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First results of the Swiss Household Panel – Covid-19 Study

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SUMMARY

To get more insight into how people were affected by and fared during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Swiss Household Panel launched an additional Covid-19 Survey among participating households. It was fielded between May and June 2020, right after the strictest regulations ended, but numerous restrictions were still in place. This paper presents the main findings of this study with respect to a wide variety of domains: the occurrence of Covid-19 infections in people's networks, changes with respect to work, finances, time use, family life, following education from home, health and wellbeing, worries, social networks and social cohesion, and the evaluation of the political measures taken by the federal government.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, crisis, Swiss Household Panel

1. INTRODUCTION

The pandemic following the outbreak of the Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in 2020 and the economic crisis that followed has had a profound global impact. During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, Switzerland experienced serious disruptions in the labour market, with increasing unemployment, even though it has implemented many policy measures to counter these disruptions (SECO, 2020b; ILO, 2020). The pandemic has strongly hit the Swiss economy (SECO, 2020b) leading to a strong recession and to unpresented levels of short-time work (with an increase from 4048 people in short-time work in February to 782'436 in March) and increased unemployment (2.5% in January, 3.4% in September, SECO, 2020a). Nonetheless, the decline of the gross domestic product by 10.5 percent in the first six months of 2020 was lower than the EU average (-16.5%, Eurostat, 2020). The high level of short-term work influenced also the work-life balance. Worktime has often been reduced with people working from home (Ehrler et al., 2020). In combination with the semi-confinement with children at home, the living space reunited normal home work activities, work that is normally done in office and schooling activities by pupils. Notably having small children at home coincided with women reducing their work-related activities where possible (Sotomo, 2020). We furthermore know that the most educated reduce their work-related activities, but that reduced work-hours also have positive effects on living together for families (Sotomo, 2020; Steinmetz and Monsch, 2020). This shows the multitude of effects caused by the Covid-19 crisis that we address in this report.

With respect to the epidemic, the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino and the French-speaking cantons of Geneva and Vaud were most affected with higher mortality rates per million people than the European average by the end of April (828 in Ticino, 518 in Geneva, 358 in Vaud compared with 163 in Switzerland as a whole and 264 in Europe, Federal Office of Public Health, 2020, OurWorldinData, 2020). In the most affected regions, intensive care units were close to full occupancy by the end of March.

The Swiss Household Panel (SHP), having followed a large sample of households and their household members in Switzerland over time,[1] is uniquely situated to shed light on how life of the resident population of Switzerland have changed and will change in the future, because of the Covid-19 crisis. To get more insight into how people were affected by and fared during the first wave of the Covid-19 crisis, the SHP launched an additional Covid-19 Survey among participating households[2]. It was fielded between May and June 2020, right after the strictest regulations ended, but numerous restrictions were still in place. The information collected can be linked to past and future waves of the SHP, which provides a longitudinal view on direct and indirect consequences of the pandemic in the short and longer term.

Whereas the situation around the Covid-19 crisis is evolving continuously, the SHP Covid-19 Study provides insights into the immediate aftermath of the pandemic outbreak. To place the timing of the data collection for SHP Covid-19 Study in context,

[1] In 2019 the SHP interviewed 5791 households: 2586 households from the original sample that started in 1999, 1241 from the refreshment sample of 2004, and 1964 from the refreshment sample of 2013.
[2] The SHP Covid-19 Study was realized thanks to additional funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Table 1.1 shows the timeline of the measures taken by the Federal Council since the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in Switzerland (February 25) until the end of June, when fieldwork ended.

Between March 8 and May 10 2020, schools, public institutions and non-essential retailers were closed. While authorities recommended individuals to stay at home, outdoor activities were allowed as long as not more than five individuals gathered and physical distancing was assured. As of May 11, measures were slowly eased with the State of Necessity lifted on June 19 (see Table 1.1 for details).

After outlining the survey design and the methods used for analysis, we present findings with respect to a wide variety of domains: the occurrence of Covid-19 infections in people's networks, changes with respect to work, finances, time use, family life, following education from home, health and wellbeing, worries, social networks and social cohesion. Finally, we regard the evaluation of the political measures before drawing a conclusion.

Table 1.1. Time line of measures and easing of measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 implemented by the Federal Council in 2020

