

WHO CARES? GENDER, UNPAID DOMESTIC AND CARE WORK IN BRAZIL DURING THE PANDEMIC

QUEM CUIDA? GÊNERO, TRABALHO DOMÉSTICO E DE CUIDADO NÃO PAGO NO BRASIL DURANTE A PANDEMIA

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ABSTRACT

Historically, societies present a sexual division of labour wherein women are responsible for domestic and care work. Adding to this, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the time spent on these activities, as social distancing imposes the closure of workplaces, schools, restaurants and governmental services. This paper investigates if the extra amount of domestic and care work added to women's burden or if this was an opportunity for men to take more responsibility. The analysis of 455 questionnaires answered during social distancing in Brazil shows that the domestic and care work increase was not evenly distributed in gender and race terms.

Keywords: Inequality, Sexual Division of Labour, Social Reproduction, Race, Gender Norms.

RESUMO

Historicamente, as sociedades apresentam uma divisão sexual do trabalho em que as mulheres são responsáveis pelos trabalhos domésticos e de cuidado. Reforçando isso, a pandemia de Covid-19 aumentou o tempo dedicado a essas atividades, pois o distanciamento social impôs o fechamento de locais de trabalho, escolas, restaurantes e serviços governamentais. Este artigo analisa se a quantidade extra de trabalho doméstico e de cuidados aumentou a carga sobre as mulheres ou se isso foi uma oportunidade para os homens assumirem mais responsabilidades. A análise de 455 questionários respondidos durante o distanciamento social no Brasil mostra que o aumento do trabalho doméstico e de cuidado não foi distribuído de forma homogênea em termos de gênero e raça.

Palavras-chave: Desigualdade, Divisão Sexual do Trabalho, Reprodução Social, Raça, Padrões de Gênero.

JEL: J16 – Economics of gender; J22 – Time allocation and labour supply; J1 – Demographic Economics.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world of work is still highly segregated in terms of gender. Women's experience of the labour market is substantially different from that of men regarding sectors, working hours, rates of schooling and literacy, unemployment, underemployment or inactivity rates (ELDER and JOHNSON, 1999). These differences are also connected to discrimination in the labour market and to the social construct of merit (TOMEI, 2003).

Many scholars identify a sexual division of labour in our contemporary societies in which women are socially responsible for domestic work (BADGETT and FOLBRE, 1999; SAFFIOTTI, 2013). This sexual division of labour, due to socially defined gender roles, impacts and influences women's trajectories and their insertion in the labour market (GIBB, 2017). Domestic work responsibilities have long-lasting effects and shape the way in which women participate in the labour market: being the main responsible for reproduction labour has numerous implications for women, reducing the time available for paid work and adding to various discriminations. For example, Sparreboom (2014) highlights the ambiguous relationship regarding time use by women, especially regarding part-time work: on the one hand, part-time work has allowed many women who would not have worked at all if only full-time jobs were available to enter the labour market, due to the need to conciliate paid and unpaid work. On the other hand, part-time work is often of lesser quality than full-time work, which impacts women's financial autonomy.

The Brazilian society is no exception to this analysis. On the contrary, Brazil still presents a highly segregated labour market in terms of gender, visible by the amount of hours allocated to unpaid domestic labour – crucial to social reproduction – in terms of gender. IBGE (2020) shows that in 2019 women dedicated 21,4 hours a week on average for unpaid domestic labour, while men dedicated 11 hours a week on average. Even before the pandemic, Brazilian women were already overwhelmed with domestic and care work, with profound impacts on their insertion in the labour market. In this article, we argue, as Gibb & Oliveira (2015), that in order to fully grasp the working time and the working conditions, this amount of time must also be accounted for as working time.

In the same sense as a sexual division of labour exists, González (1979) identifies a racial division of labour in the Brazilian society, according to which the society is based upon structural racism due to the enslavement of the Black population in Brazil until 1888, delegating low paid and precarious occupations to this population. Carr & Chen (2004) also argue that ethnicity and gender are often the source of exclusion or inclusion at work and that labour markets are segmented along the lines of gender, ethnicity and some mix of the two. Black women, in this highly segregated society such as Brazil, face dual oppression. This makes women's experiences in the world of work very different according to their race, class, region etc, making an intersectional approach very important.

From 2003 to 2014, many public policies were put in place to reduce inequalities in its various forms in Brazil. Improvements in the labour market also rendered very positive results especially for the black population and women (OLIVEIRA & COLOMBI, 2014). However, i) these improvements were not enough to substantially change structural sexism and racism present in Brazilian society (ALMEIDA, 2018; OLIVEIRA & COLOMBI, 2014); ii) social provision remained limited in the country, relying on women to perform various unpaid activities for society to function. Even so, the improvements seen in this period were also reversed, in a sense, from 2015 on, as the country adopted an austerity approach towards public finance and development (DWECK, ROSSI & OLIVEIRA, 2020). From 2015 to 2020, prior

to the pandemic, many instruments to oppose gender and racial inequalities were underfunded or altogether cut and the labour market faced an increase in precariousness, guiding Brazil towards a more vulnerable position in social terms prior to the pandemic (OLIVEIRA & ALLOATTI, 2021).

These structural characteristics were met by an unprecedented event: the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic disrupted the global economy and the world of work in many ways. In early 2020, important multinationals stopped their production, global cities such as New York, Shanghai and Paris came to a halt and even pollution levels went down as economic activity was reduced. However, even if the global economy came to a halt, domestic and care work did not. Not only has unpaid domestic and care work not stopped, as has the global economy, but on the contrary: they seem to have increased and intensified. In this sense, the different dimensions of gender inequalities were evidenced, especially regarding the overload of domestic and care work. The increase in domestic work, as social distancing imposes the closure of workplaces, schools, restaurants and governmental services that facilitate social reproduction, is a disruption to the world of work. This article argues that, as does Gibb & Oliveira (2015), the domestic realm is an important feature to analyse the world of work.

