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**THE MEDIUM-TERM
EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC ON THE TIME
USE OF LOW-SKILLED
WORKING WOMEN: IN-
PERSON VERSUS VIRTUAL
OCCUPATIONS**

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THE MEDIUM-TERM EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE TIME USE OF LOW-SKILLED WORKING WOMEN: IN-PERSON VERSUS VIRTUAL OCCUPATIONS

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Abstract

Variations in the ability to perform virtual or telework have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic as a source of differences in how workers adjusted to the consequent economic and social shock. Given the long-lasting nature of the pandemic and the length of the mobility restrictions in Latin America and the Caribbean, a critical question is how the pandemic affected the time use (and well-being) of low-skilled working women in the medium term, based on the type of job they had pre-pandemic—one that could adapt to virtuality ('virtual jobs') or one that must be done in-person ('in-person jobs'). Using novel data from the first wave of the second phase of the High Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS), collected between May and August 2021, and a difference-in-difference approach, our analysis shows that: (1) low-skilled women with in-person jobs in 2020 are participating less in the labour market at the time of the survey; (2) conditional on working in 2021, low-skilled women with virtual jobs seem to be working fewer hours per week; (3) low-skilled women with virtual jobs seem to be experiencing larger increases in the time they devote to non-paid domestic work; and (4) low-skilled women with in-person jobs are perceiving lower reductions in total household income. Moreover, using domestic workers as a case study for in-person occupations, this paper shows that the previous results are consistent with a decrease in the services provided by domestic workers, as working women in that sector transitioned to inactivity, unemployment, and other occupations during the pandemic. This implies a potential increase in the gender gap in the region in paid and unpaid work and in the vulnerability of women in the domestic work sector who, prior to the pandemic, accounted for more than 11 percent of the female workforce.

Keywords: time use, domestic work, COVID-19, female labour-force participation, virtual work.

JEL: D10, J01, J16, J22

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LOS EFECTOS A MEDIO PLAZO DE LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19 EN EL USO DEL TIEMPO DE LAS MUJERES TRABAJADORAS POCO CUALIFICADAS: OCUPACIONES PRESENCIALES VERSUS VIRTUALES

Cynthia Boruchowicz¹

Resumen

Las variaciones en la capacidad de realizar trabajo virtual o teletrabajo han surgido durante la pandemia de COVID-19 como fuente de diferencias en la forma en que los trabajadores se ajustaron al consiguiente shock económico y social. Dada la naturaleza prolongada de la pandemia y la duración de las restricciones de movilidad en América Latina y el Caribe, una pregunta crítica es cómo la pandemia afectó el uso del tiempo (y el bienestar) de las mujeres trabajadoras poco calificadas en el mediano plazo, según el tipo de trabajo que tenían antes de la pandemia: uno que podría adaptarse a la virtualidad (“trabajos virtuales”) o uno que debe hacerse en persona (“trabajos en persona”). Usando datos novedosos de la primera ola de la segunda fase de la Encuesta Telefónica de Alta Frecuencia (HFPS), recopilados entre mayo y agosto de 2021, y un enfoque de diferencia en diferencia, el análisis muestra que: (1) mujeres poco calificadas con trabajos presenciales en 2020 están participando menos en el mercado laboral al momento de la encuesta; (2) condicionado a trabajar en 2021, las mujeres poco calificadas con trabajos virtuales parecen estar trabajando menos horas por semana; (3) las mujeres poco calificadas con trabajos virtuales parecen estar experimentando mayores aumentos en el tiempo que dedican al trabajo doméstico no remunerado; y (4) las mujeres poco calificadas con trabajos presenciales perciben menores reducciones en el ingreso total del hogar. Además, al utilizar a los trabajadores domésticos como estudio de caso para las ocupaciones en persona, este documento muestra que los resultados anteriores son consistentes con una disminución en los servicios prestados por los trabajadores domésticos, ya que las mujeres trabajadoras en ese sector pasaron a la inactividad, el desempleo y otras ocupaciones durante la pandemia. Esto implica un potencial aumento de la brecha de género en la región en el trabajo remunerado y no remunerado y en la vulnerabilidad de las mujeres en el sector del trabajo doméstico que, antes de la pandemia, representaba más del 11 por ciento de la fuerza laboral femenina.

Palabras clave: uso del tiempo, trabajo doméstico, COVID-19, participación laboral femenina, trabajo virtual

Clasificación JEL: D10, J01, J16, J22

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1. Introduction

By mid-March 2020, governments in Latin America and the Caribbean imposed strict mobility restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While, on average, countries in the region provided the most economical support to their citizens to respond to the pandemic, they also were the most severe in terms of the length of lockdowns and workplace closings (Khamis et al., 2021). Those restrictions brought social and economic shocks and exacerbated the inequalities that were already present (Villareal-Villamar and Castells-Quintana, 2020; Castells-Quintana et al., 2022).

Recent studies have shown that in Latin America and the Caribbean, both women (OECD, 2020) and households with high levels of informality (Bottan, Hoffmann and Vera-Cossio, 2020) have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic in its initial stages. Those groups have seen more job losses and business closures, and a decline in their food security than any other group. This could be linked to the fact that those households lack a safety net, which is vital during a health and economic crisis like the one provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic (Heeman, Pape and Volmer, 2022; Gupta et al., 2021).

Variations in the ability to perform virtual or telework have emerged during the pandemic as a source of differences in the adjustment to the economic and social shock. Working from home increased significantly in the region with the onset of the pandemic, particularly for working women, who represented half of the employees who worked from home during that period (Maurizio, 2021). However, analysis has shown that it is usually individuals with formal jobs, those more highly educated or those employed in occupations related to technical, managerial or administrative occupations the ones that have been able to work under that arrangement (Maurizio, 2021). In fact, it has been found that the probability of working from home in the region is positively correlated with January 2020 household income (Bottan, Hoffmann and Vera-Cossio, 2020).

Given the long-lasting nature of the pandemic and the length of the mobility restrictions in Latin America and the Caribbean, a critical question is how the pandemic affected the time use (and other measures of well-being) of low-skilled working women in the medium term based on the type of job they had pre-pandemic: either one that can be considered 'virtual', and thus could be performed remotely with the onset of the mobility restrictions, or one that is considered 'in-person' and thus could only be performed by the individual having to mobilize to the place of work.

Moreover, given the relative importance of domestic workers in the region's economy and how interrelated their activity is with the time use of other women who employ their services to release valuable time for other labour and non-labour activities (Raz-Yurovich and Marx, 2018; Van der Lippe et al., 2004; Craig and Baxter, 2016), it is also important to focus the analysis on how the pandemic impacted them in particular as a case study within the in-person occupation. Domestic workers were, in fact, one of the main groups affected by the mobility restrictions that emerged as a consequence of the pandemic (Salvador and Cossani, 2020). Domestic work is defined as "work performed in or for a household or households within an employment relationship" (ILO, 2011, Article 1). Domestic workers carry out a variety of activities for the household that employs them: from general cleaning

and cooking activities to taking care of the children, the elderly or persons with disabilities (ILO, 2010). Latin America and the Caribbean is the second region where domestic workers account for the largest share of total employment (after the Arab States): 5.1 percent of total employment and 8.4 percent of all employees. It is also the region in which domestic work is the most feminized, 91.1 percent of domestic workers in the region being women. Domestic work remains an important source of employment among women; 1 in 9 employed women and almost 2 in 10 (17.8 percent) female employees in the subregion are employed in domestic work (Hobden and Bonnet, 2021).

Using novel data from the first wave of the second phase of the High Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS), collected through a joint effort of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank between May and August 2021 in 24 countries in the region,¹ and a difference-in-difference (DD) approach (using low-skilled working men as a control group), our results demonstrate that there have been differences in how low-skilled working women distribute their time (and on different measures of well-being) based on the type of job they had prior to the start of the pandemic: either one that could only be performed in-person ('in-person jobs') or one that could adapt to virtuality ('virtual jobs'). We see that low-skilled working women with in-person jobs in 2020 are participating less in the labour market during the pandemic, particularly domestic workers. However, there is some indication that, conditional on working, low-skilled women with virtual jobs are devoting fewer hours to working outside the household compared to domestic workers. We also see some evidence that low-skilled women with virtual jobs are experiencing larger increases in the time they devote to domestic chores compared to women with in-person jobs. Moreover, we observe that domestic workers seem to be experiencing increases in their time spent taking care of the elderly or persons with disabilities. Finally, we see that there is some indication that low-skilled women with in-person jobs are experiencing a higher probability of becoming new informal workers compared to low-skilled women with virtual jobs, and that domestic workers might have a higher probability of their households becoming new ones experiencing food insecurity and of becoming new individuals receiving government transfers. However, low-skilled women with virtual jobs are seeing higher reductions in their total household income compared to low-skilled women with in-person jobs, even domestic workers (something that could be the result, in part, of the reduction in the number of hours worked).

This paper is the first to analyse changes in time use (and other measures of well-being) of low-skilled working women in the medium term, based on the type of job they had pre-pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean—and in particular of domestic workers as a case study within the in-person occupations. It is important to note that the paper only analyses women who were employed prior to the pandemic, given that the focus is to understand differences based on their type of occupation. This means that what happened during the pandemic with women who were unemployed or out of the labour force in 2020 is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia and Uruguay.

Our results show first that, overall, low-skilled working women seem to be doing worse than low-skilled working men, regardless of their type of occupation: they are participating less in the labour market, working for a lower number of hours, experiencing higher increases in the time they devote to different non-paid domestic work, becoming informal and watching their households experiencing food insecurity at a higher rate; overall, they see a higher decrease in their wages and household total income than men. More importantly, it evolves from the analysis that the decrease in the time low-skilled women with in-person jobs prior to the pandemic are devoting to work outside the household might be linked to the increase in time spent doing non-paid domestic work by low-skilled women with virtual jobs. The main driver of the decrease in employment of low-skilled women with in-person jobs are domestic workers—the pandemic seemed to have affected them the most in terms of their ability to keep their jobs. With domestic workers not being as active during the pandemic as prior to 2020, we see low-skilled women with virtual jobs (who are now working from home) devoting more time to activities like cleaning, cooking, ironing and taking care of children. The fact that there is some indication of low-skilled women with virtual jobs working fewer hours (compared to before the pandemic), and the fact that they experienced a higher decrease in their household income shows that this situation might be imposing a trade-off in the use of time between work inside and outside the household for those women.

The previous results, on top of the fact that we see some indication of domestic workers' households experiencing more food insecurity than any other group, and that their households are also experiencing more government transfers compared to the households of other low-skilled working women, highlight the importance of understanding how domestic workers adjusted to the pandemic's aftermath and the mobility restrictions. On the one hand, domestic workers represent a high proportion of the female labour force in the region. The fact that by mid-2021 they have lost their jobs at a higher rate compared to other groups—and have transitioned mostly either to inactivity or unemployment—shows not only the vulnerabilities still present in the sector but could also put them at a higher risk of experiencing poverty once the monetary help that governments implemented at the beginning of the pandemic for the most vulnerable groups eases (By mid-2021, domestic workers experienced a reduction in their total household income, but to a lower extent compared to other groups of women probably due to the increase in the government transfers.) On the other hand, the decrease in domestic worker's activity might be linked to an increase in the time low-skilled women with virtual jobs devote to activities they used to outsource like cooking, cleaning, ironing and taking care of children. And, as such, they experienced a decrease in the number of hours they work outside the household (even though they seemed to have kept their jobs at a higher rate than low-skilled women with in-person jobs) and on their total household income. This can widen the inequalities between men and women in the region—potentially increasing the gender gap in paid and unpaid work. Moreover, the combination of the reduction of domestic work employment and the fact that, when they are working, they seem to be doing so more to take care of elderly individuals or persons with disabilities rather than, for example, smaller children, could lead to a new paradigm for women who used to rely on domestic workers to take care of their families while they work outside the household and a shift in the way we understand the care economy. As such, investigating the longer-run effects of the pandemic on low-skilled working women's time use remains a critical area of study for the future.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses previous literature on the impacts of mobility restrictions and a summary of the domestic worker context overall and during COVID-19. Section 3 presents the data and sample used for the analysis. Section 4 shows results, and Section 5 summarizes the conclusions.

2. Previous literature and context

2.1. Effects of mobility restrictions on time use

The accumulated experience of previous health shocks like the HIV pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa (Makina, 2009), the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (Smith, 2019) and the Zika outbreak in South America (Davies and Bennett, 2016) has shown that there is substitution of work time from paid to unpaid and that gender disparities in time use widen (Ilkcaracan and Memis, 2021). Furthermore, the evidence regarding economic shocks on gender disparities in time use in developing countries has shown an increase in unpaid work for women (Frankenberg, Thomas and Beegle, 1999; Rodgers and Menon, 2012; Ilkcaracan and Memis, 2021). Moreover, studies like that of Berthelon, Kruger and Oyarzun (2022) show that school length is positively correlated with female labour-force participation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be both a health and economic crisis and has also included school closures—all factors that seem to affect women more than men. Moreover, it has added a new layer of analysis: the distinction between individuals who could adjust to the virtual or online world and those who could not.

In the developed world, Van Tienoven, Minnen and Glorieux (2021) analysed the effects of the first lockdown in Belgium between March and May 2020 on the time use of men and women. The authors find an increase in the time men spent on household chores, but not women—and as such a temporal reduction in the gender gap. In Australia, Craig and Churchill (2020) show that during the May 2020 lockdown, women performed most of the extra unpaid work, but men’s time used on childcare activities increased more relatively, which led to a decrease in the gender gap. In the UK, Hupkau and Petrangolo (2020) found that women took over a larger share of childcare needs. In the US, women have been impacted the hardest regarding employment since they are more affected by school closures and were also employed in sectors mostly affected by the lockdowns (Alon et al., 2020; Adams, 2020; Sevilla and Smith, 2020). Something similar was found in Italy, Portugal and Spain (Caselli et al., 2022). In fact, Ando et al. (2022) show that across European countries, workers in contact-intensive services were hit harder (reductions in both employment and hours worked). The authors explain that workers in those sectors tend to be low-skilled and young, which could exacerbate inequality.

Also in the US, Lyttelton, Zang and Musick (2021) examine the relationship between commitments to paid and unpaid work by individuals’ gender and ability to telecommute from May to November 2020. They found that mothers who started telecommuting were working more hours than those mothers who continued working in-person—but those differences were not observed for fathers. Moreover, they found that parents who telecommute report a smaller gender gap in unpaid work since fathers seemed to have spent increasing time in childcare activities. Something similar is highlighted by Carlson, Petts and Pepin (2021) who find that fathers’ contribution to domestic chores and childcare has increased with the

pandemic, and as such, there is a shift towards more egalitarian distribution of work inside the household.

In the developing world, Deshpande (2020) shows the effect of the first strict lockdown in April 2020 in India. The author finds that conditional on being employed pre-lockdown, women lost their jobs at a higher rate than men—but, relatively, men saw a greater increase in the hours spent on domestic chores. Chauhan (2021) points to the closure of offices and educational institutions and the lack of domestic workers’ services as reasons behind the increase in unpaid domestic work. In Turkey, Ilkkaracan and Memis (2021) find that women’s increase in unpaid work was greater than men’s—and as such, the gender gap increased. Nevertheless, the authors find that the gender gap in paid work narrowed due to relatively fewer employment disruptions for women.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Botta, Hoffmann and Vera-Cossio (2020) use an online survey from 17 countries to show the short-term effects on the pandemic and the large-scale lockdowns. The authors show that by April 2020, households with the lowest income prior to the pandemic had shown the highest job losses and business closures, as well as declines in food security and health, exacerbating economic inequalities in the region. In respect to sector-specific effects, Morales et al. (2022) assessed the impact of mobility restrictions in the Colombian labour market between February and April 2020. The authors find that employment fell 9.4 percent more in the sectors affected by sector-specific mobility restrictions, compared to individuals who worked in sectors excluded from the measures. They also found negative effects (those smaller in magnitude) in the number of hours worked.

It can be seen then that the evidence is mixed in terms of what happened with men’s and women’s time use during the pandemic worldwide with the imposition of mobility restrictions. This paper is the first study to use 2021 data and retrospective data from before the pandemic to analyse the medium-term impact of the pandemic on time use (and other measures of well-being) of low-skilled women in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly of domestic workers. The addition of new waves of the survey in the future into the analysis will allow for the creation of a panel structure and, as such, the capacity to study changes through the use of high frequency data.

2.2. The importance of the domestic work sector in Latin America and the Caribbean

In 2019, at least 75.6 million men and women aged 15 years old and over throughout the world were employed as domestic workers. This meant that 2.3 percent of employment worldwide was related to domestic work activities. When looking only at employees, this figure almost doubles: 4.5 percent of all employees work as domestic workers. Those values differ between the developing and the developed world. For example, domestic work represents 0.8 percent of total employment in Europe and Central Asia (1 percent of all employees) and 1.5 percent in North America (1.7 percent of all employees). However, those figures are 5.1 percent (8.4 percent) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 12.3 percent (14.8 percent) in the Arab States. These figures account for the sector’s relative importance in different parts of the world: while the share of domestic workers among total employees in low-income countries is 9.9 percent, that figure is 5.1 in middle-income and 2.6 percent in high-income countries (Hobden and Bonnet, 2021).

The relative importance of domestic work is also highlighted in two groups: migrants and women. Around 17 percent of domestic workers are migrants; that figure is over 70 percent in North America and the Arab States (Gallotti and Branch, 2015). Moreover, women make up 76.2 percent of the domestic workforce worldwide (ILO, 2020a). This means that around the globe, 1 in 22 women workers correspond to this sector—and 1 in every 12 female employees are domestic workers (ILO, 2020a). In fact, 4.5 percent of total women employment worldwide (8.8 percent of total women employees) is related to domestic work activities. These figures differ between regions. Domestic workers represent 18.2 percent of women employees in sub-Saharan Africa, 17.8 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean and 13.1 in Southern Asia (with the highest figure seen in Arab States, with 34.6 percent). However, in subregions like Northern America, Eastern Europe, and Northern, Western and Southern Europe the figure is not even 3 percent.

Another key characteristic of domestic work is its high rates of informality: 80 percent of those 75.6 million workers do so in an informal scenario, meaning they do not contribute to the national pension scheme and do not have access to employment-related social security benefits (Hobden and Bonnet, 2021). This is particularly striking given that globally, it is estimated that 39.7 percent of all other employees are informal, and 60.1 percent of all non-domestic employment, regardless of employment status, is informal (Bonnet et al., 2019). Informality among domestic workers is the lowest in subregions like Northern America (23 percent), Eastern Asia excluding China (41 percent) and Eastern Europe (51 percent). The highest values can be observed in Africa (91.6 percent), the Arab States (99.7 percent), Southern Asia (95.5 percent), Central and Western Asia (81 percent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (72 percent). A similar pattern is seen for women domestic workers.

Domestic work is therefore a sector that significantly contributes to the share of individuals who do not contribute to a pension scheme or, overall, to social insurance and are also not subject to regulations on job stability and minimum wages. The formal-informal segmentation of domestic workers results from a mix of legal exclusions and non-compliance (UNDP, 2021). In other words, in some countries, domestic workers are required by law to make contributions to social insurance—even with a regime that is separate from those that regulate the remaining employees in the country (for example, Argentina, Brazil and recently Mexico)—but laws and regulations are imperfectly enforced. In many cases, those laws are then “replaced by tacitly accepted social norms that de facto sanction non-compliance, even if de jure it may be argued that illegal behavior is taking place” (UNDP, 2021 p. 242).

Latin America and the Caribbean is the second region where domestic workers account for the largest share of total employment (after the Arab States): 5.1 percent of total employment and 8.4 percent of all employees. Across the region, almost 15 million individuals 15 years and older work as domestic workers, representing 19.6 percent of domestic workers in the world. It is also the region in which domestic work is the most feminized, 91.1 percent of domestic workers in the region being women. Domestic work remains an important source of employment among women; 1 in 9 employed women and almost 2 in 10 (17.8 percent) female employees in the subregion are employed in domestic work (Hobden and Bonnet, 2021). Brazil, with more than 6 million domestic workers, and Mexico, with more than 2 million, are the countries that have the largest number of workers in this sector (in line with the size of their population). Next come Argentina, with almost 1 million domestic workers, Colombia (670 thousand), Venezuela (500 thousand) and Peru (440 thousand).

More importantly, Figure 1 shows the share of domestic work over total employment per country, by gender. Argentina, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Uruguay appear to have the largest share of domestic work over total employment. When divided by gender, Argentina is the country with the largest share of domestic work over total female employment: almost 18 percent. It is followed by Costa Rica and Paraguay with a little over 17 percent. Trinidad and Tobago is the country with the largest share of domestic work over total male employment: 8.5 percent. Employment rates in domestic work have remained relatively stable over the last 10 years, changing by only a fraction of a percentage point from year to year between 2012 and 2018 (ILO, 2020b). However, one change has been evident in the sector in Latin America and the Caribbean: the reduction of live-in domestic workers (from 22.6 percent in 2000 to 7.3 percent in 2019) (CEPAL, 2019).

