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Research Article

Work–family balance during the pandemic: Longitudinal evidence from 27 European countries

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Work–family balance during the pandemic: Longitudinal evidence from 27 European countries

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Abstract

BACKGROUND

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, school closures and limits on social interaction had a major impact on younger people and increased the strain on working parents, particularly women, due to limited access to childcare. Prior research highlights that women, who are overrepresented in the services sector, faced disproportionate impacts.

OBJECTIVE

This study investigates how individuals and families in the EU adapted to unprecedented work–family challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. With a gender perspective, we investigate whether work affected family life, and vice versa.

METHODS

Using the Eurofound Living, Working and COVID longitudinal survey, we track work–life balance across five pandemic phases, examining both work-to-family and family-to-work interference. The findings are contextualized by merging the survey data with the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) in order to assess the impact of varying national non-pharmaceutical interventions.

RESULTS

Across Europe, work responsibilities interfered with family life more than family responsibilities interfered with work, and mothers with young children were particularly

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affected. Teleworking helped reduce the work burden, but effective childcare support is essential to relieve working mothers.

CONCLUSIONS

Differences across countries indicate that structural gender equality and institutional support shape families' ability to reconcile work and care during crises. In contexts with lower female labour participation, greater flexibility and childcare provision would enhance both work-family balance and gender equality.

CONTRIBUTION

The study establishes how work affects family life during major societal upheavals, as opposed to the other way around. It identifies the role of policy interventions across 27 EU countries.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the organisation of work and family life in ways few could have anticipated. Millions of workers were suddenly asked to work from home, while schools, childcare facilities, and many services closed. Families had to reorganise daily routines, redistribute care, and redefine the boundary between work and private life. At the same time, physical distancing limited informal help from relatives and friends. For many parents, particularly mothers of young children, everyday life became an exercise in combining employment, education, and care within the same household.

This paper focuses on resilience by examining how individuals and families in Europe adapted to these extraordinary pressures on work and family life. We emphasize two directions of interference: work-to-family balance (WtoFB), when work obligations intrude on family life, and family-to-work balance (FtoWB), when family demands limit work performance. Our main question is how these two dimensions evolved during the pandemic and which factors influenced people's ability to maintain a balance.

While the pandemic threatened older people's health most directly, its economic and social consequences fell heavily on younger, working-age adults. Studies have shown that women were disproportionately affected because they were concentrated in the service sectors that were hit hardest by lockdowns and because school and childcare closures increased unpaid care responsibilities (Alon et al. 2020; Profeta, Calò, and Occhiuzzi 2021; Chung et al. 2021). Yet evidence on how these pressures developed over time and which mechanisms – such as telework, family composition, or government restrictions – shaped people's capacity to cope, remains limited.

To address these gaps, we use data from the Eurofound Living, Working and COVID-19 longitudinal survey, which covers individuals in all 27 EU Member States

across five waves from 2020 to 2022 and so captures a period where most families experienced substantial upheaval. This allows us to analyse changes in work–family balance across successive phases of the pandemic and to link them with national containment measures using the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT).

The analysis is guided by three main questions. First, we examine how work-to-family and family-to-work balance evolved during the various phases of the pandemic, assessing whether one form of interference dominated and how patterns changed as restrictions were tightened and relaxed. Second, we investigate the extent to which gender, teleworking arrangements, and family composition – particularly the presence of young children – shaped work–family balance. This allows us to test whether women and men experienced these pressures differently and whether telework mitigated or reinforced conflicts. Third, we explore how national policy responses influenced work–family balance, focusing on how school closures, workplace restrictions, and stay-at-home requirements affected the ability of workers, especially parents, to reconcile work and care responsibilities. Together, these questions allow us to assess both individual resilience and the responsiveness of institutions during an unprecedented crisis. The longitudinal and comparative design of the Eurofound Living, Working and COVID-19 survey provides a unique opportunity to examine, across the five survey waves from 2020 to 2022, how gender, family composition, and telework shaped work–family balance as the pandemic evolved.

To contextualise these individual-level dynamics, we complement the survey with two macro-level indicators that capture broader structural differences in gender equality across Europe. The first is the female labour force participation rate, which we use to classify countries according to the overall level of women’s participation in the labour market. The second is the Gender Equality Index, which reflects multidimensional aspects of equality across work, time, and social domains. Together, these measures help us explore how structural gender equality interacts with individual characteristics to shape work–family outcomes.

This approach recognises that countries differ not only in their exposure to pandemic restrictions but also in their underlying institutional frameworks. Our aim is therefore not to evaluate specific policy interventions, but rather to identify how gender, family, and employment conditions operated within these broader contexts. The next section situates this study within the literature on gender and work–family balance and outlines the theoretical and empirical expectations guiding our analysis.

2. Background

Several studies have analysed the pandemic's labour market impacts (e.g., Costa Dias, Joyce, and Keiller 2020; Hupkau and Petrongolo 2020). Much attention has been paid to the role of teleworking (Sostero et al. 2020; Arntz, Yahmed, and Berlingieri 2020). Some of this literature suggests that the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affected women in the labour market, in part because women were (and still are) overrepresented in the services sector, which suffered more severely from the lockdown measures. For women who maintained their jobs and who switched to teleworking, it is also possible that school and childcare facility closures meant challenges in terms of maintaining a satisfactory family life. Again, the suspicion is that in this respect, women suffered more than men (Alon et. al 2020; Profeta, Calò, and Occhiuzzi 2021; Del Boca et al. 2020; Chung et al. 2021; Collins et al. 2020).

2.1 Work–family balance

As people have responsibilities both at home and at work, achieving balance between the spheres of work and family life matter a great deal. The concept of work–family conflict refers to “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). A large body of research (Allen et al. 2000; Cazan, Truță, and Pavalache-Ilie 2019; Frone, Russell, and Cooper 1997; Spector et al. 2005) documents its negative consequences for wellbeing, including depression, stress, dissatisfaction, and absenteeism.

The literature identifies three main forms of work–family conflict: time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Time-based conflict is linked to long work hours (Major, Klein, and Ehrhart 2002; Tausig and Fenwick 2001), overtime (Golden and Wiens-Tuers 2006; Bohen 1981), and limited schedule flexibility (Hofäcker and König 2013). Family characteristics such as marriage (Herman and Gyllstrom 1977) and the presence of children (Bohen 1981; Gallie and Russell 2009) also increase the potential for conflict through increased time demands.

An important insight is that work–family conflict is bidirectional: work may interfere with family responsibilities, and family may interfere with work (Gutek, Searle, and Klepa 1991; Kanter 1989; Frone, Russell, and Cooper 1992). These two forms of conflict are interrelated but not identical. Byron (2005) finds that work-related antecedents such as job stress and schedule flexibility mainly affect work interfering with family, whereas non-work antecedents such as marital conflict, hours spent on childcare, and family stress affect family interfering with work.

Family composition and the presence of children are therefore key. Married individuals and parents report greater conflict, especially those with young children (Gallie and Russell 2009; Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Larger families and multiple responsibilities intensify both forms of interference (Cartwright 1978; Voydanoff 1988).

Cross-national studies reveal strong contextual differences. In individualistic cultures, work and family tend to be viewed as separate domains, whereas in collectivist cultures, family obligations are central and work is less dominant (Lu et al. 2006; Shafiro and Hammer 2004; Yang et al. 2000). Cultural attitudes toward gender roles also matter: women from more individualistic gender ideologies show greater attachment to work (Agassi 1982; Lieblich 1993). Context and institutional support are therefore crucial for understanding work–family balance (Crompton and Lyonette 2006; Lewis 1992; Lyness and Kropf 2005).

2.2 Disruptions and gender differences in work–family balance

Gender plays a central role in the literature on work–life balance because the burden of being responsible for childcare and organising the family continues to be greater for women, despite long-term increases in women’s educational attainment and labour market participation (OECD 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic represented a major external shock that severely tested families’ ability to balance work and care, but with important gender differences. Lockdowns, school closures, and social distancing simultaneously affected the supply of paid work and the demand for unpaid care. The pandemic also produced an atypical economic recession: sectors such as hospitality and tourism, where women are overrepresented, were hit hardest (Alon et al. 2020; Hupkau and Petrongolo 2020). As a result, many women lost their jobs or experienced reduced working hours (Costa Dias, Joyce, and Keiller 2020).

At the same time, women were more likely than men to hold jobs that could be performed remotely (Sostero et al. 2020; Arntz, Yahmed, and Berlingieri 2020). Teleworking thus became both a buffer and a new source of conflict. While remote work can provide flexibility and reduce commuting time, it may also blur boundaries between paid and unpaid labour, increasing strain within the household (Chung and van der Lippe 2020; Fagan et al. 2012).