Date	Measures taken/lifted	Fieldwork
28 February	- Ban of events involving more than 1,000 people	
13 March	- Ban on all events involving more than 100 people - Partial border closure, enacted border controls	
16 March	- Cancelation of classes in all educational establishments, some cantons closed nurseries and day care centers	
17 March	- State of Necessity declared - Closure of all stores and markets, except grocery shops, pharmacies - Closure of museums, zoos, night clubs, hairdressers, restaurants, bars, libraries	
21 March	- Ban on gatherings over 5 people, people were asked to stay at home	
27 April	- Surgeons, dentists, hairdressers, massage and beauty salons, Do-It-Yourself stores, garden centers, florists resumed activities.	
11 May	- Resumption of classroom teaching at primary and lower secondary schools - Resumption of classroom teaching at upper secondary schools and other educational establishments in groups of up to five - Opening of shops and markets - Resumption of most sports events under restrictions - Opening restaurants and bars until midnight and under restrictions (only seated customers, maximum of 4 persons per table)	
12 May		***Start***
28 May	- Easing of ban on religious services	
1 June	- Gatherings in public for up to 30 people allowed	
2 June		***Reminder***
6 June	- Ban of events for more than 300 people (including political demonstrations) - Resumption of classroom teaching at upper secondary and vocational schools and higher education institutions (but depending on cantons/municipalities) - Opening discos and night clubs, swimming pools, cinemas, theatres, libraries, museums, zoos - Easing on restrictions in restaurants	
15 June	- Borders reopen	
19 June	- State of Necessity lifted	
22 June	- Most measures lifted, but all publicly accessible places must have a protection concept - Mandatory distance of 1.5 metres Ban of events involving more than 1,000 people)	
26 June		***End***

Sources: Federal Office of Public Health (https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-die-arbeitswelt.html) Swiss National Covid-19 Science Task Force (https://ncs-tf.ch/en/situation-report) Republik (https://www.republik.ch/2020/06/24/watchblog-wo-unsere-rechte-eingeschraenkt-werden)

2. DESIGN AND METHODS

2.1 DESIGN OF THE SHP COVID-19 STUDY

The sample of the SHP Covid-19 Study consists of all respondents who completed the individual questionnaire in Wave 21 (2019-2020), with the exception of respondents who had requested to be taken out of the study since then. In total, 8772 sample members from 5540 households received an invitation to participate in the study. Fieldwork started on May 12 2020 and ended on June 26.

The 15-minute survey was self-administered using web and paper questionnaires. All respondents for whom a valid e-mail address was available received an invitation with a link to the web questionnaire by e-mail (N=6359). The remaining respondents received an invitation for the web questionnaire with login details by post (N=2413). The invitation included information that a paper version of the questionnaire was available upon request. Nonrespondents to the web questionnaire received a reminder by post after three weeks. This reminder letter included a paper version of the questionnaire as well as a return envelope. No incentives were used for this survey.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS

At the end of the fieldwork period, 5843 sample members (aged 14-99 from 4053 different households) had completed the Covid-19 questionnaire, which constitutes a response rate of 67%. Of all 5843 respondents, 67% completed the questionnaire online and 33% completed the paper version. Also, 2 respondents completed the questionnaire by telephone after calling the hotline. We found only little selectivity in responding to the Covid-19 questionnaire, based on information from Wave 21. Men, young people and foreigners were somewhat less likely to take part in the Covid study, whereas married, higher educated, people with a higher income, as well as those not in the labour force were slightly more likely to participate.[3]

All the topics from the Covid-19 questionnaire are covered in this report. Most of the questions were specifically focused on the Covid-19 crisis. To allow measuring change over time, a number of questions were taken from the annual questionnaires. The time reference in the questions was adapted to focus on the pandemic if necessary, for example referring to the Covid-19 crisis rather than the previous year as in regular waves.

For the questions that are the same as in the previous wave of the SHP (Wave 21)[4], it is possible to estimate the effect of the pandemic compared to measures before the crisis. For these variables, we present values for both time points to show possible changes. For the changes between waves, and for Covid-19-study variables, we look at differences by sociodemographic characteristics.

[3] The McFadden pseudo R^2 was 9.6% indicating that these covariates were only weak determinants of participation.
[4] Fieldwork for Wave 21 took place before the Covid-19 crisis, between September 2019 and March 2020 (95% of the interviews were completed before 17 December).

Of the Wave 21 respondents, 95% replied by telephone in Wave 21 and 5% by web. This implies that the majority of the respondents replied in a different mode in the Covid-19 Study than in the most recent wave. The mode of interview affects the way respondents reply to survey questions (e.g. the presence of an interviewer in a telephone interview tends to increase socially desirable answers, whereas answers to a web and paper questionnaire are more comparable; Klausch, Hox, & Schouten, 2013). Past analyses of the SHP data have shown that mode effects (telephone versus web) were strongest for variables measuring satisfaction scores in various domains and measures of health, where web respondents tended to report lower satisfaction scores and more health problems. To account for the mode effect, the analyses comparing the Covid-19 Wave to Wave 21 control for the mode in Wave 21 (telephone versus web).[5] All analyses were performed on weighted data, using individual cross-sectional survey weights from Wave 20 that corrected for inclusion probability in the sample as well as nonresponse in previous waves.[6] The SHP user guide provides an overview on the sampling procedure (Voorpostel et al., 2020).

In the present report we used standard statistical procedures (Chi2, t-test, Kruskal Wallis) to analyse significance of associations. We used a significance level of .05 for all statistical tests. If not otherwise specified, only significant results are reported. Due to rounding, totals may not always equal exactly 100%. Individuals who answered “don’t know” were excluded from analyses of the variable in question.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated crisis hit each and every individual. Yet, according to one’s life reality, the consequences vary for different sociodemographic groups. In the present report we focus on some groups that were presumably affected in specific ways. The individuals’ employment status, educational level, age and gender are relevant for how an economic shock can be cushioned (Sierminska and Takhtamanova, 2011). Also, as life has widely shifted to the privacy of one’s home, the household composition is an important indicator for how well individuals got through the semi-lockdown (Behar-Zusman et al., 2020). Finally, due to a different spread of the virus in the French- and Italian-speaking cantons (Federal Office of Public Health, 2020), we also consider interview language (see Table 2.1 for categories and frequencies). Although interview language does not fully coincide with region of residence, it is a good proxy to observe differences among the three main language regions in Switzerland.