Figure 1. Share of domestic work over total employment, 2019



Source: Own calculations based on Hobden and Bonnet (2021).

While employment levels remained high through 2019, recent evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe impacts on different labour-market outcomes for domestic workers in the short term. On the one hand, the nature of domestic work means that for those who kept their jobs, they were more at risk of contracting the virus. More importantly, on the other hand, the prolonged mobilization restrictions, and households' fear of letting someone external enter their house meant that domestic workers were at a higher risk of not being able to work during lockdown (Salvador and Cossani, 2020). In fact, by June 2020 in Latin America and the Caribbean, it was estimated that more than 75 percent of domestic workers were significantly impacted by the lockdowns—seeing reductions in either number of weekly working hours, earnings or because they lost their jobs (ILO, 2020d). Annex B gives a comprehensive look of the state of the domestic work sector in the world and the region and what has been the short-term effect of the pandemic on this sector.

3. Data and sample

For our analysis we use the High Frequency Phone Survey that was collected through a joint effort of UNDP and the World Bank in 2021. This survey was conducted by phone in 24 countries in the region for a total size of 28,602 respondents. The data is representative at the national level for the population who is 18 years old or older and have a cellphone and can be used to understand the dynamics of the labour markets every 3 months. In this case, the first round of the survey that was collected between May and August 2021 is used. The survey has modules related to individual characteristics for the respondent (health, basic demographics, employment, domestic chores and coexistence, migration²) and its household (food insecurity, income, indirect roster of children under 17 in the household, education for selected children under 17, digital and banking access, and dwelling characteristics).

For several characteristics like employment, unpaid domestic work, food insecurity and income, the survey asks questions not only about the respondent's current situation in 2021, but also about the situation prior to the pandemic in February 2020. As such, the data provide a view of differences in work outside the household, work inside the household and other measures of well-being before and after the start of the pandemic for the same individual.

This paper focuses on understanding the effects of the pandemic on low-skilled working women's distribution of time (and on different measures of well-being) based on the type of job they had prior to the pandemic: either one that could only be performed in-person ('in-person jobs') or one that could adapt to virtuality ('virtual jobs'). For that, we compare time use and other measures of well-being just before the pandemic started and mid-2021 for each group, and then compare those differences across low-skilled women who had virtual jobs and low-skilled women with in-person ones. Because there may be some non-observable differences between the groups that could be affecting the results,³ we also analyse those changes among working low-skilled men with virtual jobs and working low-skilled men with in-person jobs. Adding men as an additional control means that any pre-post change between women with virtual and in-person jobs are likely related to the pandemic rather than reflecting pre-pandemic differences between the groups.⁴ For this analysis, men and women who have completed less than tertiary education and who are under 70 years old are used in the final sample. Moreover, given that the research question is about time use according to the type of occupation the individual had prior to the start of

² Migration is only asked for individuals in Colombia, Peru, Chile and Ecuador.

³ In other words, the distribution of occupations prior to the pandemic is not random. As such, it might be the case that women with in-person jobs are inherently different from those with virtual ones: for example, they might have lower quality of education (as in-person jobs can be thought as those with a lower skill requirement) or they might not be equipped in the same way (physically and mentally) to be in a remote environment. Therefore, any observed change could be a product of those differences and not due to a differentiated effect of the pandemic based on type of occupation.

⁴ Using the same two groups—virtual and in-person jobs—for an 'untreated' group (men) accounts for the potential impact of non-observable differences in the probability of having an in-person or virtual job prior to the pandemic that might have an impact on the probability that an individual with an in-person job (both men and women) has a different adaptation (different use of time and other measures of well-being such as experiencing food insecurity) during the pandemic.

the pandemic, the sample consists only of those people who claimed to be working right before the start of the pandemic back in 2020. As such, 53 percent of the total sample is used in the analysis.

To divide the sample according to the type of occupation they had prior to the start of the pandemic, we use their main occupation in 2020 and we categorize individuals as those with ‘in-person jobs’ and those with ‘virtual jobs’. In-person jobs are those that can only be performed in-person, with the individual having to commute to another physical location. Virtual jobs are those that could adapt to virtuality and can therefore be performed remotely. To analyse such adaptation, we take advantage of the fact that the survey asks every individual that was working in 2021 how many hours they worked remotely in their main occupation the week before. For every occupation in 2021 then, the share of individuals who claimed to work remotely for at least 1 hour the week before was calculated with the restricted sample used for this analysis. Table 1 shows both the distribution of occupations in 2020 by low-skilled working men and women, and the share of individuals in each occupation who claimed to have worked remotely for at least 1 hour in the prior week in 2021. Occupations with a share of 15 percent or more in 2021 were categorized in 2020 as virtual, and those with a share of less than 15 percent in 2021 were categorized as in-person in 2020. We used 15 percent as a cut-off given that 14.78 percent is the average across occupations. For example, then, occupations like agriculture, construction, transportation or domestic work are categorized as in-person jobs. But occupations related to communications, retail, financial services, personal services or entertainment are considered virtual in this analysis. Four distinctive groups then were created: low-skilled working women with in-person jobs in 2020, low-skilled working women with virtual jobs in 2020, low-skilled working men with in-person jobs in 2020 and low-skilled working men with virtual jobs in 2020. Table 2 shows the distribution of occupations within each group. For low-skilled men with virtual occupations, the main ones are manufacturing and retail. For those with in-person jobs, the main occupations are those related to agriculture, construction and transportation. For low-skilled women with virtual jobs, the situation is similar: the main occupations are manufacturing and retail. However, for low-skilled women with in-person jobs the most popular occupation is domestic work, with almost half of the women in that occupation, followed by restaurants, hotels and tourism.

Table 1. Distribution of occupations by gender and share of individuals who worked remotely for at least 1 hour in the prior week

A.			B.	
Distribution of occupations by gender in 2020			Share of individuals who were working in 2020 who worked remotely for at least 1 hour in the prior week in 2021	
Occupations	Men	Women	Occupations	
Agriculture	15.1%	5.7%	Agriculture	9.13%
Extractive	1.6%	0.3%	Extractive	21.41%
Manufacture	12.7%	14.8%	Manufacture	16.03%
Professional	2.3%	1.4%	Professional	17.06%
Electricity/Water/Gas	2.3%	0.3%	Electricity/Water/Gas	15.00%
Construction	13.9%	0.7%	Construction	9.54%
Transportation	9.0%	1.1%	Transportation	9.47%
Retail	14.0%	21.2%	Retail	19.53%
Financial Services	1.1%	0.7%	Financial Services	29.96%
Personal Services	5.2%	8.0%	Personal Services	20.99%
Education	1.1%	3.2%	Education	27.11%
Health	1.0%	2.7%	Health	16.59%
Public administration	2.9%	1.9%	Public administration	20.51%
Restaurants/Hotels/ Tourism	4.5%	11.2%	Restaurants/Hotels/ Tourism	14.05%
Repair	4.7%	0.5%	Repair	9.85%
Communication	0.8%	0.8%	Communication	53.28%
Real Estate	0.7%	0.4%	Real Estate	15.44%
Administrative Services	4.3%	2.1%	Administrative Services	13.58%
Art/Entertainment	1.5%	1.9%	Art/Entertainment	18.52%
Domestic Work	1.5%	21.1%	Domestic Work	7.55%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	AVERAGE	14.78%

Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

Note: Distributions calculated using individual weights.

Table 2. Sample distribution by pre-pandemic occupations, per group

Occupations	Men with “virtual” jobs (1)	Men with “in-person” jobs (2)	Women with “virtual” jobs (3)	Women with “in-person” jobs (includes domestic workers) (4)
Agriculture	0.0%	28.5%	0.0%	13.4%
Extractive	3.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
Manufacture	27.0%	0.0%	25.7%	0.0%
Professional	4.9%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
Electricity/Water/Gas	4.9%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
Construction	0.0%	26.3%	0.0%	1.6%
Transportation	0.0%	17.0%	0.0%	2.6%
Retail	29.7%	0.0%	36.8%	0.0%
Financial Services	2.2%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
Personal Services	11.0%	0.0%	13.9%	0.0%
Education	2.3%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%
Health	2.2%	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%
Public administration	6.1%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%
Restaurants/Hotels/ Tourism	0.0%	8.4%	0.0%	26.5%
Repair	0.0%	8.8%	0.0%	1.1%
Communication	1.7%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%
Real Estate	1.5%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
Administrative Services	0.0%	8.1%	0.0%	5.0%
Art/Entertainment	3.1%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%
Domestic Work	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	49.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

Note: Distributions calculated using individual weights.

Teleworking or virtual work has allowed many workers to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the first months when the mobility restrictions were more severe. While there is not much information regarding previous experiences with virtual employment, it is estimated that in 2019 in Latin America and the Caribbean, only around 5–8 percent of employed individuals worked remotely (and less than 3 percent of salaried workers). Nevertheless, by mid-2020 between 20 percent and 30 percent of salaried workers were working from home (Maurizio, 2021). Table 3 shows some characteristics related to the logistics of teleworking in the sample. In particular, it shows differences in technology access and connectivity in 2021. While we do not see differences in the number of smartphones per household across groups, we do see that those in virtual occupations have a higher probability of possessing a working tablet or computer and of having access to Internet services at home. Moreover, it is also interesting to note that those individuals in 2021 who stated that they did not work even for 1 hour remotely the week before, over 93 percent claimed that the reason was “my job needs to be done in-person.” Other reasons

are related to lack of access to the Internet or technology overall, or their employers not allowing them to work from home. Even though this question was only asked of those individuals who were employed in 2021 (and therefore, we do not know if those who lost their jobs during the pandemic did so because they did not have the necessary logistics in place to adapt to virtuality), it is still interesting to see that the essence of the occupation seems to be the main reason for not teleworking.

Table 3. Access to technology and connectivity, per group

Occupations	Men with “virtual” jobs (1)	Men with “in-person” jobs (2)	Women with “virtual” jobs (3)	Women with “in-person” jobs (includes domestic workers) (4)
Smartphones in HH (#)	2.756 (1.410)	2.534 (0.583)	2.491 (1.391)	2.281 (1.317)
Working Computer or Tablet in HH (%)	0.455 (0.498)	0.351 (0.449)	0.369 (0.483)	0.281 (0.449)
Access to Internet service in HH (%)	0.619 (0.486)	0.483 (0.500)	0.571 (0.495)	0.459 (0.498)

Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

Note: Distributions are calculated using individual weights. Standard deviation in parentheses.

Table 4 shows the distribution of groups by country. The total sample consists of 11,609 individuals. There are 2,840 low-skilled men in the region with jobs back in 2020 that are categorized as virtual and 3,389 with jobs that were in-person. While there are almost 850 fewer women in the sample, in 2020 they held more jobs that could adapt to the virtual mode of the pandemic. There are 3,108 low-skilled women with virtual jobs, and 2,272 low-skilled women with in-person ones. Interestingly, of those 2,272 women, 966 were categorized as domestic workers prior to the pandemic, highlighting the relevance of the sector in the region. The sample is distributed among 23 countries,⁵ with an average of 400–500 observations per country. Mexico and Haiti are the countries with the highest number of observations, while Panama and Nicaragua have the lowest. It is important to note that because of the sample size, all the conclusions from this analysis are at the regional level, and not representative of each country individually.

⁵ Note that Brazil is excluded from the analysis since all the variables for type of occupation in 2020 and 2021 had missing values, and therefore it was not possible to categorize individuals.

Table 4. Sample distribution according to pre-pandemic occupation

Country	Men with “virtual” jobs (1)	Men with “in-person” jobs (2)	Women with “virtual” jobs (3)	Women with “in-person” jobs (includes domestic workers) (4)	Domestic Workers (women) (5)
Antigua & Barbuda	91	126	109	95	11
Belize	100	146	102	98	34
Guatemala	193	205	168	107	45
El Salvador	106	103	101	71	30
Honduras	108	163	135	103	42
Nicaragua	87	135	87	56	28
Costa Rica	72	130	75	106	53
Panama	59	116	68	72	49
Haiti	323	308	254	77	17
Peru	87	122	120	99	31
Mexico	261	241	356	218	118
Argentina	140	126	135	105	75
Chile	85	99	130	96	42
Colombia	112	136	152	138	76
Bolivia	115	175	114	84	17
Guyana	83	123	130	69	19
Ecuador	153	137	146	163	62
Paraguay	138	122	128	104	62
Uruguay	118	95	136	79	40
Santa Lucia	77	153	116	94	16
Dominica	77	140	114	68	18
Dominican Republic	159	141	124	96	60
Jamaica	96	147	108	74	21
TOTAL BY GROUP	2840	3389	3108	2272	966

Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

First, we provide a descriptive graphical analysis showing changes in time use (and other measures of well-being) before and during the pandemic for four groups based on their type of main occupation prior to the start of the pandemic: low-skilled women with virtual jobs, low-skilled women with in-person jobs, low-skilled men with virtual jobs and low-skilled men with in-person jobs. For the empirical estimation, we carry out a DD model that differences out potential effects of the non-observable characteristics associated with having an in-person or virtual job prior to the pandemic in time use and other measures of well-being between February 2020 and May–August 2021 and between low-skilled women with virtual jobs and low-skilled women with in-person jobs, also using a sample of low-skilled men with virtual and in-person jobs prior to the pandemic. In other words, using low-skilled men as a control allows us to account for any recall bias in the estimations.

Nevertheless, there still might be some noise in the estimations linked to the fact that the HFPS is asking respondents to recall information from more than a year ago, but there is no reason to believe that this bias is affecting more women or men.

We also test for the specific effects on a selected group of in-person women: domestic workers. Domestic workers are an important group in the region, as was mentioned in the previous section, and it is possible that changes in other women's time use are related to the availability of domestic workers' services. For such estimations, we replace low-skilled women with in-person jobs for domestic workers and use different control groups for low-skilled men, including construction workers who have been used in the literature as a low-skilled profession made up mostly of men with characteristics similar to domestic workers, particularly in terms of the high level of informality, the fact that they are both mostly urban occupations, and recent efforts to get organized (Tilly, 2020). Finally, we also perform some extra overall robustness estimations using propensity score matching. In every empirical estimation, we control by age, age squared, a dummy for cohabitation, a dummy for being urban, a dummy for living with someone over 65 years old, number of years of education, members in the household, number of children under 6 years old in the household, number of children between 6 and 11 years old in the household and number of children between 12 and 17 years old in the household.

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of individuals in the sample (as of 2021, when they were surveyed). As can be seen, among low-skilled men, those with virtual jobs back in 2020 were slightly younger, more urban, and more educated. They were similar in terms of probability of cohabitation; of living with someone 65 or older; in the members of the household; and in the number of children younger than 6 years old, between 6 and 11, and between 12 and 17 (though consistently the values are slightly lower for low-skilled men with virtual jobs). Something similar is seen for low-skilled women. Among low-skilled women, those with virtual jobs back in 2020 were also slightly younger, more urban, and more educated. They were similar in terms of probability of cohabitation, of living with someone 65 or older, in the members in their households, and in the number of children younger than 6 years old, between 6 and 11, and between 12 and 17 (though consistently the values are slightly lower for women with virtual jobs). Between low-skilled men and women, overall, women in the sample have a higher number of children older than 6 years old in their household.

Table 5 also shows the descriptive statistics for females who were domestic workers in 2020. Compared to the group of low-skilled women with 'in-person' jobs (which includes them), domestic workers are older and they engage in cohabitation at a slightly lower rate, have a person over age 65 in their household at a slightly higher rate, are slightly less educated, live with fewer household members, and have fewer children 6 years old or older. This is consistent with the overall characteristics of women in this occupation found in household surveys in the region. The descriptive statistics for male construction workers are also included in Table 5. Note that Table 5 also shows that the difference between women with virtual and in-person jobs and men with virtual and in-person jobs is not statistically significant for any characteristic. When we replace low-skilled in-person women with domestic workers, then we see differences in the years of schooling and total household members. When we replace low-skilled in-person men only with those with service jobs, the differences are seen in cohabitation and years of schooling; and when we replace low-

skilled in-person men only with those with manufacturing jobs, the differences are seen in urbanity and the members of the household. Finally, when low-skilled in-person men are replaced by construction workers, the significant differences are in household members and number of children between 6 and 11 years old. Overall then, we see that the double difference in observable characteristics seems not to give significant differences, which is important for our estimations and to be able to make comparisons. Though there are some differences when we analyse domestic work specifically, those variables are included in the regressions as controls.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics by groups according to pre-pandemic occupation and differences by group

Variable	(1) Men with "virtual" jobs	(2) Men with "in-person" jobs (includes construction workers)	(3) Women with "virtual" jobs	(4) Women with "in- person" jobs (includes domestic workers)	(5) Domestic Workers (women)	(6) Construction Workers (men)
Age	40.150 (13.536)	42.103 (13.509)	40.560 (13.294)	41.022 (13.038)	43.093 (12.984)	41.421 (12.362)
Cohabitation (%)	0.646 (0.478)	0.649 (0.477)	0.547 (0.498)	0.547 (0.498)	0.578 (0.494)	0.704 (0.457)
Urban (%)	0.772 (0.420)	0.623 (0.485)	0.755 (0.430)	0.646 (0.478)	0.694 (0.461)	0.662 (0.473)
HH with person over 65 y.o. (%)	0.225 (0.417)	0.257 (0.437)	0.238 (0.426)	0.250 (0.433)	0.269 (0.443)	0.252 (0.434)
Years of school	9.224 (2.978)	8.269 (3.261)	8.939 (3.134)	7.985 (3.604)	7.792 (3.759)	8.005 (3.122)
HH number of people	4.210 (1.936)	4.240 (2.055)	4.355 (2.122)	4.354 (2.089)	4.114 (2.005)	4.438 (2.072)
HH number of children <6 y.o.	0.242 (0.515)	0.227 (0.519)	0.252 (0.516)	0.257 (0.538)	0.237 (0.531)	0.244 (0.520)
HH number of children 6-11 y.o.	0.247 (0.547)	0.255 (0.560)	0.329 (0.593)	0.328 (0.616)	0.276 (0.559)	0.345 (0.694)
HH number of children 12-17 y.o.	0.242 (0.528)	0.270 (0.570)	0.366 (0.689)	0.373 (0.657)	0.346 (0.605)	0.293 (0.566)
Observations	2840	3389	3108	2272	966	978

Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

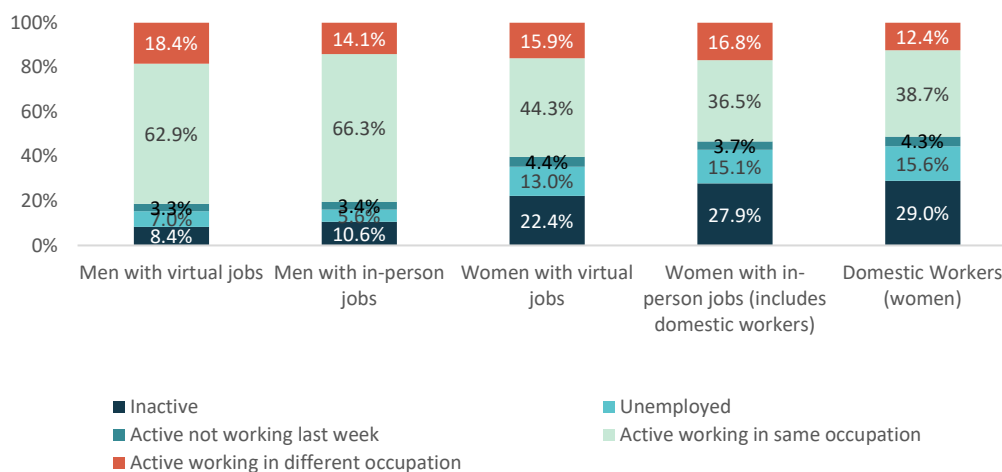
Note: Standard deviation in parentheses. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01'.

Descriptive analysis: time use (and other measures of well-being) of working men and women prior to and during the pandemic

We begin by analysing changes in the time use of individuals outside the household. Figure 2 shows the proportion of individuals who are either inactive, unemployed, active but not working last week, active working in the same occupation and active working in a different occupation by mid-2021. The sample is divided by their type of occupation at the beginning of the pandemic. Given that everyone in the sample used was active at the pandemic's onset, these figures can be seen as transition rates in the labour market. The first thing that we can see is that there is a higher share of low-skilled women who transitioned to being inactive compared to low-skilled men, and that this figure is higher for women with in-person jobs than for virtual ones (and particularly the highest for domestic workers)—and this difference is also higher than for men. Something similar happens with unemployment, though in cases for low-skilled women, those with in-person jobs seem to be doing worse than virtual low-skilled women, and the reverse is true for low-skilled men. We do not see much difference in the proportion of individuals who are active but not working the week before across groups. It is evident from the graph though that there is a higher proportion of low-skilled men who kept their jobs during the pandemic. And while those with in-person occupations have a higher probability of staying in the same occupation, for low-skilled women, the reverse is true. Finally, we see that there is a similar proportion of individuals who transitioned to another occupation in the sample across groups (though the figure is smaller for female domestic workers). Overall then, it is clear from the descriptive analysis that being a low-skilled woman with an in-person occupation in 2020 (and particularly a domestic worker) increased the probability of being inactive and/or unemployed in mid-2021 compared to low-skilled women who had virtual jobs—something that is not observed for virtual and in-person low-skilled men.