School and childcare closures further intensified the pressure on working parents (Krentz et al. 2020; Biroli 2021; Farré et al. 2020). Studies report that fathers increased their participation in domestic work compared to pre-pandemic levels (Hipp and Bünning 2020; Petts, Carlson, and Pepin 2021; Yerkes et al. 2020; Alfano et al. 2024; Llanes-Ordóñez, Sanchez-Martí, and Buxarrais-Estrada 2024; Innstrand, Grødal, and Christensen 2024; Loezar-Hernández et al. 2023), yet women still carried the heavier

load (Chung et al. 2020; Collins et al. 2020; Sevilla and Smith 2020). The persistence of traditional gender norms helps explain why mothers reported greater declines in work–family balance during lockdowns (United Nations 2020; Madgavkar et al. 2020; Ruzungunde and Zhou 2021).

Teleworking and flexible scheduling mitigated some challenges, but these arrangements were not introduced for the purpose of wellbeing: they were emergency responses to maintain economic activity (Blasko 2020). For some employees, especially parents of young children, the merging of work and family spaces produced new conflicts rather than easing existing ones (Lonska et al. 2021). Evidence across Europe confirms that the pandemic reduced satisfaction with both work and family life, with mothers of young children most affected (Möhring et al. 2021; Zoch, Bächmann, and Vicari 2021; Reimann, Peters, and Diewald 2022).

2.3 National policies and country context

Policies that improve working conditions and childcare availability have been proven to reduce work–family conflict (Gallie and Russell 2009). Social policies that expand parental leave and subsidised childcare enhance women’s labour market integration (Del Boca and Locatelli 2008; Sánchez-Mangas and Sánchez-Marcos 2008; Lefebvre, Merrigan, and Verstraete 2009). Flexible and secure labour markets also play a role by easing the incompatibility between paid and unpaid work (Cipollone, Patacchini, and Vallanti 2013).

Recent decades have therefore seen a strong association between institutional support for gender equality and women’s labour market participation (Cipollone, Patacchini, and Vallanti 2013; Anttila et al. 2015). Countries differ substantially in the generosity of family policies, labour market flexibility, and childcare infrastructure, and these differences map onto well-documented cross-national typologies of welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi 2000; Lohmann and Marx 2018).

In the analysis that follows, we capture this cross-national variation through two contextual indicators. The first groups the 27 EU member states into four clusters based on female employment rates (retrieved from Eurostat 2019 data): low, medium-low, medium-high, and high female employment. This gradient broadly tracks the depth of institutional support for gender equality: Countries in the high-employment cluster (e.g., Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands) typically combine generous parental leave, affordable public childcare, and flexible labour markets, while countries in the low-employment cluster (e.g., Italy, Greece, Romania) tend to rely more heavily on informal, family-based care arrangements. The second indicator is the Gender Equality Index (EIGE 2021), a composite measure of gender gaps in work, money, knowledge, time,

power, and health. Together, these contextual indicators allow us to examine whether the long-term institutional environment shaped how families experienced the extraordinary pressures of the pandemic period.

3. Data and methods

3.1 The LWC survey

Data for this analysis come from Eurofound's Living, Working and COVID-19 (LWC) online survey, covering people living in the 27 Member States of the European Union. Five waves of this unique survey have been carried out to date. The first wave was launched in the second week of April 2020, when most European countries were experiencing their first lockdown. In July 2020, when economies and societies were gradually reopening, the second wave was launched. The third wave was initiated in February 2021 as countries were dealing with different levels of restrictions. The fourth wave was launched in October 2021, coinciding with the emergence of the fourth pandemic wave and the Omicron variant. The fifth wave was implemented in spring 2022. Data were collected online, using a non-probability sampling methodology. The survey was advertised on Eurofound's website and on Facebook, and snowballing methods were applied to promote the survey.

Because we are interested in dynamics over time, we rely on the panel dimension of the dataset. These are restricted to individuals who completed the questionnaire in at least two of the survey waves. The panel sample consists of a total of 84,531 observations collected from 30,497 individuals.

We select a subsample of individuals of working age (i.e., above 18 years old and younger than 65) who were working in all rounds, because only they are asked the question about their work–family balance. This restriction reduces the sample size to 53,792 observations (21,179 individuals). After excluding observations with missing data for the sociodemographic variables used in the multivariate analysis, we are left with 40,113 observations collected from 13,307 respondents.

3.2 The dependent variables

We are interested in the levels and time trends of work–family balance over the course of the pandemic. We are able to capture two dimensions: the work-to-family balance (WtoFB), which shows the extent to which work responsibilities interfere with family life, and the family-to-work balance (FtoWB), which indicates how much family

responsibilities (negatively) affect work. In all four data collection rounds, respondents were presented with four statements regarding work–family balance:

How often in the last month, have you...

- (1) ...felt too tired after work to do some of the household jobs which need to be done,
- (2) ...found that your job prevented you from giving the time you wanted to your family,
- (3) ...found it difficult to concentrate on your job because of your family responsibilities,
- (4) ...found that your family responsibilities prevented you from giving the time you should to your job.

To each of these statements, respondents had to give a score ranging from 1 [always] to 5 [never], with higher values indicating better work–family balance. The correlation between the answers to the first two statements is 0.558, which is satisfactory. We therefore use the mean value of the two variables as an indicator of WtoFB for each observation. In a similar manner, FtoWB is the mean of the answers to the third and fourth statements, where the correlation coefficient is 0.750.

3.3 The explanatory variables

Among the explanatory variables used in the analysis, the variable *waves* represents the temporal dimension of the data, corresponding to the waves of the survey. Gender (*female*), age groups (18–29, 30–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–65), education (*tertiary education*), work conditions (*self-employment* and *telework*) and family arrangements (having a *partner* or young children) are the socio-demographic explanatory variables of the analysis. *Female*, *tertiary education*, *self-employment*, and *partner* are dummy variables that take the value 1 if the respondent is a woman, has a tertiary education degree, is self-employed, or has a partner living in the same household, respectively (or zero otherwise). The variable *telework* has the value 1 if the individual declares that he has teleworked for more than half of his working hours over the past week. The two dummy variables for young children, *child 0–11* and *child 12–17*, indicate the presence of children in those age groups in the household.

With the aim of curbing the pandemic, governments around the world employed non-pharmaceutical policy interventions (NPIs), which had economic and social implications. Since 1 January 2020, the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response

Tracker (OxCGRT)⁵ has collected systematic information on the NPIs that governments have taken to tackle COVID-19. The policies collected can be classified into four main categories: containment and closure policies (indicators C1–C8), economic policies (indicators E1–E4), health system policies (indicators H1–H8), and vaccine policies (indicators V1–4). For the purpose of this paper, in our model we have only included three policies belonging to the first category: school closures, workplace closures, and stay-at-home requirements, because we expect them to affect the two dependent variables of interest. They take the value of 1 in the case of an imposed (1) closure of some or all school levels, (2) closure of workplaces in some sectors or all-but-the-essential sectors, (3) requirements for individuals to stay at home with some exceptions (e.g., daily exercise, grocery shopping and ‘essential’ trips) or minimal exceptions (e.g., allowed to leave only once a week, or only one person leaving at a time, etc.). Otherwise, the three indicators take the value 0.

We also control for country groups. Eurostat data (year 2019) regarding female employment rates in the 20–64 age group were used to create the four country groups. Countries with below 65% female employment (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Romania) are classified as ‘low employment’, countries with a female employment rate between 65% and 69% (Belgium, France, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) are classified as ‘medium-low employment’, countries with female employment between 70% and 75% (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Portugal) are ‘medium-high employment’, and countries with a rate higher than 75% (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden) are ‘high female employment’. If the countries with the lowest female employment rates are those with the lowest levels of protection of and flexibility for women in the labour market, we expect these countries to also have lower levels of work-to-family balance. The rationale for using female employment rates as a proxy for institutional support and labour-market flexibility lies in the strong empirical link between women’s labour force participation and the presence of enabling policies such as affordable childcare, parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and anti-discrimination protections (Cipollone, Patacchini, and Vallanti 2013; Anttila et al. 2015; Gallie and Russell 2009). High female employment rates rarely emerge in the absence of these institutional features. Conversely, persistently low female employment rates tend to signify rigid employment systems and insufficient support for work–family reconciliation. The reasons for high participation may differ across regions. For instance, the Nordic countries combine high participation with strong social protection, whereas in some Baltic countries high rates reflect economic necessity rather than policy generosity. Overall, however, the indicator still captures the degree to

⁵ Since 1 January 2020 the Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) has collected systematic information on policy measures that governments have taken to tackle COVID-19. Data are collected on a country and daily basis, cover more than 180 countries, and are coded into 23 indicators.

which national labour markets and welfare regimes enable women's sustained employment. Thus, grouping countries by female employment level provides a meaningful proxy for cross-national variation in women's labour-market integration, institutional flexibility, and, ultimately, their capacity to achieve work–family balance.

