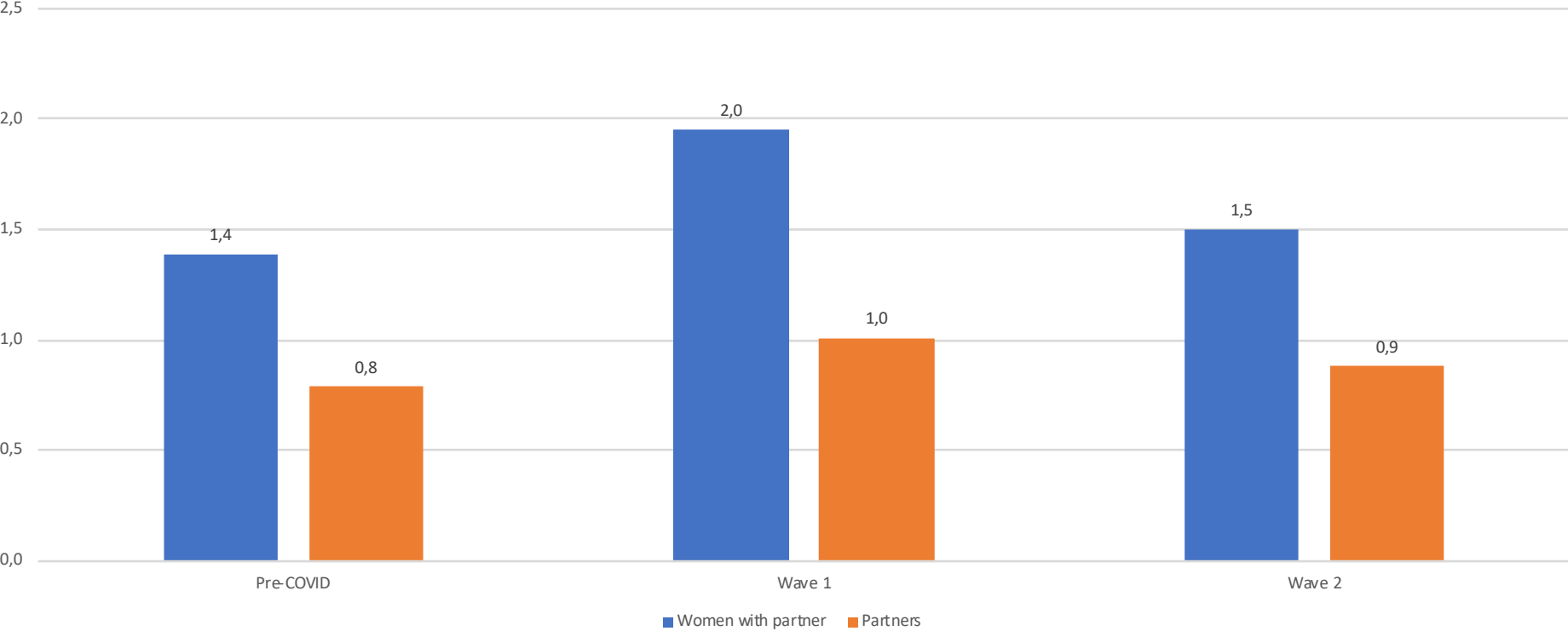
Housework (n. hours)



Childcare



Distance learning



The role of working arrangements: Housework (second wave)

	Partners working at the usual workplace	Partners working from home	Partners not working
women working at the usual workplace	Women 2.31 Partners 1.17 Difference 1.14*** N=241	Women 2.92 Partners 1.40 Difference 1.52*** N=25	Women 2.35 Partners 1.52 Difference 0.84** N=31
women working from home	Women 2.56 Partners 0.75 Difference 1.81*** N=57	Women 2.82 Partners 1.43 Difference 1.39*** N=44	Women 1.91 Partners 1.30 Difference 0.61** N=23
women not working	Women 2.53 Partners 1.04 Difference 1.49*** N=47	Women 1 Partners 3.37 Difference -2.37 N=8	Women 2.68 Partners 1.43 Difference 1.25*** N=28

The role of working arrangements: Childcare (second wave)

	Partners working at the usual workplace	Partners working from home	Partners not working
women working at the usual workplace	Women 3.59 Partners 2.18 Difference 1.41*** N=162	Women 4.56 Partners 3.44 Difference 1.12** N=16	Women 3,3 Partners 3,4 Difference -0,1 N=20
women working from home	Women 5.85 Partners 2.92 Difference 2.92*** N=39	Women 5.86 Partners 4.03 Difference 1.83*** N=29	Women 5 Partners 4.46 Difference 0.54 N=13
women not working	Women 8.90 Partners 2.86 Difference 6.03*** N=29	Women 13.2 Partners 6.4 Difference 6.8 N=5	Women 5.58 Partners 3.63 Difference 0.98* N=19