[5] The analyses comparing Wave 21 to the Covid-19 Wave compare mean scores by subgroup and wave controlled for mode. Due to item nonresponse the number of respondents may not always be equal in both waves.

[6] As the weights for Wave 21 were not yet available at the time of writing, we used the weights of Wave 20 for those respondents who participated in W20, and used the Generalized Weight Share Method (Lavallée, 2007) for the rest of the sample.

Table 2.1 Description of the sample (N=5843)

	%	n
14-25	9	554
26-35	14	796
36-45	15	904
46-55	18	1062
56-65	17	991
66-75	14	850
>75	12	685
Man	47	2777
Woman	53	3077
Mandatory schooling	15	893
Secondary education, professional	33	1937
Secondary education, general	10	580
Tertiary education, professional	15	863
Tertiary education, university	27	1570
Employed	50	2944
Self-employed	7	394
Apprentice/Intern	3	164
Unemployed	2	108
Inactive (e.g. in education, at home, unable to work)	37	2144
One-person household	19	1084
Couple, no others	35	2054
Couple with at least 1 child <18	20	1183
Lone parent[7] with at least 1 child <18	2	116
Couple with at least 1 child >18	8	471
Other composition (living with others, etc.)	16	935
French	26	1543
German	67	3939
Italian	6	361

For a detailed overview on the questionnaire, we refer to the SHP Covid-19 User Guide available in Forsbase (Voorpostel et al., 2020)[8]. Forsbase also contains a detailed overview on the questions asked in the Covid-19 Study and in the previous waves of the SHP.

[7] Lone parent households in this study are defined as households containing one parent and at least one child under 18 without other adults in the household. They may have a partner living elsewhere.
[8] https://forsbase.unil.ch/project/study-public-overview/16970/0/

3. COVID-INFECTION AND PREVALENCE WITHIN THE SOCIAL NETWORK

3.1 COVID INFECTION

We asked respondents whether they had been infected themselves or whether they knew anyone who had contracted the virus (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Covid-19 Infection prevalence: know someone in network (N= 5712)

	% yes
No	55%
Myself	1%
A household member	0.5%
A family member or close friend	9%
A work colleague	8%
Someone else in circle of friends and acquaintances	26%

Note: The total sample excludes 131 cases of "No answer" or "Don't know".

In our study 61 persons declared that they had the virus (33 men and 28 women), which accounts for 1% of the sample. The region with the highest prevalence was the Lake Geneva region (n=18, cantons of VD, GE and VS), followed by Middleland (n=17, cantons BE, FR, SO, NE, JU) and Ticino (n=9). This is in line with the distribution of infections at the time of data collection which were notably higher in Ticino and the Lake Geneva region (Federal Office of Public Health, 2020).

3.2 WHO HAS ENCOUNTERED AN INFECTION IN THE NETWORK?

While 55% of the respondents did not report any infections in their social network, 9% indicated an infection in their close environment (family and close friends) and 34% in their larger social network.

Table 3.2 shows that the likelihood of having a Covid-19 case in the network varied by employment status. We find that inactive persons were least likely to know someone who was infected (68%). Also, unemployed individuals reported fewer infections in their network (42%, compared with 53% among the employed and self-employed). Yet, this may at least partly be explained by network size: unemployed individuals tend to have smaller networks (Brand, 2015).

Table 3.2: Covid infections by employment status (N= 5636)

	No one	myself /household	close friends	larger network
Apprentice /intern	40%	1%	9%	50%
Self-employed	47%	3%	8%	42%
Employed	47%	2%	10%	41%
Unemployed	58%	2%	14%	26%
Inactive[a]	68%	1%	8%	23%
Total	55%	2%	9%	35%

[a]) Inactive includes in education, retired, stay-at-home parent/partner, unable to work due to disability etc.). Excluded were 207 cases with missing values for either Covid-infection or employment status.

Apprentices and interns had the highest likelihood of knowing an infected person (60%), mostly in the larger network (50% of apprentices and interns reported an infection among work colleagues or other acquaintances).

The higher educated were more likely to report an infection, either regarding themselves or in their networks (55%) than the lower educated group (36%). Here, again, network size may have played a role, as higher educated individuals on average have larger networks (Roberts, Dunbar, Pollet, & Kuppens, 2009).

Not surprisingly, and in line with infections at the time of data collection (Federal Office of Public Health, 2020), German-speaking respondents (39%) were least likely while French-speaking respondents were most likely to know someone who was infected (62%). Italian-speaking respondents took an intermediary position (44%).