While these findings show a high turnover during the pandemic, Latin America and the Caribbean is a region with overall high labour turnover. Nevertheless, on average, between 2013 and 2019 the participation rate in the region was a little over 60 percent, and the unemployment rate was between 6 percent and 7 percent (ECLAC/ILO, 2021). This can give an idea of the magnitude of the shock that the pandemic represented.

Figure 2. Transition rates: labour market activity during the pandemic, by groups according to pre-pandemic occupations



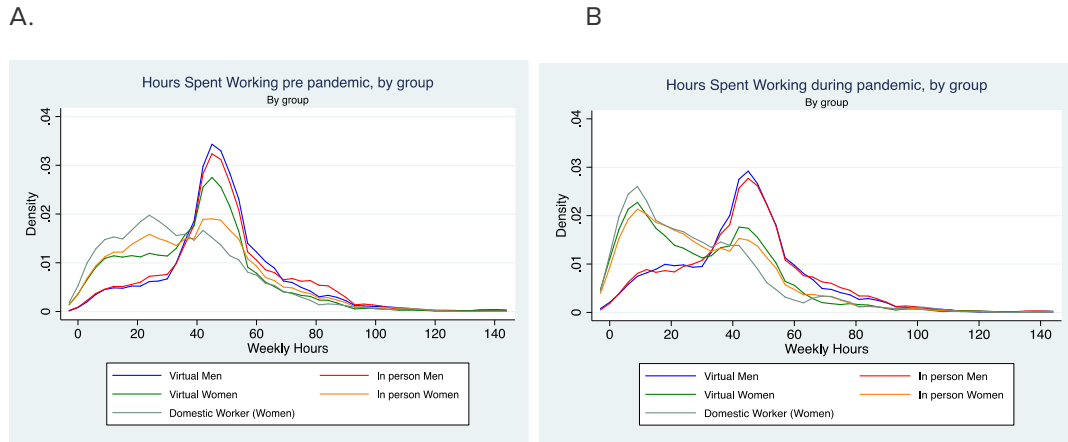
Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

Moving now to the number of weekly hours of work, Figures 3.a and 3.b show the density for the different groups (for those who report working for at least 1 hour the week before). Before the pandemic, we can see two peaks in this density: one at part-time work with an average of around 20 hours per week, and one for full time jobs with a little over 40 hours per week. Within gender, we see that while there is no difference across type of occupation in the distribution for low-skilled men, there is for low-skilled women. Even before the pandemic, a higher share of low-skilled women with virtual jobs had a full-time job compared to in-person jobs. In fact, the group with the lowest share of full-time work (and highest share of part-time jobs) were domestic workers. This means that there was something happening even before the pandemic that made the group of women with an in-person job work fewer hours per week—a possible thread to the identification strategy for this outcome if those trends were different prior to the pandemic. When we analyse what is happening during the pandemic, we can see various things. First, the share of low-skilled individuals with full-time jobs overall decreases, and the share with a part-time one increases: the pandemic seems to have reduced the number of hours people (conditional on working) worked. This is particularly true for low-skilled women, and even more so for low-skilled women with virtual jobs. Second, we see that the part-time peak now has shifted to the left, to around 10 hours per week. Third, we see that among low-skilled men, the distributions across occupations are similar both pre- and during the pandemic; for low-skilled women, the gap that we saw prior to the pandemic (with more virtual women working full-time and in-person women working part-time) closed. We see a similar share of low-skilled women working either part-time or full-time by their occupation prior to the pandemic (though particularly for domestic workers we do see a higher share working part-time at 10 hours), which means that those with virtual jobs are devoting fewer hours to working outside the household.

It is important to highlight at this point that the analysis for employment and working hours is based on what the respondent considers their main occupation. While the dynamics of job transitions are more complex, given that individuals might have accepted a secondary

job as a result of the pandemic, the nature of the data does not allow us to understand if individuals in the sample have more than one occupation—and the characteristics of that secondary activity.

Figure 3. Hours spent working pre- and during the pandemic, by group



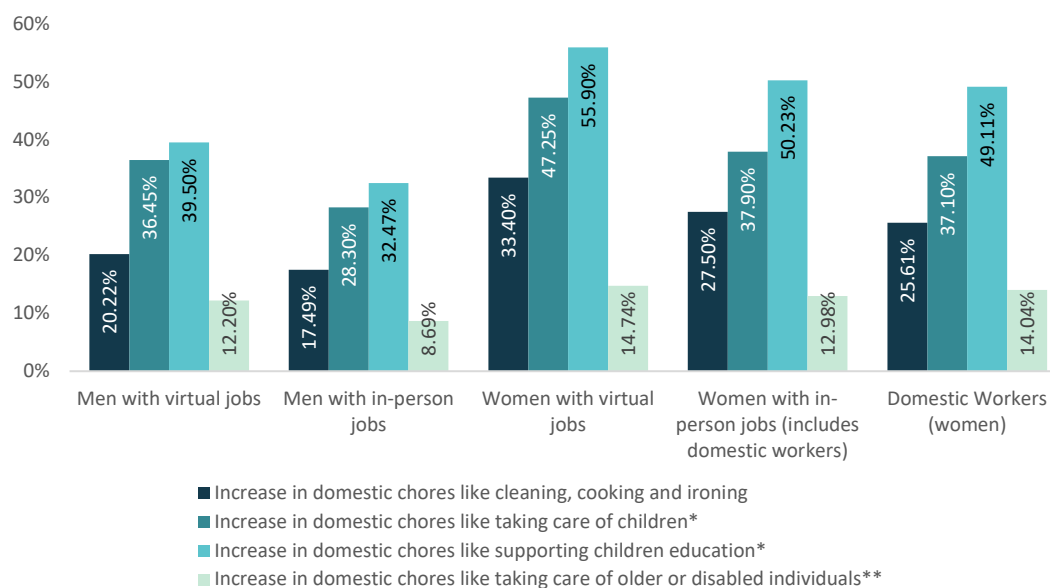
Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

The reduction in the time spent working outside the household that is seen for low-skilled women might be associated with increases in work within the household. Figure 4 shows individual perceptions of experiencing increases in different domestic chores during the pandemic.⁶ Overall, we see low-skilled women experiencing a higher increase in domestic chores compared to low-skilled men, with taking care of children and supporting children’s education being the highest experienced increases across groups. Both for low-skilled men and women, we see the experienced increases being higher for individuals with virtual jobs compared to those with in-person jobs—probably because individuals with virtual jobs are spending more time at home. Even though we would expect the reduction in the proportion of people with in-person jobs who are working to correspond to a higher time spent working inside the household, the opposite is happening for both men and women. There are two potential explanations for this. First, those with virtual jobs are working from home. Even though we see that they managed to keep their jobs at a higher rate, they are also working fewer hours outside the household (particularly low-skilled women). Therefore, they might be experiencing a large increase in the time they are devoting to domestic chores simply because they are physically at home. Probably without the pandemic, that would not have been their reality as they would have been, for example, in an office. Second, the decrease in the activity level of domestic workers might have translated to men and women with virtual jobs not having someone at their house to do their cooking, cleaning and taking care of children as they did before the pandemic. Such a decrease might have affected individuals

⁶ In this case, the question in the survey directly asks, “compared to the situation prior to the pandemic, did the time you spent doing a domestic chore increase?”. The survey does not ask about time devoted to domestic chores pre- and during the pandemic, but the change itself.

with virtual jobs more, if we think that they are the potential employers of domestic workers. Finally, it is interesting to see that for the share of individuals who experienced an increase in taking care of older persons or those with disabilities (something that enumerators had to highlight as not linked to an occupation and not involving taking care of just household members, thus it was asked to everyone, not just individuals sharing their households with someone older than 65), the increase is higher for those with virtual jobs compared to in-person ones across gender. However, compared to overall low-skilled women with in-person jobs, we see that domestic workers experienced the highest increase in this category.

Figure 4. Domestic chores during the pandemic: share of individuals who experienced an increase, by groups according to pre-pandemic occupations



Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

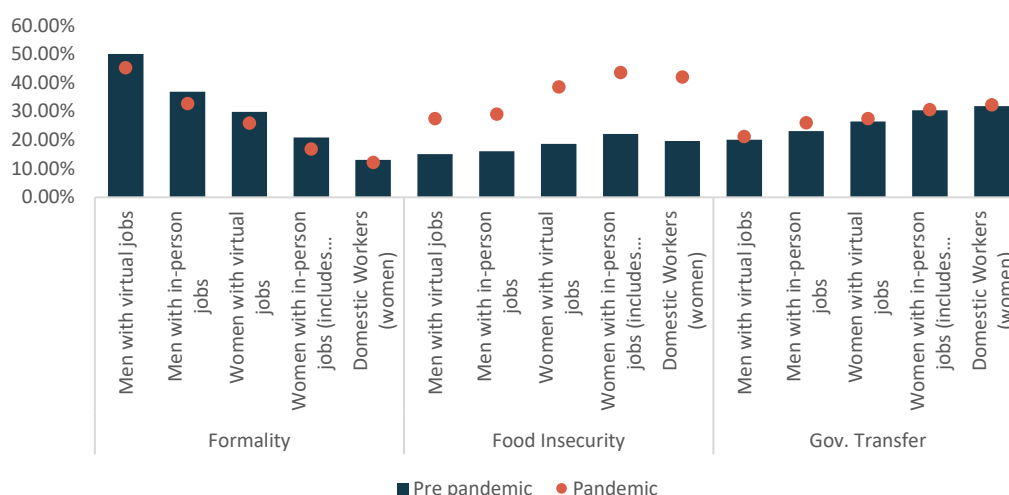
Finally, we analyse changes in four measures of the household's overall well-being: changes in the respondent's work formality status, changes in the household experiencing food insecurity, changes in the household being the recipient of government transfers and changes in household income (from different sources).

Figure 5 shows the share of respondents who were formal, lived in a household that had experienced food insecurity and lived in a household that received government transfers before and during the pandemic. Across groups we see that the pandemic implied a decrease in the share of formal workers, an increase in the proportion in households that experienced food insecurity and an increase in the proportion in households that received a government transfer. For low-skilled men, the reduction in formality was greater for those with virtual jobs compared to in-person ones: a decrease of almost 5 points versus a little over 4. For low-skilled women, there is almost no difference, with formality decreasing around 4 points for both groups of workers. Interestingly, those who experienced a lower decrease compared to the pre-pandemic level of formality are domestic workers, with less than a 1-point difference.

Moving now to the issue of food insecurity, Figure 5 shows the largest increases for households were among low-skilled women compared to low-skilled men (given their pre-pandemic values). In this case, while the increase for low-skilled men across groups is similar (an increase of 12 points for men with both types of occupations), for low-skilled women we see a greater increase (21.45 points versus almost 20 points) for those with in-person jobs compared to low-skilled women with virtual ones. The effect is even greater when comparing domestic workers with low-skilled women with virtual jobs.

Finally, with regards to receiving government transfers, we can see that the largest jump before and during the pandemic was experienced by households when low-skilled men with in-person jobs were the respondents. In fact, for households with men respondents, the difference in the increase in receiving government transfers was 1.85 points greater for those with in-person jobs. For low-skilled women, that figure was 0.67, but the opposite was true: households with low-skilled women respondents with virtual jobs are experiencing higher increases.

Figure 5. Formality, food Insecurity and government transfers before and during the pandemic, by groups according to pre-pandemic occupations



Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

From the previous visual analysis, it seems like the households of low-skilled women with in-person occupations (and particularly domestic workers) are doing the worst in terms of food insecurity, but not in terms of being recipients of government transfers, probably because they were already receiving those transfers at a higher rate pre-pandemic and because, on average, countries in the region provided the most economic support to its citizens to respond to the pandemic (Khamis et al., 2021). For respondents with a formal job, we do not see differences across groups of low-skilled women (but we do for men). It is important to highlight that the latter analysis is done pre-pandemic over the total sample, but during the pandemic only for those individuals who were still working.

Finally, Figure 6 shows changes in different sources of income.⁷ We observe a larger share of low-skilled women claiming to have experienced reductions in income compared to low-skilled men—true for total household income as well as individual sources of income. For low-skilled men, we see larger increases in the share of individuals that experienced a reduction in total income for those who had in-person jobs back in February 2020 compared to those with virtual ones. For low-skilled women, the reverse is true, and the largest reductions are seen for low-skilled women with virtual occupations (which to an extent might be a consequence of the change in their working hours). Even when compared to domestic workers, women with low-skilled virtual jobs are the ones that experienced the largest decreases in their household total income. The same is true when we only analyse wages. Therefore, even though women with in-person low-skilled jobs have lost their jobs or stopped working at a higher rate, it seems to appear that the rate at which women with virtual low-skilled jobs experienced a reduction in hours of work translates into a reduction in income that more than compensates the decrease in income for in-person low-skilled women as a product of their decrease in labour participation. Note that the total sample was ask only about total income and wages.^{8 9}

Figure 6. Income during the pandemic: share of individuals who experienced a decrease, by groups according to pre-pandemic occupations



Source: Own calculations based on the World Bank and UNDP; LAC High-Frequency Phone Survey, Phase II, Round 1.

⁷ Just as with domestic chores, the question in the survey directly asks “what your household received in terms of [source] of income in 2021, [i.e.] increased, was the same, or decreased compared to February 2020?”. This means that the survey does not ask about income level pre- and during the pandemic, but for the change.

⁸ Wages have 1,677 missing values, distributed across those who are active (1,168 observations), unemployed (185) and inactive (324).

⁹ Figure 6 shows that between 14 percent and 20 percent of the sample experience a decrease in the amount of income coming from government transfers. The survey first asks a yes/no question regarding receiving government transfers before the pandemic then the same question for after the pandemic. For those who answered yes to both, the third question is if those transfers increased, decreased or stayed the same during the pandemic. Finally, the HFPS asks about receiving specific pandemic government transfers during the pandemic (as a yes/no question). This is done for every household in every country (though the question is specifically targeted to each country, asking about each country’s specific program). As such, the change in the amount of government transfers is seen only for those who received transfers both pre- and post-pandemic from ‘traditional’ programs. Nevertheless, if we analyse Figure 5, we see that the share of people receiving transfers in 2021 increased compared to 2020—which means that overall, more government transfers are issued.

4. Multivariate Results

Our descriptive analysis above was suggestive of some important overall changes in the time use of low-skilled women during the pandemic based on the type of occupation they had back in February 2020. We see that low-skilled working women with in-person jobs pre-pandemic are participating less in the labour market (particularly domestic workers), but that those who remained working reduced their number of hours at a lower rate compared to low-skilled women with virtual jobs. We also see that women with virtual jobs are experiencing larger increases in the time they devote to domestic chores compared to low-skilled women with in-person jobs and specifically to domestic workers. Moreover, we observe that domestic workers are experiencing increases in their time taking care of elderly individuals or persons with disabilities. Finally, we see that compared with low-skilled virtual women, households of low-skilled women with in-person jobs experienced greater increases of food insecurity, but lower reductions in their wages and total household income.

We now turn to multivariate analysis to provide more evidence and rigor on the size and significance of these changes during the pandemic. We also use this analysis to go deeper into the situation of domestic workers during the pandemic. As such, we employ a DD¹⁰ strategy over the sample that includes only individuals who were employed in 2020 (with a known occupation to be categorized as either in-person or virtual),

$$Y_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{Women}_i + \gamma_2 \text{InPerson}_i + \gamma_3 \text{Women}_i \text{InPerson}_i + \sum_{c=1}^C \delta_c X_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

where Y_i are transitional or change outcomes (that already incorporate the before-during the pandemic difference), an indicator for being female and InPerson_i is a variable that takes the value of 1 if the individual has a job in 2020 that is considered to be in-person and 0 if the job is virtual. X_i represents a series of control variables in 2021, including age, age squared, a dummy for cohabitation, a dummy for being urban, a dummy for living with someone over 65 years old, number of years of education, members in the household, number of children under 6 years old in the household, number of children between 6 and 11 years old in the household and number of children between 12 and 17 years old in the household. μ_i is the error term that will be clustered at the country level. The DD parameter in this case is represented by γ_3 . A significant value of γ_3 means that the pandemic affected low-skilled women with in-person jobs pre-pandemic differently than for low-skilled women with virtual jobs (once we control by the overall differences between in-person and virtual occupations that are not related to the pandemic and that could be driving the results, which are captured by the before-during difference between low-skilled in-person and virtual men). All the estimations are performed using a linear probability model. In the main text, we only report the coefficient on the individual effects and the interaction, which captures the change in time use/well-being during the pandemic between low-skilled women with virtual jobs and low-skilled

¹⁰ Another way to think about this approach is a DDD (triple difference) analysis, where the first difference is the before-after the pandemic, the second difference is the virtual-person one, and the third difference is the men-women one. However, the before-after difference is absorbed in the outcome variable.

women with in-person ones, differencing out changes in these patterns for the ‘untreated’ group of low-skilled men.¹¹ The results of the estimations with fixed effects by country can be found in the Annex.

To test for heterogeneous effects of the pandemic on domestic workers, we calculate equation (1) using domestic workers as the in-person women group, and then for robustness we iterate into different control groups for in-person low-skilled working men.

We begin with Table 6, which shows the changes in the proportion of individuals who, conditional on working prior to the pandemic, transitioned to either inactivity, unemployment, being active but not working last week, working in the same occupation as in 2020 or working in a different occupation. Panel A shows the results for the complete sample. Similar to what was observed in the descriptive part, the table shows that being a low-skilled woman with an in-person job at the start of the pandemic increased the probability of being inactive by mid-2021 by almost 4 p.p., compared to low-skilled virtual women (once we account for the before-after differences in virtual versus in-person jobs in low-skilled men). It also increased the probability of being unemployed by 3.3 p.p., decreased the probability of working in the same occupation by 11 p.p. and increased the probability of working in a different occupation by around 5 p.p.—all compared to low-skilled virtual women once we remove the differences between those occupations in low-skilled men. As such, in column (6), overall we see the pandemic implied an increase in 6 p.p. in the probability that low-skilled women with an in-person job lost their jobs compared to low-skilled virtual women. Columns (7) and (8) are linked to working hours for those who are still working in 2021. Column (7) shows the probability of working for fewer hours per week conditional on being employed in 2020 and 2021. Even though low-skilled women have around a 14-p.p. higher probability of working fewer hours, the DD is not significant. That means that there are no statistically significant differences in the reduction of the number of hours worked between low-skilled women with in-person and virtual jobs with the pandemic. Finally, column (8) shows for those who were full-time workers in 2020 (employed for 20 hours or more per week), their probability of transitioning to part-time employment (employed for less than 20 hours per week) in 2021, conditional on working in 2021. Once again, we see that low-skilled women have around an 18-p.p. higher probability of transitioning to part-time from full-time employment; the DD is not significant. Therefore, even though the DD is not significant for both outcomes related to working hours, the sign is negative and the magnitude is 1.5–2 p.p., reflecting what was observed in the descriptive section: low-skilled women with in-person jobs see lower reductions in working hours compared to low-skilled women with virtual occupations (or, saying it differently, low-skilled women with virtual jobs see higher reductions in working hours compared to low-skilled women with in-person occupations) with the pandemic.

¹¹ To perform the previous estimation, the assumptions are: (i) in the absence of the pandemic, the changes in use of time and well-being between women with in-person and virtual jobs prior to the pandemic would have evolved similarly; and (ii) there is no other event besides the pandemic happening at the same time that can explain the differences in outcomes between the groups. While the previous two assumptions cannot be tested, what is tested are the double differences in outcomes between the groups prior to the pandemic. See Table A.1 in the Annex. As shown, virtual women and in-person women were different prior to the pandemic, and so were virtual and in-person men. Nevertheless, the difference between the four groups is not statistically significant in 2020, which allows us to move forward with the analysis. Note also that this analysis can only be done for the limited outcomes for which we have 2020 information.