The other contextual indicator is the Gender Equality Index (taken in the same year of the previous macro-indicator, i.e., the EIGE indicator for the 2021 index, which refers to 2019 ⁶). In theory, the Gender Equality Index gives the EU and the Member States a score between 1 and 100; a score of 100 means that a country has reached full equality between women and men. For the year considered, it varied between 83.9 for Sweden and 52.5 for Greece (EU average 68). The Gender Equality Index measures the progress of gender equality in the EU and was developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The six core domains are work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health, plus the two additional domains of violence against women and intersecting inequalities. The GEI is consequently a broad proxy for structural gender equality rather than a direct measure of specific policy interventions.

3.4 The random effect model

Since we are interested in gender differences, and since gender does not vary over time, a random effects (RE) model was chosen to perform this analysis, with the main estimation equation being:

$$Balance_{i,t} = \beta_1 female_i + \sum_{k=1}^{12} \gamma^k X_{i,t}^k + \sum_{k=1}^{12} \delta^k female_i \cdot X_{i,t}^k + \mu_i + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

where *Balance* is the dependent variable (WtoFB or FtoWB) of an individual *i* at time *t*, *X* represents the set of individual characteristics (gender, age group, educational level, family arrangements such as having a partner or children, employment status and teleworking) as well as controls for wave and country group, and dummy variables for restrictive policies (school closures, workplace closures and 'stay-at-home' requirements). μ_i represents individual random effects and $\varepsilon_{i,t}$ is the error term. Although the four survey items used to construct the work–family balance measures are ordinal, the dependent variables in our analysis are continuous indices, calculated as the mean of two highly correlated items for each dimension (correlation coefficients = 0.56 for WtoFB and 0.75 for FtoWB). The indices approximate normal distributions and we estimate linear random-effects models rather than ordinal models.

⁶ Countries' GEI data are taken from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive results

The first important descriptive finding is that the mean values are always higher (indicating fewer conflicts) for FtoWB than for WtoFB (see Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Appendix). This suggests that during the COVID-19 pandemic period, work interfered with family responsibilities more than the other way around. This result has already been highlighted in Nivakoski and Mascherini (2021), who analyse the same data but also compare their numbers with previous data from the 2015 wave of the European Working Conditions Survey.

The second important descriptive finding is for gender differences: the mean levels of both WtoFB and FtoWB are always lower for women (with the exception of individuals younger than 30 years old). Over the course of the pandemic the situation deteriorated further, and this was particularly true for mothers. In addition, for both men and women, WtoFB decreases over time, indicating a greater difficulty in balancing work responsibilities and family life. FtoWB follows a more fluctuating trend, touching the lowest point during wave three (March/February 2021). At this point, countries were dealing with the third wave of the pandemic and new restrictions.

Teleworking appears to be associated with a higher WtoFB for both men and women. Conversely, working from home is linked to lower FtoWB, especially among women. Gender differences emerge particularly in families with young children (0–11 years). Although having children lowers the WtoFB and FtoWB of both fathers and mothers, mothers appear to suffer more.

Regarding NPIs, both men and women benefited in terms of WtoFB when schools and workplaces were closed. A small improvement in women's WtoFB is evident even in the presence of stay-at-home requirements. All restrictive measures reduce average FtoWB reported by women, while they only have minimal effects on the levels reported by men.

When it comes to the country grouping, the average declared levels of WtoFB and FtoWB in medium-low female employment and high female employment are quite similar. Conversely, workers belonging to the medium-high female employment group have, on average, levels of WtoFB and FtoWB similar to workers in the low female employment group. This somewhat unexpected pattern may partly reflect the heterogeneity of institutional contexts within our country groupings. For example, countries in the medium-high employment group, such as Denmark, Portugal, and Czechia, differ in their policy approaches and welfare regimes. Denmark combines extensive family support and flexible labour arrangements, while in Portugal and Czechia high participation rates coexist with more limited public childcare and lower job

flexibility. Grouping by female employment rate therefore captures broad labour-market participation patterns but may also mask institutional differences that shape work–family outcomes.

4.2 Multivariate models

Figures 1 and 2 show, respectively, the estimates of the main effects of interest (Appendix Tables A-3 and A-4 present the complete models in tabular form, with the Figures referring to the (full) model in column 12 of the Tables).

4.2.1 The evolution of gender difference during the pandemic

The coefficients associated with the *wave* variable captures the evolution of the two dependent variables over the time window of the survey. As can be seen from Figure 1, in comparison to the first survey wave, WtoFB decreased in the second wave (summer 2020, coefficient = -0.185), in wave three (February–March 2021, coefficient = -0.187), in wave four (October/November 2021, coefficient = -0.275), and also in wave five (spring 2022, coefficient = -0.279). The reduction is higher in wave five and significant in all waves. The gender interactions demonstrate a significant decrease between waves 1 and 3, suggesting that women recovered during the summer of 2020, which was a period of partial recovery in the social and economic situation. Moreover, parents are often on holidays during the summer and so their work responsibilities decrease, while in other months they needed to manage both work and children at home. This also explains why women struggled more than men to find a balance in wave three. This gender difference is not present in wave four, however.

Figure 1: Estimates of the main effects, and interactions with gender, of WtoFB and FtoWB, with 95% confidence intervals

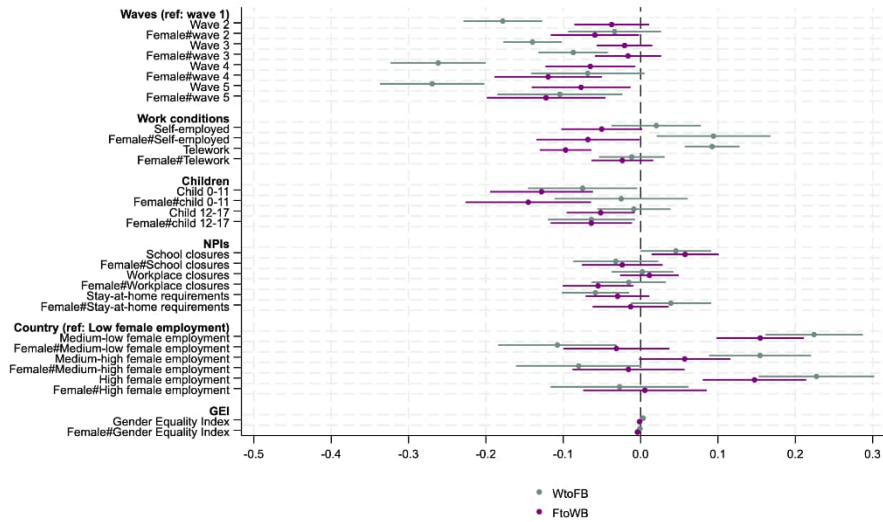
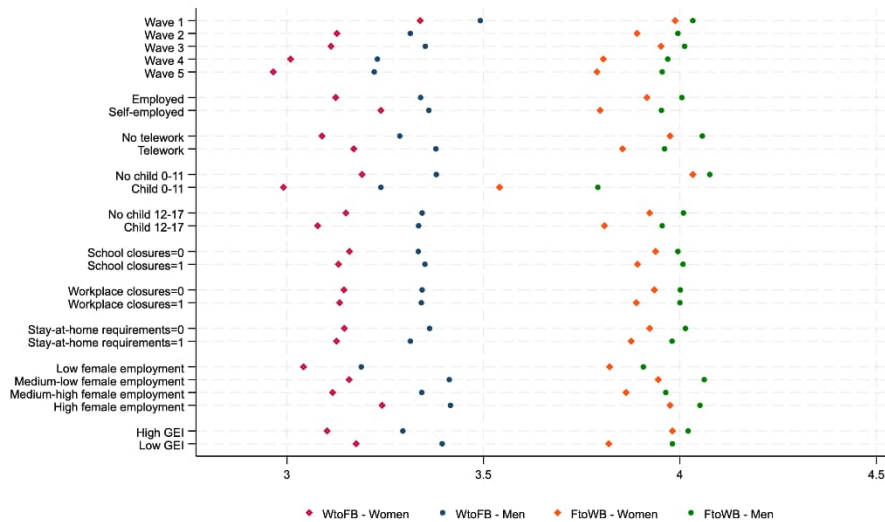


Figure 2: Model-predicted mean values of main covariates by gender



Note: Predicted margins, i.e., model-predicted mean values of the work-to-family and family-to-work balance scores for representative categories of the explanatory variables, holding other covariates at their sample means. These plots illustrate the substantive size of effects reported in Figure 1.