Housework

	Hours spent on housework by women during the lockdown	Hours spent on housework by partners during the lockdown	Hours spent on housework by women during the second wave of COVID-19	Hours spent on housework by partners during the second wave of COVID-19
Woman's age	-0.002 (0.010)	-0.037*** (0.010)	0.009 (0.008)	-0.022*** (0.008)
Woman having a degree	0.085 (0.187)	0.157 (0.195)	-0.125 (0.155)	-0.042 (0.156)
Woman having children	0.502*** (0.192)	0.126 (0.199)	0.444*** (0.155)	0.173 (0.156)
Centre	-0.051 (0.233)	0.008 (0.242)	-0.015 (0.196)	0.158 (0.198)
South	1.127*** (0.218)	0.045 (0.226)	0.899*** (0.177)	0.294* (0.178)
Woman working from home	0.050 (0.245)	-0.393 (0.255)	0.070 (0.189)	-0.363* (0.191)
Woman not working	0.567** (0.254)	-0.422 (0.264)	0.125 (0.210)	0.013 (0.212)
Partner working from home	-0.285 (0.236)	-0.045 (0.246)	0.288 (0.221)	0.697*** (0.223)
Partner not working	-0.211 (0.219)	-0.064 (0.228)	-0.190 (0.213)	0.467** (0.215)
Constant	2.420*** (0.526)	3.435*** (0.547)	1.497*** (0.397)	1.928*** (0.401)
Observations	405	405	504	504
R-squared	0.113	0.044	0.082	0.045

Childcare

	Hours spent on childcare by women during the lockdown	Hours spent on childcare by partners during the lockdown	Hours spent on childcare by women during the second wave of COVID-19	Hours spent on childcare by partners during the second wave of COVID-19
Woman's age	-0.191*** (0.042)	-0.166*** (0.041)	-0.205*** (0.032)	-0.128*** (0.025)
Woman having a degree	0.673 (0.748)	0.151 (0.723)	0.560 (0.568)	0.451 (0.452)
Centre	-1.374 (0.960)	-1.824* (0.928)	-0.301 (0.727)	-0.537 (0.579)
South	1.271 (0.842)	0.535 (0.814)	0.937 (0.643)	0.919* (0.512)
Woman working from home	1.053 (0.972)	0.250 (0.939)	1.601** (0.696)	0.437 (0.554)
Woman not working	3.295*** (0.984)	0.737 (0.951)	3.951*** (0.793)	0.215 (0.631)
Partner working from home	0.899 (0.963)	1.314 (0.931)	0.685 (0.824)	1.262* (0.656)
Partner not working	0.528 (0.858)	1.303 (0.829)	-0.616 (0.792)	1.558** (0.630)
Constant	12.041*** (2.197)	10.473*** (2.124)	12.692*** (1.546)	7.747*** (1.231)
Observations	273	273	332	332
R-squared	0.154	0.096	0.216	0.122

Distance learning

	Hours spent on distance learning by women during the lockdown	Hours spent on distance learning by partners during the lockdown	Hours spent on distance learning by women during the second wave of COVID-19	Hours spent on distance learning by partners during the second wave of COVID-19
Woman's age	-0.031** (0.015)	-0.033*** (0.012)	-0.051*** (0.012)	-0.040*** (0.010)
Woman having a degree	0.171 (0.262)	0.093 (0.220)	0.068 (0.205)	0.167 (0.173)
Centre	0.210 (0.336)	0.191 (0.282)	-0.188 (0.263)	-0.133 (0.221)
South	0.275 (0.295)	0.397 (0.248)	0.315 (0.232)	0.083 (0.196)
Woman working from home	-0.333 (0.341)	-0.601** (0.286)	-0.157 (0.252)	-0.356* (0.212)
Woman not working	0.171 (0.345)	-0.659** (0.290)	0.041 (0.287)	-0.425* (0.241)
Partner working from home	0.597* (0.338)	0.499* (0.283)	0.344 (0.298)	0.394 (0.251)
Partner not working	0.221 (0.301)	0.220 (0.252)	0.314 (0.286)	0.535** (0.241)
Constant	2.941*** (0.770)	2.645*** (0.647)	3.673*** (0.559)	2.637*** (0.471)
Observations	273	273	332	332
R-squared	0.049	0.067	0.072	0.071

Additional results /1

- We ask women whether they are concerned about
 - losing her job/close her economic activity
 - earning less money
 - that the return on her investments will decrease
 - that she will have a lower pension when retired, given the potential interruptions of working activities.
- Findings:
 - Women not working during the second wave of COVID-19 are those more concerned of losing their job or closing their activities and of earning less money in the future.
 - More educated women feel less insecure about their future, meaning that they are in a stronger position to cope with the current and future situation.

Additional results /2

- We ask women whether they are dissatisfied with
 - her household income,
 - health status,
 - partner,
 - life in general
- Findings:
 - women who are not working several months after the outbreak of COVID-19 are more likely to be dissatisfied in all the above-mentioned areas.
 - women with a university degree are less likely to be dissatisfied about their income and life in general.

Conclusions

- Gender gaps in household division of labor during COVID-19: more in the first wave, but not disappeared in the second wave.
- Childcare is more balanced than housework
- The time spent by women on housework, childcare and children's distance learning does not depend on the work arrangement of the partner.
- The partner does more HW, CC and DL if he works from home
- How the division of labor, related to work arrangements, translates into outcomes? LFP, subjective well-being.....