

Since the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic a large number of families have been directly impacted by the spread of the SARS-coV-2 as the family members got infected, became sick, hospitalized and some of them died. But in addition to the direct health effects, an even larger number of families has been affected indirectly by the pandemic, as most countries around the globe have implemented far reaching social (physical) distancing and confinement policies, such as country lockdowns, school, childcare and workplace closures, restrictions to movement of people, cancellation of mass gatherings, closing of parks, forests and other public spaces, limiting access to shops and services.

The scientific goal of the project is to assess the diverse short (immediate) and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak policy responses for the distribution of paid and unpaid work in couples and their labour market outcomes (type of work contract, job stability, earnings, supervisory/managerial position) in Poland and in an international comparative perspective. The main focus will be on working parents with dependants, who were severely affected by the pandemic through school and childcare closures as well as disturbances to working arrangements. It is for the first time in modern history that partners who already had adopted certain division of paid and unpaid work unexpectedly had to re-arrange it because of the sudden immense increase in childcare responsibilities caused by kindergarten and school closures. At the same time, home-based work became suddenly available for many workers. Overall, these new circumstances create an extraordinary situation which may lead to either exacerbation of gender inequalities in the division of paid and unpaid labour or to more equal division.

At the beginning of the XXI century, we still observe persistence of an unequal division of unpaid work among working parents that may have numerous negative social consequences. It creates a major barrier to women's work careers leading to persistently lower incomes of women versus men and eventually female poverty at old age. It also results in loss of human resources, strong work-family tensions for women, low fertility intentions and marital conflict. Examining the changes to the gender division of labour due to COVID-19 outbreak policies and their underlying mechanisms is thus fundamental for the comprehensive understanding of the effect the current pandemic had on societies.

In our project, we will pay particular attention to: 1) the mechanisms underlying the changes in gender division of labour in families; 2) the moderating role of the cultural and economic context for these changes and their effects on labour market outcomes of men and women; 3) the role of the design of social distancing and confinement policies and the accompanying "cushioning" policies introduced in response to the pandemic for partners' involvement in paid work and their labour market outcomes.

In order to achieve the goals of this project several high-quality data sources will be used, of which the most important one is a special 2 wave social survey designed within an international cooperation with partners from Canada, Spain, USA, Germany and Sweden.