By contrast, family to work balance (FtoWB) did not significantly change over this period. In particular, once controls for teleworking are included, the period effect becomes insignificant. As controls are included in the model, we notice that women drive the negative effects; the closure of summer camps and daycare centres in the summer of 2020 and the restrictions associated with the fourth wave of the virus in October and November 2021 may have increased family responsibilities for women.

4.2.2 Work conditions

For WtoFB, the effect of being self-employed is positive. The gender interaction shows that this is driven by self-employed women, who have a higher WtoFB, probably because self-employment is a way for women to have greater work autonomy. Conversely, being self-employed has a negative effect on FtoWB and self-employed women appear to have greater difficulty maintaining this balance. Self-employed individuals are more likely to telework than employees, and this fact could explain how teleworking has a positive and significant effect on WtoFB. Telework has the opposite effect on FtoWB, probably

because working from home makes it more difficult to separate family tasks and work obligations. These results are consistent with Blasko (2020), who studies the incidence of family interference with work and the incidence of work interference with family using data from the first wave of the LWC survey.

4.2.3 Children

We expect family arrangements to have a strong impact on WtoFB and FtoWB. This hypothesis is confirmed by the estimates: having a younger child (0–11 years old) negatively affects both work-to-family balance (coefficient = -0.075) and family-to-work balance (coefficient = -0.128) (column 10). Note that this second coefficient is twice the magnitude of that related to WtoFB. Being a parent of an older child (12–17 years) also has a negative effect on FtoWB, but the effect is smaller in magnitude. Mothers of both younger children (0–11 years) and teenagers (12–17 years) struggle more than fathers to combine family responsibilities and work (lower FtoWB). Interestingly, being a mother of a teenager also reduces the work-to-family balance. A possible explanation is that when children are this age, their parents are likely to be at the peak of their careers, and as a result need to dedicate more time and effort to work. On the other hand, teenagers might be more demanding than young children, particularly in terms of psychological support during lockdowns. Therefore, it is possible that parents with heavy workloads might feel like they are not paying enough attention to their children.

The finding that individuals with a partner report lower levels of family-to-work balance is consistent with earlier evidence that partnered individuals, especially in dual-earner households, face higher demands to coordinate work and home roles (Poelmans 2003; Matysiak, Mencarini, and Vignoli 2016). Having a partner may increase the need for negotiation and shared time management, which can amplify feelings that family life is interfering with work even when domestic responsibilities are divided. This effect likely reflects the added complexity of managing two work schedules rather than an absence of support within partnerships.

4.2.4 Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs)

The analysis also aims to investigate the impact on work and family balance of three restrictive measures (NPIs) adopted to reduce the spread of coronavirus: school closures, workplace closures, and stay-at-home requirements. We expect NPIs to have had a major effect on the lives of Europeans, especially working women with young children. For this reason, triple interactions are included in the model, shown in column 10 of Tables A-3

and A-4. The triple interaction terms involve three dummy variables: whether the respondent is a woman (gender), whether the respondent has young children (children 0–11 years), and whether NPIs (school closure, workplace closure, and stay-at-home requirements) are in place. In other words, we not only explore if there is a gender differential with respect to the introduction of NPIs but also whether having young children contributes to the difference. It is expected that the closure of schools will have had a negative effect on both measures, but especially on FtoWB, because it increases parental responsibilities. Furthermore, women, being traditionally in charge of most childcare, would be the most disadvantaged by this measure. It is difficult to predict the direction of association regarding the closure of workplaces, because it is closely linked to the possibility of working from home. Finally, we expect the third measure considered (stay-at-home) to have a negative effect on FtoWB because it requires parents of young children in particular to reconcile family and work in the same place and at the same time.

The last five columns of Tables A-3 and A-4 present the coefficients related to the three policy measures; column 8 in particular shows their direct effects. With regard to WtoFB, the only significant direct effect is associated with stay-at-home requirements and it is negative. This effect remains negative when interactions are included. In the following columns, as expected, we find that parents of young children (0–11 years old) suffer more than others from school closures. FtoWB is negatively affected by all three restrictive measures. As we expected, school closures are particularly harmful for parents of young children and in particular for mothers. Women also suffer the most from workplace closures.

4.2.5 Country differences in female employment and gender equality

As mentioned above, it is likely that the countries that guarantee greater flexibility and security in the job market are also those in which the percentage of working women is higher. Precisely by virtue of the greater protections offered to workers, in these countries we expect to find higher levels of FtoWB and WtoFB. Results (in column 10 of Table A-3) show that WtoFB is higher in medium-low (coefficient = 0.242), medium-high (coefficient = 0.164), and high (coefficient = 0.250) female-employment country groups than in the low-female-employment country group. It is worth noting that, contrary to what we expected, the coefficient of the medium-high country group is less than the coefficient of the medium-low group. Women in the medium-low and medium-high employment country group have a lower WtoFB than their male counterparts. This is consistent with the fact that women do a higher percentage of unpaid work than men and therefore their job responsibilities can be more invasive because they prevent them from devoting the necessary time to family duties.

Regarding the family-to-work balance (FtoWB), the results are surprising. Respondents from medium-low-employment and high-employment countries show a higher ability to balance family and work than workers who live in countries with lower rates of female employment. Conversely, the coefficient associated with the medium-high female employment group is not significant, meaning that, in terms of FtoWB, countries belonging to this group (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Portugal) are no different to countries in the low-female-employment group (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Romania). The findings do not suggest differences between men and women.

Countries with higher female participation in the labour market present higher levels of WtoFB, but women from countries belonging to the medium-low and medium-high female employment group struggle the most in this regard. Past studies have suggested a higher satisfaction with work–family balance in Northern European countries, which comprise our high-female-employment group (Anttila et al. 2015), and our results confirm the importance of social policies and institutional setting in the labour market. They are consistent with the hypothesis that low-female-employment countries are those with fewer incentives and less flexibility (Cipollone, Patacchini, and Vallanti 2013), which are also the causes of lower levels of WtoFB.

The results for the Gender Equality Index (GEI) are in the expected direction. Higher levels of structural gender equality are associated with improved work–family balance in both directions. Specifically, countries that score higher on the GEI show higher average values of work-to-family balance and family-to-work balance, indicating that gender-equal contexts provide more supportive institutional environments for reconciling work and care. The effects appear modest in Figure 1 due to the GEI's measurement scale (ranging from 1 to 100), yet the coefficients are statistically significant and substantively meaningful. These findings confirm that progress in gender equality, reflected in greater parity in employment, time use, and decision-making, translates into tangible improvements in families' capacity to manage work and family responsibilities.

5. Conclusions

Our analysis shows that across Europe, work responsibilities during the pandemic tended to interfere with family life more often than family responsibilities interfered with work. This general pattern appears consistently across survey waves and country groups. However, these two dimensions of work–family balance are conceptually distinct and measured on separate scales, so direct comparison of their absolute levels should be approached with caution. What the results do indicate is that during the pandemic, difficulties in managing paid work were more pervasive than difficulties stemming from

family demands. For mothers in particular, the presence of young children compounded these challenges, making it harder to maintain equilibrium between work and family roles.

The cross-country patterns observed in our analysis suggest that structural gender equality and labour market inclusion shaped how families experienced the pandemic. Respondents in countries with higher female labour force participation and stronger gender equality scores reported somewhat higher levels of both work-to-family and family-to-work balance. Although these indicators cannot capture the full complexity of national policy frameworks, they provide a useful approximation of institutional environments that support women's labour market integration and shared family responsibilities. This interpretation is consistent with previous research showing that work-family balance is more attainable in contexts that combine supportive labour market conditions with greater gender equality (Crompton and Lyonette 2006; Anttila et al. 2015; Gallie and Russell 2009; Rubery and Tavora 2020).

These findings also echo earlier evidence that countries with long-standing traditions of gender equality were better positioned to cushion the social effects of the pandemic (Bariola and Collins 2021). At the same time, they highlight that improving women's access to flexible and secure employment together with adequate childcare provision remains crucial for achieving a more sustainable balance between work and family demands (Fanelli and Profeta 2021; Del Boca et al. 2021). In line with Hudde and Nitsche (2020), the results further suggest that societies that are more supportive of maternal employment were also quicker to reopen schools and childcare facilities. Overall, while our evidence does not permit causal claims about policy design, it reinforces the broader conclusion that institutional settings promoting gender equality and labour market flexibility are key to strengthening families' resilience when work and care responsibilities collide.

