

The gendered impacts of COVID-19: Lessons and reflections ^[1]

Author: Mooi-Reci, I. & Risman, B.J.

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Excerpted from introduction

Widespread unemployment, job displacement, and income loss have characterized the lives of millions since the onset of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Around the world, early findings show that effects of the recent COVID-19 crisis are not equally distributed (e.g., Bartik et al. 2020; Cortes and Forsythe 2020). People of color and women with caregiving responsibilities are bearing the brunt of the pandemic in the United States and around the globe. Early in the pandemic, the U.S. unemployment rate for women 16–19 years of age hovered at 36.6 percent in contrast to 27.6 percent of men of the same age (Congressional Research Service [CRS] 2020a). The incidence of job loss was higher among women from racial and ethnic minority groups than among whites, with unemployment rates among Black and Hispanic women reaching double digits in September 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). During the last month of 2020, all of the job losses were sustained by women of color (Kurtz 2021). Millions of women with children were forced to reduce their paid work (Collins et al. 2020) and leave employment (Alon et al. 2020; Bateman and Ross 2020; Heggeness 2020) as result of school and child care center closures, social distancing measures, and reduced availability of child care provision.

These unprecedented social and economic disruptions have provided gender scholars with the opportunity to highlight long-term structural gender disparities and to study the impact of COVID-19 on gender inequality. To what extent are gendered disparities of COVID-19 felt differently across family contexts, across national borders, and by women of different racial and minority groups within national borders? Can remote learning and parents' working from home reduce gender disparities? How do the gendered impacts in paid and unpaid work vary cross-nationally? These questions are at the heart of this special COVID-19 symposium issue. In it, we bring together leading gender scholars to present their most up-to-date empirical evidence on the gendered and heterogeneous impacts of COVID-19 in paid and unpaid work in the United States, Canada, Israel, United Kingdom, Australia, and India.

Region: International ^[3]

Tags: gender equality ^[4]

COVID-19 ^[5]

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