



### Summary

A time-use survey in Turkey conducted in pandemic lockdown conditions in May reveals a range of gender impacts of the crisis on paid and unpaid work. School closures, intensified demands for household consumption items and domestic and care services have triggered an unprecedented increase in the demand for household production and caring labour. Women as a group have served as the main absorber of this demand shock by increasing their paid and unpaid work hours.

More employed women than men left their jobs in vulnerable conditions and had less access to leave with pay. Women were nearly twice as likely to switch to working from home compared to men. While nearly twice the number of men as women reported employment disruption due to the pandemic, employed women faced higher risks in this regard.

Changes to time use under lockdown conditions increased the unpaid workload for men and women. But women shouldered more of this burden, doing nearly four times as much unpaid work as men. Women's total workload (paid and unpaid work combined) was also higher than that of men. For employed women, this increase is especially striking, due to a simultaneous rise both in paid and particularly in unpaid work. For women who continue to work at the workplace (as 'most essential' workers), the total work hours are more than 10 hours per day.

Despite the widening gender gaps in unpaid and total work under the pandemic, men's unpaid work time rose substantially in relative terms. For men who continue employment from home, there is a striking five-fold increase in unpaid work compared to before the pandemic.

At the same time, a large share of both women and men believe that household work should be shared more equally between men and women.

As a result of changes in work patterns, and mainly due to a fall in men's paid work hours, the gender gap in paid work narrowed under the pandemic lockdown. But gender gaps in unpaid work and total work time in couple households widened: on average women's workload (including both paid and unpaid work) increased while that of men decreased.

Together, these findings call for urgent policy interventions to reduce and redistribute care work both through labour market regulation and expanding access to quality and affordable care services. Workplace practices and social care policies can bring about transformative changes to labour market participation and economic opportunity for men and women.

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\* This brief was prepared by İpek İlkkaracan (Istanbul Technical University) and Emel Memiş (Ankara University) who developed and led an autonomous research initiative with the KONDA research and consultancy company to include time-use questions in KONDA's pandemic survey. The initiative was supported by the UNDP Country Office in Turkey and the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub Istanbul. The authors are grateful for comments received from the UNDP Country Office, and to Bharati Sadasivam, UNDP Regional Gender Advisor, for review and editing. Further analysis and a detailed discussion of the results will be in İlkkaracan and Memiş (forthcoming).

# Research Brief

## Introduction

The economic crisis induced by the Covid-19 pandemic has further deepened the gender division of labour around the world. A unique field survey in Turkey provides evidence on the extent of the impact of the pandemic on gender gaps in paid and unpaid work. The regular Household Life Style Survey (HLSS) conducted under pandemic lockdown conditions in May 2020 in Turkey included a series of questions on time use. The results offer a basis for comparison with similar data obtained in the HLSS in April 2018 to assess the impacts of the pandemic.

Turkey was under a stay-at-home order from mid-March until the end of May during weekdays and a complete lockdown on weekends and national holidays. There was a gradual easing of restrictions from mid-May onwards. The pandemic time-use survey was conducted on May 18-19 under a complete lockdown, with the time-use survey (TUS) questions taking as the reference point “a typical weekday” in the previous week (week of May 11).<sup>1</sup> The survey covered 2407 people in all regions of Turkey and respondents answered questions with respect to a weekday during a period when some people might have gone to their workplaces but many workplaces and public spaces were closed.

In line with the population distribution by age groups in Turkey (TÜİK, 2020), 68% of the survey respondents are in the 15-49 age group (Appendix Table A1). More than half of the sample have high school or university education (56% for men, 47% for women). Couple households with/without children are the most recurring household type (79%) with a size of 3-5 members (63%) in Turkey. We extracted a subsample living in couple households (1902 people) to better observe changes in the gender division of labour. Members in couple households are more likely to do both paid and unpaid work activities, reflecting the bargaining power within the household.

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## Employment disruption by gender

The pandemic survey indicates substantial employment disruption. Overall, a higher proportion of men report employment disruption (54%) compared to women (32%). When employment disruption is measured as a share of those who had a job in the pre-pandemic period, however, employed women faced higher risks of employment disruption (31% of women in employment pre-pandemic) than employed men (18% of men in employment pre-pandemic).<sup>2</sup>

**Reasons for employment disruption (Figure 1):** Around 50% of employed women left their jobs in a vulnerable position (26% got laid off plus 25% left on leave without pay). The corresponding total is 42% for men (21% each got laid off or left without pay). “Leave with pay” appears to be more available to men (9%) than to women (5%). More men report that they “stopped working freelance” and “closed down workplace” (18% and 3% respectively) than women (11% and 1% respectively).