Pre-existing inequalities such as income, labour force status, labour market segmentation and productive and reproductive labour conciliation were aggravated by the pandemic. Women and men, Black and White were affected differently by the Covid-19 crisis. Women and Black people suffered more job losses with the suspension of non-essential jobs, especially in the service sector where they are overrepresented. Women's and Black workers' average wage is lower than White men's. There is also a prevalence of women and Black workers in precarious and "self-employed" occupations which face difficulties to conduct their occupations online. Formal, informal, and self-employed non-essential service workers, such as hairdressers, cleaners, maids, resellers, among many others experienced either reduction or complete shut down during the social distancing period, impacting these workers directly with reduction of income or job loss (FARES et al., 2020). These groups are also more susceptible to unemployment. Women were 65.6% of workers who lost their occupation between March and September 2020 (FERNANDES, 2020). Their loss of aggregate working time still has not picked up (OLIVEIRA et al., 2020). In addition to being the majority of the population in the informal sector, Black people are also the majority of those living in slums and have barriers to self-isolate (OLIVEIRA et al., 2020).

The segmentation of the labour force reinforced women's fragile situation during the pandemic also regarding those who did not lose their job. Essential service workers like health and care workers are at increased risk. Women and the black population were highly exposed to Covid-19 since they are also overrepresented in essential service jobs, like nurses, cleaning, supermarket cashiers among others. Given this context, this paper discusses the following research questions, focused on Brazil: has the extra amount of domestic work caused by the Covid-19 pandemic added to women's burden in the household? How was the extra domestic work during social distancing divided regarding gender? Did this situation forge an opportunity for men to take more responsibility for household and care? Are there any relevant differences between how Black and White women are experiencing this period? Our hypothesis is that although the Covid-19 pandemic may have been an opportunity to problematize the sexual division of domestic and care work, time spent by women in domestic work increased in an uneven manner, therefore augmenting gender inequality. As this occurred in a context in which Black women already faced dual oppression, a related hypothesis is that the pandemic also impacted racial inequality in Brazil (in particular, by overburdening Black women).

In order to investigate these hypotheses, the paper performs a literature review on the sexual division of labour during the pandemic in Brazil and abroad, and analyses unexplored data from a questionnaire answered by 455 people during a social distancing period in Brazil, between May 26th 2020 and June 15th 2020 using a snowball technique. The article is finalized with final remarks.

2. COVID-19 AND THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR: A REVIEW

A significant amount of research has emerged on the increase in time spent on domestic and care work due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the disruption of routines, some of them highlighting the gender inequality in this area, both in Brazil and abroad.

Azcona, Bhatt & Love (2020) argue that health emergencies such as Covid-19 – and the response to them – can exacerbate gender inequality and derail hard-won progress on sustainable development. UN Women (2020) conducted an 18-country poll which revealed that women took on a lot more responsibility for household chores and care of children and family during the pandemic: on average, women were 4% more likely than men to say they strongly agreed that their care load had increased during the pandemic (UN Women, 2020). For Brazil, this poll shows that the gender differential to the question “I have had to take a lot more responsibility for household chores and care of children and family during this pandemic” was 8 percentage points (p.p.) higher for women. It should also be considered that women tend to underestimate the time and energy they allocate to caring for others, while men are inclined to overestimate it (UN Women, 2020).

There is evidence of gender inequality in unpaid work in various countries. For example, in France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States, men performed 25 hours a week on domestic work and care, while women performed 35 hours a week. After Covid-19, men started performing, on average, 25 hours more on those activities, while women started performing 29 hours more on the same errands (KRENTZ et al., 2020). Also, the Australian Government’s Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020) argues that the increase in caring responsibilities during the Covid-19 crisis is likely to be shouldered by women.

In Britain, Pregnant Then Screwed (2020) found that 81% of British mothers needed childcare to be able to work during the Covid-19 pandemic, but 51% did not have it in place. According to the research, 15% of British mothers were either fired or quit during the crisis and 46% have said that a lack of childcare provision played a role in their redundancy. Also in Britain, Villadsen et al., (2020) point out that 64% of mothers of school-age children reported doing some homeschooling on a typical weekday during lockdown, while 49% of fathers reported the same. Also, while mothers of primary school children spent an average of 5 hours per day on homeschooling, fathers spent just under 2 hours on it. Finally, mothers of secondary school children spent on average just under 2 hours per day on homeschooling versus just under 1 hour for fathers.

Research on Brazil on this matter has also flourished. In Brazil, Mena (2020) argues that 57% of women working from home due to the pandemic accumulated most of the domestic work. Among men, this rate is 21%. Febraban (2020) shows that during social distancing 49% of the Brazilian population argued domestic work increased: 50% of women and 47% of men had this opinion. Regarding the amount of men reporting engaging in domestic work and assisting children in homeschooling, women perceive men’s participation in these activities to be lower than that reported by men (FEBRABAN, 2020).

Also for the Brazilian case, a very important research was conducted during the period of social distancing in Brazil by *Sempreviva Organização Feminista* (SOF) (2020). The study shows that 50% of the Brazilian women stated being a care-giver during the pandemic; 72% of the Brazilian women stated having increased time spent on monitoring someone or acting as a companion for someone. As for the impacts of the pandemic in economic activity, Barbosa, Costa & Hecksher (2020) argue that Brazilian women that were occupied previous to the pandemic transitioned to inactivity by March 2020 at a higher rate than men, also arguably due to the closure of schools and the increase in domestic and care work. Fernandes (2020) identifies the same phenomenon. Research has also highlighted the gendered effects of the pandemic on academic production, especially in Brazil (MYERS et al., 2020; STANISCUASKI et al., 2020).

More recently, the journal *Feminist Economics* published a special issue on the gendered impacts of the Covid-19 crisis. Kabeer et al., (2021), opening this issue, highlight the growing amount of evidence globally which indicates that the increase in care work during the pandemic has fallen disproportionately on the shoulders of women. İlkkaracan & Memiş (2021), in this same special issue, uses a survey conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey to analyse men's and women's time use under lockdown. The study finds that, while men's participation in unpaid work increased, particularly for men who switched to working from home, the relative increase for women further widened the gender gap in unpaid work. Stevano et al., (2021) show how the pandemic and the measures to contain it have further deepened the centrality of households and reproductive work in the functioning of capitalism. The authors argue that this reorganization is exacerbating gender, class, and race inequalities. Finally, Seck et al., (2021) show, by using evidence from eleven countries in Asia-Pacific, that the impact of the pandemic goes far beyond health consequences. One of the consequences highlighted by the authors is that women have disproportionately shouldered the burden of unpaid care and domestic work triggered by the lockdowns, which is one of the factors which make the need for a gender-sensitive recovery to be undertaken. However, the authors underscore the need for more gender-responsive surveys.