Younger persons were more likely to know someone with Covid-19 than older persons. People aged between 36 and 55 were most likely to know someone who had contracted the virus (55%), mostly among more remote ties of work colleagues and acquaintances. Younger people (aged 13-25) showed notably a higher-than-average likelihood of infections among friends. Among people aged 76 or older, only 25% knew an infected person, this was 32% among people aged 66 to 75 and 47% among people aged 56 to 65.

4. WORK AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

4.1 CHANGES TO THE WORK SITUATION OF EMPLOYEES

During the semi-lockdown (March/April), Swiss authorities encouraged staying at home as much as possible, meaning that employees should work from home whenever this was possible. At the same time, there were people working in ‘essential jobs’ in sectors such as health, social- and childcare, safety or transportation (Zhou et al., 2020) who could not work from home. Also, companies could apply for state subsidized short-term work agreements in order to assure that employees did not face severe reductions in income levels or that companies were not forced to lay off employees. Moreover, some employees were required to reduce overtime, whereas others had to work more hours.

Table 4.1 Percentage of employees and apprentices/interns who experienced changes in their work situation (N=3064[9])

	% yes
Work partially from home	22%
Work entirely from home	25%
Short-time work	19%
Work less due to care duties	6%
Reduce overtime	9%
Work overtime	13%
Flexible working hours	17%
No changes	26%

Note: Respondents could select all that applied. Excluded are 34 employees and 11 apprentices who replied don't know or no answer to all items.

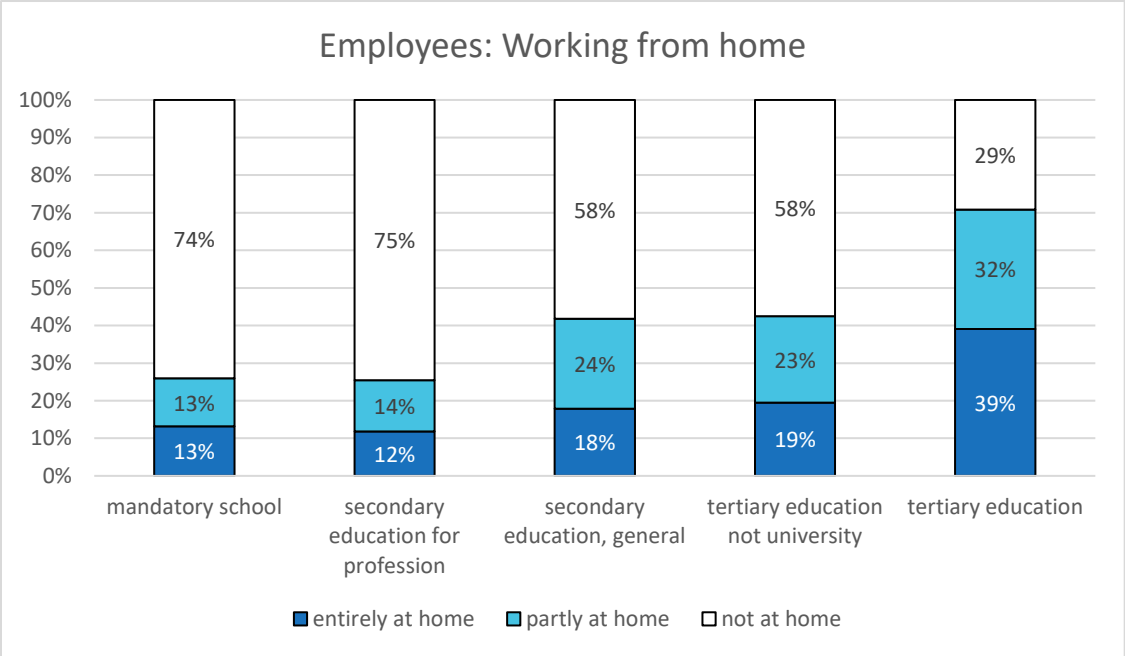
Table 4.1 shows that there was a large variation in how the work situation was affected. Working partially or completely from home was the most common change in the work situation (47%). Short-time work affected 19% of the workers. Working fewer hours due to care duties was rare (6%) as was the obligation to reduce overtime (9%). For 13%, the crisis led to an increase in worked hours and 17% could work more flexible hours. Finally, a quarter of the workers continued their work as before and reported none of the mentioned changes to their work situation.

In the following we focus on two aspects: working from home and short-time work among the employed population. Both have consequences for work-life balance and potentially the financial situation and job security in the longer term.

Working from home

We see a clear positive relationship between the level of education and the degree of working from home (see Figure 4.1). Among the least educated employees (primary or lower secondary education) only 26% worked partially or entirely from home, whereas this was 71% among those with a university degree, most likely reflecting more frequent office work among the highly educated.

[9] The question was only posed to employees and apprentices/interns.



Mandatory school: n=312; secondary education for prof: n= 921; secondary education general: n=285; tertiary not university: n=483; tertiary university: n=1063

Figure 4.1 Share of employees working from home by level of education

Men were somewhat more likely to work from home than women (50% vs. 59%), which likely is related to the higher share of women in essential jobs (cashiers, nurses etc., Bundesrat 2020).