Table 6. Effect of the pandemic on work outside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Inactive	Unemployed	Active not working last week	Active working in same occupation	Active working in different occupation	Lost of employment indicator	Less working hrs per week indicator	Move from FT to PT employment
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)								
DD	0.0366** (0.01605)	0.0335** (0.01530)	-0.0069 (0.00813)	-0.1144*** (0.01949)	0.0512*** (0.01186)	0.0632*** (0.02232)	-0.0153 (0.02266)	-0.0189 (0.02029)
Women	0.1420*** (0.01254)	0.0571*** (0.00686)	0.0091 (0.01124)	-0.1758*** (0.01670)	-0.0325*** (0.00830)	0.2083*** (0.01840)	0.1416*** (0.03902)	0.1757*** (0.03482)
In person	0.0165* (0.00839)	-0.0139 (0.01013)	0.0009 (0.00548)	0.0388* (0.02092)	-0.0422** (0.01654)	0.0035 (0.01267)	-0.0153 (0.01055)	0.0025 (0.01008)
Constant	0.4437*** (0.08359)	0.2342*** (0.04445)	-0.0406 (0.03076)	0.0381 (0.07639)	0.3246*** (0.05940)	0.6373*** (0.07887)	0.4736*** (0.04911)	0.2753*** (0.09059)
N	10737	10737	10737	10737	10737	10737	8033	7206
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)								
DD	0.0596 (0.03514)	0.0265 (0.03921)	0.0288* (0.01495)	-0.1074** (0.04614)	-0.0076 (0.02551)	0.1150* (0.05740)	0.1624*** (0.03733)	-0.0947** (0.04362)
Women	0.1401*** (0.01399)	0.0574*** (0.00605)	0.0087 (0.01114)	-0.1757*** (0.01608)	-0.0304*** (0.00842)	0.2062*** (0.01889)	0.1414*** (0.04095)	0.1768*** (0.03357)
In person	0.0018 (0.02558)	0.0031 (0.04146)	-0.0328*** (0.00656)	0.0497 (0.03969)	-0.0218 (0.03278)	-0.0279 (0.05497)	-0.1833*** (0.03504)	0.1180* (0.06186)
Constant	0.4658*** (0.05372)	0.2821*** (0.06725)	-0.0412 (0.02834)	-0.0240 (0.06898)	0.3173*** (0.06152)	0.7067*** (0.08178)	0.5496*** (0.15130)	0.2911* (0.14247)
N	6440	6440	6440	6440	6440	6440	4696	4153
C: (Women with virtual jobs - Domestic Workers) - (Men with virtual jobs - Men with in person service jobs)								
DD	0.0149 (0.02563)	0.0397*** (0.01325)	-0.0165 (0.01395)	-0.0157 (0.01387)	-0.0224 (0.01328)	0.0381* (0.02099)	-0.0537 (0.04377)	0.0133 (0.03394)
Women	0.1383*** (0.01449)	0.0577*** (0.00623)	0.0094 (0.01121)	-0.1733*** (0.01758)	-0.0321*** (0.00768)	0.2054*** (0.01912)	0.1394*** (0.03906)	0.1766*** (0.03363)
In person	0.0383 (0.02274)	-0.0064 (0.01652)	0.0155** (0.00724)	-0.0440*** (0.01498)	-0.0034 (0.01599)	0.0474** (0.01945)	0.0460** (0.01782)	0.0199* (0.01152)
Constant	0.5004*** (0.05711)	0.2970*** (0.05432)	-0.0753** (0.03593)	-0.0446 (0.06264)	0.3225*** (0.06487)	0.7221*** (0.07359)	0.5084*** (0.11205)	0.3418** (0.12149)
N	7451	7451	7451	7451	7451	7451	5532	4936
D: (Women with virtual jobs - Domestic Workers) - (Men with virtual jobs - Men with in person manufacture jobs)								
DD	0.0562** (0.02060)	0.0511** (0.02351)	0.0042 (0.01135)	-0.1551*** (0.02595)	0.0436* (0.02370)	0.1115*** (0.03111)	0.0406 (0.03800)	0.0344 (0.03479)
Women	0.1398*** (0.01325)	0.0589*** (0.00609)	0.0089 (0.01132)	-0.1771*** (0.01516)	-0.0304*** (0.00782)	0.2076*** (0.01818)	0.1432*** (0.04070)	0.1758*** (0.03525)
In person	0.0020 (0.01472)	-0.0169 (0.01077)	-0.0072 (0.00609)	0.0902*** (0.02938)	-0.0681*** (0.01805)	-0.0221 (0.02084)	-0.0508*** (0.01133)	-0.0054 (0.01420)
Constant	0.4167*** (0.06757)	0.2327*** (0.04135)	-0.0340 (0.02451)	0.0588 (0.08272)	0.3257*** (0.05625)	0.6154*** (0.07771)	0.4911*** (0.09654)	0.2201* (0.10853)
N	8165	8165	8165	8165	8165	8165	6185	5555
E: (Women with virtual jobs - Domestic Workers) - (Men with virtual jobs - Construction Workers)								
DD	0.0590*** (0.01685)	0.0379* (0.02098)	-0.0009 (0.01379)	-0.0760*** (0.02564)	-0.0200 (0.03043)	0.0960*** (0.02811)	-0.0645 (0.04618)	0.0134 (0.03634)
Women	0.1412*** (0.01340)	0.0581*** (0.00609)	0.0088 (0.01117)	-0.1762*** (0.01486)	-0.0319*** (0.00786)	0.2080*** (0.01812)	0.1429*** (0.04168)	0.1771*** (0.03428)
In person	0.0031 (0.01665)	-0.0079 (0.01520)	-0.0033 (0.00895)	0.0188 (0.03913)	-0.0108 (0.02050)	-0.0080 (0.02670)	0.0428 (0.02716)	0.0080 (0.02468)
Constant	0.4844*** (0.06075)	0.2612*** (0.05141)	-0.0319 (0.02512)	-0.0389 (0.06876)	0.3252*** (0.05372)	0.7137*** (0.07002)	0.4801*** (0.10060)	0.2417* (0.13513)
N	7231	7231	7231	7231	7231	7231	5334	4761

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables.

= * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'

Moving to Table 7, Panel A shows the changes in the time use spent on working within the household or domestic chores. First it is interesting to note that being a low-skilled woman implied an increase in all different types of domestic chores in the magnitude of 3–16 p.p. compared to low-skilled men—a reality of the gender distribution of work within a household. Moreover, we can see overall that having an in-person job is correlated with a lower increase in domestic chores during the pandemic compared to having a virtual one across gender. As previously stated, this is probably a result of individuals with virtual occupations spending more time at home compared to what their situation would have been in pre-pandemic times. Finally, Panel A shows that the interaction of being a low-skilled woman and having an in-person job prior to the pandemic is not significant for any domestic chore. However, the sign of the DD points to some correlation in low-skilled women with in-person jobs experiencing a lower increase than low-skilled women with virtual jobs in the time use spent in activities like cleaning, cooking and ironing during 2021 compared to 2020, as well as in activities related to taking care of children. This is similar to what was shown in the descriptive section and probably a result of low-skilled women with virtual jobs spending more time at home. Moreover, the DD also shows a small and positive sign on increase in time use spent taking care of older individuals or persons with disabilities, meaning that low-skilled women with in-person jobs show some correlation with experiencing a higher increase in the time use in those activities relative to low-skilled virtual women.

Given the above, we analyse the decomposition of the time use in domestic chores between households who claim that either new people permanently moved to their household during the pandemic (even though we do not know who they are) and/or a baby was born, and those who state that no new members were added to their household during the pandemic. The idea behind the analysis is to understand if the increase in domestic chores that low-skilled women are experiencing overall—and particularly those differences (even though not statistically significant) between occupations in different domestic chores—are coming from the same individuals who had always lived in the household or new ones who might have moved to the house during the pandemic or because of it. Table 8 shows the results. While all the DD continually remains statistically not significant, it is still interesting to see the differences in sign and magnitude of the coefficient within the two types of households. In particular, we see that in households with new members, being a low-skilled woman with an in-person job is correlated with a lower increase in activities like cooking, ironing and cleaning as well as in supporting children’s education. However, it is correlated with an increase in taking care of children as well as older individuals or persons with disabilities. In households without new members, being a low-skilled woman with an in-person job is also correlated with a lower increase in activities like cooking, ironing and cleaning (though the magnitude is smaller than for the other household types) and, in this case, taking care of children. It is correlated with an increase in supporting children’s education. Here, the effect over taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals is almost negligible. It is interesting then that in households with new members, low-skilled women with in-person jobs—who stopped working outside the household at a higher rate—are now devoting more time to taking care of children and particularly persons with disabilities or who are elderly, who could have moved in because of the pandemic, compared to those with virtual jobs. While low-skilled women with virtual jobs seem to be working fewer hours, they are mainly increasing their time devoted to domestic work to activities like cooking, cleaning and ironing, which perhaps they try to do while working from home at the same time.

Table 7. Effect of the pandemic on work inside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Increase in domestic chores like cleaning, cooking and ironing	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of children	Increase in domestic chores like supporting children education	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of older or disabled individuals
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) - (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	-0.0307 (0.02219)	-0.0139 (0.03450)	0.0139 (0.02473)	0.0181 (0.02259)
Women	0.1274*** (0.01714)	0.1060*** (0.03566)	0.1528*** (0.02973)	0.0253** (0.01045)
In person	-0.0147 (0.01184)	-0.0678*** (0.02068)	-0.0429 (0.03383)	-0.0306*** (0.00514)
Constant	-0.0170 (0.09281)	-0.1772** (0.06406)	-0.3450*** (0.10317)	-0.1132*** (0.03429)
N	10737	7023	5485	10737
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	-0.0738 (0.05144)	-0.0247 (0.12931)	-0.0358 (0.12592)	0.0692 (0.04836)
Women	0.1266*** (0.01727)	0.1018** (0.03766)	0.1494*** (0.02994)	0.0259** (0.01062)
In person	0.0194 (0.04853)	-0.0601 (0.09606)	0.0069 (0.12298)	-0.0682** (0.03090)
Constant	-0.0291 (0.05668)	-0.1556 (0.10336)	-0.3853*** (0.10215)	-0.1881*** (0.04956)
N	6440	4222	3304	6440
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)				
DD	-0.0529 (0.04835)	-0.0527 (0.06810)	0.0236 (0.05163)	0.0172 (0.02399)
Women	0.1271*** (0.01711)	0.1011** (0.03805)	0.1501*** (0.02925)	0.0242** (0.01065)
In person	-0.0005 (0.02590)	-0.0330 (0.04225)	-0.0484 (0.04954)	-0.0169 (0.01114)
Constant	-0.0640 (0.08841)	-0.1969** (0.09332)	-0.4289*** (0.10481)	-0.1729*** (0.02595)
N	7451	4826	3756	7451
D: (Women with virtual jobs - Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)				
DD	-0.0303 (0.02689)	-0.0035 (0.04557)	0.0115 (0.03396)	0.0417 (0.02669)
Women	0.1275*** (0.01660)	0.1055*** (0.03558)	0.1466*** (0.03135)	0.0265** (0.01092)
In person	-0.0223* (0.01140)	-0.0855*** (0.01349)	-0.0392 (0.03789)	-0.0380*** (0.01051)
Constant	-0.0107 (0.07954)	-0.2399*** (0.06985)	-0.3552*** (0.08068)	-0.1361** (0.05108)
N	8165	5342	4168	8165
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction workers)				
DD	-0.0698* (0.03861)	-0.0513 (0.04932)	-0.0070 (0.04439)	0.0280 (0.03483)
Women	0.1264*** (0.01655)	0.1017** (0.03636)	0.1474*** (0.02966)	0.0253** (0.01064)
In person	0.0146 (0.02254)	-0.0360 (0.02303)	-0.0233 (0.04368)	-0.0280 (0.02013)
Constant	-0.0428 (0.08656)	-0.2435*** (0.07659)	-0.3693*** (0.08747)	-0.1818*** (0.04792)
N	7231	4738	3709	7231

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables. = ** p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'

Table 8. Effect of the pandemic on work inside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic and type of household

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Increase in domestic chores like cleaning, cooking and ironing	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of children	Increase in domestic chores like supporting children education	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of older or disabled individuals
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs) in HH with new members				
DD	-0.0517 (0.06700)	0.0445 (0.05206)	-0.1295 (0.15033)	0.1107 (0.06641)
Women	0.2688*** (0.04229)	0.1707*** (0.03932)	0.2557*** (0.05521)	-0.0144 (0.06569)
In person	0.0042 (0.04908)	-0.1138*** (0.03960)	-0.0371 (0.11637)	-0.0588* (0.02985)
Constant	0.1247 (0.20250)	-0.0947 (0.13030)	0.1153 (0.19721)	0.0678 (0.14794)
N	1576	1362	908	1576
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs) in HH with no new members				
DD	-0.0223 (0.01402)	-0.0270 (0.03023)	0.0503 (0.03717)	0.0071 (0.01748)
Women	0.1010*** (0.01811)	0.0902** (0.03745)	0.1261*** (0.02967)	0.0327** (0.01242)
In person	-0.0161* (0.00858)	-0.0584*** (0.01820)	-0.0462 (0.04635)	-0.0345*** (0.00755)
Constant	-0.0766 (0.06112)	-0.1572* (0.08284)	-0.4326*** (0.11092)	-0.1845*** (0.03456)
N	8559	5661	4577	8559

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

We finally turn to other measures of well-being, as seen in Table 9 (Panel A). Column (1) shows the probability of being a new informal worker, conditional on being formal in 2020. We see that being a low-skilled woman with an in-person job increased the probability of becoming a new informal worker by more than 8 p.p. compared to being a low-skilled woman with a virtual job. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the differences in averages did not hold for formality prior to the pandemic between groups (see Table A.1 in the Annex), and as such this result should be taken with caution. Similarly, we see that for households with in-person low-skilled women respondents, the probability of being new at experiencing food insecurity is almost 5 p.p. greater than for low-skilled virtual women, but the difference is not statistically significant. We also do not see differentiated effects for a household that is new at receiving a government subsidy. In what refers to reductions in total income (for the specific income categories refer to Table A.2 in the Annex), we see that compared to low-skilled men, overall low-skilled women experienced an almost 16-p.p. higher reduction in total household income. Nevertheless, we see that compared to low-skilled women who hold a virtual job, low-skilled women with an in-person job experienced a lower reduction: around 8 p.p. less. This is also consistent with what was observed in the descriptive section. Therefore, even though in-person low-skilled women have lost their jobs or stopped working at a higher rate, the rate at which virtual low-skilled women experienced a reduction in household income more than compensates that decrease in labour participation.

Table 9. Effect of the pandemic on other measures of well-being, conditional on occupation pre pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	New informal worker	New individual experiencing food insecurity	New individual receiving gov. subsidy	Reduced income indicator (total)
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	0.0883*** (0.02637)	0.0464 (0.02751)	0.0023 (0.02215)	-0.0730** (0.02730)
Women	0.0448** (0.02143)	0.0809*** (0.02134)	-0.0019 (0.00766)	0.1597*** (0.01793)
In person	0.0103 (0.02574)	-0.0084 (0.01704)	0.0143 (0.01478)	0.0233 (0.02475)
Constant	0.5933*** (0.16584)	0.3835*** (0.08147)	0.1258*** (0.03110)	0.2237*** (0.07425)
N	3770	8810	8353	10727
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	0.0931 (0.09373)	0.1446*** (0.03420)	0.0681* (0.03289)	0.0028 (0.04370)
Women	0.0377* (0.02061)	0.0797*** (0.02149)	-0.0004 (0.00657)	0.1595*** (0.01822)
In person	-0.0738 (0.05369)	-0.1038*** (0.02585)	-0.0417* (0.02421)	-0.0775* (0.04247)
Constant	0.6985*** (0.19110)	0.4597*** (0.08602)	0.1084* (0.05448)	0.3007*** (0.10152)
N	2317	5292	4989	6433
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)				
DD	0.0300 (0.04816)	0.0485 (0.03005)	0.0075 (0.02333)	-0.1480*** (0.03558)
Women	0.0342* (0.01967)	0.0796*** (0.02127)	-0.0002 (0.00685)	0.1581*** (0.01799)
In person	0.0165 (0.03996)	-0.0019 (0.01798)	0.0185 (0.02343)	0.0781** (0.03432)
Constant	0.6459*** (0.18828)	0.4644*** (0.11043)	0.1214*** (0.02479)	0.3349*** (0.11495)
N	2794	6168	5822	7444
D: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)				
DD	0.0377 (0.06102)	0.0634* (0.03200)	0.0098 (0.02740)	-0.0598** (0.02855)
Women	0.0503** (0.02272)	0.0831*** (0.02216)	-0.0005 (0.00765)	0.1598*** (0.01833)
In person	0.0000 (0.02168)	-0.0178 (0.02302)	0.0111 (0.01912)	-0.0107 (0.02473)
Constant	0.6570*** (0.18570)	0.4259*** (0.12128)	0.0997*** (0.03482)	0.2522*** (0.08547)
N	2865	6735	6294	8156
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction Workers)				
DD	0.0149 (0.06884)	0.0197 (0.05088)	0.0212 (0.02523)	-0.0937*** (0.03066)
Women	0.0479* (0.02520)	0.0804*** (0.02235)	-0.0002 (0.00699)	0.1599*** (0.01832)
In person	0.6375*** (0.16439)	0.4617*** (0.09208)	0.0820** (0.03277)	0.0198 (0.02225)
Constant	0.6375*** (0.16439)	0.4617*** (0.09208)	0.0820** (0.03277)	0.2443*** (0.08380)
N	2603	5943	5592	7223

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables. = ** p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

4.1. Domestic Workers

We now move to Panel B of the aforementioned tables, where we only consider domestic workers for low-skilled women in-person jobs. In terms of work outside the household, Table 6 shows similar patterns as the one with the complete sample: being an in-person low-skilled woman (just a domestic worker in this case) at the start of the pandemic increased the probability of being inactive by mid-2021 by around 6 p.p., compared to low-skilled virtual women (once we account for the before-after differences in virtual versus in-person jobs in low-skilled men). It also increased the probability of being unemployed by 2 p.p. However, in both cases, the differences are not statistically significant now. We also see a significant decreased probability of working in the same occupation by 10.8 p.p.—all compared to low-skilled virtual women once we remove the differences between those occupations in low-skilled men. As such, as seen in column (6), overall the pandemic implied an increase of 11.5 p.p. in the probability the domestic worker lost her job compared to low-skilled virtual women. Column (7) shows the probability of working for fewer hours per week conditional on being employed in 2020 and 2021 increased by almost 17 p.p., but column (8) shows that for those domestic workers who were full-time workers in 2020, their probability of transitioning to part-time employment in 2021 is 10 p.p. lower than for low-skilled women with virtual jobs—probably due to the fact that not that many domestic workers were employed full-time prior to the pandemic to begin with.

Panel B of Table 7 shows what happened with work in the household. Once again, we still see that being a low-skilled woman implies a greater increase in every type of chore during the pandemic compared to low-skilled men. As seen in the descriptive analysis, the only positive interaction of being a low-skilled woman and having an in-person job, meaning a domestic worker, prior to the pandemic is the one related to taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals. The almost 7-p.p. increase in the proportion of domestic workers who perform this activity compared to low-skilled virtual women is consistent with the fact that due to demographic changes in the region now, domestic workers are shifting more to caring for the elderly. Nevertheless, this result should be taken with caution as the figure is not statistically significant.

Finally, Panel B of Table 9 shows other measures of well-being for this analysis. In this case we can see that there seems to be no differences in the probability of becoming a new informal worker for domestic workers compared to low-skilled virtual women, but there is almost a 15-p.p. higher probability of belonging to a new household experiencing food insecurity and a 7-p.p. higher probability of belonging to a new household receiving government transfers. Nevertheless, the differences in the averages assumption did not hold for the last variables with this sample (meaning that experiencing food insecurity and receiving government transfers was already different between groups prior to the pandemic), so results should be taken with caution. Regarding total income, in this case we do see that low-skilled women experienced a higher decrease in total household income than low-skilled men, but there is no differentiated effect between low-skilled women with virtual jobs and domestic workers.

The results then show that low-skilled women with in-person jobs in 2020 are losing their jobs at a higher rate during the pandemic compared to low-skilled virtual women, particularly

domestic workers. For number of hours, the empirical estimations do not give a conclusive effect.

Regarding work within the household, the analysis shows that low-skilled women with virtual jobs are experiencing larger increases in the time they devote to domestic chores compared to low-skilled women with in-person jobs. The descriptive data show that this is particularly true for activities like cooking, ironing or cleaning and taking care of children. This is consistent with both the fact that low-skilled women with virtual jobs are now spending more time at home and the decrease in domestic workers' services (linked to a reduction in their activity). It is important to note that while the empirical estimations are in line with those findings, the effects are not statistically significant.

Finally, we also see some evidence that low-skilled women with in-person jobs are experiencing a higher probability of becoming new informal workers compared to virtual women. This is not observed when domestic workers are analysed independently. Across the different estimations it can be seen that low-skilled women with in-person jobs (and particularly domestic workers) are seeing reductions in their wages and total household income that are lower than for low-skilled virtual women.