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1- Given the difficulties in survey conduct under pandemic conditions, KONDA developed a methodology that could be implemented in the lockdown. The surveyors located in different provinces across the country were able to move around in their immediate vicinity to conduct the surveys, within their own buildings and streets. KONDA has already undertaken three rounds of surveys using this revised sample, whose characteristics confirmed that the results were quite satisfactory in terms of representativeness (with similar results from previous surveys based on regular sample under non-pandemic conditions).

2- We estimate that 57% of men were employed pre-pandemic versus 22% of women. During the pandemic the corresponding figures were 17% and 49% respectively.

# Gender gaps in the care economy during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey



Among “other” reasons for employment disruption, commonly reported ones were “employed at a part-time/temporary/irregular job” or “engaged in gardening/agriculture work” which stopped due to the pandemic, or “moved to (early) retirement”. Around 10% of both women and men report quitting their jobs due to health risks; the share is higher for women living in extended households (17%). Few women (2%) report discontinuing employment because of having to take care of child/elderly/patient at home (versus no men); this figure rises to 4% for women in three-generation or extended families.



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Figure 1. Reasons for employment disruption (%)

**Continuation of employment under pandemic containment measures (Figure 2):** Women were more likely to switch to working from home (40%) compared to men (23%). By contrast, men were more likely to continue their employment at the workplace (61%) than women (51%). More men (17%) than women (9%) reported that they switched to working from home with pandemic measures (mid-March), returning to the workplace again by May with the easing of the measures. Continuing to work entirely from home appears to be rare among employed men at only 10%.

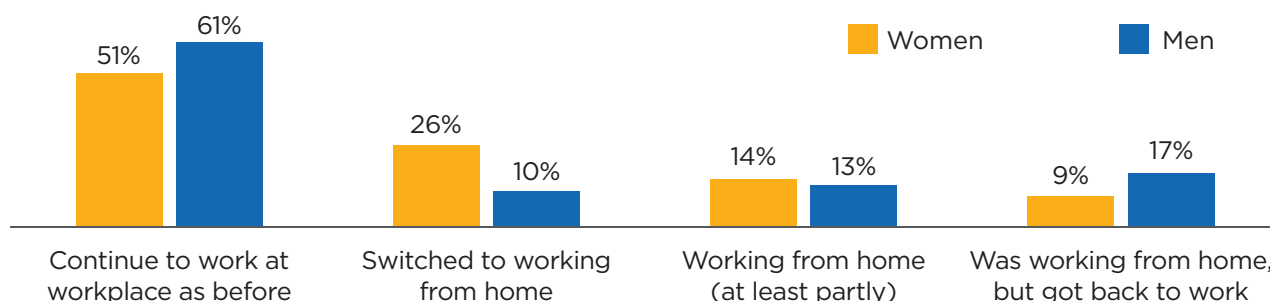


Figure 2. Change in employment status due to the outbreak (%)

## Gender gaps in paid and unpaid work

In line with these findings on employment disruption during the pandemic, overall, both women and men living in couple households experienced a decrease in their paid workload. This drop is relatively less for women (from 1.6 hours per day pre-pandemic (April 2018) to 1 hour per day during lockdown (May 2020)) than for men (from 5.2 hours per day to 3.2 hours per day).

A comparison of the time-use patterns (Tables 1a, 1b and 2) shows that the unpaid workload increased both for women and men, but more for women (from 2.9 hours per day to 4.5 hours per day) than for men (from as little as 0.3 hours per day to 1.1 hours). In terms of the total workload (paid and unpaid combined), men's work hours decreased by 1.2 hours per day to 4.3, while women's work hours increased by 1 hour per day to 5.5. Couple households with children (the majority of the sample, at 86%) display similar patterns (Table 1b). Hence the economy coming to a halt with the pandemic seems to be more of a male phenomenon, while for women the reverse is true. In other words, under pandemic conditions, while the market economy slowed down substantially, economic activity in the care economy both in its paid and unpaid components intensified.