To complete this review, we undertook two searches to find the state-of-the-art literature being published in journals on this matter. On August 25th 2020, we conducted a search on Web Of Science and a search on Scopus using the terms gender* and covid* and work*. As a result, 96 articles were obtained on Web of Science and 138 articles were obtained on Scopus, all published in 2020. The articles were then manually analysed by their titles and abstracts. A total of 12 articles were selected and are presented on Table 1 along with their main contributions.

The articles summarized in Table 1 analyse different geographical scopes, utilize very different methodologies from one another and also present very different outcomes regarding gender, unpaid work and Covid-19. Two are more optimistic and argue that the crisis challenges gender roles in the household (WENHAM, SMITH & MORGAN, 2020; MISHRA & MAJUMDAR, 2020), eight argue that gender roles are being reinforced regarding unpaid work (AL-ALI, 2020; COLLINS et al., 2020; CRAIG, 2020; CRAIG & CHURCHILL, 2020; KING et al., 2020; MANZO & MINELLO, 2020, MCLAREN et al., 2020; POWER, 2020), while two other argue the effects can be diverse (THOMASON & MACIAS-ALONSO, 2020; HENNEKAM & SHYMKO, 2020). None of them has a specific focus on Brazil.

TABLE 1 – SELECTED ARTICLES FROM WEB OF SCIENCE AND SCOPUS AND THEIR MAIN CONTRIBUTION

Authors	Geographic scope	Main contribution relating to unpaid work & gender dynamics under Covid-19
Al-Ali (2020)	Global South	Women who provide most of the unpaid care work within families experienced a sharp increase in their care burden under Covid-19. The pandemic threatens to create long-term gaps in girls' education and women's participation in formal paid labour, which could strengthen traditional patriarchal gender norms. Women who still have jobs tend to do even more housework than before.
Collins, Landivar, Ruppner & Scarborough (2020)	United States	In dual-earner heterosexual married couples with children, mothers with young children have reduced their work hours four to five times more than fathers. The gender gap in work hours has grown by 20–50 per cent and this may undermine women's career advancement, as scaling back work hours is part of a 'downward spiral' that often leads to labour exits.
Craig (2020)	Australia	Time in unpaid work was significantly higher during lockdown than it had been before. Men's average unpaid work was raised by more than two and a half hours a day, and women's by more than three and a half hours a day. For many women, the crisis worsened gender roles, and gender inequities proved resistant to changes. However, there were some signs of gender shifts in work–family trade-offs.
Craig & Churchill (2020)	Australia	Paid work time was slightly lower and unpaid work time was much higher during lockdown than before it. Absolute time increases in unpaid work were higher for mothers. Prior to Covid-19, mothers' average daily time allocation to housework and household management and active care combined was about 1.7 hours more than men on these activities together, and during the lockdown this had increased to 2.3 hours per day.
Hennekam & Shymko (2020)	France	The findings reveal: i) an intensification of gender performativity manifested in the reproduction of 'masculine' and 'feminine' reactions; ii) a gradual deflection from gender performances through mental improvisations that foster new awareness. The study highlights some potential emancipatory implications the crisis may have for the practices of 'doing gender' and perceptions of work–life balance instigating a transition towards more egalitarian households: "like any other edifice of social convention, a traditional system of gender roles is not immune to 'cracks'" (:13). Under Covid-19, in the absence of rules on how to behave towards gender, improvised self-ruling emerged as household members stepped into unknown territory.
King et al., (2020)	Worldwide	Covid-19 delivered a shock to existing gender systems that could recalibrate gender roles and deliver long-term health benefits. However, the pandemic exacerbates gender unpaid work differences in two main ways: i) women's caring for sick family members reduces their capacity to be in paid employment, and places them at increased risk of infection; ii) confinement due to work at home requirements and school closures may compound the unequal division of domestic tasks. Responsibility for schooling children at home may be disproportionately borne by women.
Manzo & Minello (2020)	Italy	The lockdown has exacerbated gender inequality, creating unequal domestic rearrangements of parenting duties. The research highlights the key role that working mothers have played in organizing caretaking activities to resist the never-ending burden of social distancing, childcare, and maintaining a degree of normalcy and efficiency at work. There is an urgency to understand why the male 'breadwinner' model prevails even in emergency conditions when it shows intrinsic limits, as the long-time adverse effects on the women's labour market might suggest.

Authors	Geographic scope	Main contribution relating to unpaid work & gender dynamics under Covid-19
McLaren et al., (2020)	Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam and Australia	During disease outbreaks, women endure additional burdens associated with paid and unpaid work, often without consideration or the alleviation of other life responsibilities. This is no different under Covid-19: considering the productive, reproductive and community work spheres, women's reproductive sphere was the most intensified during the crisis. Understanding the extent to which Covid-19 affects women and men differently will be fundamental to analyse its impact both during the crisis and during individual/societal recovery.
Mishra & Majumdar (2020)	India	Gender relations within the family are likely to change in favour of greater sharing of domestic responsibilities between men and women, as under social distancing, cooking, cleaning and childcare responsibilities began to be shared. Gender roles in the household are being tweaked in favour of greater sharing of domestic responsibilities
Power (2020)	Worldwide	Women were already doing most of the world's unpaid care work prior to the pandemic and the crisis and its subsequent shutdown response have resulted in a dramatic increase in this burden. The closure of schools and nurseries has revealed the fragility of women's participation in the paid economy. It is likely that the negative impacts for women and families will last for years without proactive interventions.
Thomason & Macias-Alonso (2020)	United States	The pandemic highlights caregiving as critical work that is under-valued and under-paid.
Wenham, Smith & Morgan (2020)	Worldwide	Crisis can be an opportunity for gendered change: WWI was a watershed moment for women's emancipation with large swathes being added to the workforce, and the creation of women's institutes, which led to women's suffrage. Covid-19 can be another such movement for greater gender-equality in the workplace.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

This literature review demonstrates the importance of the topic selected for this article, as well as its geographic scope. Indeed, the section highlights that this article fills a literature gap. Whether gender roles were questioned or reinforced during the pandemic in Brazil is an important debate and one which can have an impact on gender equality in the long term: is this crisis an opportunity for gendered change (Wenham, Smith & Morgan, 2020) or will the male 'breadwinner' model prevail even in an emergency condition, when it shows its intrinsic limits (MANZO & MINELLO, 2020)? These questions, along with some considerations on the intersectionality between gender and race and unpaid domestic and care work, will guide the discussion in the next section.