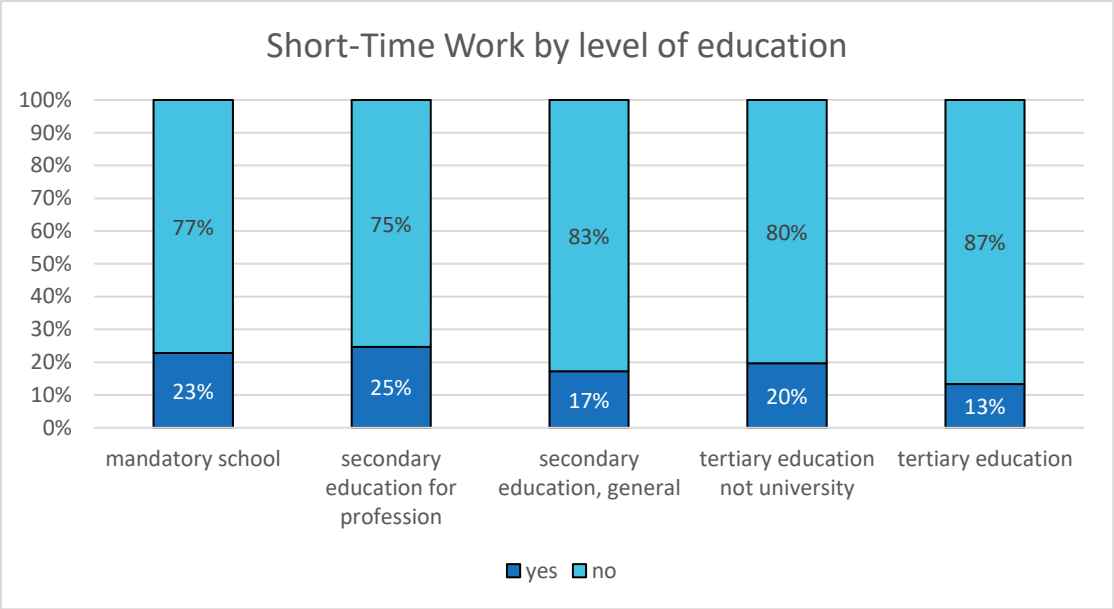
There was also a clear association between the linguistic region and the level of working from home. The likelihood of working from home was highest among French-speaking respondents (54% partly or entirely). Although Ticino was severely hit at the beginning of the pandemic, the Italian-speaking respondents were the least likely to work from home (36% compared to 43% for German-speaking).

We found that the youngest age group (under 26) as well as those aged 56-65 were the least likely to work from home (23% of the youngest age group worked partly from home and 15% worked entirely from home, this was 19% and 16% respectively for the 56-65-year-old group). The other age groups indicated with 22% to 29% that they were partly working from home and 19% to 24% responded working entirely from home.

Short-time work

The lower likelihood of the lower educated to work from home was matched by a higher share to be in short-time work[10] (Figure 4.2). 23% of them indicated that they were in short-time work, compared to 13% of the highly educated. This reflects the more vulnerable position of the lower educated on the labour market. We found no association between short-time work and age, sex or linguistic region.

[10] Short-time work is the temporary reduction of working hours in order to account for a reduction of business activities, the differences in salaries are partly paid by the unemployment insurance. The Federal Council facilitated the procedure as a consequence of the Covid-19 outbreak and the related reductions in business activities (Arbeit.Swiss, 2020)



Mandatory school: n= 312, secondary professional: n=921, secondary general: n=285, tertiary professional: n=484, tertiary university: n=1061

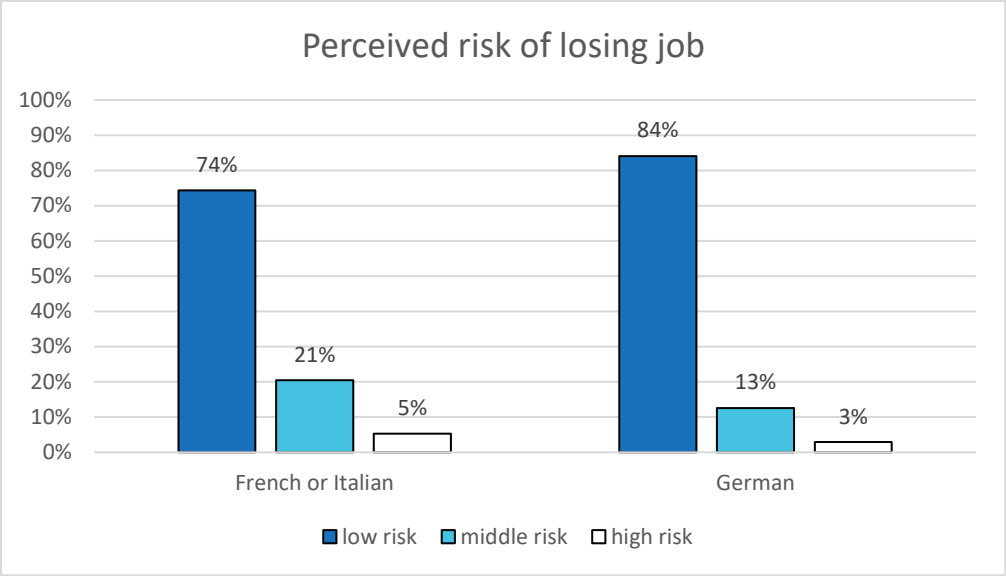
Figure 4.2: Employees in short-time work by level of education