4.2. Robustness checks

Given that, as shown in Table A.1 in the Annex, the differences in averages in this analysis did not hold for several variables, and given that Table 5 shows that the groups are different in terms of years of schooling, we decided to redo the analysis replacing low-skilled men with different groups of in-person jobs. Panels C–E in Tables 6, 7 and 9 show the results. In particular, in Panel C we use in-person jobs related to the service industry as the control, mainly restaurants/hotels/tourism, transportation, administrative services and domestic work. In Panel D we use in-person jobs related to the manufacture industry as the control, mainly agriculture, repair and construction. Finally, in Panel E we only use construction workers for men with in-person jobs.

Starting with Panel C of Table 6, we see that being a domestic worker at the start of the pandemic did not seem to significantly change the probability of being inactive by mid-2021 compared to low-skilled virtual women (once we account for the before-after differences in virtual low-skilled men versus low-skilled men with in-person service jobs), but it did increase the probability of being unemployed by almost 4 p.p., and, overall, implied an increase in almost 4 p.p. in the probability the domestic worker lost her job compared to low-skilled virtual women. In terms of hours, no differences are observed in this case. Nevertheless, results should be taken with caution given that, as seen in Table A.1, the differences in averages assumption does not hold for this group.

For work inside the household, Panel C of Table 7 shows that domestic workers seem to be experiencing a lower increase in having to devote time to activities such as cooking, cleaning and ironing compared to low-skilled virtual women (around 6 p.p.)—consistent once again with the hypothesis that the decrease in the domestic workers' activity implied an increase in the time low-skilled women with virtual jobs had to devote to such activities in their household. Moreover, we once again see the increase in the probability of domestic workers taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals. It is important to note that the effects are, nevertheless, not statistically significant.

Finally, for other measures of well-being, Panel C of Table 9 shows that domestic workers seem to be having a higher probability of becoming a new individual experiencing food insecurity (though the effect is not statistically significant), but also they experienced a decrease in their household total income that is lower (by almost 15 p.p.) than that experienced by low-skilled women with virtual jobs. Therefore, even though domestic workers have lost their jobs or stopped working at a higher rate, the rate at which low-skilled women with virtual jobs experienced a reduction in income is higher.

Moving now to Panel D, Table 6 shows that in terms of work outside the household, we see similar patterns as with the general case: being a domestic worker at the start of the pandemic increased the probability of being inactive by mid-2021 by almost 6 p.p., compared to low-skilled virtual women (once we account for the before-after differences in low-skilled virtual men versus men construction workers), and increased the probability of being unemployed by around 5 p.p. It also decreased the probability of working in the same occupation by 15 p.p. As such, as seen in column (6), overall the pandemic implied an increase of more than 10 p.p. in the probability the domestic worker lost her job compared to low-skilled virtual women. In terms of hours, we also do not see a difference in terms of moving from full-time work to part-time work, or having fewer hours of work with the pandemic for those who continued working.

For work inside the household, we can see that domestic workers seem to also be experiencing a lower increase in having to devote time to activities such as cooking, cleaning and ironing as well as taking care of children compared to virtual low-skilled women—consistent once again with the hypothesis that the decrease in domestic workers’ activity implied an increase in the time low-skilled women with virtual jobs had to devote to such activities in their household. However, the effects are not statistically significant. Moreover, we see that domestic workers experienced an increase of around 4 p.p. in the probability of taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals compared to low-skilled virtual women (once again, without those effects being statistically significant).

Finally, for other measures of well-being, Panel D of Table 9 shows that even though the DD is positive, we do not see any statistically significant changes in the probability of domestic workers becoming either a new informal worker or belonging to a household that is new in receiving a government transfer at a different rate than low-skilled women with virtual jobs. However, we do see that domestic workers seem to belong to households that are becoming new at experiencing food insecurity at a higher rate and also experienced a decrease in their household total income. This is lower (by almost 6 p.p.) than the decrease experienced by low-skilled women with virtual jobs. Therefore, even though domestic workers have lost their jobs or stopped working at a higher rate, the rate at which low-skilled women with virtual jobs experienced an income reduction in is higher. This can be partially due to the fact that government help was enough for domestic workers to compensate for a loss in income, but not for low-skilled virtual women who perhaps earned more prior to the pandemic.

Lastly, we move to Panel E where only construction workers are used. In Table 6, in terms of work outside the household, we see patterns similar to those in Panel D: being a domestic worker at the start of the pandemic increased the probability of being inactive by mid-2021 by almost 6 p.p., compared to low-skilled virtual women (once we account for the before-

after differences in low-skilled virtual men versus men construction workers), and increased the probability of being unemployed by almost 4 p.p. It also decreased the probability of working in the same occupation by 7 p.p. Therefore overall, as seen in column (6), the pandemic implied an increase of almost 10 p.p. in the probability the domestic worker lost her job compared to low-skilled virtual women. In terms of hours, we also do not see significant differences across groups.

For work inside the household, Table 7 shows that domestic workers seem to be experiencing a lower increase in having to devote time to activities such as cooking, cleaning and ironing compared to low-skilled virtual women (around 7 p.p.)—consistent once again with the hypothesis that the decrease in domestic workers’ activity implied an increase in the time low-skilled women with virtual jobs had to devote to such activities in their household. Moreover, we once again see the increase in the probability of domestic workers taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals (though the effect is not significant).

Finally, for other measures of well-being, even though the DD is positive, in Table 9 we do not see any statistically significant changes in the probability of domestic workers becoming either a new informal worker, or belonging to a new household experiencing food insecurity or receiving a government transfer at a different rate than low-skilled women with virtual jobs. However, we do see that domestic workers experienced a decrease in their household total income that is lower (by almost 10 p.p.) than that experienced by low-skilled women with virtual jobs.

4.3. Propensity score matching

Given that we are particularly interested in understanding more about domestic workers, and that the previous analysis is based on a double difference approach where the differences in averages have to hold for the double difference but not for the individual ones, we decided to perform a propensity score matching (PSM) analysis. This means matching domestic workers with both low-skilled virtual women and other low-skilled in-person women based on observables (the same control variables used in the previous section). It is important to note that this is just a robustness check, since we are matching across the region—therefore, a domestic worker in Colombia can be matched to a woman in Bolivia. As seen in the description of the dataset, doing a match country by country would not be possible since the sample of domestic workers in each country is insufficient to make a strong case. Nevertheless, to be as rigorous as possible, we decided to match using the nearest neighbor method (therefore, matching is 1-1 between the groups). This creates a loss of approximately 65 percent of the sample.

For work outside the household, Table 10 shows the matches for low-skilled women with both virtual and in-person jobs. In Panel A we see the match for low-skilled women with virtual jobs prior to the pandemic. Once again, for domestic workers we see the increase in the probability of being inactive, an increase in the probability of being unemployed, a decrease in the probability of being active and working in the same occupation and, overall, an increase in the probability of domestic workers having lost their jobs. For those still working, we see an increase in the probability of working fewer hours per week, and of moving from full-time employment to part-time. Panel B shows the same but for low-skilled

women with in-person jobs prior to the pandemic. In this case, we see once again the increase in the probability of being inactive and, overall, of having lost their jobs (though now we see a decrease in the probability of being active in other occupations). We also see an increase in the probability of working fewer hours per week and of moving from full-time employment to part-time.

Table 11 shows the results for work inside the household. We see similar results when the match is done over virtual or other in-person low-skilled women: a lower increase in the probability of domestic workers engaging in chores inside their own households like cooking, cleaning or ironing, as well as taking care of children (compared to other similar low-skilled women). In this case, we do not see significant differences for taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals (and the sign is actually negative, contrary to what was expected).

Finally, for other measures of well-being, we see in Table 12, Panel A, that compared to virtual low-skilled women, domestic workers have a higher probability of being a new informal worker and of belonging to a new household experiencing food insecurity. We do not see differences for total income or for belonging to a new household receiving government transfers. In Panel B, we can see that compared to other in-person low-skilled women, domestic workers do not have any significant difference in terms of a higher probability of being a new informal worker, belonging to a new household experiencing food insecurity or receiving government transfers. We do see a lower probability of experiencing a reduction in total income, compared to low-skilled women with in-person jobs in 2020 who are matched in observables.

Table 10. Effect of the pandemic on work outside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic (PSM)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Inactive	Unemployed	Active not working last week	Active working in same occupation	Active working in different occupation	Lost of employment indicator	Less working hrs per week indicator	Move from FT to PT employment
A: Domestic Workers – Matched Women with virtual jobs								
Nearest neighbor matching	0.0556*** (0.01546)	0.0355*** (0.01295)	-0.0094 (0.00713)	-0.0614*** (0.01866)	-0.0203 (0.01290)	0.0817*** (0.01827)	0.0724*** (0.01741)	0.0850*** (0.02267)
Constant	0.2049*** (0.00770)	0.1301*** (0.00645)	0.0400*** (0.00355)	0.4823*** (0.00930)	0.1427*** (0.00643)	0.3751*** (0.00910)	0.6639*** (0.00867)	0.2104*** (0.01035)
N	3822	3822	3822	3822	3822	3822	3822	2065
B: Domestic Workers – Matched Women with in person jobs								
Nearest neighbor matching (ATT)	0.0461** (0.01822)	0.0160 (0.01565)	-0.0030 (0.00762)	0.0097 (0.02123)	-0.0688*** (0.01579)	0.0592*** (0.02125)	0.0427** (0.01949)	0.0813*** (0.02630)
Constant	0.2144*** (0.01197)	0.1496*** (0.01028)	0.0336*** (0.00500)	0.4112*** (0.01394)	0.1912*** (0.01037)	0.3976*** (0.01396)	0.6936*** (0.01280)	0.2141*** (0.01625)
N	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	1126

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

Table 11. Effect of the pandemic on work inside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic (PSM)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Increase in domestic chores like cleaning, cooking and ironing	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of children	Increase in domestic chores likesupporting children education	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of older or disabled individuals
A: Domestic Workers – Matched Women with virtual jobs				
Nearest neighbor matching	-0.0468*** (0.01743)	-0.0468** (0.02256)	-0.0397 (0.02545)	-0.0189 (0.01282)
Constant	0.3295*** (0.00868)	0.4568*** (0.01107)	0.5467*** (0.01240)	0.1402*** (0.00638)
N	3822	2653	2120	3822
B: Domestic Workers – Matched Women with in person jobs				
Nearest neighbor matching (ATT)	-0.0501** (0.01992)	-0.0558** (0.02571)	-0.0026 (0.02899)	-0.0155 (0.01449)
Constant	0.3328*** (0.01308)	0.4658*** (0.01661)	0.5096*** (0.01852)	0.1368*** (0.00952)
N	2198	1532	1233	2198

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

Table 12. Effect of the pandemic on other measures of well-being, conditional on occupation pre pandemic (PSM)

Other measures of well being (during pandemic, conditional on occupation pre pandemic)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	New informal worker	New individual experiencing food insecurity	New individual receiving gov. subsidy	Reduced income indicator (total)
Domestic Workers – Matched Women with virtual jobs				
Nearest neighbor matching	0.1210*** (0.03732)	0.0660*** (0.02013)	0.0231 (0.01417)	-0.0235 (0.01825)
Constant	0.2005*** (0.01377)	0.3258*** (0.00980)	0.1124*** (0.00691)	0.6191*** (0.00909)
N	1028	3058	2858	3819
Domestic Workers – Matched Women with in person jobs				
Nearest neighbor matching (ATT)	0.0108 (0.04673)	-0.0104 (0.02409)	0.0164 (0.01661)	-0.0538*** (0.02083)
Constant	0.3107*** (0.02529)	0.4021*** (0.01580)	0.1190*** (0.01067)	0.6493*** (0.01368)
N	478	1685	1645	2196

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to analyse how the pandemic affected the time use (and other measures of well-being) of working low-skilled women in Latin America and the Caribbean based on the type of occupation they had back in February 2020: either one that can be considered virtual, and as such can be performed remotely, or one that is considered in-person and therefore can only be performed if the individual mobilizes to the place of work. Moreover, given the importance of the domestic work sector in the female labour force and how interrelated their work is with the ability of other women to perform labour and non-labour activities, this study also puts particular emphasis on those changes in that group. Authors like Chauhan (2021), for example, point to the closure of offices and educational institutions, and the lack of domestic workers' services as reasons behind the increase in unpaid domestic chores in developing countries like India.

Using novel data from the first wave of the HFPS and a DD approach (using low-skilled working men with in-person or virtual jobs as a control group), our results demonstrate that by mid-2021 (and compared to the situation back in February 2020), low-skilled working women have seen higher reductions in the time they spent in the labour market and higher increases in the time they devote to domestic chores. The higher reductions in labour participation for women have also been observed in the US (Alon et al., 2020; Adams et al., 2020; Sevilla and Smith, 2020); Italy, Portugal and Spain (Caselli et al., 2022); and India (Deshpande, 2020). It is also in line with what has been reported by de Hoop et al. (2022) in Latin America and the Caribbean using the same dataset. In terms of women having the highest toll on unpaid work, that is something also observed in the UK (Hupkau and Petrangolo, 2020) and Turkey (Ilkcaracan and Memis, 2021) but not in countries like Belgium, the US or India, where the opposite was found (Van Tienoven, Minnen and Glorieux, 2021; Lyttelton, Zang and Musick, 2021; Carlson, Petts and Pepin, 2021; Deshpande, 2020).

Our results also show that by mid-2021 there have been differences in how low-skilled women with in-person jobs pre-pandemic distribute their time (and on different measures of well-being) compared to low-skilled women with virtual jobs.

In terms of work outside the household, we see that low-skilled women with in-person jobs in 2020 are participating less in the labour market during the pandemic, particularly domestic workers. The magnitude of that difference is 4–6 p.p. The main changes that are observed in work outside the household are a strong transition to inactivity, some increase in unemployment and (to a lower extent) having to find other occupations. This goes in line with the findings of Morales et al. (2022) regarding employment decreasing more in the sectors affected by sector-specific mobility restrictions. For number of hours, conditional on working in 2021, we observed in the descriptive data that the pandemic seems to have reduced the number of hours people (conditional on working) worked. This is particularly true for low-skilled women and even more so for low-skilled women with virtual jobs. This is different than what was experienced in the US with telecommuter mothers, who were working more hours than those mothers who continued working in-person in 2020 (Lyttelton, Zang and Musick, 2021). Even though we see that compared to domestic workers, the share of low-skilled women with virtual jobs that have experienced a reduction in their working hours (conditional on working in 2021) is 10 p.p. higher, the empirical estimations do not give a conclusive effect.

Regarding work within the household, the analysis shows that low-skilled women with virtual jobs are experiencing larger increases in the time they devote to domestic chores compared to low-skilled women with in-person jobs. The descriptive data show that this is particularly true for activities like cooking, ironing or cleaning and taking care of children. This is consistent with both the fact that low-skilled women with virtual jobs are now spending more time at home and that the decrease in domestic workers' services (linked to a reduction in their activity) might have implied an increase in the time low-skilled women with virtual jobs had to devote to such activities in their household. In other words, as noted by Bottan, Hoffmann and Vera-Cosio (2020), the intersectoral linkages imply that mobility restrictions (like the ones experienced by low-skilled women with in-person jobs) have affected other sectors as well. It is important to note that while the empirical estimations go in line with those findings, the effects are not statistically significant.

Moreover, we see some indication that domestic workers are experiencing increases in their time spent taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals, consistent with the fact that domestic workers are shifting more to caring for the elderly due to demographic changes in the region now (and with the exemptions such countries made to the mobilization of workers for that activity at the beginning of the pandemic).

Finally, we also see some evidence that low-skilled women with in-person jobs are experiencing a higher probability of becoming new informal workers. Domestic workers in particular might be experiencing a higher probability of belonging to a household that is new at experiencing food insecurity and receiving government transfers. Nevertheless, for those outcomes the empirical estimations and robustness checks do not give a conclusive result, and as such this finding needs to be taken with caution. What has been consistent across the different estimations though, is the fact that low-skilled women with in-person jobs (and particularly domestic workers) are seeing reductions in their wages and total household income that are lower than for low-skilled virtual women (an effect between 7 and 10 p.p.). While it is still true that domestic workers work for a lower number of hours and have lower wages overall, the effect of the pandemic seemed to have been relatively stronger for low-skilled virtual women in terms of income. It seems like low-skilled women who transitioned to working virtually outside their homes had to divert time from paid to unpaid work, which resulted in lost income (Van den Berg et al., 2006). It could also be the case that government help was enough for domestic workers to compensate for lost income, but not for low-skilled virtual women who perhaps earned more prior to the pandemic.

This study has some limitations that need to be discussed. First of all, it is a regional study and as such it is not possible to differentiate the effects by country due to the sample size (note that in the Annex the analysis including fixed effects by country can be found—results hold). This means that there are some within-country specifics (for example, the duration of the mobility restrictions) that are not accounted for. Therefore, the results should be seen as a general overview of the pandemic's medium-term effect on the time use (and other measures of well-being) of low-skilled working women in Latin America and the Caribbean based on their occupation type prior to the pandemic. Second, the data for February 2020 (prior to the pandemic) were collected retrospectively. That means that respondents were asked in mid-2021 about their work within and outside the household as well as other measures of well-being a year and a half after the events took place. It is possible to think that there is some noise in what people can remember in that time frame. Subsequent work with new waves of the HFPS could potentially eliminate this issue by relying on a panel

structure. Third, the definition of virtual versus in-person jobs in 2020 is based on the share of individuals by each occupation that worked at least 1 hour per week remotely in 2021—so it is possible that some individuals who are categorized as virtual were actually not able to adjust to a remote environment (and it is also possible that some individuals categorized as in-person were able to). Similarly, categorizing an individual as a domestic worker depends on her self-reporting. Thus, the definition might not incorporate women who perform those activities without payment or those who consider themselves an independent contractor, those who have more than one job (and perhaps domestic worker is their secondary occupation), or even distinctions between those women who live with their employers and those who do not. Extending this analysis to other surveys that might consider the previous distinctions (like household surveys) could be a future step in this line of research. Related to the previous point, a further limitation of the study is that the analysis is based on what the respondent considers their main occupation. While the dynamics of job transitions are more complex, given that individuals might have accepted a secondary job as a result of the pandemic, the nature of the data does not allow us to understand if individuals in the sample have more than one occupation. New waves of the HFPS could incorporate more questions related to secondary jobs to better understand the reality. It is also important to consider that the small sample size also implies that there are certain specifics of each country's regulation of domestic work that we expect would impact the way they adjust to the shock caused by the pandemic that cannot be analysed. As highlighted in Annex B, countries in the region have taken several steps towards the formalization of the sector, even though implementation of those laws still has a long way to go. Finally, this study is solely based on the first wave of the HFPS. Further research projects can include new waves of the survey that would allow for the construction of panels so that other types of analysis, like post-pandemic intra-household dynamics, could be further studied.

Beyond its limitations, this study is the first attempt to measure and analyse how the pandemic affected the time use (and other measures of well-being) of low-skilled working women based on the type of occupation they had prior to the pandemic at the regional level. The results found in this paper mean that the pandemic has had, so far, long-lasting effects. First of all, it is important to highlight that low-skilled women overall seem to be doing worse than low-skilled men, regardless of their type of occupation: the individual effects are strong and show that they are participating less in the labour market, working for a lower number of hours, experiencing higher increases in the time they devote to different domestic chores, becoming informal and belonging to households that are experiencing food insecurity at a higher rate, and, overall, they are seeing a higher decrease in their wages and household total income than low-skilled men. As such, the pandemic seems to be correlated with a widening of the inequity between men and women in the region (United Nations, 2020). Policies that are family-friendly (for example, giving fathers access to care leave and overall flexible work arrangements) could help reduce this gap (Ikkaracan and Memiş, 2021). While the focus of this analysis is only on low-skilled women who were employed prior to the pandemic—and therefore analysing what happened during the pandemic with low-skilled women who were unemployed or out of the labour market in 2020 is out of the scope of the paper—it would be interesting in future research projects to understand the extent of the effects of the pandemic on those low-skilled women who were not employed before the onset of the mobility restrictions.

Moreover, while the decrease in active labour-force participation of low-skilled women with in-person jobs was expected at the beginning of the pandemic given the mobility restrictions that affected the region, it is surprising that they are still visible by mid-2021 when most of the more challenging restrictions had been lifted. In other words, low-skilled women who were not allowed to work at the beginning of the pandemic due to the different quarantines (like domestic workers) had not returned to the job market by mid-2021. Knowing how this reality evolved in 2022 and onwards is key to understanding what the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-skilled women employment will be, and the effect not only in the aggregate economy of the region, but also in the inequities between men and women in the labour market. As highlighted by Ikkaracan and Memiş (2021), “Bailout and stimulus packages need to reflect a recognition of the care economy and its interactions with the market” (Ikkaracan and Memiş, 2021; p. 18).