Though the study brings new insights to the literature on work-life balance, it also comes with limitations. First, given the need to react quickly to the onset of the COVID pandemic in terms of the survey implementation, the respondents were recruited online. This means that the samples were not fully representative of the populations. For instance, we do see an over-representation of respondents with high education and we have a larger share of women in the sample compared to population parameters. Though we include sample weights in the regression analysis, we cannot be fully sure that all biases are cancelled out. Second, NPIs are observed only at the national level, precluding analysis of the within-country variation of those policies. It is reasonable that within some countries there was significant variation in the actual implementation of these policies. Third, the survey does not measure pre-pandemic levels of family-to-work and work-to-family balance, preventing us from making comparisons with the pandemic levels. Still, the evidence presented here suggests that an external shock like the pandemic impacts

work-to-family and family-to-work conflict differently, and that these patterns are strongly gendered. Future research and data collection efforts need to improve on the measurements of these aspects in order to establish policy advice on how to best mitigate the observed gender differences. In line with the Special Collection's focus, future research also needs to connect the family strain we document during school and childcare closures to children's wellbeing. We see particular value in studies that (1) quantify closure 'dosage' (timing, duration, intensity, mode of instruction, and support for remote learning) and relate it to educational and socio-emotional outcomes; (2) examine household mechanisms, such as parental stress, time reallocation to supervision and learning support, feasibility and predictability of telework, and the digital divide; and (3) analyse heterogeneity by children's age, special educational needs, socioeconomic disadvantage and migrant background, and family structure (single-parent vs. dual-earner households). Cross-national work should ideally incorporate granular policy indicators (e.g., re-opening protocols, emergency childcare, device/connectivity support, tutoring and catch-up programmes, and income-replacement or leave schemes for parents). This agenda directly extends our findings on family-to-work strain during closures to children's outcomes, and provides a roadmap for cumulative, policy-relevant evidence.

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Appendix

Table A-1: Descriptive statistics, Work-to-Family (WtoFB) balance, by key variables

Variable		Full sample				Men				Women			
		Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%
Wave													
	Wave 1	3.40	0.010	10,199	26.0	3.50	0.017	3,003	24.8	3.36	0.012	7,196	26.5
	Wave 2	3.20	0.010	8,069	20.6	3.32	0.019	2,341	19.3	3.15	0.012	5,728	21.1
	Wave 3	3.14	0.010	9,089	23.2	3.29	0.017	2,904	23.9	3.07	0.011	6,185	22.8
	Wave 4	3.09	0.011	7,139	18.2	3.21	0.019	2,360	19.5	3.03	0.013	4,779	17.6
	Wave 5	3.06	0.013	4,737	12.1	3.20	0.023	1,515	12.5	3.00	0.015	3,222	11.9
Age group													
	18–29	3.34	0.020	2,552	6.5	3.35	0.032	985	8.1	3.32	0.024	1,567	5.8
	30–34	3.17	0.016	3,393	8.6	3.25	0.026	1,260	10.4	3.13	0.020	2,133	7.9
	35–44	3.03	0.009	10,418	26.6	3.18	0.017	2,870	23.7	2.97	0.011	7,548	27.8
	45–54	3.19	0.008	13,488	34.4	3.31	0.015	3,832	31.6	3.15	0.009	9,656	35.6
	55–65	3.38	0.009	9,382	23.9	3.50	0.016	3,176	26.2	3.32	0.012	6,206	22.9
Tertiary													
	No	3.23	0.010	9,601	24.5	3.29	0.017	3,401	28.0	3.20	0.012	6,200	22.9
	Yes	3.19	0.005	26,632	75.5	3.33	0.010	8,722	72.0	3.12	0.006	20,910	77.1
Employment status													
	Employed	3.19	0.005	34,653	88.3	3.32	0.009	10,239	84.5	3.14	0.006	24,414	90.1
	Self-employed	3.28	0.014	4,580	11.7	3.33	0.022	1,884	15.5	3.25	0.019	2,696	9.9
Telework*													
	No	3.08	0.007	15,591	39.7	3.20	0.013	5,255	43.3	3.02	0.009	10,336	38.1
	Yes	3.28	0.006	23,642	60.3	3.42	0.011	6,868	56.7	3.23	0.007	16,774	61.9
Partner													
	No	3.25	0.010	8,670	22.1	3.41	0.022	1,977	16.3	3.20	0.012	6,693	24.7
	Yes	3.19	0.005	30,563	77.9	3.31	0.009	10,146	83.7	3.13	0.006	20,417	75.3
Child 0–11													
	No	3.27	0.005	29,402	74.9	3.39	0.010	8,871	73.2	3.22	0.006	20,531	75.7
	Yes	2.99	0.009	9,831	25.1	3.15	0.016	3,252	26.8	2.91	0.011	6,579	24.3
Child 12–17													
	No	3.22	0.005	32,201	82.1	3.33	0.009	10,060	83.0	3.17	0.006	22,141	81.7
	Yes	3.14	0.011	7,032	17.9	3.31	0.020	2,063	17.0	3.07	0.012	4,969	18.3
Country group													
	Low female emp.	3.08	0.009	9,783	24.9	3.16	0.016	3,530	29.1	3.04	0.012	6,253	23.1
	Medium-low female emp.	3.25	0.008	12,673	32.3	3.42	0.015	3,624	29.9	3.18	0.009	9,049	33.4
	Medium-high female emp.	3.18	0.010	8,594	21.9	3.33	0.017	2,837	23.4	3.11	0.012	5,757	21.2
	High female emp.	3.29	0.010	8,183	20.9	3.41	0.020	2,132	17.6	3.25	0.012	6,051	22.3
School closures													
	No	3.12	0.008	14,130	36.0	3.24	0.014	4,502	37.1	3.06	0.006	9,628	35.5
	Yes	3.25	0.006	25,103	64.0	3.37	0.011	7,621	62.9	3.20	0.007	17,482	64.5

Table A-1: (Continued)

Variable		Full sample				Men				Women			
		Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%
Workplace closures	No	3.16	0.008	11,634	29.6	3.30	0.015	3,532	29.1	3.11	0.010	8,102	29.9
	Yes	3.22	0.006	27,599	70.4	3.33	0.010	8,591	70.9	3.17	0.007	19,008	70.1
Stay-at-home requirement	No	3.18	0.006	22,521	57.4	3.32	0.011	6,662	55.0	3.12	0.007	15,857	58.5
	Yes	3.23	0.007	16,712	42.6	3.32	0.013	5,459	45.0	3.18	0.009	11,253	41.5
Gender Equality Index		3.09	0.932	39,233	100.0	3.24	0.915	12,123	30.9	3.02	0.933	27,110	69.1
Total		3.20	0.005	39,233	100.0	3.32	0.008	12,123	30.9	3.15	0.006	27,110	69.1

Note: Work-to-family (WtoFB) measures how much a person can balance work responsibilities and family responsibilities. Values go from 1 [very poor balance] to 5 [very good balance] and they represent the mean value of the scores given to two WF statements: 'How often in the last month, have you ... (1) Felt too tired after work to do some of the household jobs which need to be done, (2) Found that your job prevented you from giving the time you wanted to your family.'

Table A-2: Descriptive statistics, Family-to-Work (FtoWB) balance, by key variables

Variable	Full sample				Men				Women			
	Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%
Wave												
Wave 1	3.93	0.009	10,257	26.1	3.99	0.016	3,022	24.8	3.91	0.012	7,235	26.6
Wave 2	3.97	0.010	8,106	20.6	4.04	0.018	2,349	19.3	3.94	0.012	5,757	21.2
Wave 3	3.89	0.009	9,093	23.1	3.96	0.016	2,916	24.0	3.87	0.012	6,177	22.7
Wave 4	3.95	0.010	7,126	18.1	4.01	0.017	2,358	19.4	3.92	0.012	4,768	17.5
Wave 5	3.07	0.013	4,715	12.1	3.21	0.024	1,507	12.5	3.00	0.016	3,208	11.9
Age group												
18–29	4.27	0.016	2,561	6.5	4.29	0.025	990	8.1	4.26	0.021	1,571	5.8
30–34	3.93	0.017	3,411	8.7	4.02	0.025	1,273	10.5	3.89	0.022	2,138	7.9
35–44	3.64	0.010	10,456	26.6	3.76	0.017	2,883	23.7	3.60	0.011	7,573	27.9
45–54	3.95	0.007	13,496	34.3	3.98	0.013	3,836	31.6	3.94	0.009	9,660	35.6
> = 55	3.38	0.009	9,353	23.9	3.50	0.016	3,164	26.1	3.33	0.011	6,189	22.9
Tertiary												
No	4.11	0.009	9,620	24.5	4.14	0.014	3,416	28.1	4.09	0.011	6,204	22.8
Yes	3.88	0.006	29,704	75.5	3.94	0.009	8,744	71.9	3.85	0.006	20,960	77.2
Employment status												
Employed	3.95	0.005	34,704	88.2	4.01	0.008	10,251	84.3	3.92	0.006	24,453	90.0
Self-employed	3.84	0.014	4,620	11.8	3.92	0.020	1,909	15.7	3.78	0.019	2,711	10.0
Telework*												
No	4.06	0.006	15,606	39.7	4.09	0.011	5,265	43.3	4.05	0.008	10,341	38.1
Yes	3.85	0.006	23,718	60.3	3.92	0.011	6,896	56.7	3.82	0.007	16,823	61.9
Partner												
No	4.09	0.009	8,711	22.1	4.20	0.019	1,975	16.2	4.06	0.011	6,736	24.8
Yes	3.89	0.005	30,613	77.9	3.96	0.008	10,185	83.8	3.85	0.006	20,428	75.2
Child 0–11												
No	4.10	0.005	29,470	74.9	4.13	0.008	8,899	73.2	4.09	0.006	20,571	75.7
Yes	3.43	0.010	9,854	25.1	3.63	0.017	3,261	26.8	3.32	0.012	6,593	24.3
Child 12–17												
No	3.97	0.005	32,284	82.1	4.02	0.008	10,090	83.0	3.94	0.006	22,194	81.7
Yes	3.78	0.010	7,040	17.9	3.89	0.019	2,070	17.0	3.73	0.013	4,970	18.3
Country group												
Low female emp.	3.88	0.009	9,828	25.0	3.93	0.014	3,553	29.2	3.85	0.011	6,275	23.1
Medium-low female emp.	3.97	0.008	12,695	32.3	4.05	0.014	3,627	29.8	3.94	0.010	9,068	33.4
Medium-high female emp.	3.90	0.010	8,611	21.9	3.98	0.016	2,846	23.4	3.86	0.012	5,765	21.2
High female emp.	3.98	0.010	8,190	20.8	4.03	0.019	2,134	17.6	3.96	0.012	6,056	22.3