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As a result of these changes in women's and men's work patterns, and mainly due to a fall in men's paid work hours, the gender gap in paid work (Figure 3 and Table 2) narrowed under the pandemic lockdown - from about -3.6 hours per day (2018) to -2.2 hours (2020) in couple households. On the other hand, the gender gaps in unpaid work and total work time in couple households have widened - by 0.8 hours per day from 2.7 hours to 3.4 hours for unpaid work and by 2.1 hours per day.

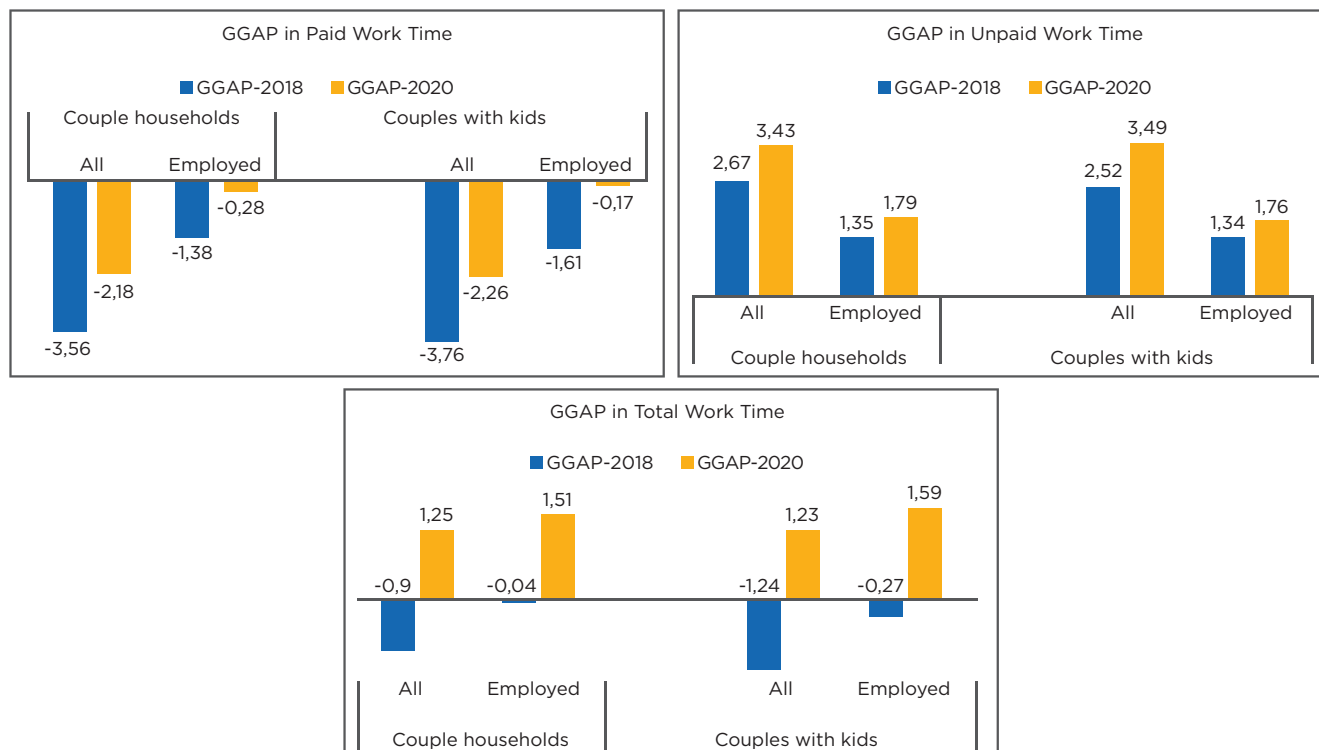
These changes in gender gaps in paid, unpaid and total work of women and men living in couple households vary in magnitude according to employment status and conditions as well as the presence of children. For women who continue in employment, the increase in total workload under the pandemic is striking: from 7.7 hours per day pre-pandemic to 9.2 hours per day due to a simultaneous rise both in paid work (from 6.2 to 6.5 hours) and particularly in unpaid work by almost 80% (from 1.5 to 2.7 hours). For women who continue to work at the workplace (as 'most essential' workers), the total daily work hours are more than 10 hours per day. Overall, men who continue in employment under the pandemic have nearly the same workload (7.7 to 7.6 hours), with a slight decrease in paid work and an increase in unpaid work.