3. UNPAID DOMESTIC AND CARE WORK IN BRAZIL UNDER COVID-19: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

As mentioned, this article analyses data from an online questionnaire answered by 455 people during the social distancing period in Brazil, between May 26th 2020 and June 15th 2020 using a snowball technique (ALLOATTI, 2014). This method was chosen

because researchers were not able to contact interviewees personally due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it allowed us to go beyond our personal contacts.

Before proceeding, it is important to mention a few characteristics of the respondents. In terms of sex, 288 (63.3%) were women and 167 (36.7%) were men. In terms of declared race, 346 (76.0%) respondents declared to be white, 99 (21.8%) black, 8 (1.8%) Asian descendants, and 2 (0.4%) indigenous. In terms of age, 104 (22.9%) respondents were between 18 and 29 years old, 237 (52.1%) respondents were between 30 and 49 years old, 107 (23.5%) respondents were between 50 and 69 years old, and 7 (1.5%) respondents were between 70 and 79 years old. Most of the respondents resided in three Brazilian states located in the Southeast region: 237 (52.1%) in São Paulo, 69 (15.2%) in Minas Gerais, and 46 (10.1%) in Rio de Janeiro. The remaining 103 (22.6%) respondents resided in 17 Brazilian states and the Federal District.

The questionnaire aimed at identifying if the respondents perceived an increase in the amount of domestic and care work during the pandemic and if this was related to a change in the sexual division of domestic and care work. The analysis presented first explores the gender dimension in care and domestic work. Then, we briefly analyse information concerning domestic work and the intersection between gender and race.

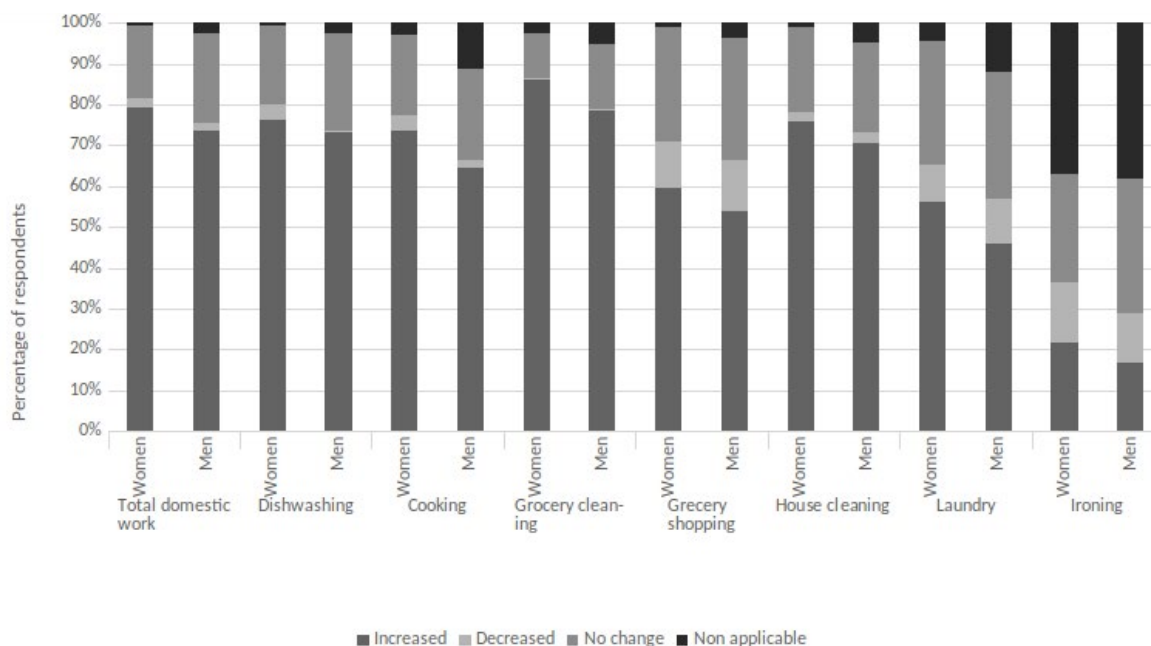
3.1 Domestic and care work during the pandemic: gender impacts

The analysis begins with the data concerning domestic work. As reported in Figure 1, most of the respondents reported an increase in the total time spent on domestic work under Covid-19 (that is, during the period of social distancing). There are no significant differences between men and women in this case, as 79% women and 74% men reported an increase in the total time they spend on domestic work. However, the information regarding each type of domestic work provides some additional insights into how the pandemic affected the time spent on domestic work for men and women. While most respondents reported an increase in each type of domestic work (except for ironing for both sexes and doing the laundry for men), such increase was more relevant for activities such as dishwashing, cooking, cleaning groceries, and house cleaning. In addition, even if in general women reported more frequently an increase the time spent in each activity, gender differences were more relevant in activities such as cooking (increased for 74% of women and 65% of men), cleaning groceries (increased for 86% of women and 78% of men), and doing the laundry (increased for 56% of women and 46% of men). This suggests that some domestic activities tend to be more frequently done by women than men and, thus, the former were more affected by the increase in the time required for these activities during the pandemic.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the difference between women and men who declared that the question did not apply, which can be interpreted as a sign that the respondent does not perform that activity. This was particularly the case for cooking (non applicable for 3% of women and 11% of men) and doing the laundry (non applicable for 5% of women and 12% of men), but in all activities the percentage of men who answered that the question did not apply was higher than that of women (even though in for some activities the percentages were very similar). In sum, while the percentage of respondents who declared an increase in the total

amount of domestic work was similar for both sexes, the information for each type of activity indicates that the pandemic may have meant a more relevant increase in domestic work for women, thus reinforcing our hypothesis that during the pandemic the time spent by women in domestic work increased in an uneven manner, augmenting gender inequality.