Table A-2: (Continued)

Variable	Full sample				Men				Women			
	Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%	Mean	Se	N	%
School closures												
No	3.95	0.007	14,139	36.0	4.00	0.012	4,502	37.0	3.93	0.009	9,637	35.5
Yes	3.92	0.006	25,185	64.0	3.99	0.010	7,658	63.0	3.89	0.007	17,527	64.5
Workplace closures												
No	4.00	0.008	11,650	29.6	4.05	0.014	3,534	29.1	3.98	0.010	8,116	29.9
Yes	3.90	0.005	27,674	70.4	3.97	0.009	8,626	70.9	3.87	0.007	19,048	70.1
Stay-at-home requirements												
No	3.97	0.006	22,558	57.4	4.03	0.010	6,669	54.8	3.94	0.007	15,889	58.5
Yes	3.88	0.007	16,766	42.6	3.95	0.012	5,491	45.2	3.85	0.009	11,275	41.5
Gender Equality Index	3.82	0.919	39,324	100.0	3.98	0.853	12,160	30.9	4.14	0.946	27,164	69.1
Total	3.93	0.005	39,324	100.0	4.00	0.008	12,160	30.9	3.91	0.006	27,164	69.1

Note: family-to-work balance (FtoWB) is a variable that measures how much a person can balance family responsibilities and work responsibilities. Values go from 1 [very poor balance] to 5 [very good balance] and they represent the mean value of the scores given to two FW statements: 'How often in the last month, have you ... (3) Found it difficult to concentrate on your job because of your family responsibilities, (4) Found that your family responsibilities prevented you from giving the time you should to your job.'

Table A-3: Work-to-family balance (WtoFB) results

VARIABLE	(1) WF	(2) WF	(3) WF	(4) WF	(5) WF	(6) WF	(7) WF	(8) WF	(9) WF	(10) WF	(11) WF	(12) WF
Female = 1	-0.175 (0.000)	-0.148 (0.000)	-0.025 (0.623)	0.030 (0.599)	0.011 (0.857)	0.020 (0.733)	0.069 (0.279)	0.065 (0.312)	0.089 (0.229)	0.078 (0.297)	0.075 (0.316)	0.128 (0.335)
Wave (ref: wave 1)												
Wave 2		-0.185 (0.000)	-0.186 (0.000)	-0.135 (0.000)	-0.135 (0.000)	-0.136 (0.000)	-0.141 (0.000)	-0.172 (0.000)	-0.177 (0.000)	-0.178 (0.000)	-0.178 (0.000)	-0.178 (0.000)
Wave 3		-0.187 (0.000)	-0.192 (0.000)	-0.142 (0.000)	-0.139 (0.000)	-0.135 (0.000)	-0.140 (0.000)	-0.143 (0.000)	-0.141 (0.000)	-0.140 (0.000)	-0.140 (0.000)	-0.140 (0.000)
Wave 4		-0.275 (0.000)	-0.287 (0.000)	-0.219 (0.000)	-0.215 (0.000)	-0.238 (0.000)	-0.244 (0.000)	-0.282 (0.000)	-0.268 (0.000)	-0.264 (0.000)	-0.262 (0.000)	-0.262 (0.000)
Wave 5		-0.279 (0.000)	-0.295 (0.000)	-0.228 (0.000)	-0.225 (0.000)	-0.248 (0.000)	-0.255 (0.000)	-0.295 (0.000)	-0.277 (0.000)	-0.271 (0.000)	-0.270 (0.000)	-0.269 (0.000)
Female# wave 2		-0.033 (0.112)	-0.033 (0.115)	-0.045 (0.050)	-0.045 (0.053)	-0.045 (0.051)	-0.042 (0.066)	-0.041 (0.077)	-0.033 (0.280)	-0.033 (0.288)	-0.034 (0.272)	-0.034 (0.274)
Female# wave 3		-0.074 (0.000)	-0.070 (0.000)	-0.081 (0.000)	-0.083 (0.000)	-0.084 (0.000)	-0.081 (0.000)	-0.081 (0.000)	-0.085 (0.000)	-0.087 (0.000)	-0.087 (0.000)	-0.087 (0.000)
Female# wave 4		-0.025 (0.251)	-0.018 (0.399)	-0.032 (0.221)	-0.034 (0.197)	-0.056 (0.037)	-0.053 (0.050)	-0.053 (0.048)	-0.073 (0.050)	-0.066 (0.078)	-0.068 (0.069)	-0.068 (0.068)
Female# wave 5		-0.057 (0.025)	-0.051 (0.047)	-0.062 (0.033)	-0.063 (0.030)	-0.084 (0.005)	-0.081 (0.006)	-0.082 (0.006)	-0.107 (0.010)	-0.102 (0.014)	-0.104 (0.012)	-0.104 (0.011)
Age group (ref: 18–29)												
30–34			-0.121 (0.011)	-0.122 (0.009)	-0.101 (0.034)	-0.075 (0.117)	-0.065 (0.172)	-0.065 (0.168)	-0.066 (0.166)	-0.062 (0.190)	-0.063 (0.183)	-0.063 (0.181)
35–44			-0.142 (0.001)	-0.144 (0.001)	-0.112 (0.014)	-0.065 (0.160)	-0.059 (0.196)	-0.060 (0.191)	-0.060 (0.191)	-0.058 (0.208)	-0.061 (0.180)	-0.062 (0.174)
45–54			-0.023 (0.602)	-0.018 (0.678)	0.016 (0.727)	0.028 (0.538)	0.044 (0.325)	0.044 (0.325)	0.045 (0.317)	0.044 (0.321)	0.039 (0.383)	0.038 (0.398)
55–65			0.160 (0.000)	0.163 (0.000)	0.197 (0.000)	0.187 (0.000)	0.200 (0.000)	0.200 (0.000)	0.201 (0.000)	0.203 (0.000)	0.196 (0.000)	0.194 (0.000)
Female#30–34			-0.064 (0.280)	-0.065 (0.269)	-0.080 (0.176)	-0.058 (0.327)	-0.062 (0.293)	-0.062 (0.293)	-0.062 (0.293)	-0.060 (0.307)	-0.059 (0.317)	-0.059 (0.318)
Female#35–44			-0.151 (0.006)	-0.155 (0.005)	-0.179 (0.002)	-0.136 (0.017)	-0.131 (0.021)	-0.131 (0.021)	-0.131 (0.021)	-0.131 (0.021)	-0.126 (0.026)	-0.125 (0.027)
Female#45–54			-0.112 (0.040)	-0.122 (0.025)	-0.150 (0.007)	-0.137 (0.014)	-0.140 (0.012)	-0.141 (0.011)	-0.142 (0.010)	-0.140 (0.011)	-0.134 (0.015)	-0.133 (0.016)
Female#55–65			-0.135 (0.017)	-0.143 (0.011)	-0.174 (0.002)	-0.166 (0.004)	-0.168 (0.003)	-0.170 (0.003)	-0.170 (0.003)	-0.169 (0.003)	-0.163 (0.004)	-0.161 (0.005)
Tertiary education				0.026 (0.304)	0.027 (0.274)	0.028 (0.269)	0.026 (0.285)	0.027 (0.276)	0.028 (0.265)	0.027 (0.280)	0.023 (0.343)	0.023 (0.360)
Female#tertiary education				-0.058 (0.061)	-0.058 (0.059)	-0.054 (0.076)	-0.058 (0.055)	-0.057 (0.062)	-0.058 (0.058)	-0.057 (0.062)	-0.056 (0.068)	-0.055 (0.073)
Self-employed				-0.011 (0.700)	-0.011 (0.711)	-0.009 (0.753)	0.012 (0.691)	0.012 (0.679)	0.013 (0.668)	0.013 (0.649)	0.019 (0.517)	0.020 (0.491)
Female#1_self				0.102 (0.007)	0.102 (0.007)	0.101 (0.007)	0.098 (0.009)	0.097 (0.009)	0.097 (0.010)	0.097 (0.009)	0.096 (0.010)	0.094 (0.012)