For women and men living in couple households with children who continue in employment under the pandemic, the gender gap in paid work almost disappears (from -1.6 to -0.2 hours per day), while the gender gap in unpaid work widens (from 1.4 to 1.8 hours per day). The gender gap in total work is the highest for this group at 1.6 hours per day (Figure 3).

Despite the widening gender gaps in unpaid and total work under the pandemic, men's unpaid work time shows an interesting departure from the norm. In relative terms, there is a substantial increase in men's unpaid work time: overall from 0.3 to 0.8 hours a day (Table 1a). In the case of men who continue employment from home, the relative change is more than five-fold - from 0.2 to 1.1 hours a day.

The magnitude of this relative change provides insights into the conditions that are likely to provoke a transformation in men's behavior with respect to contributing to household production: When time becomes more available for men (due to decreasing paid work hours), conditions of work accommodate work-life balance (working from home) and the needs are pressing (pandemic containment measures), it is possible to observe unprecedented changes in men's participation in unpaid work.

# Gender gaps in the care economy during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey



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Figure 3. Change in Gender Gap (GGAP) in paid, unpaid and total work time  
Source: Authors' calculations based on 2018 KONDA Household Life Style Survey (HLSS) and 2020 Pandemic-TUS, Turkey by KONDA

Table 1a. Average time spent by women and men by employment status living in couple households

COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS	DURING THE PANDEMIC (May 2020) (change from pre-pandemic)			PRE-PANDEMIC (April 2018)				
	Sample share	Paid Work	Unpaid Work	Total Work	Sample share	Paid Work	Unpaid Work	Total Work
<b>WOMEN- ALL</b>		1,02	4,52	5,54		<b>1,62</b>	<b>2,92</b>	<b>4,54</b>
		-0,60	1,60	0,99				
<b>1. Employed Women</b>	17%	6,51	2,66	9,17	22%	6,18	1,53	7,72
		0,33	1,13	1,46				
1.1.Pre- and during-pandemic working at workplace	56%	7,96	2,06	10,02				
1.2.Pre- and during employed now working (partly) from home	35%	5,34	3,32	8,66				
<b>MEN-ALL</b>		3,20	1,09	4,3		<b>5,18</b>	<b>0,26</b>	<b>5,44</b>
		-1,98	0,83	-1,2				
<b>2. Employed Men</b>	49%	6,79	0,88	7,7	62%	7,57	0,19	7,75
		-0,78	0,69	-0,1				
2.1.Pre- and during-pandemic working at workplace	58%	7,59	0,71	8,3				
2.2.Pre- and during employed now working (partly) from home	33%	6,24	1,09	7,3				

Source: Authors' calculations based on 2018 KONDA Household Life Style Survey (HLSS) and 2020 Pandemic-TUS, Turkey by KONDA

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Table 1b. Average time spent by women and men by employment status in couple households with children

COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN	DURING THE PANDEMIC (May 2020) (change from pre-pandemic)				PRE-PANDEMIC (April 2018)			
	Sample share	Paid Work	Unpaid Work	Total Work	Sample share	Paid Work	Unpaid Work	Total Work
<b>ALL WOMEN</b>		1,05 -0,63	4,49 1,74	5,54 1,11		<b>1,68</b>	<b>2,75</b>	<b>4,43</b>
<b>1. Employed Women</b>	17%	6,62 0,57	2,56 1,04	9,18 1,61	22%	6,05	1,52	7,57
1.1.Pre- and during-pandemic working at workplace	57%	7,97	1,98	9,95				
1.2.Pre- and during employed now working (partly) from home	35%	5,25	3,43	8,67				
<b>ALL MEN</b>		3,31 -2,14	1,00 0,78	4,31 -1,36		<b>5,44</b>	<b>0,23</b>	<b>5,67</b>
<b>2. Employed Men</b>	51%	6,80 -0,86	0,80 0,62	7,60 -0,24	66%	7,66	0,18	7,84
2.1.Pre- and during-pandemic working at workplace	1%	7,44	0,70	8,14				
2.2.Pre- and during employed now working (partly) from home	0%	6,36	1,03	7,39				

Source: Authors' calculations based on 2018 KONDA Household Life Style Survey (HLSS) and 2020 Pandemic-TUS, Turkey by KONDA