Job loss and perceived risk of future job loss

There were 108 respondents (2%) in our study who were unemployed during the crisis. However, 68 of those indicated already having been unemployed before the Covid-19 crisis, and only 40 reported becoming unemployed during the crisis. A number of respondents considered themselves at risk of unemployment. Risk of job loss was assessed on a scale of 0 (no risk at all) to 10 (very high risk) or the respondent could indicate this had already happened (11). We recoded the perceived risk of job loss into a low risk (0-3), medium risk (4-7), high risk (8-10) and this already happened (11). As there were only 11 persons (0,3%) that respondent that this already happened, we do not detail on this group.

The perceived risk of job loss was higher for French- and Italian-speaking[11] respondents compared with German speakers. 5% of French-or Italian speaking respondents perceived a high and 21% a medium risk of job loss, compared with 3% and 13%, respectively, among German-speaking respondents (Figure 4.3).

[11] The (few) Italian speaking respondents were merged with French-speaking respondents.



French- or Italian-speaking: n=990, German-speaking n=2281

Figure 4.3: Perceived risk of job loss by linguistic region

Perceived risk of job loss was also related to the educational level: 6% of low skilled workers and of respondents with an upper secondary education perceived a high risk of job loss while only 3% with tertiary university education indicated a high risk.

Also, the self-employed estimated to be at a somewhat higher risk of losing their job than employees. While on average 15% of employees perceived a medium risk of losing their job and 4% a high risk, among the self-employed 17% reported a medium risk and about 6% a high risk.

4.2 CHANGES IN THE WORK SITUATION OF THE SELF-EMPLOYED

Out of the 5843 respondents, 393 were self-employed (about 7%). We asked several questions on changes in their work situation and their companies, such as whether their business was affected by the regulations to contain the spread of Covid-19, by a decreased demand for their products or services or problems with suppliers, whether they run their business from home and whether they had to lay off employees or put them on short-time work (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Changes in the work situation and business of the self-employed (N=393)

	% yes
Business affected by regulations	42%
Business affected due to suppliers	7%
Business affected by missing demand	25%
Work entirely from home	27%
Work partially from home	19%
Applied for short-time work myself	28%
Applied for Covid-19 credit	13%
Short time for employees	19%
Forced to lay off employees	1%
Reduced number of employees (no renewal)	4%
None of the above	18%

Notes: Respondents could select all that applied. There were 394 self-employed, but one respondent answered "Don't know" for all items.

We found that the self-employed faced many challenges: 58% declared that their business was affected either by the regulations, lack of demand or due to problems with suppliers, or a combination of these three. More than a quarter (28%) applied for short-time work for themselves, and 19% for their employees. Cutting back on employees, either through lay-offs or by not replacing employees leaving the company was rare (1% and 4% respectively). Only 18% of the self-employed reported none of these changes occurred.

Women-owned businesses were more likely to be affected by regulations, problems with suppliers or decreased demand (69% versus 51% for men). We also observed a relationship between the linguistic region and whether one's business was affected. While nearly 70% of the French-speaking business owners (115 respondents) declared being affected, only 56% of German-speaking (250) and 26% of Italian-speaking (27) business owners reported this.

44% of the self-employed could adapt to the pandemic by working from home (at least partly). As was the case for the employees, higher educated business owners were more likely to work from home than lower educated ones. In particular, business owners with a university degree (61%) reported working from home.

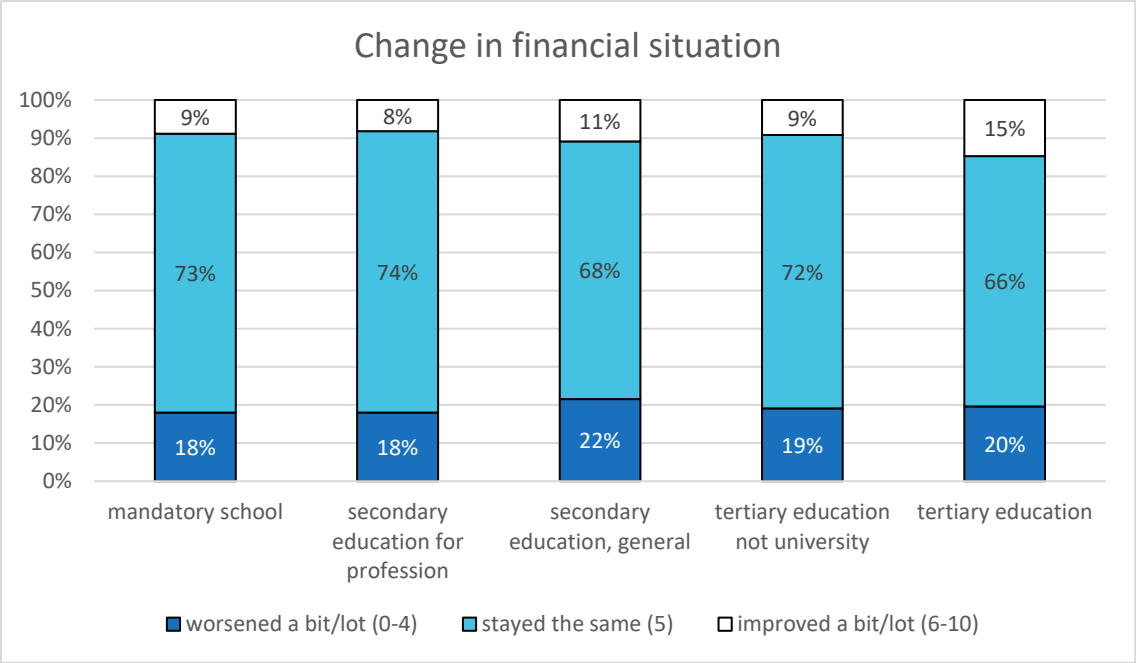
The extent to which self-employed were affected by the crisis and how they adapted to it presumably depends on the sector of activity. However, this information is not available for the Covid-19 wave.