Table A-3: (Continued)

VARIABLE	(1) WF	(2) WF	(3) WF	(4) WF	(5) WF	(6) WF	(7) WF	(8) WF	(9) WF	(10) WF	(11) WF	(12) WF
Telework (work mainly from home)				0.106	0.107	0.106	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.095	0.093	0.093
				(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Female#telework				-0.021	-0.021	-0.020	-0.014	-0.013	-0.012	-0.013	-0.012	-0.011
				(0.341)	(0.335)	(0.367)	(0.524)	(0.551)	(0.581)	(0.558)	(0.574)	(0.596)
Partner present				-0.092	-0.062	-0.063	-0.064	-0.064	-0.064	-0.061	-0.059	-0.059
				(0.001)	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.041)
Female#partner present				0.050	0.047	0.051	0.051	0.052	0.050	0.050	0.048	0.048
				(0.132)	(0.157)	(0.127)	(0.122)	(0.122)	(0.131)	(0.149)	(0.152)	(0.152)
Child 0–11 dummy				-0.141	-0.146	-0.147	-0.146	-0.146	-0.075	-0.075	-0.075	-0.075
				(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Female#child 0–11 dummy				-0.070	-0.066	-0.067	-0.067	-0.067	-0.024	-0.025	-0.025	-0.025
				(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.579)	(0.567)	(0.569)	(0.569)
Child 12–17 dummy				-0.004	-0.004	-0.005	-0.005	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009
				(0.872)	(0.873)	(0.847)	(0.823)	(0.823)	(0.722)	(0.718)	(0.717)	(0.717)
Female# child 12–17 dummy				-0.064	-0.064	-0.063	-0.063	-0.063	-0.064	-0.064	-0.064	-0.064
				(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Country group (ref: low female employment)												
Medium-low female employment							0.253	0.245	0.243	0.242	0.228	0.224
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Medium-high female employment							0.178	0.169	0.163	0.164	0.156	0.154
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
High female employment							0.265	0.252	0.250	0.250	0.232	0.227
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Female#medium-low female employment							-0.119	-0.116	-0.113	-0.111	-0.113	-0.108
							(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.006)
Female#medium-high female employment							-0.098	-0.094	-0.086	-0.084	-0.082	-0.080
							(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.046)	(0.054)
Female#high female employment							-0.042	-0.040	-0.036	-0.035	-0.033	-0.027
							(0.332)	(0.353)	(0.407)	(0.423)	(0.450)	(0.552)
School closures = 1							-0.018	0.012	0.043	0.045	0.046	0.046
							(0.136)	(0.556)	(0.064)	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Female#school closures							-0.044	-0.044	-0.031	-0.032	-0.032	-0.032
							(0.086)	(0.269)	(0.262)	(0.254)	(0.254)	(0.254)
Child 0–11#school closures							-0.113	-0.113	-0.112	-0.111	-0.111	-0.111
							(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Female#child 0–11#school closures							-0.055	-0.055	-0.056	-0.056	-0.056	-0.056
							(0.227)	(0.222)	(0.222)	(0.219)	(0.219)	(0.219)

Table A-3: (Continued)

VARIABLE	(1) WF	(2) WF	(3) WF	(4) WF	(5) WF	(6) WF	(7) WF	(8) WF	(9) WF	(10) WF	(11) WF	(12) WF
Workplace closures = 1								-0.007 (0.503)	-0.000 (0.982)	0.006 (0.787)	0.003 (0.885)	0.002 (0.908)
Female#workplace closures									-0.008 (0.717)	-0.016 (0.506)	-0.016 (0.509)	-0.015 (0.532)
Child 0– 11#workplace closures										-0.015 (0.696)	-0.015 (0.704)	-0.015 (0.705)
Female#child 0– 11#workplace closures										0.026 (0.593)	0.025 (0.595)	0.025 (0.597)
Stay-at-home requirements = 1								-0.031 (0.005)	-0.051 (0.011)	-0.061 (0.006)	-0.059 (0.008)	-0.058 (0.009)
Female#stay-at- home requirements									0.029 (0.224)	0.041 (0.118)	0.040 (0.133)	0.039 (0.140)
Child 0–11#stay-at- home requirements										0.038 (0.262)	0.036 (0.280)	0.036 (0.285)
Female#child 0– 11#stay-at-home requirements										-0.037 (0.365)	-0.036 (0.371)	-0.036 (0.376)
Gender Equality Index											0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.030)
Female#GenderEqu alityIndex												-0.001 (0.628)
Constant	3.325 (0.000)	3.488 (0.000)	3.506 (0.000)	3.385 (0.000)	3.428 (0.000)	3.433 (0.000)	3.268 (0.000)	3.324 (0.000)	3.307 (0.000)	3.284 (0.000)	3.125 (0.000)	3.088 (0.000)
Observations	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233	39,233
Number of id_num	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015	13,015

Note: Estimation results from Equation 1 with WtoFB as dependent variable. A positive (negative) effect can be interpreted as an increase (reduction) of the WtoFB. P-values in parentheses.