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COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN	GGAP-2020			GGAP-2018		
	Paid	Unpaid	Total	Paid	Unpaid	Total
	<b>All</b>	-2,18	3,43	1,25	-3,56	2,67
<b>1. Employed</b>	-0,28	1,79	1,51	-1,38	1,35	-0,04
1.1.Pre- and during-pandemic employed, working at workplace	0,38	1,35	1,73			
1.2.Pre- and during-pandemic employed, working from home (at least partly)	-0,91	2,24	1,33			
COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH KIDS	GGAP-2020			GGAP-2018		
	Paid	Unpaid	Total	Paid	Unpaid	Total
	<b>All</b>	-2,26	3,49	1,23	-3,76	2,52
<b>1. Employed</b>	-0,17	1,76	1,59	-1,61	1,34	-0,27
1.1.Pre- and during-pandemic employed, working at workplace	0,53	1,28	1,81			
1.2.Pre- and during-pandemic employed, working from home (at least partly)	-1,11	2,40	1,29			

Source: Authors' calculations based on 2018 KONDA Household Life Style Survey (HLSS) and 2020 Pandemic-TUS, Turkey by KONDA

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Further to the time-use question, the respondents were also asked directly to assess how their own and their spouses' unpaid workload changed due to the pandemic. A much higher proportion of women living in couple households report that their unpaid workload has increased compared to that of men (68% to 41%). In couple households with children, these figures are slightly higher (70% and 42% respectively). Aligned with these figures, the responses to the question on changes in spouses' unpaid workload also reflect unequal change among women and men (Figure 4).

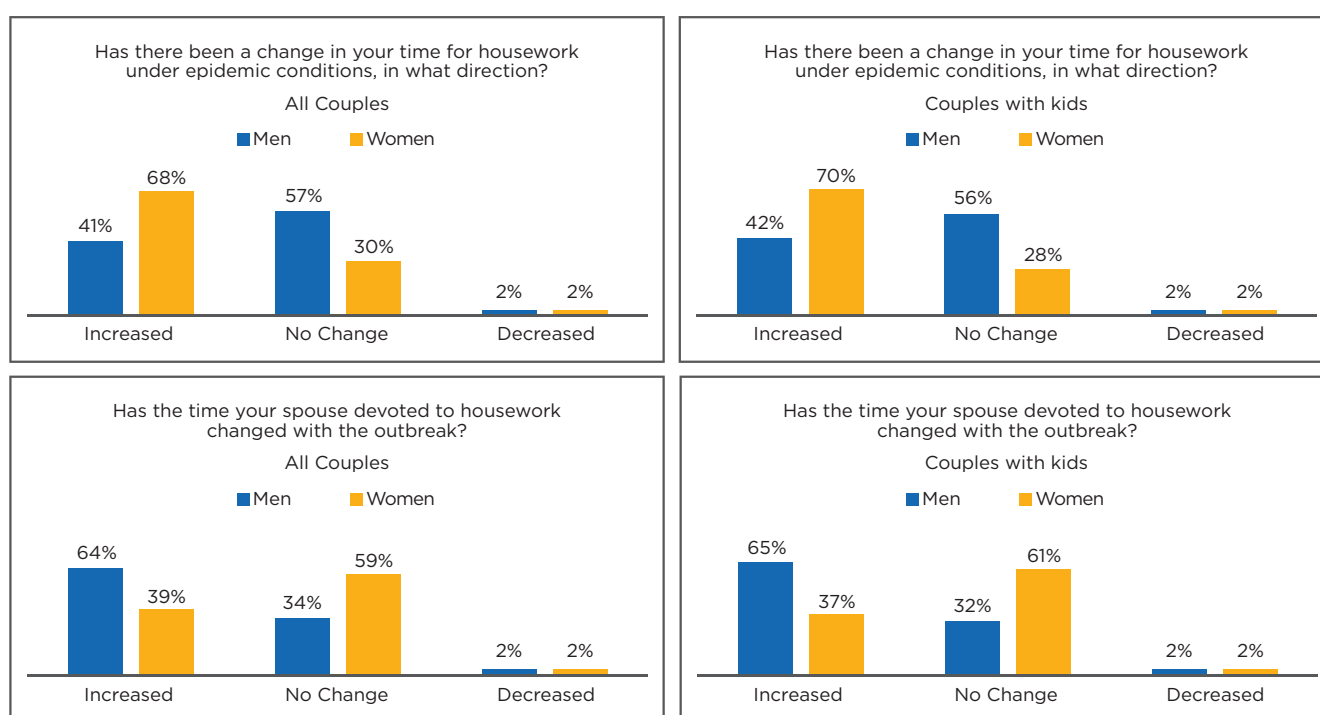


Figure 4. Change in housework time due to pandemic (%)