It evolves from the analysis that the decrease in the time low-skilled women with in-person jobs prior to the pandemic are devoting to work outside the household might be linked to the increase in time spent doing domestic chores by low-skilled women with virtual jobs. The main driver of the decrease in employment of low-skilled women with in-person jobs are domestic workers. The pandemic seemed to have affected them the most in terms of their labour-force outcomes. Households usually outsource domestic chores through domestic workers so that other women can be active in the labour force. With domestic workers not being as active during the pandemic as prior to 2020, we see low-skilled women with virtual jobs (who are now working from inside their homes) devoting more time to activities like cleaning, cooking, ironing, and taking care of children. The question then arises whether such a situation is sustainable, or if it would force these women to spend less time working outside the household to take care of activities that they used to outsource to domestic workers. The fact that there is some indication of low-skilled virtual women working fewer hours (compared to prior to the pandemic), and the fact that they experienced a higher decrease in their household income shows that it is possible that the answer to that question is yes. It seems like finding support in the care economy for those women is fundamental to prevent them from reducing their time in the labour market (Martinez et al., 2016; Sulmont et al., 2021), which can also contribute to deepening the gap between men and women (Bangham, 2020; Craig and Churchill, 2020) particularly in this region where work inside the household is still highly femininized (Cruz et al., 2003). This seems key as domestic work employment positively correlates with female labour-force participation (Flipo et al. 2007), with wages of employed mothers (Kimmel and Connelly, 2007), and with female-headed households, larger households, larger dwellings and with aggregate household consumption (Fakih and Marrouch 2014).

Finally, it is important to remember that domestic workers were 11 percent of the regional female labour force (and more than 17 percent of all employees) prior to the pandemic. Not only can the reduction in their activity have long-lasting effects on the time use of other women who employ their services, as highlighted in the previous paragraph, it can also affect their own well-being. We see some initial indication that their households might be experiencing, for example, more food insecurity than any other group. Domestic workers have been the group that was mostly affected in terms of losing their jobs. This could be a consequence of the sector’s characteristics, still represented by high levels of informal work arrangements that make those women unable to enjoy the benefits of the protection of the law, despite the advancements in the region. As mobility restrictions ease and the

governments stop the transfers, they had to extend to vulnerable families affected by the pandemic, it would be important to understand how the time use of this group adjusts. Their time use has repercussions for other individuals in the economy, particularly other women who employ their services to care of their young or their household. In particular, it would be important to implement policies to try to bring these women back to the labour force, as their removal from the labour market plus less support from the government will inevitably lead to higher vulnerability. Targeted policies like educational and vocational programs adapted to the post-pandemic labour demands have been highlighted as policies to help and support the most vulnerable groups (Ando et al., 2022). Having more women enjoy the protection of the new domestic work regulations that emerged in the region could also be a way to help them navigate the aftermath of the pandemic.

A final reflection is also related to the fact that there is some indication that domestic workers, who traditionally performed activities like cooking, cleaning and taking care of children, are reporting an increase in taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals during the pandemic. This could reflect a change in the region's demographics or even the inertia provoked by the fact that most governments did allow mobilization of domestic workers for those purposes in early 2020. It could also indicate the reality that some households might have received family members with disabilities or those who are elderly into their homes during the pandemic. When the analysis of domestic chores was decomposed between households who claim that either new people permanently moved to their household during the pandemic and/or a baby was born, and those who state that no new members were added to their household during the pandemic, we see that being a low-skilled woman with an in-person job in the first group correlates with an increase in taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals, while in the second group the effect was almost negligible. The combination of the reduction of domestic work employment and the fact that they might be spending more time taking care of persons with disabilities or older individuals rather than, for example, smaller children, could also lead to a new paradigm for women who used to rely on domestic workers to take care of their families while they work outside the household. More research therefore is needed to see how women overall accommodated their time working inside their household and outside as countries in the region start to resume their level of functioning prior to 2020.

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7. Annexes

Annex A: Additional estimations

Table A.1. Differences in averages: work outside the household and well-being prior to the pandemic, conditional on occupation prior to the pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Weekly hours worked	Formal employment	Food insecurity	Gov. transfer
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	-1.0659 (1.86003)	0.0386** (0.01725)	0.0268 (0.01986)	0.0071 (0.01600)
Women	-8.6847*** (1.57746)	-0.1922*** (0.01027)	0.0226 (0.01425)	0.0416** (0.01506)
In person	0.5615 (1.51768)	-0.1088*** (0.02113)	-0.0032 (0.01343)	0.0212 (0.02008)
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	8.6871 (5.11323)	0.0122 (0.07438)	-0.1022** (0.03684)	0.1124** (0.04946)
Women	-8.7000*** (1.56525)	-0.1907*** (0.00921)	0.0210 (0.01419)	0.0410** (0.01497)
In person	-14.0145*** (4.32705)	-0.1673** (0.07777)	0.1010* (0.05090)	-0.0603 (0.04270)
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)				
DD	-10.7123*** (3.25498)	-0.1034** (0.04431)	-0.0124 (0.02069)	0.0697** (0.02528)
Women	-8.6878*** (1.62611)	-0.1893*** (0.00881)	0.0216 (0.01487)	0.0410** (0.01526)
In person	5.3059** (2.31850)	-0.0469** (0.01899)	0.0006 (0.02143)	-0.0115 (0.01804)
D: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)				
DD	-3.0062 (2.14744)	-0.0063 (0.02222)	-0.0014 (0.02636)	0.0159 (0.02298)
Women	-8.6678*** (1.57019)	-0.1914*** (0.00955)	0.0195 (0.01346)	0.0424*** (0.01489)
In person	-2.2595 (1.39239)	-0.1484*** (0.03077)	-0.0079 (0.01146)	0.0437 (0.02772)
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction Workers)				
DD	8.6871 (5.11323)	0.0122 (0.07438)	-0.1022** (0.03684)	0.1124** (0.04946)
Women	-8.7000*** (1.56525)	-0.1907*** (0.00921)	0.0210 (0.01419)	0.0410** (0.01497)
In person	-14.0145*** (4.32705)	-0.1673** (0.07777)	0.1010* (0.05090)	-0.0603 (0.04270)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables. = ** p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01.

Table A.2. Sources of income (during the pandemic, conditional on occupation pre-pandemic)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Reduced income indicator (wages)	Reduced income indicator (gov. transfers)	Reduced income indicator (business)	Reduced income indicator (agricultural activities)	Reduced income indicator (help from friends & family)	Reduced income indicator (remittances)	Reduced income indicator (private transfers)	Reduced income indicator (total)
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)								
DD	-0.0049 (0.02287)	-0.0013 (0.04931)	0.0003 (0.04303)	-0.2063** (0.09682)	0.1836 (0.14233)	-0.0330 (0.10751)	0.0520 (0.07276)	-0.0730** (0.02730)
Women	0.1576*** (0.01595)	0.0321 (0.02291)	0.1017*** (0.02864)	0.2834*** (0.07490)	0.1100 (0.08349)	0.1228 (0.07188)	0.0902 (0.05269)	0.1597*** (0.01793)
In person	0.0120 (0.01574)	-0.0391 (0.02566)	-0.0970*** (0.02731)	0.0427 (0.08267)	-0.0816 (0.11622)	0.0088 (0.06757)	-0.0413 (0.05075)	0.0233 (0.02475)
Constant	0.3029*** (0.08613)	0.0210 (0.08310)	0.3826*** (0.05941)	-0.0595 (0.23675)	-1.0453** (0.39069)	-0.1560 (0.38424)	-0.5810*** (0.19462)	0.2237*** (0.07425)
N	9830	1792	5185	1424	306	1485	1404	10727
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)								
DD	-0.0885 (0.06525)	0.0340 (0.08803)	0.0576 (0.08604)	0.0854 (0.16783)	-0.3176 (0.27897)	-0.0087 (0.20475)	0.4309*** (0.12813)	0.0028 (0.04370)
Women	0.1584*** (0.01736)	0.0350 (0.02372)	0.0992*** (0.02788)	0.2499*** (0.06708)	0.1240 (0.08569)	0.1541* (0.08534)	0.1064* (0.05225)	0.1595*** (0.01822)
In person	0.0683 (0.04684)	-0.0461 (0.10281)	-0.2245*** (0.07777)	-0.1399 (0.14540)	0.4623* (0.23269)	-0.0792 (0.17274)	-0.3851*** (0.11969)	-0.0775* (0.04247)
Constant	0.5394*** (0.09008)	0.0678 (0.20703)	0.4130*** (0.06730)	-0.1466 (0.38228)	-1.3889*** (0.41507)	-0.1088 (0.51408)	-0.3041* (0.16902)	0.3007*** (0.10152)
N	5938	1098	3190	509	182	803	832	6433
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)								
DD	-0.0751** (0.03048)	0.0082 (0.08516)	-0.1299*** (0.03421)	-0.2579** (0.09811)	0.1941 (0.17624)	-0.0333 (0.12973)	0.0804 (0.11999)	-0.1480*** (0.03558)
Women	0.1569*** (0.01726)	0.0354 (0.02299)	0.0992*** (0.02913)	0.2576*** (0.06957)	0.1250 (0.08226)	0.1467* (0.08056)	0.0975* (0.05247)	0.1581*** (0.01799)
In person	0.0570*** (0.01962)	-0.0166 (0.02141)	-0.0393 (0.02740)	0.2029** (0.08352)	-0.0366 (0.14307)	-0.0503 (0.08187)	-0.0321 (0.05856)	0.0781** (0.03432)
Constant	0.5158*** (0.10084)	0.0514 (0.15602)	0.3912*** (0.07981)	-0.1510 (0.34234)	-1.2695*** (0.41282)	-0.2595 (0.45356)	-0.4462* (0.21854)	0.3349*** (0.11495)
N	6857	1228	3676	635	201	971	965	7444
D: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)								
DD	-0.0395 (0.02639)	0.0555 (0.07770)	-0.0711 (0.05037)	-0.0750 (0.10646)	0.2569 (0.19086)	-0.1094 (0.10901)	0.0511 (0.11560)	-0.0977*** (0.03074)
Women	0.1560*** (0.01657)	0.0325 (0.02552)	0.1002*** (0.02834)	0.2628*** (0.07527)	0.0934 (0.08406)	0.1520* (0.08826)	0.1081* (0.05326)	0.1592*** (0.01832)
In person	0.0229 (0.02193)	-0.0589** (0.02631)	-0.0934** (0.03664)	0.0385 (0.08761)	-0.1222 (0.11646)	0.0270 (0.06828)	-0.0122 (0.05393)	0.0310 (0.02556)
Constant	0.3404*** (0.10384)	0.0359 (0.11965)	0.3716*** (0.07421)	0.0096 (0.26060)	-0.8153* (0.39982)	-0.3070 (0.40579)	-0.4227** (0.17461)	0.2441** (0.09082)
N	7719	1444	4088	1125	240	1133	1097	8445
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction Workers)								
DD	-0.0267 (0.03325)	0.0481 (0.06780)	-0.0089 (0.05533)	-0.2761*** (0.09279)	0.5554** (0.20867)	-0.3715** (0.14402)	-0.0635 (0.09538)	-0.0937*** (0.03066)
Women	0.1567*** (0.01660)	0.0346 (0.02497)	0.0985*** (0.02824)	0.2594*** (0.06337)	0.1244 (0.08391)	0.1488* (0.08490)	0.1142** (0.05340)	0.1599*** (0.01832)
In person	0.0057 (0.02956)	-0.0598 (0.03518)	-0.1570*** (0.04405)	0.2024** (0.08730)	-0.4105*** (0.13251)	0.2826*** (0.09460)	0.0938 (0.10939)	0.0198 (0.02225)
Constant	0.4352*** (0.07790)	0.0642 (0.13262)	0.3790*** (0.07789)	-0.2946 (0.34821)	-1.2302*** (0.41164)	-0.1159 (0.50026)	-0.3175* (0.17003)	0.2443*** (0.08380)
N	6668	1237	3600	634	205	948	940	7223

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. = ** p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01.

Estimations with country fixed effects

Table A.3. Effect of the pandemic on work outside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Inactive	Unemployed	Active not working last week	Active working in same occupation	Active working in different occupation	Lost of employment indicator	Less working hrs per week indicator	Move from FT to PT employment
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)								
DD	0.0342** (0.01576)	0.0302* (0.01568)	-0.0072 (0.00824)	-0.1090*** (0.01973)	0.0517*** (0.01191)	0.0573** (0.02222)	-0.0177 (0.02449)	-0.0195 (0.01991)
Women	0.1440*** (0.01289)	0.0579*** (0.00747)	0.0095 (0.01164)	-0.1758*** (0.01708)	-0.0357*** (0.00882)	0.2115*** (0.01886)	0.1435*** (0.03658)	0.1764*** (0.03244)
In person	0.0142 (0.00868)	-0.0154 (0.01001)	0.0006 (0.00557)	0.0421* (0.02112)	-0.0414** (0.01718)	-0.0006 (0.01254)	-0.0147 (0.01091)	0.0009 (0.01021)
Constant	0.4198*** (0.08048)	0.2538*** (0.04394)	-0.0579** (0.02726)	0.1197*** (0.03851)	0.2646*** (0.05879)	0.6157*** (0.06299)	0.3482*** (0.05452)	0.2352** (0.09343)
N	10737	10737	10737	10737	10737	10737	8033	7206
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)								
DD	0.0410 (0.03424)	0.0080 (0.04201)	0.0261* (0.01520)	-0.0677 (0.05046)	-0.0075 (0.02283)	0.0752 (0.05612)	0.1266*** (0.03219)	-0.1250** (0.05240)
Women	0.1415*** (0.01421)	0.0599*** (0.00745)	0.0093 (0.01161)	-0.1767*** (0.01647)	-0.0340*** (0.00927)	0.2107*** (0.01955)	0.1425*** (0.03825)	0.1767*** (0.03100)
In person	0.0132 (0.02721)	0.0172 (0.04123)	-0.0329*** (0.00556)	0.0171 (0.03931)	-0.0147 (0.02701)	-0.0024 (0.05506)	-0.1521*** (0.03266)	0.1395** (0.05956)
Constant	0.4719*** (0.05376)	0.2712*** (0.06660)	-0.0569** (0.02548)	0.0929 (0.06200)	0.2209*** (0.06993)	0.6862*** (0.08384)	0.3265** (0.14562)	0.2143 (0.14159)
N	6440	6440	6440	6440	6440	6440	4696	4153
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)								
DD	0.0074 (0.02285)	0.0370** (0.01473)	-0.0207 (0.01670)	-0.0134 (0.01457)	-0.0104 (0.01421)	0.0238 (0.01690)	-0.0528 (0.04124)	0.0098 (0.03460)
Women	0.1397*** (0.01484)	0.0604*** (0.00741)	0.0099 (0.01170)	-0.1743*** (0.01795)	-0.0357*** (0.00819)	0.2100*** (0.01985)	0.1412*** (0.03646)	0.1766*** (0.03108)
In person	0.0379 (0.02254)	-0.0068 (0.01768)	0.0169** (0.00787)	-0.0420** (0.01530)	-0.0060 (0.01684)	0.0480** (0.01957)	0.0443** (0.01786)	0.0171 (0.01175)
Constant	0.5010*** (0.05484)	0.2804*** (0.05585)	-0.0918*** (0.03076)	0.0567 (0.05702)	0.2537*** (0.06964)	0.6896*** (0.07078)	0.2873** (0.10307)	0.2907** (0.12002)
N	7451	7451	7451	7451	7451	7451	5532	4936
D: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)								
DD	0.0531** (0.01895)	0.0487* (0.02350)	0.0038 (0.01206)	-0.1530*** (0.02443)	0.0474* (0.02567)	0.1056*** (0.02822)	0.0380 (0.03879)	0.0300 (0.03847)
Women	0.1421*** (0.01337)	0.0601*** (0.00696)	0.0090 (0.01165)	-0.1780*** (0.01548)	-0.0333*** (0.00863)	0.2112*** (0.01860)	0.1443*** (0.03825)	0.1773*** (0.03319)
In person	-0.0024 (0.01405)	-0.0182** (0.00863)	-0.0086 (0.00639)	0.0945*** (0.02828)	-0.0653*** (0.01949)	-0.0292 (0.01952)	-0.0503*** (0.01147)	-0.0057 (0.01480)
Constant	0.4269*** (0.06315)	0.2333*** (0.03404)	-0.0481** (0.02231)	0.1599*** (0.05226)	0.2280*** (0.05951)	0.6121*** (0.06598)	0.3118*** (0.09674)	0.1576 (0.10960)
N	8165	8165	8165	8165	8165	8165	6185	5555
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction Workers)								
DD	0.0615*** (0.01555)	0.0351* (0.01984)	-0.0010 (0.01409)	-0.0757** (0.02726)	-0.0199 (0.03133)	0.0956*** (0.02784)	-0.0638 (0.04744)	0.0132 (0.03942)
Women	0.1432*** (0.01354)	0.0598*** (0.00718)	0.0093 (0.01164)	-0.1778*** (0.01529)	-0.0345*** (0.00889)	0.2124*** (0.01864)	0.1442*** (0.03914)	0.1789*** (0.03226)
In person	-0.0067 (0.01464)	-0.0091 (0.01516)	-0.0054 (0.00894)	0.0260 (0.04132)	-0.0048 (0.02247)	-0.0212 (0.02631)	0.0392 (0.02939)	0.0006 (0.03032)
Constant	0.4918*** (0.06164)	0.2569*** (0.05083)	-0.0533** (0.02345)	0.0954* (0.05517)	0.2091*** (0.06111)	0.6955*** (0.07251)	0.2544** (0.10753)	0.1712 (0.13492)
N	7231	7231	7231	7231	7231	7231	5334	4761

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables and country fixed effects. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

Table A.4. Effect of the pandemic on work inside the household, conditional on occupation pre pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Increase in domestic chores like cleaning, cooking and ironing	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of children	Increase in domestic chores like supporting children education	Increase in domestic chores like taking care of older or disabled individuals
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	-0.0317 (0.02197)	-0.0188 (0.03303)	0.0104 (0.02439)	0.0164 (0.02286)
Women	0.1288*** (0.01658)	0.1066*** (0.03585)	0.1543*** (0.03004)	0.0274** (0.01082)
In person	-0.0154 (0.01193)	-0.0685*** (0.02066)	-0.0454 (0.03548)	-0.0303*** (0.00515)
Constant	0.1520* (0.08521)	0.0297 (0.06553)	-0.2629** (0.11959)	-0.1242*** (0.03051)
N	10737	7023	5485	10737
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	-0.0862* (0.04774)	-0.0507 (0.12401)	-0.0576 (0.12860)	0.0593 (0.04907)
Women	0.1272*** (0.01694)	0.1028** (0.03822)	0.1520*** (0.03053)	0.0282** (0.01114)
In person	0.0243 (0.04797)	-0.0477 (0.09123)	0.0102 (0.13032)	-0.0634* (0.03084)
Constant	0.0574 (0.06478)	-0.0612 (0.11781)	-0.3489*** (0.11301)	-0.2105*** (0.04748)
N	6440	4222	3304	6440
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)				
DD	-0.0586 (0.04848)	-0.0654 (0.06379)	0.0082 (0.04665)	0.0123 (0.02363)
Women	0.1276*** (0.01688)	0.1028** (0.03822)	0.1517*** (0.02975)	0.0257** (0.01100)
In person	-0.0028 (0.02435)	-0.0326 (0.04231)	-0.0475 (0.04910)	-0.0161 (0.01035)
Constant	0.0548 (0.09134)	-0.0796 (0.10468)	-0.3202** (0.12398)	-0.1836*** (0.02455)
N	7451	4826	3756	7451
D: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) - (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)				
DD	-0.0376 (0.02744)	-0.0142 (0.04596)	-0.0014 (0.03243)	0.0382 (0.02825)
Women	0.1296*** (0.01603)	0.1067*** (0.03605)	0.1498*** (0.03179)	0.0290** (0.01142)
In person	-0.0232* (0.01157)	-0.0858*** (0.01488)	-0.0454 (0.04027)	-0.0391*** (0.01059)
Constant	0.1341* (0.07366)	-0.0847 (0.06472)	-0.2973*** (0.09188)	-0.1483*** (0.04591)
N	8165	5342	4168	8165
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction workers)				
DD	-0.0688* (0.03979)	-0.0568 (0.04956)	-0.0098 (0.04458)	0.0258 (0.03585)
Women	0.1279*** (0.01597)	0.1023** (0.03712)	0.1498*** (0.03034)	0.0277** (0.01122)
In person	0.0060 (0.02322)	-0.0436* (0.02256)	-0.0414 (0.04516)	-0.0314 (0.02002)
Constant	0.0823 (0.08543)	-0.1028 (0.08573)	-0.3182*** (0.09620)	-0.1936*** (0.04510)
N	7231	4738	3709	7231