Table A-4: Family-to-work balance (FtoWB) results

VARIABLE	(1) FW	(2) FW	(3) FW	(4) FW	(5) FW	(6) FW	(7) FW	(8) FW	(9) FW	(10) FW	(11) FW	(12) FW
Female = 1	-0.090 (0.000)	-0.095 (0.000)	-0.073 (0.125)	0.004 (0.944)	-0.005 (0.931)	0.021 (0.704)	0.034 (0.554)	0.029 (0.621)	0.142 (0.036)	0.124 (0.069)	0.129 (0.060)	0.367 (0.002)
Wave (ref: wave 1)												
Wave 2		0.041 (0.014)	0.041 (0.013)	0.001 (0.956)	-0.001 (0.963)	-0.005 (0.783)	-0.009 (0.630)	-0.067 (0.001)	-0.035 (0.154)	-0.037 (0.129)	-0.037 (0.130)	-0.037 (0.129)
Wave 3		0.004 (0.788)	0.007 (0.666)	-0.031 (0.086)	-0.025 (0.174)	-0.021 (0.251)	-0.024 (0.183)	-0.028 (0.118)	-0.025 (0.181)	-0.021 (0.261)	-0.021 (0.259)	-0.021 (0.260)
Wave 4		0.052 (0.003)	0.051 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.925)	0.006 (0.790)	-0.053 (0.013)	-0.057 (0.007)	-0.125 (0.000)	-0.076 (0.011)	-0.064 (0.031)	-0.067 (0.024)	-0.065 (0.029)
Wave 5		0.036 (0.072)	0.035 (0.087)	-0.016 (0.500)	-0.010 (0.671)	-0.068 (0.004)	-0.073 (0.002)	-0.153 (0.000)	-0.091 (0.005)	-0.076 (0.019)	-0.078 (0.016)	-0.077 (0.018)
Female# wave 2		-0.010 (0.612)	-0.011 (0.574)	-0.022 (0.319)	-0.020 (0.354)	-0.021 (0.333)	-0.020 (0.368)	-0.017 (0.448)	-0.062 (0.034)	-0.062 (0.034)	-0.060 (0.040)	-0.059 (0.043)
Female# wave 3		0.010 (0.615)	0.006 (0.755)	-0.006 (0.791)	-0.007 (0.747)	-0.008 (0.704)	-0.007 (0.744)	-0.006 (0.766)	-0.012 (0.588)	-0.016 (0.454)	-0.016 (0.459)	-0.016 (0.458)
Female# wave 4		0.014 (0.501)	0.008 (0.693)	-0.011 (0.670)	-0.012 (0.636)	-0.060 (0.018)	-0.059 (0.022)	-0.060 (0.019)	-0.131 (0.000)	-0.121 (0.001)	-0.118 (0.001)	-0.120 (0.001)
Female# wave 5		0.032 (0.183)	0.022 (0.367)	0.003 (0.912)	0.004 (0.893)	-0.042 (0.135)	-0.041 (0.145)	-0.044 (0.120)	-0.133 (0.001)	-0.125 (0.001)	-0.122 (0.002)	-0.122 (0.002)
Age group (ref: 18–29)												
30–34			-0.273 (0.000)	-0.258 (0.000)	-0.211 (0.000)	-0.157 (0.000)	-0.151 (0.000)	-0.151 (0.000)	-0.151 (0.000)	-0.144 (0.001)	-0.143 (0.001)	-0.144 (0.001)
35–44			-0.458 (0.000)	-0.448 (0.000)	-0.379 (0.000)	-0.278 (0.000)	-0.275 (0.000)	-0.274 (0.000)	-0.275 (0.000)	-0.271 (0.000)	-0.266 (0.000)	-0.270 (0.000)
45–54			-0.278 (0.000)	-0.279 (0.000)	-0.206 (0.000)	-0.174 (0.000)	-0.165 (0.000)	-0.164 (0.000)	-0.164 (0.000)	-0.164 (0.000)	-0.156 (0.000)	-0.162 (0.000)
55–65			-0.148 (0.001)	-0.142 (0.001)	-0.067 (0.121)	-0.086 (0.038)	-0.080 (0.053)	-0.079 (0.057)	-0.080 (0.054)	-0.075 (0.068)	-0.064 (0.119)	-0.072 (0.083)
Female#30–34			-0.077 (0.171)	-0.086 (0.123)	-0.109 (0.050)	-0.044 (0.414)	-0.046 (0.398)	-0.048 (0.379)	-0.048 (0.376)	-0.044 (0.415)	-0.046 (0.393)	-0.045 (0.400)
Female#35–44			-0.082 (0.122)	-0.097 (0.063)	-0.138 (0.009)	-0.031 (0.542)	-0.028 (0.584)	-0.030 (0.559)	-0.030 (0.558)	-0.029 (0.578)	-0.035 (0.490)	-0.032 (0.530)
Female#45–54			0.039 (0.449)	0.023 (0.656)	-0.030 (0.563)	-0.019 (0.703)	-0.021 (0.671)	-0.024 (0.626)	-0.025 (0.612)	-0.022 (0.660)	-0.031 (0.538)	-0.026 (0.607)
Female#55–65			0.064 (0.236)	0.040 (0.455)	-0.022 (0.679)	-0.015 (0.778)	-0.015 (0.765)	-0.020 (0.700)	-0.020 (0.700)	-0.018 (0.720)	-0.028 (0.585)	-0.020 (0.695)
Tertiary education				-0.146 (0.000)	-0.143 (0.000)	-0.143 (0.000)	-0.145 (0.000)	-0.144 (0.000)	-0.144 (0.000)	-0.146 (0.000)	-0.141 (0.000)	-0.144 (0.000)
Female#tertiary education				-0.018 (0.530)	-0.018 (0.545)	-0.007 (0.791)	-0.010 (0.730)	-0.007 (0.788)	-0.006 (0.816)	-0.005 (0.862)	-0.007 (0.805)	-0.002 (0.933)
Self-employed				-0.063 (0.024)	-0.061 (0.026)	-0.060 (0.024)	-0.048 (0.072)	-0.048 (0.072)	-0.047 (0.075)	-0.047 (0.074)	-0.056 (0.034)	-0.050 (0.059)
Female#1.self				-0.062 (0.080)	-0.059 (0.094)	-0.062 (0.066)	-0.062 (0.067)	-0.063 (0.064)	-0.064 (0.060)	-0.062 (0.069)	-0.060 (0.077)	-0.068 (0.045)

Table A-4: (Continued)

VARIABLE	(1) FW	(2) FW	(3) FW	(4) FW	(5) FW	(6) FW	(7) FW	(8) FW	(9) FW	(10) FW	(11) FW	(12) FW
Telework (work mainly from home)				-0.084 (0.000)	-0.083 (0.000)	-0.090 (0.000)	-0.098 (0.000)	-0.096 (0.000)	-0.098 (0.000)	-0.098 (0.000)	-0.094 (0.000)	-0.097 (0.000)
Female#telework				-0.035 (0.093)	-0.035 (0.095)	-0.032 (0.117)	-0.029 (0.157)	-0.028 (0.177)	-0.025 (0.229)	-0.026 (0.196)	-0.027 (0.183)	-0.024 (0.247)
Partner present					-0.198 (0.000)	-0.131 (0.000)	-0.131 (0.000)	-0.132 (0.000)	-0.131 (0.000)	-0.126 (0.000)	-0.129 (0.000)	-0.127 (0.000)
Female#partner present					0.047 (0.135)	0.045 (0.140)	0.048 (0.119)	0.048 (0.113)	0.048 (0.117)	0.046 (0.132)	0.049 (0.105)	0.048 (0.115)
Child 0–11 dummy						-0.298 (0.000)	-0.301 (0.000)	-0.302 (0.000)	-0.302 (0.000)	-0.128 (0.000)	-0.128 (0.000)	-0.128 (0.000)
Female#child 0–11 dummy						-0.225 (0.000)	-0.224 (0.000)	-0.225 (0.000)	-0.226 (0.000)	-0.147 (0.000)	-0.146 (0.000)	-0.145 (0.000)
Child 12–17 dummy						-0.044 (0.053)	-0.044 (0.052)	-0.045 (0.045)	-0.045 (0.046)	-0.052 (0.022)	-0.051 (0.022)	-0.052 (0.022)
Female# child 12–17 dummy						-0.063 (0.019)	-0.063 (0.019)	-0.062 (0.021)	-0.063 (0.020)	-0.064 (0.017)	-0.064 (0.017)	-0.064 (0.018)
Country group (ref: low female employment)												
Medium-low female employment								0.155 (0.000)	0.141 (0.000)	0.148 (0.000)	0.148 (0.000)	0.155 (0.000)
Medium-high female employment								0.062 (0.035)	0.048 (0.104)	0.052 (0.084)	0.053 (0.074)	0.057 (0.031)
High female employment								0.149 (0.000)	0.128 (0.000)	0.138 (0.000)	0.138 (0.000)	0.147 (0.000)
Female#medium-low female employment								-0.056 (0.094)	-0.050 (0.137)	-0.058 (0.086)	-0.056 (0.100)	-0.031 (0.112)
Female#medium- high female employment								-0.030 (0.409)	-0.024 (0.515)	-0.028 (0.456)	-0.024 (0.519)	-0.016 (0.478)
Female#high female employment								-0.011 (0.783)	-0.008 (0.845)	-0.022 (0.578)	-0.019 (0.633)	0.006 (0.585)
School closures = 1												
Female#school closures									0.007 (0.007)	0.059 (0.714)	0.056 (0.008)	0.058 (0.012)
Child 0–11#school closures										-0.053 (0.029)	-0.021 (0.415)	-0.024 (0.374)
Female#child 0– 11#school closures											-0.139 (0.000)	-0.138 (0.000)
												-0.140 (0.001)

Table A-4: (Continued)

VARIABLE	(1) FW	(2) FW	(3) FW	(4) FW	(5) FW	(6) FW	(7) FW	(8) FW	(9) FW	(10) FW	(11) FW	(12) FW
Workplace closures = 1								-0.036 (0.000)	-0.003 (0.863)	0.010 (0.606)	0.014 (0.457)	0.011 (0.558)
Female#workplace closures									-0.048 (0.022)	-0.059 (0.011)	-0.059 (0.011)	-0.055 (0.019)
Child 0– 11#workplace closures										-0.049 (0.193)	-0.050 (0.185)	-0.049 (0.190)
Female#child 0– 11#workplace closures										0.034 (0.457)	0.034 (0.452)	0.033 (0.461)
Stay-at-home requirements = 1								-0.045 (0.000)	-0.035 (0.064)	-0.028 (0.176)	-0.033 (0.121)	-0.030 (0.157)
Female#stay-at- home requirements									-0.015 (0.515)	-0.012 (0.623)	-0.010 (0.701)	-0.013 (0.610)
Child 0–11#stay-at- home requirements										-0.024 (0.450)	-0.022 (0.497)	-0.023 (0.465)
Female#child 0– 11#stay-at-home requirements										0.003 (0.946)	0.002 (0.962)	0.004 (0.916)
Gender Equality Index											-0.004 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.344)
Female#GenderEqu alityIndex												-0.004 (0.015)
Constant	4.001 (0.000)	3.978 (0.000)	4.240 (0.000)	4.429 (0.000)	4.522 (0.000)	4.540 (0.000)	4.456 (0.000)	4.566 (0.000)	4.486 (0.000)	4.432 (0.000)	4.672 (0.000)	4.509 (0.000)
Observations	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324	39,324
Number of id_num	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051	13,051

Note: Estimation results from Equation 1 with FtoWB as dependent variable. A positive (negative) effect can be interpreted as an increase (reduction) of the FtoWB. P-values in parentheses.