Table 3. Reasons for increase in unpaid work - women and men in couple households

	Women	Men
Childcare with the closing of schools	23%	17%
Housework normally done by cleaner / carer / assistant, etc.	9%	9%
Support / care for elderly people over 65 or older (including those who do not live in households)	4%	5%
To support and care for sick at home and / or stop receiving health care from outside	1%	1%
We cut out / cut home order / home order	16%	15%
To comply with the hygiene conditions required by the outbreak (hand washing, washing the home entrants)	41%	41%
Other	5%	11%

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The respondents' subjective feelings about their workload are also indicative of the deepening gender gaps in unpaid work. One in every two women (50%) versus less than a quarter of men (24%) report feeling overwhelmed by their workload. The figure is much higher for women in employment at 63% versus 27% for employed men (Table 4) indicative of the time squeeze experienced by women in employment.

**Table 4. Difficulty with workload: Women and men in couple households**

	Women All	Men All	Women Employed	Men Employed
Hard to deal with workload	50%	24%	63%	27%
No problem with workload	50%	76%	38%	73%

Responses on attitudes towards the gender division of labour indicate that a large share of both women and men have a predisposition towards equality: 85% of all women and 65% of all men in couple households support men's obligation to share housework equally with women (Table 5a). Support is stronger from employed women (89%) and lower from employed men (69%). About one-fifth of men (versus 6% of women) are neutral, and only 14% of men (versus 5% of women) disagree.

When it comes to the gender division of paid and unpaid labour, more than half (54%) of all women and more than two-thirds of employed women (67%) disagree that housework should be predominantly women's responsibility and earning income should be predominantly men's (Table 5b). However, much fewer men (35% of all men, 32% of employed men) disagree with this statement.

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**Table 5a. Attitudes towards gender division of labour**

Men should share housework equally with women				
	Women		Men	
	All	Employed	All	Employed
Absolutely wrong	1%	1%	3%	4%
Wrong	2%	4%	11%	13%
Neither wrong neither right	11%	6%	21%	23%
Right	33%	32%	41%	39%
Absolutely right	52%	57%	24%	21%

**Table 5b. Attitudes towards gender division of labour**

Housework should be predominantly women's work, earning income is men's				
	Women		Men	
	All	Employed	All	Employed
Absolutely wrong	30%	41%	14%	11%
Wrong	24%	26%	21%	21%
Neither wrong neither right	22%	10%	24%	26%
Right	20%	18%	32%	31%
Absolutely right	4%	5%	9%	12%



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## Policy implications

The survey results highlight the fact that the pandemic-induced economic crisis has had a substantial negative impact on employment (paid work) of both women and men in Turkey despite government measures to protect jobs. Employment disruption is more prevalent overall for men than for women surveyed. This is because many more men were employed before the pandemic and also possibly because of women's relative concentration among essential workers.

Nevertheless, when the negative employment impact is evaluated as the relative share of employed women and men, the impact on women's employment is larger, with higher shares of women facing lay-offs and leave without pay. This underlines the need for much more concerted policy measures to protect employment and labour earnings, with a focus on those in vulnerable forms of employment – informal workers such as wage workers without a legal work contract or social security coverage and own account workers (including domestic workers) – and provide compensatory payments where necessary.

The survey results also unveil the impact of the pandemic in deepening gender inequalities in unpaid work and total work time. School closures, lack of access to market substitutes for food, other household consumption items and domestic services, increased requirements for hygiene as well as for ill and elderly care under the pandemic conditions, has triggered an unprecedented increase in the demand for household production and caring labour. Women as a group have served as the main absorber of this demand shock by increasing their paid and unpaid work hours.

The pandemic thus underlines the urgent need for transformative policies to change unequal division of unpaid care work. In the absence of specific measures and policy responses, the pandemic is likely to further exacerbate the existing gender division of labour, intensify the time squeeze experienced by women in employment with inevitable spillover effects on women's labour force attachment, gender jobs segregation and the gender earnings gap; and at the same time weaken the resilience of households against the health and economic crises.

The substantial and unexpected increase in men's unpaid work time, especially in the case of men who continue employment from home, suggest that, under certain conditions, there can be more gender-equal sharing of household and care work.