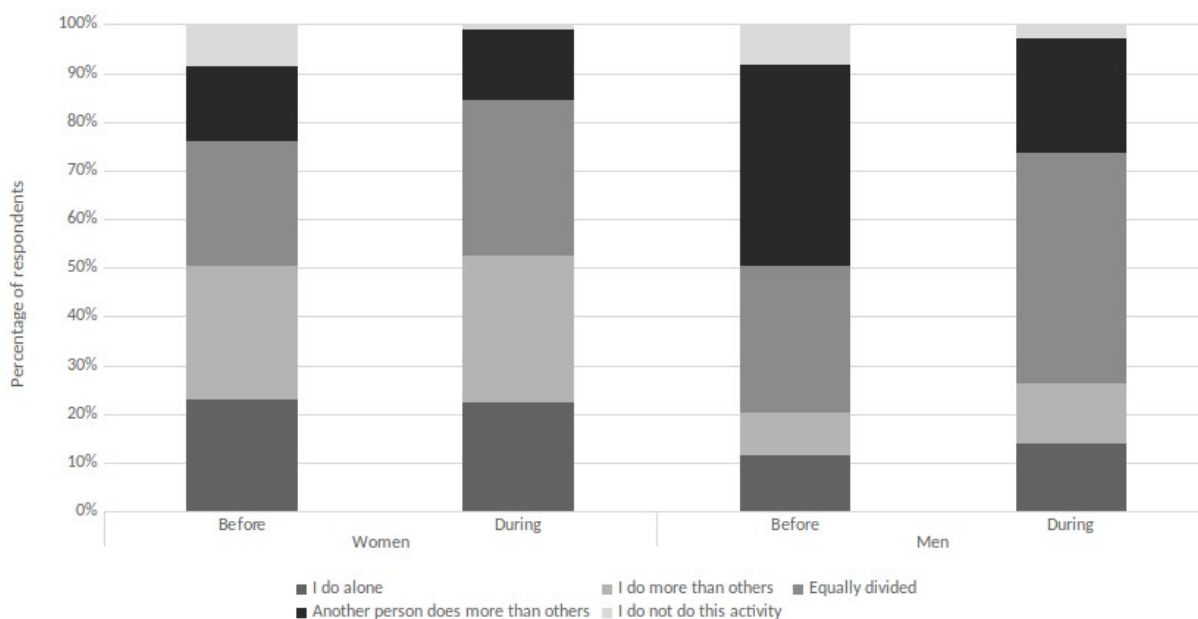
FIGURE 1 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE TIME SPENT ON DOMESTIC WORK COMPARED TO THE PERIOD BEFORE SOCIAL DISTANCING (TOTAL AND PER ACTIVITY)”



Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on questionnaire.

The evidence of an uneven increase in the time spent on domestic work is reinforced by the respondents’ answers when asked how they shared the domestic work (Figure 2). It is possible to observe that the pandemic did not bring an expressive change in gender differences, as the percentage of women who are the sole responsible for domestic work (23% before the pandemic and 22% during the pandemic) remained much higher than that of men (11% before the pandemic and 14% during the pandemic) and the percentage of women who do more domestic work than others (27% before the pandemic and 30% during the pandemic) also remained above that of men (9% before the pandemic and 13% during the pandemic). Thus, the previous pattern of sexual division of the domestic work, which was characterized by an overburden of domestic activities on women, remained basically the same. The most relevant information when the periods before and during the pandemic are compared was an increase in the percentage of respondents of both sexes who declared that their domestic work is equally shared, which was particularly more relevant for men. In other words, men declared more frequently that they were participating more in household chores than before. This was due to a decrease in the percentage of women and men who declared not to do any domestic work and a decrease in the percentage of men who declared that another person in the household does more domestic work than others.

FIGURE 2 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE DOMESTIC WORK ACTIVITY”



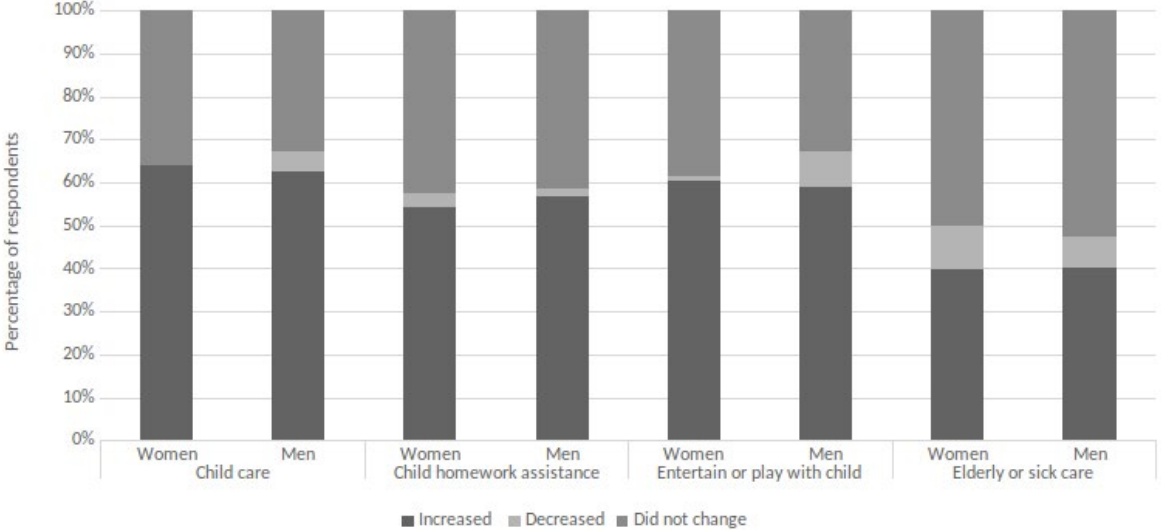
Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on questionnaire.

The information regarding the effect of the pandemic on care work is reported in Figure 3. In this case, we created subsamples for each activity and only included respondents who are actually involved with that activity, as many respondents are not involved with any type of care activity. This rendered the following subsample sizes: 89 women and 64 men for child care (31% and 38% of the total of women and men respectively), 68 women and 53 men for child homework assistance (24% and 32% of the total of women and men respectively), 78 women and 61 men for entertaining or playing with a child (27% and 37% of the total of women and men respectively), and 68 women and 40 men for elderly or sick care (24% of women and 24% of men). While most respondents who performed each activity declared an increase in the activities related to childcare, this was not the case for the elderly and sick care activity, as it did not change to most respondents (50% of women and 53% of men). Nevertheless, a relevant percentage declared an increase in the time spent on elderly and sick care (40% of women and 40% of men). Differently from the analysis of the domestic activities, in the case of the care activities it is not possible to identify a clear gender pattern, as the percentage of women and men who declared an increase in each type of activity is rather similar.

