Understanding the Economic Impact of COVID on Women

Claudia Goldin
Harvard University
“Covid-19 could push many mothers out of the workforce”  
McKinsey-LeanIn, 2020 Women in the Workplace

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Fortune Feb. 2021

“In One Year, Coronavirus Pandemic Has Wreaked Havoc on Working Women”  
US News, March 8, 2021

“One in Four Women May be Forced to Scale Back or Opt Out”  
McKinsey-LeanIn, 2020

“Pandemic Could Scar a Generation of Working Mothers”  
NYT, June 30, 2020

“Pandemic Will ‘Take Our Women 10 Years Back’ in the Workplace”  
NYT, Sept. 26, 2020

“… a double whammy for Black women, robbing them of their jobs [and] their health”  
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“[W]e should go ahead and call this a ‘shecession.’”  
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“At Work” Changes (Season 2020/21 – Season 2018/19) for 20 to 54 Years Old: By Education and Sex

Approx. base for Males: 0.90; Females 0.79

Approx. base for Males: 0.78; Females 0.64
“At Work” Changes (Season 2020/21 – Winter2019/20) for 20 to 54 Years Old: By Education and Sex

College Graduates

- Male
- Female

Not College Graduates

- Male
- Female

Spr20 | Sum20 | Fall20 | Wint20 | Spr21 | Sum21 | Fall21
Working Remotely (due to COVID) among Men and Women by Education: May 2020 to Sept. 2021

- College graduate men
- College graduate women
- Non-college graduate men
- Non-college graduate women
Childcare Hours of College-Graduate, Employed Couples, by the Age of Their Youngest Child

Fraction of total parental childcare hours done by the mother.

- Youngest Age <1
  - BCE Mothers: 66%
  - DC Mothers: 61%
  - AC/DC Mothers: 71%
- Age 1<3
  - BCE Mothers: 59%
  - DC Mothers: 65%
  - AC/DC Mothers: 54%
- Age 3<6
  - BCE Mothers: 59%
  - DC Mothers: 65%
  - AC/DC Mothers: 54%
- Age 6<13
  - BCE Mothers: 58%
  - DC Mothers: 52%
  - AC/DC Mothers: 78%
- Age 13<18
  - BCE Mothers: 66%
  - DC Mothers: 58%
  - AC/DC Mothers: 84%

Hours of Childcare per Week for Mothers
“Mercedes helps Mila go to the bathroom while on a call for work. Her husband works from the office next door.”

“At Work” Changes (Season 2020/21 – Season 2018/19) for Females (20 to 54 Years): By Education and Youngest Child Age
Pandemic Impact on “At Work” Rates of Women 20 to 54 Years Old by Various Factors

- Pre- to Pandemic
- College
- Child 0 to 4 years
- Child 5 to 13 years
- Black
- Hispanic
- Service occupation
Pandemic Impact on “At Work” Rates of Women Relative to Men 20 to 54 Years Old by Various Factors

Pre- to Pandemic  | College  | Child 0 to 4 years  | Child 5 to 13 years  | Black  | Hispanic  | Service occupation

-0.05  | 0.01  | 0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05  | 0.06

-0.04  | 0.00  | 0.01  | 0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05

-0.03  | 0.00  | 0.01  | 0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05

-0.02  | 0.00  | 0.01  | 0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05

-0.01  | 0.00  | 0.01  | 0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05

0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0

0.01  | 0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05  | 0.06  | 0.07

0.02  | 0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05  | 0.06  | 0.07  | 0.08

0.03  | 0.04  | 0.05  | 0.06  | 0.07  | 0.08  | 0.09

0.04  | 0.05  | 0.06  | 0.07  | 0.08  | 0.09  | 0.10

0.05  | 0.06  | 0.07  | 0.08  | 0.09  | 0.10  | 0.11
But what about my future promotion?

“In the Covid-19 Economy, You Can Have a Kid or a Job. You Can’t Have Both.” **But they did.**

July 4, 2020
Deb Perelman