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables and country fixed effects. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

Table A.5. Effect of the pandemic on other measures of well-being, conditional on occupation pre pandemic

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	New informal worker	New individual experiencing food insecurity	New individual receiving gov. subsidy	Reduced income indicator (total)
A: (Women with virtual jobs – Women with in person jobs (includes domestic workers)) - (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	0.0860*** (0.02704)	0.0410 (0.02763)	0.0054 (0.02324)	-0.0782** (0.02838)
Women	0.0453** (0.02127)	0.0779*** (0.01803)	0.0000 (0.00801)	0.1574*** (0.01856)
In person	0.0174 (0.02593)	-0.0089 (0.01843)	0.0103 (0.01561)	0.0206 (0.02405)
Constant	0.3715** (0.17550)	0.4687*** (0.07403)	0.0796** (0.03564)	0.1436* (0.07595)
N	3770	8810	8353	10727
B: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person jobs)				
DD	0.0688 (0.10502)	0.1212*** (0.03988)	0.0391 (0.02970)	-0.0243 (0.05048)
Women	0.0414* (0.02076)	0.0769*** (0.01855)	0.0028 (0.00715)	0.1586*** (0.01825)
In person	-0.0586 (0.05636)	-0.0890*** (0.01820)	-0.0186 (0.02212)	-0.0491 (0.04874)
Constant	0.4247** (0.19540)	0.5124*** (0.08635)	0.0571 (0.05559)	0.1197 (0.09300)
N	2317	5292	4989	6433
C: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person service jobs)				
DD	0.0277 (0.03871)	0.0531* (0.03057)	0.0083 (0.02221)	-0.1372*** (0.03611)
Women	0.0376* (0.02006)	0.0772*** (0.01822)	0.0017 (0.00740)	0.1578*** (0.01830)
In person	0.0218 (0.03956)	-0.0102 (0.01512)	0.0140 (0.02676)	0.0726** (0.02999)
Constant	0.4060** (0.18051)	0.5301*** (0.09770)	0.0645* (0.03216)	0.1556 (0.09605)
N	2794	6168	5822	7444
D: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Men with in person manufacture jobs)				
DD	0.0245 (0.06338)	0.0578* (0.03162)	0.0088 (0.02891)	-0.0555* (0.02982)
Women	0.0514** (0.02236)	0.0796*** (0.01864)	0.0022 (0.00825)	0.1581*** (0.01902)
In person	0.0046 (0.02294)	-0.0157 (0.02376)	0.0066 (0.01761)	-0.0121 (0.02552)
Constant	0.4096* (0.20373)	0.5157*** (0.12547)	0.0399 (0.04100)	0.1219 (0.09723)
N	2865	6735	6294	8156
E: (Women with virtual jobs – Domestic Workers) – (Men with virtual jobs – Construction Workers)				
DD	-0.0035 (0.06920)	0.0158 (0.05192)	0.0288 (0.02207)	-0.0925*** (0.03169)
Women	0.0541* (0.02630)	0.0775*** (0.01886)	0.0032 (0.00741)	0.1584*** (0.01866)
In person	0.0063 (0.05100)	0.0166 (0.04281)	-0.0084 (0.01551)	0.0197 (0.02213)
Constant	0.3750** (0.17693)	0.5528*** (0.08722)	0.0266 (0.03813)	0.0995 (0.08362)
N	2603	5943	5592	7223

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Errors clustered at the country level. All estimations include control variables and country fixed effects. = * p<0.10 ** p<0.05. *** p<0.01'.

Annex B: Domestic work in Latin America and the Caribbean

B.1. Domestic workers in the world

Domestic work is defined as “work performed in or for a household or households within an employment relationship” (ILO, 2011, Article 1). Domestic workers carry out a variety of activities for the household that employs them: from general cleaning and cooking activities to taking care of the children, persons with disabilities or older individuals (ILO, 2010).

While domestic work is a paid activity, there are three main characteristics that make it unique compared to other occupations. First, the employer in this case is a private household, which outsources chores and childcare activities to free up its members’ time for other labour and non-labour activities (Raz-Yurovich and Marx, 2018; Van der Lippe et al., 2004; Craig and Baxter, 2016). Therefore, while the hiring of a worker in this case is not directly linked to an economic profit, as would be the case when the employer is a private business, the fact that this worker takes care of basic chores releases valuable time for members of the household to participate in the labour force.

Secondly, the location where the employment takes place is a private dwelling (ILO, 2010), implying isolation at the workplace, since most households employ one domestic worker at a time (Gaitskell et al., 1983; ILO, 2020a). It also implies low monitoring and enforcement mechanisms from external authorities since in most countries the privacy of what happens inside a private dwelling is protected by the Constitution (ILO, 2014; Paraciani and Rizza, 2021). And, lastly, it can translate into unique dynamics between household employers and workers (Chen, 2011). For example, the interpersonal nature of the interactions between household employers and workers builds a social hierarchy where domestic employees can be seen as inferior in the labour relationship (Gorban and Tizziani, 2014). Their relationship is also disguised by a sense of familiarity and operating social norms though they are not part of the family, which might cause “affective ambiguities” (Valenzuela and Mora, 2009; Pereyra, 2017; Brites, 2014; Courtis and Pacecca, 2014). In fact, many times the work of a domestic employee is not seen as a proper occupation—a supply of services—but rather as ‘help’ to the functioning of the household (ILO, 2010; Peterson, 2007).

Finally, in general the employee is a low-income, low-educated woman (ILO, 2010; Brites, 2014; Courtis and Pacecca, 2014; Neetha, 2008). Through domestic work, women from poor households find a way to earn a living that does not require any prior training (D’Souza, 2010)—since most training is acquired through day-to-day activities (Rojas-Garcia and Toledo Gonzalez, 2018). This is particularly true for women from marginalized populations who end up migrating in search of better opportunities within this occupation (Gorban and Tizziani, 2014; Courtis and Pacecca, 2014; D’Souza, 2010; Rubio, 2003).

In 2019, at least 75.6 million men and women aged 15 years old and over throughout the world were employed as domestic workers. This meant that 2.3 percent of employment worldwide was related to domestic work activities. When looking only at employees, this figure almost doubles: 4.5 percent of all employees work as domestic workers. Those values differ between the developing and the developed world. For example, domestic

work represents 0.8 percent of total employment in Europe and Central Asia (1 percent of all employees) and 1.5 percent in North America (1.7 percent of all employees). However, those figures are 5.1 percent (8.4 percent) in Latin America and the Caribbean and 12.3 percent (14.8 percent) in the Arab States. This accounts for the sector’s relative importance in different parts of the world: while the share of domestic workers among total employees in low-income countries is 9.9 percent, that figure is 5.1 in middle income ones and 2.6 percent in high-income ones (Hobden and Bonnet, 2021).

The relative importance of domestic work is also highlighted in two groups: migrants and women. Around 17 percent of domestic workers are migrants; that figure is over 70 percent in North America and the Arab States (Gallotti and Branch, 2015). Moreover, women make up 76.2 percent of the domestic workforce worldwide (ILO, 2020b). This means that around the globe, 1 in 22 women workers corresponds to this sector—and 1 in every 12 female employees is a domestic worker (ILO, 2020b); and 4.5 percent of total women employment worldwide (8.8 percent of total women employees) is related to domestic work activities. This figure differs between regions. Domestic workers represent 18.2 percent of women employees in sub-Saharan Africa, 17.8 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean and 13.1 percent in Southern Asia (with the highest figure seen in Arab States, with 34.6 percent). However, in subregions like Northern America, Eastern Europe, and Northern, Western and Southern Europe this figure is not even 3 percent.

The number of domestic workers has been steadily increasing and is expected to keep growing (ILO, 2020b; Manyika et al., 2017; Pape, 2020) along with the number of intermediaries of domestic workers, which might incentivize formalization in the sector but can also negatively affect the way these employment relationships normally work (Fudge and Hobden, 2018). From the demand side, the reduction in the size of families (which implies less extended family support), the fact that nearly 40 percent of all preschool children (80 percent in low-income countries) are not enrolled (Devercelli and Beaton-Day, 2020) and the increase in life expectancy means that families have to turn to domestic workers to care for their children, their older relatives and their households overall (ILO, 2020b; Pape, 2020). In fact, countries that have extensive investment in care policies (like Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, with high levels of public employment in the education and health and social work sectors; or some European countries and North America, which rely more on market mechanisms, with some public assistance for care service delivery) have a lower share of domestic workers employed directly by households (ILO, 2020c). Moreover, one of the main determinants for the number of domestic workers is the increase in women’s education, since now more than ever before, women have high-skilled jobs requiring them to spend more time working outside their houses. In fact, domestic work employment positively correlates with female labour-force participation (Flipó et al. 2007), wages of employed mothers (Kimmel and Connelly, 2007), female-headed households, larger households, larger dwellings and aggregate household consumption (Fakih and Marrouch 2014). From the supply side, poverty and the lack of employment opportunities for those at the bottom of the income distribution—and particularly girls coming from those families (Anderson and Anderson, 2000; Blofield 2012)—are among the main reasons that push individuals into the domestic work sector.

Inequality is also another reason why the size of the domestic work sector is expected to increase. Using the Gini coefficient, it was found that the higher the level of income inequality in a country, the greater the size of the domestic workforce as a share of total employment (ILO, 2018). These findings are compatible with the distribution of the domestic workforce across country income groups. From the demand side, a higher inequality level means that there is a large number of people who are willing to accept relatively low wages, which are paid by a large enough number of households (ILO, 2018). Low levels of compliance with legal responsibilities also make it more affordable for households to employ domestic workers in those countries. From the supply side, a growing inequality means less access to opportunities and a higher worker’s willingness to accept an offer of employment at a given wage.

Another key characteristic of domestic work is its high rates of informality: 80 percent of those 75.6 million workers work in an informal scenario, meaning they do not contribute to the national pension scheme and do not have access to employment-related social security benefits (Hobden and Bonnet, 2021). This is particularly striking given that globally, it is estimated that 39.7 percent of all other employees are informal—and 60.1 percent of all non-domestic employment regardless of employment status (Bonnet et al., 2019). As shown in Table 2, informality among domestic workers is the lowest in subregions like Northern America (23 percent), Eastern Asia excluding China (41 percent) and Eastern Europe (51 percent). The highest values can be observed in Africa (91.6 percent), the Arab States (99.7 percent), Southern Asia (95.5 percent), Central and Western Asia (81 percent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (72 percent). A similar pattern is seen for women domestic workers. Table 2 also shows that around the world, domestic workers present an informality rate that is two times that of other employees. In regions like the Arab States and Europe and Central Asia, domestic workers present an informality rate that is more than 3 times and more than 4.5 times that of other employees, respectively. However, in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific, the informality rates between domestic workers and other employees are smaller—though in all cases domestic workers present a higher level of lack of contribution to the national pension scheme.

Domestic work is therefore a sector that significantly contributes to the share of individuals who do not contribute to a pension scheme or, overall, to social insurance and are also not subject to regulations on job stability and minimum wages. The formal-informal segmentation of domestic workers results from a mix of legal exclusions and non-compliance (UNDP, 2021). In other words, in some countries domestic workers are required by law to make contributions to social insurance—even with a regime that is separate from those that regulate the country’s remaining employees (for example, Argentina, Brazil and recently Mexico)—but laws and regulations are imperfectly enforced. In many cases, those laws are then “replaced by tacitly accepted social norms that de facto sanction non-compliance, even if de jure it may be argued that illegal behavior is taking place” (UNDP, 2021 p. 242).

In Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, for example, domestic workers are simply not required to participate in any contributions to social insurance and are de facto excluded from the benefits of work regulation and having access to it. (They can, however, make voluntary contributions.) Related to this is the sector’s lack of regulation. The fact that domestic work does not have a standard structure (workers can be full or part time, they can have one or more than one employers and they can live in the home of the employer

or on their own), their isolation at the workplace; their high rates of international migration and low-educational attainment; and their low levels of collective organization and relative lower bargaining power affect their ability to push for regulation of their work (D’Souza, 2010; ILO, 2020b; Pape, 2020).

By 2013 only 10 percent of domestic workers were covered by general labour laws to the same extent as other workers in the economy; the rest were either covered by subordinate regulations, specific labour laws or state-level provisions (60 percent) or completely excluded from the scope of the country’s labour laws (ILO, 2016). This represents a de facto discrimination against an occupation made up mostly of poor women (ILO, 2018). To mitigate this reality, in 2021 the ILO instrumented the Domestic Workers Convention, compelling signatory countries to develop national laws to transition domestic workers to formality. As of 2019, 18 out of 24 countries in the region had ratified the convention. However, even with the regulation in place, the special characteristics of this occupation—mainly its location and the employer-employee relationship dynamic—mean that its enforcement might be challenging (Gudibande and Jacob, 2020).

Non-compliance is not a phenomenon exclusive to domestic workers. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, around 60 percent of total employees and employment overall is not contributing to the insurance program. Non-compliance may result from explicit evasion or from elusion in situations in which the borderline between a dependent and non-dependent worker is fuzzy and the requirement to comply ambiguous. Non-compliance is facilitated if the production unit is small, measured by the number of participants. Authorities in charge of enforcing laws have great difficulty separating evasion from elusion and, in the case of the former, in establishing and collecting fines. Indeed, because contributory social insurance regulations may not apply to these firms, and, even if they do, they can be enforced only with difficulty; they are replaced by tacitly accepted social norms that de facto sanction non-compliance, even if de jure it may be argued that illegal behaviour is taking place. In the end, “Informality is a complex phenomenon that results from institutions, laws, and law enforcement” (UNDP, 2021 p. 276). However, domestic work takes place inside four walls, and given that “in most of the countries, the law requires the consent of the householder or prior judicial authorization to allow access of labor inspectors under provisions protecting the right to privacy, which in most of the cases is guaranteed by the Constitution” (ILO, 2014 pg. 26) means that it is harder and costly to monitor the activity. A clear demonstration that this is true is what happens in developed regions: while the share of employees (excluding domestic workers) who are informal in Europe and Central Asia is 14.2 percent and in the Americas it is almost 24 percent, for domestic workers those figures are around 65 percent.

B.2. Domestic work in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019

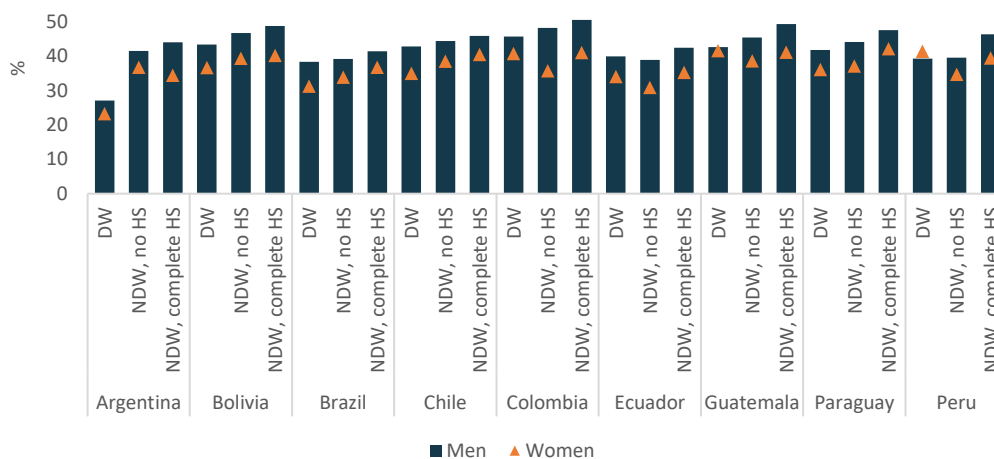
We turn the analysis to labour income (presented here in 2019 purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars to be able to make proper comparisons between countries) and working hours for the sector for selected countries in the region. For working hours see Figures B.1 and B.2. The first important observation is that women—regardless of their occupation or education levels—are the ones that show the lowest levels of average and median weekly hours (with a few exceptions).

For Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay the lowest average levels of weekly working hours are seen for female domestic workers, and for the remaining countries, for female non-domestic workers with no high school. In fact, the lowest level of average weekly hours of work is seen for female domestic workers in Argentina, with 23 hours. Nevertheless, Brazil shows the lowest figure for male non-domestic workers with less than high school, Ecuador for female non-domestic workers with less than high school and Brazil for male non-domestic workers with high school. The highest number for average weekly working hours is seen for male non-domestic with high school (with the highest being 51 in Colombia). What about median hours? In this case, in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Chile the lowest average levels of weekly working hours are seen for female domestic workers (and in the remaining countries in the sample, the lowest levels are seen in female non-domestic workers with less than high school). Argentina is also the country that presents the lowest levels for median weekly hours of work across groups—different from Colombia, which presents the highest (except for female non-domestic workers with less than high school, where Chile shows the highest figure). The highest levels are seen for male non-domestic with high school, except for Brazil (in fact, in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador the figures for male non-domestic workers are similar by education level).

Turning to the gender gap, men consistently earn more than women (the highest difference seen in Colombia for non-domestic workers with less than high school). However, within domestic work, in Peru the reverse is true (both for average and median weekly working hours). Analysing average working hours, the largest gender gaps are seen for non-domestic workers. For those with high school education, the largest are seen in Colombia and Argentina with almost 10 hours and the smallest is 5 hours, in Brazil. For those with lower levels of education, the largest gap is seen in Colombia: almost 13 hours. The smallest is seen in Argentina and Peru with just under 5 hours. Within domestic work, the largest gender gap is observed in Brazil and Chile with a little more than 7 weekly working hours. The smallest is seen in Guatemala with 1 hour per week. In the case of Peru, female domestic workers seem to work 2.2 hours more than their male counterparts each week. In the case of average weekly working hours, the largest gap is seen for non-domestic workers who have not graduated high school (on average, an 8-hour difference in favour of male workers). In fact, the largest differences are seen in Bolivia and Colombia with 12 hours. In Brazil and Chile, there are almost no differences in weekly average hours by gender. For those with high school, in Chile, Colombia and Ecuador there are almost no differences by gender, but in Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru the differences are 8 hours per week. Finally, for domestic workers, the largest gender gap is observed in Bolivia (12 hours) and the smallest in Guatemala (2 hours). In Ecuador, there seems not to be a gap, and in Peru, female domestic workers work on average 5 hours more per week than men.

Turning attention now to female domestic workers, we can see that in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay, they present a lower number of average weekly working hours compared to non-domestic workers with low education levels (the highest difference being Argentina, with 14 hours per week and the smallest in Paraguay with 1 hour). In the other countries of the sample, the reverse is true, and in fact the highest differences in favour of female domestic workers are seen in Peru, with 7 hours per week. Compared to female non-domestic workers with high school, only in Peru do domestic workers present higher levels of average weekly hours. In Colombia and Guatemala, the figures are essentially similar. Once again, the largest difference is seen in Argentina, with 11 hours per week. In three countries in the sample (Argentina, Brazil and Chile), domestic workers present a lower median number of weekly working hours compared to non-domestic workers with no high school (the highest difference is seen in Argentina, with 12 hours per week). In Bolivia, the number of hours between groups is similar, and in the remaining countries in the sample, domestic workers seem to be working more per week than non-domestic workers with less than high school (the highest differences seen in Peru, with 13 hours and in Guatemala with 10). Compared to female non-domestic workers with high school, only in Peru and Guatemala do domestic workers present higher levels of average weekly hours. The largest difference is seen in Argentina, with a 17-hour difference between female domestic workers and non-domestic workers with high school (in favour of the latter group).

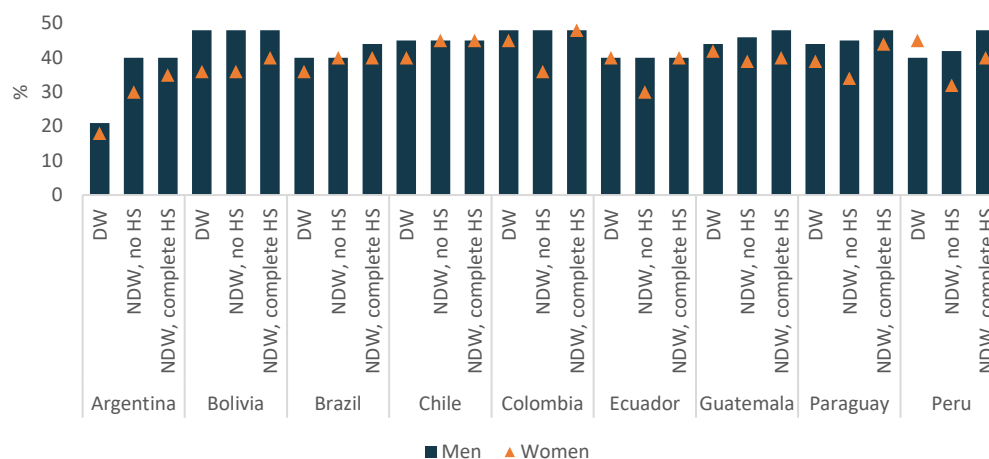
Figure B.1. Average weekly working hours, 2019



Source: UNDP calculations; national household surveys.