However, it is possible to draw some insights into the division of the child care activities from the information in Figure 4. In this case, there is a considerable difference between women and men, as 53% of women declared doing this activity alone or more than others before the pandemic (60% during the pandemic), while this percentage was only 7% of men (14% during the pandemic). This difference is also reflected in the percentage of respondents who declared that another person does more or does alone this activity, which was equal to 9% of women and 35% of men before the pandemic (5% and 30% during the pandemic respectively), and in the percentage of respondents who declared to equally share this activity, which was equal to 38% of women and 58% of men before the pandemic (35% and 56% during the pandemic respectively). Therefore, despite some marginal changes in the percentages for the periods before and during the pandemic, the expressive gender differences in the division of the child care activities remained. As in the case of domestic work, this means that the previous pattern

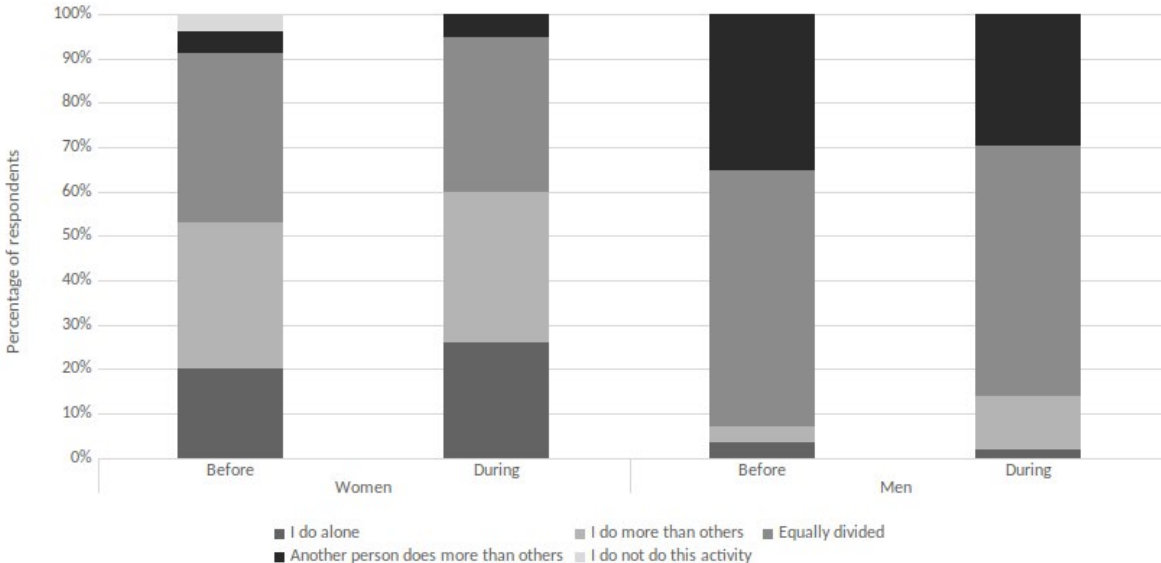
in which women are the main responsible for these activities was not altered by the pandemic. Consequently, the increase in the time spent on care activities reported in Figure 3, by not being accompanied by a more equal division of this work, meant an extra burden on women.

FIGURE 3 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE TIME SPENT ON CARE WORK COMPARED TO THE PERIOD BEFORE SOCIAL DISTANCING (PER ACTIVITY)”



Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on questionnaire.

FIGURE 4 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE CHILD CARE WORK ACTIVITY”

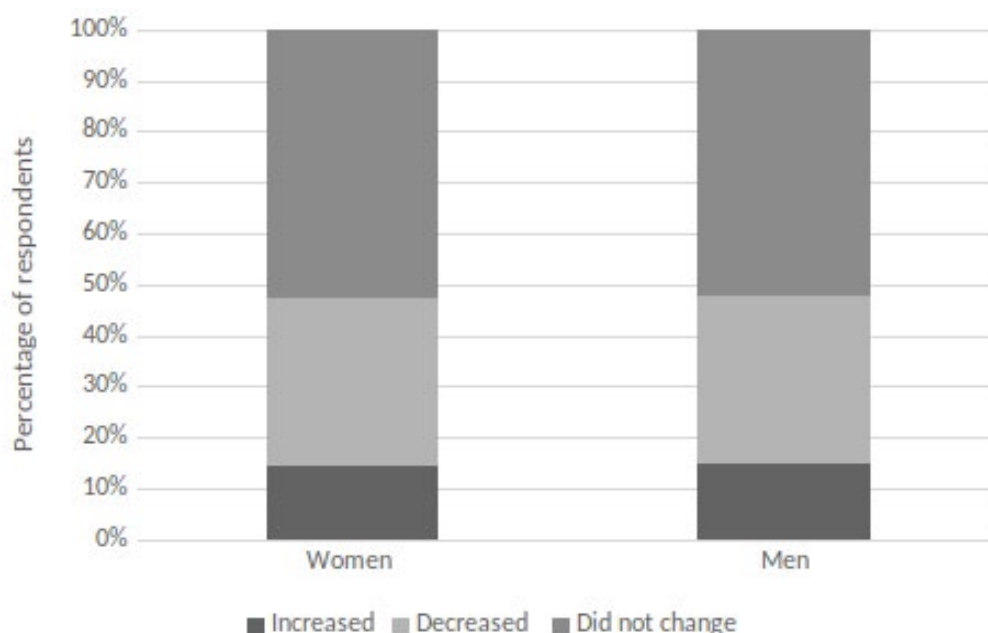


Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on questionnaire.

As mentioned in the introduction and in the literature review and confirmed by the data presented above, women tend to be the main responsible for the domestic and care activities, which means that the amount of time spent by women on these activities tends to be much higher than in the case of men. This difference in the use of time is so relevant that, even if women tend to work less hours in paid work, their total work hours are higher than those for men when domestic work is considered (GIBB & OLIVEIRA, 2015). Therefore, in order to better understand the pandemic’s impact on the use of time and the gender differences, we investigate whether there was a reduction in the amount of paid work in the period. This information is

reported in Figure 5, which shows that most respondents reported that the time spent on paid work did not change (53% of women and 52% of men), while it reduced to 33% of men and women, and increased for 14% of women and 15% of men. It is important to mention that, among those who reported a decrease in the time spent on paid work (95 women and 55 men), 24 women and 12 men lost their job during the pandemic. Considering the total sample, this means that 8% of women and 7% of men lost their job during the pandemic. These figures were not counterbalanced by the number of people who started a new job during the pandemic, as only two women were in this situation. In terms of gender, however, there is no considerable difference in how their amount of paid work changed with the pandemic, as the percentage of respondents who declared an increase, a decrease, or no change in the amount spent on paid work is similar for both sexes.