Together, these findings call for policy interventions that entail measures to reduce and redistribute care work through a two-pronged approach: First, there is a need for labour market regulation for family-friendly policies and workplace practices addressing the work-life balance needs of both women and men with care dependents (such as care leave, telecommuting, flexible family-friendly work schedules and hours). Second, the expansion of access to quality social care services (including childcare, elderly, ill and disabled care (long-term care), education and health services) is essential. Such an expansion should include upgrading service delivery systems to improve their resilience in the face of shocks such as the current pandemic. The realization of these policies requires necessary fiscal expenditures at local and national levels. As such, stimulatory spending should be designed with a gender-responsive budgeting approach and with the awareness of the crucial role of care work in ensuring a resilient recovery.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1. Summary Statistics

2018 TUS and PANDEMIC-TUS-TURKEY		2018			2020		
		Women	Men	All	Women	Men	All
<b>Sample</b>	<b>Obs. #</b>	2,813	2,974	5,787	1,221	1,186	2,407
Age groups	15 - 17 years	3%	6%	4%	4%	3%	4%
	18 - 32 years	32%	32%	32%	33%	30%	32%
	33 - 48 years	35%	31%	33%	35%	30%	32%
	49+ years	30%	32%	31%	28%	36%	32%
Educational Attainment	Less than high school	62%	48%	55%	53%	44%	48%
	High School	25%	33%	29%	29%	35%	32%
	University	13%	19%	16%	18%	22%	20%
Household Type	Couple without kids	15%	16%	16%	8%	11%	9%
	Couple with kids	61%	61%	61%	72%	69%	70%
	Three generation extended families	13%	11%	12%	9%	9%	9%
	Other extended families	4%	3%	3%	6%	5%	5%
	Other households	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
	Single adult households	6%	6%	6%	3%	4%	4%
Household Size	1 - 2 person	21%	20%	21%	13%	17%	15%
	3-5 people	63%	63%	63%	63%	64%	63%
	6-8 people	14%	14%	14%	22%	18%	20%
	9 or more	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Labour force status	Employed, white collar	9%	21%	15%	7%	16%	11%
	Employed, worker, artisan, farmer	13%	41%	27%	9%	35%	22%
	Retired	7%	17%	12%	5%	19%	12%
	Housewife	53%	1%	26%	50%	1%	26%
	Student	11%	13%	12%	19%	18%	19%
	Unemployed	6%	8%	7%	10%	11%	10%
Employed/Nonemployed	Employed	22%	61%	42%	16%	50%	33%
	Non-employed	78%	39%	58%	84%	50%	67%
Life style (own defined)	Modern	28%	31%	29%	29%	30%	29%
	Traditional conservative	44%	46%	45%	43%	48%	45%
	Religious conservative	28%	23%	25%	29%	22%	25%

# Gender gaps in the care economy during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey



**Table A2. Change in workplace due to pandemic (%)**

	All households		Three-generation and other extended households		White collar		Blue collar	
	Women (n=180)	Men (n=471)	Women (n=37)	Men (n=109)	Women (n=111)	Men (n=296)	Women (n=21)	Men (n=29)
Continue to work at workplace as before	51%	61%	40%	59%	47%	51%	67%	70%
Switched to working from home	26%	10%	32%	9%	33%	17%	8%	5%
Working from home (at least partly)	14%	13%	26%	15%	17%	18%	10%	7%
Working from home with the pandemics, but got back to work	9%	17%	2%	17%	3%	14%	15%	17%

## Further reading

Ilkcaracan, Ipek and Emel Memiş. (forthcoming). Transformation in the Gender Imbalances in Paid and Unpaid Work under the Pandemic: Findings from a Pandemic Time-Use Survey in Turkey. Feminist Economics Special Issue on Feminist Economic Perspectives on the Covid-19 Pandemic (September 2020).

UN Women Jordan (2020). **Implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic for Women's Economic Empowerment and Policy Interventions: Contextualizing To The Case Of Jordan**

UN Women Jordan (2020). **Fiscal Policy, Taxation and Gender Equality in Jordan**

UNDP and UN Women (2017). **Investing in social care for gender equality and inclusive growth in Europe and Central Asia**

Istanbul Technical University Women's Studies Center and the Levy Economics Institute with ILO, UNDP, UN Women (2015). **The Impact of Public Investment in Social Care Services on Employment, Gender Equality, and Poverty: The Turkish Case**



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