4.3 CHANGES IN THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Respondents were asked whether their personal financial situation stayed the same, had deteriorated or had improved[12]. About 70% reported no change, about 19% indicated a worsened situation and 11% an improvement.

Among the highly educated, 15% experienced an improvement, whereas this was the case for 8-9% among the lower educated (Figure 4.4). The share of respondents reporting a deterioration is, however, relatively stable across educational levels.

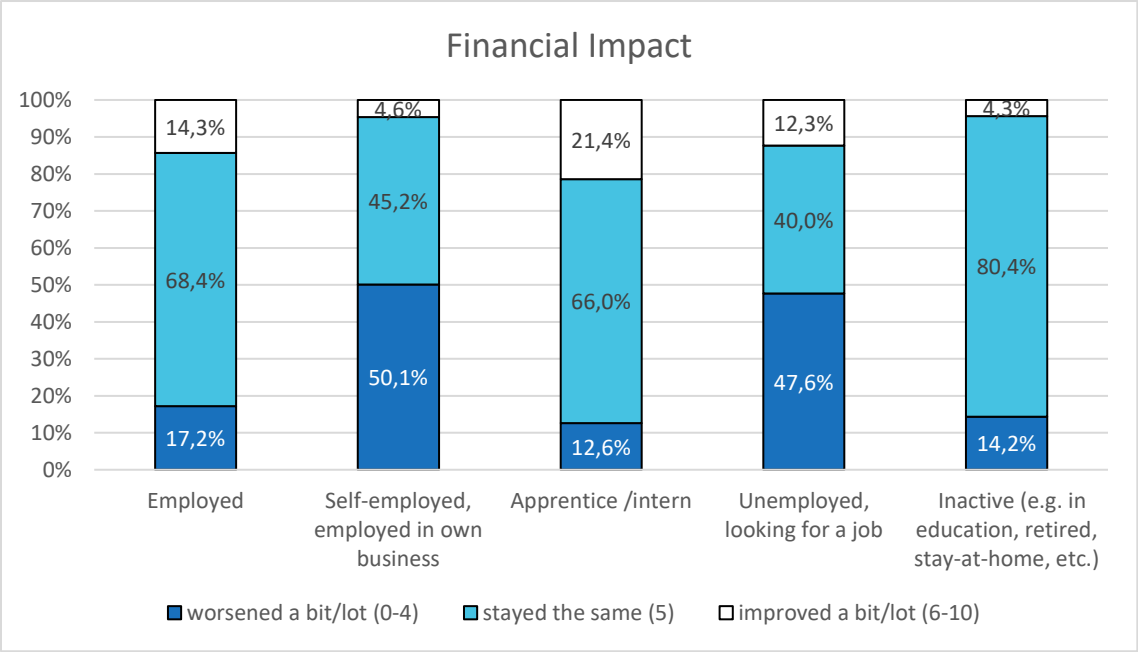
[12] The financial situation refers to the individual level. No information on the household level is available.



Mandatory school: n=650, secondary professional: n=1853, secondary general: n=558, tertiary professional: n=850, tertiary university: n=1556