FIGURE 5 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK”



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on questionnaire.

In sum, the data gathered from the questionnaire and presented in this article suggests that for those individuals in our sample there was an increase in the time spent on both domestic and care work, with the increase in the former being particularly more relevant for women than for men in some specific activities. However, this increase was not accompanied by a better division of the domestic and care work. The previous pattern - in which women were overburdened - remained the same, which indicates that women had to deal with most of the increase in the time spent on these activities.

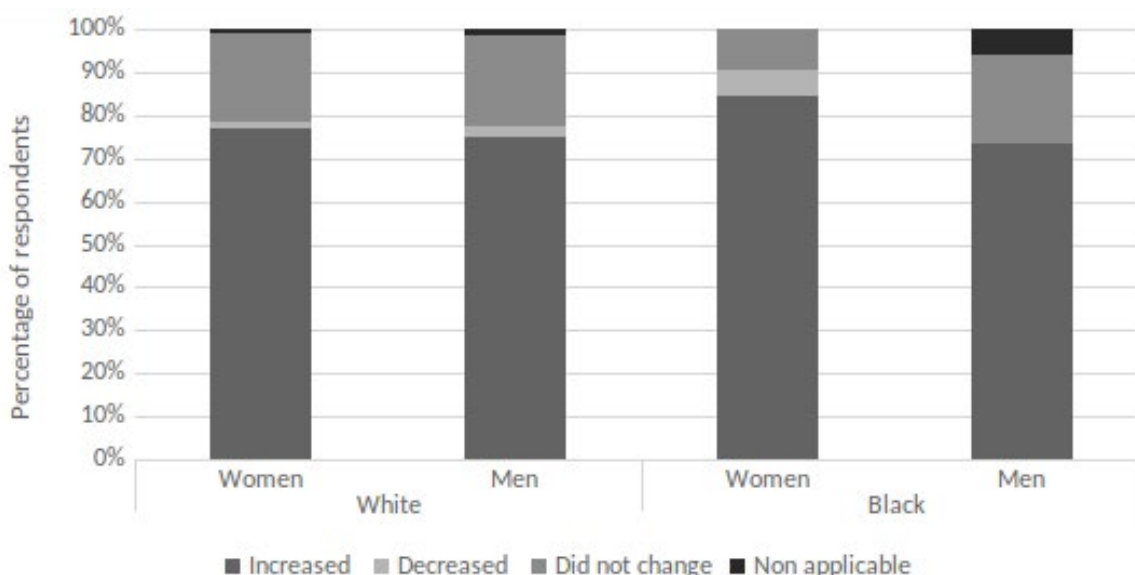
In other words, even if both sexes perceived an increase in the time spent on domestic and care work, this occurred with no change in how these activities are divided or in some cases with an increase in gender differentials, which means that women remained the main responsible for them and, thus, took the responsibility for most of the increase in these activities during the pandemic. As there were no significant differences between women and men in terms of the change in the amount of time spent on paid work, this increase in the time spent on domestic and care work meant a more relevant increase in the total amount of (paid and unpaid) work for women. This extra burden brought by the pandemic exacerbates the patterns highlighted by Gibb & Oliveira (2015), with possible long term impacts on gender equality (OLIVEIRA & EMÍDIO, 2020).

3.2 Domestic work during the pandemic: the gender and racial intersection

As mentioned in the introduction, race is also a relevant aspect that affects men’s and women’s participation in the labour market and in society, especially in Brazil (GONZÁLEZ, 1979). This translates into Black people and Black women, in particular, facing more difficulties to access decent work both previously – in a structural manner – and during the pandemic.

In order to explore how the racial dimension affected the increase in domestic work, we draw some insights into the gender and racial intersection concerning the increase in domestic work during the pandemic. This information is reported in Figure 6, which shows that most of the difference between men and women in the increase in the time spent in domestic work is actually due to a more significant increase in the domestic work for Black women than the other categories. Indeed, while the percentage of Black women who declared an increase in the time spent in domestic work was equal to 85%, this percentage was equal to 77% for White women, 75% for White men, and 74% for Black men.

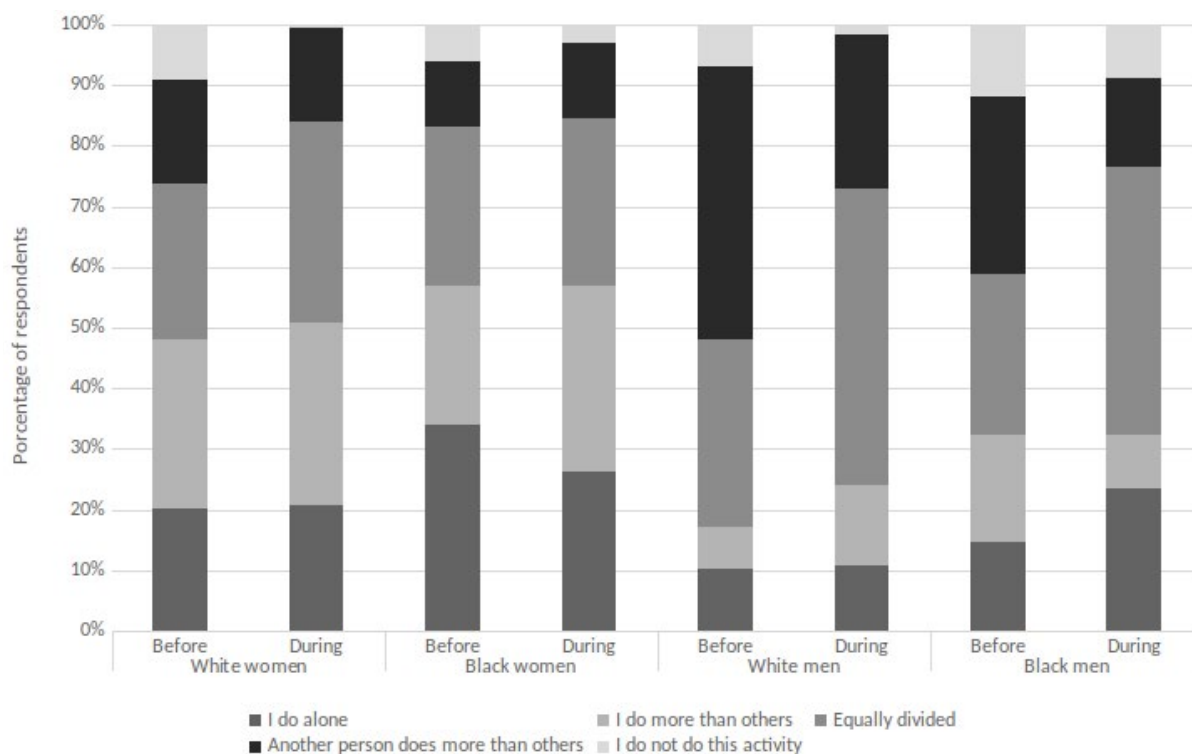
FIGURE 6 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE TIME SPENT ON DOMESTIC WORK COMPARED TO THE PERIOD BEFORE SOCIAL DISTANCING”



Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on questionnaire.