Note: DW=domestic worker; NDW, no HS=non-domestic workers with no high school; NDW complete HS=non-domestic workers who are high school graduates. The year is 2017 for Chile.

Figure B.2. Median weekly working hours, 2019



Source: UNDP calculations; national household surveys.

Note: DW=domestic worker; NDW, no HS=non-domestic workers with no high school; NDW complete HS=non-domestic workers who are high school graduates. The year is 2017 for Chile.

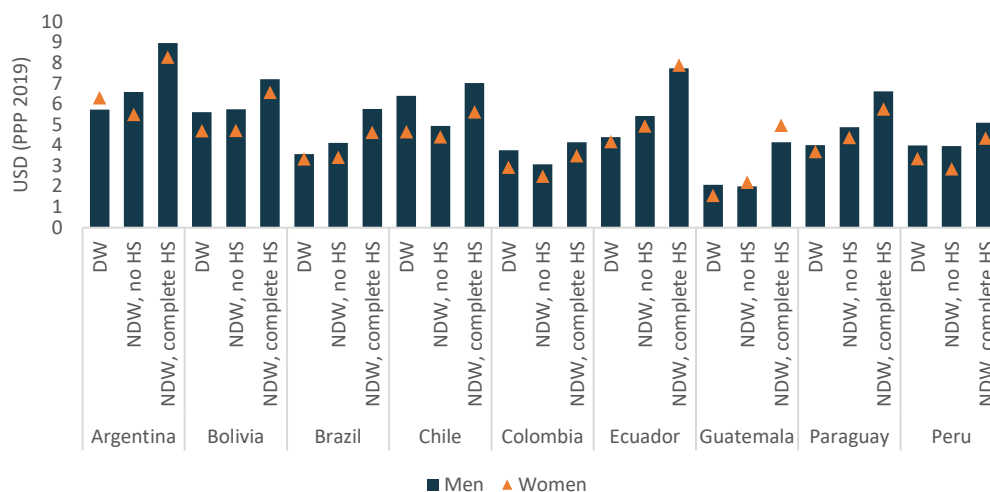
Given the previous analysis, the last thing to consider is what happens to labour income per hour. Figures B.3 and B.4 show the average and median monthly labour income in USD PPP, respectively. Across the sample, the smallest average labour income per hour, Figure B.3 shows that in the case of Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay, the smallest figures are for female domestic workers; and for Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru they are for female non-domestic workers with no high school. Within female domestic workers, the figures also show that those who are worst off are in Guatemala (with an average hourly income of USD 1.58), and those who earn the most are those in Argentina (with an average hourly income of USD 6.31). For male domestic workers, Guatemala presents the smallest values (with an average hourly income of USD 2.1), while the highest corresponds to Chile with USD 6.4. Interestingly, in Ecuador and Guatemala the highest levels of average labour income per hour are seen for female non-domestic workers with high school—in the remaining countries, the highest levels of average labour income per hour are observed for the male counterparts. What happens to the median of labour income per hour? Overall, the largest figures for average hourly labour income are seen for male non-domestic workers with complete high school—except for Chile and Colombia where it is for male domestic workers (USD 5.30 and USD 3.52, respectively) and Guatemala where it is for female non-domestic workers with high school (USD 3.69). In terms of lowest figures, they correspond to female non-domestic workers with no high school—except for Brazil, Guatemala and Paraguay, which is female domestic work. Finally, within female domestic work, the lowest figure corresponds to Guatemala (USD 1.18), and the largest is seen in Argentina (USD 4.81). For male domestic workers, Guatemala still presents the lowest levels of median labour income per hour (USD 1.37), and the largest is seen for Bolivia (USD 5.6)

Turning attention to the gender gap, the first thing that is important to highlight is that overall, women's average labour income per hour is lower than men's. The only exceptions are domestic workers in Argentina (where the difference is USD 0.6), Guatemala for non-domestic workers with complete high school and non-domestic workers without high school, and non-domestic workers with complete high school in Ecuador. Moreover, the extent to which hourly labour income differs varies across groups. The largest differences in

the gender gap are seen for non-domestic workers without high school education, with an average difference of USD 0.7 in favour of male workers (the highest difference in Argentina, Bolivia and Peru with over USD 1). The smallest are seen for domestic work, with an average of less than USD 0.5 in favour of male workers. In this case, the highest difference is seen in Chile where male domestic workers earn on average USD 1.7 more per hour than female domestic workers, and the smallest difference is seen for Ecuador with a USD 0.2 difference. For median values, we see that female labour income per hour is consistently lower than male labour income per hour except for domestic workers in Argentina (where the difference of USD 0.37 favours females) and non-domestic workers with high school in Guatemala. The largest differences in the gender gap for median values are seen, once again, for non-domestic workers without high school education (with the highest difference in Argentina and Bolivia with over USD 1 and the smallest in Guatemala with USD 0.03). The smallest differences are seen for domestic work, with the highest difference in Chile and the smallest one in Ecuador and Brazil.

For female workers, when we compare labour income per hour for domestic workers with others, they consistently earn less than non-domestic workers with high school (the largest difference seen in Guatemala with USD 2.5 and the smallest in Peru with less than USD 0.05 for median hourly income, and in Ecuador and Colombia for average hourly income with USD 3.7 and USD 0.6, respectively). Nevertheless, for non-domestic workers with less than high school, the situation is different. For average figures, in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru, female domestic workers present an hourly labour income that is higher than for non-domestic workers with no complete high school. The largest of this difference is seen in Argentina, with USD 0.8. In the remaining countries of the sample, the average hourly income of domestic workers is lower than that of low-educated non-domestic workers—with the difference being the largest in the case of Ecuador with USD 0.8 and the smallest being Bolivia with USD 0.01. For median values, in Guatemala, Paraguay and Brazil, domestic workers earn less than non-domestic workers with low levels of education. In the remaining countries in the sample, female domestic workers earn more per hour than non-domestic workers with less than high school (with the highest difference seen in Peru with USD 0.98).

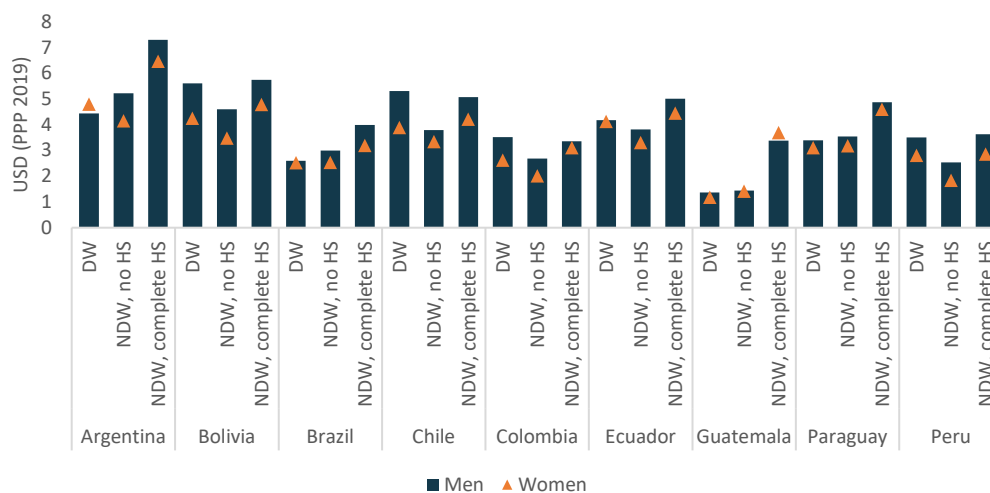
Figure B.3. Average hourly labour income, USD (PPP 2019)



Source: UNDP calculations; national household surveys.

Note: DW=domestic worker; NDW, no HS=non-domestic workers with no high school; NDW complete HS=non-domestic workers who are high school graduates. The year is 2017 for Chile.

Figure B.4. Median hourly labour income, USD (PPP 2019)



Source: UNDP calculations; national household surveys.

Note: DW=domestic worker; NDW, no HS=non-domestic workers with no high school; NDW complete HS=non-domestic workers who are high school graduates. The year is 2017 for Chile.

B.3. Domestic work protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean

In 2011 the Domestic Workers Convention was adopted by the ILO, compelling signatory countries to develop national laws to give domestic workers access to a similar array of benefits as the rest of private sector employees—namely, access to a minimum wage and labour legislation as well as inclusion in each country’s contributive insurance system. Countries like Argentina (2013), Chile (2014), Mexico (2019) and Peru (2020) developed specific labour regulations for the sector. As of 2019, 18 out of 24 countries in the region had ratified the convention. In fact, in 18 out of 24 countries in the region (75 percent), domestic workers have some legal social security coverage (they legally have at least one social security benefit, like access to a pension, medical care or unemployment insurance). This figure is greater than what is seen in the rest of the world: 102 out of 168 countries (a little over 60 percent).

Table B.1 shows the state of legal coverage of labour legislation and access to benefits for the sector (for live-out domestic workers) in the region and the rest of the world. Domestic workers in every country in the region are covered by national labour legislation. While in 19 countries they are covered by a subordinate regulation or specific labour laws, in just 2 of them they are covered by the general labour laws that regulate the country’s remaining private sector employees. In that respect, Latin America and the Caribbean differ from the rest of the world: out of 108 countries that have data, in 27 (25 percent of the sample) domestic workers were covered by the same legislation as any other workers.

What do national labour legislations cover? The first element is the limitations of weekly working hours. As shown in Table B.1, half of the countries in the region have limitations of normal weekly hours for domestic workers that are the same or lower than for other workers. Moreover, while five countries in the region have a limitation of normal weekly hours for domestic workers higher than for other workers, seven countries have no limitations regarding working hours. This pattern is similar to what is observed in the world overall.

Secondly, it can be seen that 21 out of 24 countries in the region (almost 90 percent of countries) have a regulation in place that determines those domestic workers are entitled to rest the same period or more as other workers. Around the globe, that is true for almost 78 percent of countries. Moreover, 100 percent of countries in the region have paid annual leave for domestic workers that is the same or longer than for the rest of the private salaried workers. Globally, that is true for 84 out of 108 countries.

Regarding access to the minimum wage, Table B.1 shows that in 18 countries in the region (75 percent), domestic workers are entitled to a minimum wage that is the same or higher than for other workers. In three countries (12.5 percent) domestic workers have access to a minimum wage that is lower than for other workers, and in another three countries (12.5 percent) domestic workers are excluded from the minimum wage coverage. For the world overall, those figures are 64.8 percent, 9.3 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively. The table also shows that in the region, in 11 countries the minimum wage can be paid only in cash, and in 10 countries, part of the minimum wage can be paid in-kind.

In a highly feminized occupation, access to maternity benefits is essential. Table 4 shows that in 21 out of 24 countries (87.5 percent), maternity leave entitlements are the same

or more favorable than for other workers; in 2 (8.3 percent of the sample) they are less favorable and in 1 (4.2 percent) there are no maternity leave entitlements for domestic workers. This distribution is different than what is observed in the world overall, where 74 percent of countries have maternity leave entitlements that are the same or more favorable than for other workers, and in 20 percent there are no maternity leave entitlements for domestic workers.

Regarding maternity cash benefits, the region presents a similar pattern to the rest of the world: in 67 percent of the countries in the region, domestic workers are entitled to the same or more favorable maternity cash benefits compared to the rest of the private workers; and for 17 percent, domestic workers are not entitled to maternity cash benefits (and in the remaining countries, domestic workers are entitled to cash benefits that are less favorable than for other workers).

Finally, Table B.1 shows the number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the world (in this case for a total of 168 countries) where, legally, domestic workers have access to specific social security coverage. As can be seen, in 18 countries domestic workers de facto have access to a pension (75 percent of countries in the region), in 17 they have access to medical care (71 percent), in 13 they have access to employment injury benefits (54 percent), and in 15 they have access to sickness leave (62.5 percent). They legally are subject to receiving unemployment benefits in only eight countries and to receiving family benefits in just six (33 percent and 25 percent, respectively). Globally, domestic workers have legal access to a pension just in slightly over 50 percent of the countries. In 42 percent they have access to medical care and employment injury benefits, in 33 percent they can receive sickness benefits and in 27 percent they receive family benefits and in 25 percent, unemployment benefits. Therefore, while access to family benefits and unemployment benefits is low both in the region as well as around the globe—compared to access to other social security benefits, overall domestic workers in Latin America and the Caribbean seem to be better off in terms of the legal coverage that they are supposed to receive compared to domestic workers around the world.

The existence and proper functioning of domestic workers' unions has been highlighted as necessary to strengthening protection systems for this sector.

Table B.1. Domestic work legal regulation coverage and access to social insurance benefits

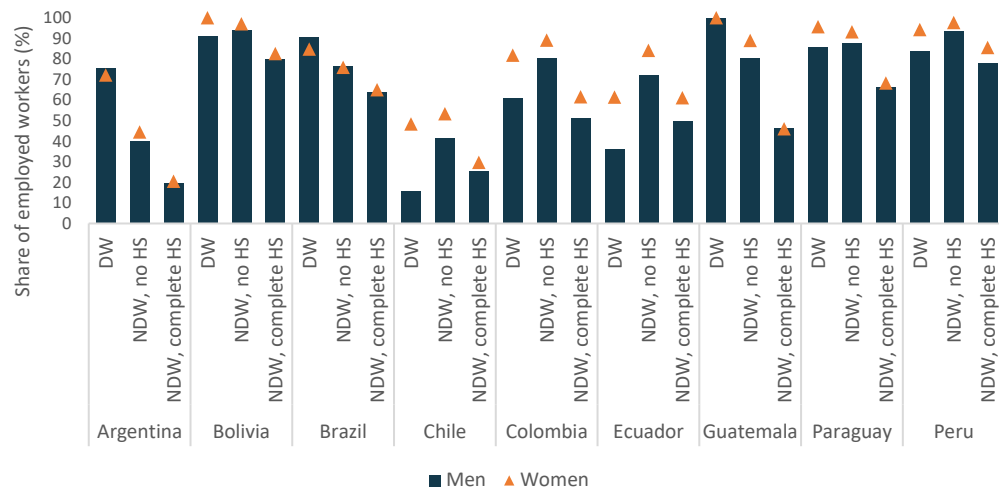
Number of Countries that have...	LAC	World
Coverage by national labor legislation		
Covered by general labor laws	2	27
Covered in part by general labor laws and in part by subordinate regulations or specific labor laws	3	56
Covered by subordinate regulations or specific labor laws	19	12
Excluded from the scope of the country's labour laws	0	9
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	4
Limitations of normal weekly hours of work		
Limitation of normal weekly hours same as or lower than for other workers	12	54
Limitation of normal weekly hours higher than for other workers	5	21
No limitation of normal weekly hours for domestic workers	7	30
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	3
Entitlement to weekly rest		
Entitlement to weekly rest is the same as or more favourable than for other workers	21	84
Entitlement to weekly rest of shorter duration than for other workers	2	4
No entitlement to weekly rest for domestic workers	1	25
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	5
Paid annual leave		
Annual leave is the same as or longer than for other workers	24	84
Annual leave is shorter than for other workers	0	7
Domestic workers are excluded from provisions	0	12
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	5
Extent of minimum wage coverage		
Statutory minimum wage for domestic workers is the same or higher than for other workers	18	70
Statutory minimum wage for domestic workers is lower than for other workers	3	10
Domestic workers are excluded from minimum wage coverage in countries where minimum wage exists	3	17
No minimum wage in the country	0	7
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	4
Extent of provisions on payment in kind		
Minimum wage can be paid in cash only	11	40
Part of the minimum wage can be paid in-kind	10	39
Domestic workers are excluded from minimum wage coverage in countries where minimum wage exists	3	15
No minimum wage in the country	0	7
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	7
Maternity Leave		
Maternity leave entitlements are the same or more favourable than for other workers	21	80
Maternity leave entitlements less favourable than for other workers	2	3
No entitlement to maternity leave for domestic workers	1	22
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	3
Maternity cash benefits		
Entitlement to maternity cash benefits is the same or more favourable than for other workers	16	74
Entitlement to maternity cash benefits less favourable than for other workers	4	5
No entitlement to maternity cash benefits	4	25
Federal country with provisions that differ between states	0	4
Access to*:		
Pension	18	87
Medical care	17	70
Employment injury benefit	13	71
Sickness benefit	15	56
Family benefit	6	46
Unemployment benefit	8	42

Source: own compilation based on Hobden and Bonnet (2021).

Note: in LAC, 24 countries were analysed. In the world, the analysis is done for 108 countries. *=168 countries analysed.

While in most countries in the region, domestic workers are covered by general labour laws and social security laws, as shown in Figure B.5, over 70 percent of domestic workers in the region in 2019 were not making contributions to their country's pension and social insurance system. On average, this figure was 71 percent for male domestic workers and 82 percent for female domestic workers. In the case of non-domestic workers with no high school, these values were 74 percent and 80 percent for male and female workers, and for non-domestic workers with high school, 53 percent and 58 percent respectively. Informality, then, is not a phenomenon that is present only in this sector. Guatemala is the country with the highest rates of informality in the sector: 100 percent of male and female domestic workers were not contributing to social insurance (the next country is Bolivia, with 91 percent and 100 percent informality rates for men and women, respectively). For non-domestic workers with no high school, Bolivia is the country with the highest rates of informality, with 94 percent for men and 97 percent for women (for non-domestic workers with high school, Bolivia and Peru present the highest informality rates). The lowest levels of informality in domestic work are seen in Chile, with a rate of 16 percent for men and 48 percent for women. The next country with the lowest rates of informality is Colombia with rates of 61 percent for males and 82 percent for women. For non-domestic workers with less than high school, the lowest rates of informality are seen for Chile and Argentina (though in this country, informality cannot be calculated for the self-employed, which might be biasing these results). The same is true for non-domestic workers with high school.

Figure B.5. Informality rates, 2019



Source: UNDP calculations; national household surveys.

Note: DW=domestic worker; NDW, no HS=non-domestic workers with no high school; NDW complete HS=non-domestic workers who are high school graduates. The year is 2017 for Chile. In Argentina, informality rates do not consider the self-employed given the structure of the household survey.

B.4. Short-term effects of COVID-19 on domestic workers in Latin America and the Caribbean

While employment levels remained high through 2019, recent evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe impacts on different labour-market outcomes for domestic workers in the short term. On the one hand, the nature of domestic work means that they were more at risk of contracting the virus for those who kept their jobs. More importantly, on the other hand, the prolonged mobilization restrictions, and the households' fear of letting someone external enter their house meant that domestic workers were at a higher risk of not being able to work during lockdown and in the aftermath (Salvador and Cossani, 2020). In fact, by June 2020 in Latin America and the Caribbean, it was estimated that more than 75 percent of domestic workers were significantly impacted by the lockdowns, seeing reductions in either the number of weekly working hours or earnings, or because they lost their jobs (ILO, 2020d).

Figure B.6 shows the changes in the number of workers, hours of work and wages of domestic workers and other employees between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 2nd quarter of 2020, for selected countries in the region. Data come from household surveys.

Figure B.6. Changes in employment, hours of work and wages between 4th quarter of 2019 and 2nd quarter of 2020



Source: Own compilation based on Hobden and Bonnet (2021).

The first thing that is important to highlight is that the decrease in the number of workers during this timeframe was higher for domestic workers compared to other employees in every country in the sample. The largest decrease was experienced by Peruvian domestic workers, with a reduction of over 70 percent in the number of workers. The smallest was seen in Mexico, with less than 20 percent. The same is observed for other employees, though the figures in such cases are almost 50 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

In terms of weekly hours of work, Figure B.6 shows that domestic workers experienced on average a 50-percent reduction with the pandemic. The largest hit was observed in Peru, with a more than 70-percent decrease and the smallest in Mexico, with 20 percent. On the other hand, other employees saw on average a 34-percent decrease in their weekly working hours between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 2nd quarter of 2020. Once again, the largest reduction is seen in Peru (67 percent) and the smallest in Mexico (13 percent). In Ecuador, Chile, Argentina and Colombia, the differences in the decrease in the number of hours per sector is higher than 25 points. Conversely, in Paraguay, Mexico and Peru the difference is less than 10 points.

Finally, in the case of monthly wages, on average domestic workers suffered from a reduction of around 44 percent—almost double the size of the reduction for other employees. The largest reduction is seen for domestic workers in Ecuador and Peru, with reductions of more than 70 percent. The smallest was seen in Mexico, with around 15 percent. For other employees, the largest reductions are also seen for Peru (50 percent) and Ecuador (45 percent), while the smallest is seen in Mexico with less than 5 percent. In Argentina, non-domestic employees actually experienced a 5-percent increase during the time period analysed.

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