As reported in Figure 7, this particularity for Black women may have also resulted from a previous different pattern in the division of the domestic work. Indeed, the percentage of Black women who declared to either be the sole responsible for domestic work or do more domestic work than others (57% before the pandemic and also 57% during the pandemic) remained above the percentage of that of White women (48% before the pandemic and 51% during the pandemic). While any conclusion on this aspect would certainly require further investigation, this preliminary analysis indicates that this intersection between race and gender is relevant for understanding how domestic work affects different groups. The information presented in Figures 6 and 7 suggests that the increase in domestic work during this social distancing period may have been more relevant for Black women than for the other groups. If that is the case, the increase in the total amount of (paid and unpaid) work may have been even more significant for Black women, thus increasing their overburden and adding to the already existing inequality in the country.

FIGURE 7 – ANSWERS TO QUESTION “ON THE DOMESTIC WORK ACTIVITY”



Source: Authors’ own elaboration based on questionnaire.

Therefore, as we argued in the introduction, racial dimensions in Brazil are a crucial factor to understand social relations, as well as gender. Consequently, the experiences of White and Black women and men vary also under Covid-19.

4. DISCUSSION AND FINAL REMARKS

In this article, it is argued that the gender perspective is key to understanding the allocation of time during the pandemic. Women and men faced different challenges due to the gender roles imposed on them in this period. This is one of the reasons why we argue, as Lansky et al., (2017) highlight, that a conventional equality framework alone cannot compensate for differential effects of gender on people’s lives and that much wider changes in conceptualization, operationalization, implementation and on values and norms are required. One cannot interpret “the worker” as a “standardized person”, with no gender, race or nationality. In order to achieve equality, policies – especially in times of crisis such as this – must consider structural inequalities, which are likely to become more acute as the crisis lingers and savings and resistance, especially of the poor, are consumed. Responses to the crisis must consider group specificities in order not to derail hard-won progress in the reduction of inequalities in Brazil.

In this sense, the highly segregated Brazilian labour market (gender and race), when struck by the pandemic, deepened its inequalities. The pandemic and its consequences disrupted the economy and people’s lives, and affected women and Black people even harder and in many ways. First, women and Black people suffered more job losses with the suspension of non-essential jobs, especially in the service sector where they are overrepresented. Second, being highly exposed to Covid-19 since they are also overrepresented in essential service jobs, like nurses, cleaning, supermarket cashiers among others. Third, unpaid domestic and care work have increased and intensified as education and care services were suspended.

In sum, the evidence from the literature (at least eight out of the 12 articles reviewed) and from the data collected and analysed by the authors confirmed the initial hypothesis that the extra amount of domestic work derived by the pandemic was unevenly divided and therefore added to women's burden in the household and increased gender inequality in various areas of the world.

Our data, disaggregated by gender and race, shows that in this time of crisis, where social institutions show their limits, different groups are affected in different manners. Data for White and Black men shows that they declare to have taken on a greater share of the domestic work being done in the household. Can this open a scope for a questioning of the (White-)male "breadwinner" model and for the sexual division of labour in Brazil to become less pronounced? This does not seem to be the case as, even during the pandemic, women still perform a greater share of the domestic and care work in the household. In this sense, Brazilian women, especially Black, already overburdened with domestic work before the pandemic, declared to have increased the amount of time spent in this activity under social distancing without having experienced a decrease in the time spent on paid work or a better division of the domestic work.

In our survey, most of the respondents reported an increase in the total time spent on domestic work during the social distancing period and that gender differences were more relevant in activities such as cooking, cleaning groceries and doing the laundry. Also, the pandemic did not bring an expressive change in the gender division of domestic work, as the percentage of women who are the sole responsible for domestic work and the percentage of women who do more domestic work than others remained higher than that of men. Regarding care work the percentage of women and men who declared an increase in each type of activity is similar. However, a much higher proportion of women than men declared doing this activity alone or more than others before the pandemic and on the other hand, more men declared that another person is in charge of care work. In terms of paid work, the proportion of respondents who reported that the time spent on paid work did not change, reduced, or increased did not vary much across genders. We conclude that since the amount of time spent on paid work did not change and the amount of time spent on domestic and care work increased without being accompanied by a better division of this work, the total amount of (paid and unpaid) work for women increased and therefore, the sexual division of labour under Covid-19 has become even more pronounced. As Gibb & Oliveira (2015), this article argues that in order to fully grasp the working time and the working conditions, this gendered unpaid work must be considered by scholars analysing the labour market and this time, although unpaid, must also be accounted for as working time.

What impacts will this dynamic under Covid-19 have in achieving gender equality in the long run? What we can affirm is that even if this situation may have forged an opportunity for men to take more responsibility for household and care and this may have happened on the individual level, it does not hold true when considering our entire sample. There were disturbances to the sexual division of labour, but on the aggregate level those tend to reinforce the sexual division of labour, rather than question it. In addition to this, the importance of the gender and race intersection in our analysis, which was clear in the more expressive increase in domestic work for Black women was higher than for White women during the pandemic, also suggests that the pandemic has reinforced racial inequalities in Brazil.

Therefore, this crisis by itself did not bring about change, quite the opposite, it reinforced inequalities. If societies expect and want real change, gendered and racial structural inequalities should be addressed from political, cultural and economic perspectives. In this context, policy recommendations that can contribute to mitigating these inequalities

are public campaigns, special school and community programs to raise awareness and to promote debate about the unequal sexual division of labour; reduction of paid working time (without payment reduction) to reduce the burden of women; reduction of paid working time (without payment reduction) as an important but not sufficient condition for men to spend more time at home and take up more domestic and care work responsibilities; expansion of free good quality social reproduction services public provision like restaurants, laundries, childcare, full time schools, elderly care facilities, among others.

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