Figure 4.4: Change in financial situation by education

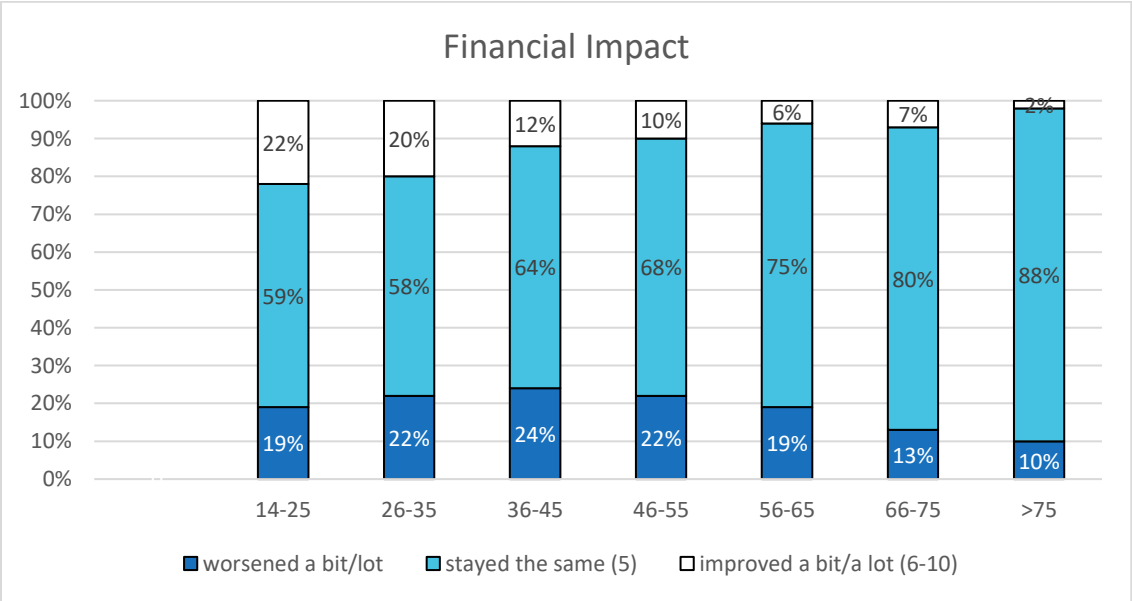
There were very strong differences in financial changes depending on the work situation of respondents (see Figure 4.5). We observed very few changes for inactive persons, where a clear majority declared no changes (80%). This group mainly consisted of retired persons (70% of the inactive were 65 years or older) and their pensions were not affected by the semi-lockdown. Furthermore, employed respondents were somewhat more likely to report an improvement and slightly less likely to experience a deterioration. This positive finding changed impressively when looking at the self-employed, 45% of whom indicated no change and 50% declared a deterioration of their financial situation (Figure 4.5). Another particularly affected group were the unemployed that indicated losses on a similar level. We looked at the details of this group and observed that notably those who became unemployed during this period indicated a stronger deterioration. Of the 64 persons who were already unemployed before the Covid-19 crisis 41% indicated a worsened situation, compared with 60% of the newly unemployed (40 persons).



Employed: n=2922, self-employed: n=389, apprentice/intern: n=103, unemployed: n=105, inactive: n=1948

Figure 4.5: Financial impact by work status

There were also differences across age groups. As shown in Figure 4.6, we observed notably that younger respondents aged 14-35 were more likely to report a change than the older age groups. About 20% of younger respondents saw an improved financial situation. This may be explained by fewer costs for leisure activities and less commuting. Yet, about the same percentage experienced a worsening of the financial situation. While improvements were lowest among older respondents, their losses were also lower compared with other age groups. Financial losses were greater among those aged 36 to 45.



14-25: n=356, 26-35: n=785, 36-45: n=890, 46-55: n=1045, 56-65: n=967, 66-75: n=806, >75: n=618

Figure 4.6: Changes in financial situation by age

Lone parents faced significant financial losses with above 30% indicating a deterioration (10% an improvement). The most stable situation was observed among those living with their partner only (77% answered “no change”, 15% “worsened”, 8% “improved”).

Finally, Italian-speaking respondents showed the strongest negative effects with 27% responding that their financial situation worsened compared with 21% among French-speaking and 18% among German-speaking respondents. The share of “winners” is rather equal between regions at 9% (Italian speaking) and 11% (German speaking).

4.4 PERCEIVED FINANCIAL RISKS

We assessed a number of financial risks (see Table 4.3 for an overview). The majority did not perceive themselves to be at risk of having to use savings, take out a loan, apply for social assistance or to lower their standard of living. Having to use savings was the most frequently reported risk, with 22% reporting a risk and 4% of the respondents already had to rely on savings.

The risk of using savings was particularly high among the unemployed, where 48% saw a high risk of using savings and a further 26% some risk. The self-employed were equally overrepresented with 30% saying that they had already or would have to use savings and further 27% that saw some risk. French- and Italian speaking respondents were more likely to report a medium (25%) or high risk (12%) of having to use savings. German-speaking respondents reported only 13% and 9% respectively.

Table 4.3: Perceived financial risks (respondents 18+, N=5664)

	low risk (0-3)	**some risk (4-7)**	**high risk (8-10)**	**already happened**
Risk to have to use savings	74%	16%	6%	4%
Risk to have to take out a loan	95%	3%	1%	1%
Risk to have to apply for social assistance	93%	4%	2%	1%
Risk to have to lower standard of living	81%	13%	4%	2%

Note: excluded are the responses “don’t know”, “no answer”, and “does not apply” (694 cases for savings, 768 for loan, 773 for social assistance, and 631 for standard of living.

Respondents also feared to have to lower their standard of living (19% experienced some or a high risk or had already lowered their standard of living, Table 4.3). Table 4.4 shows the perceived risk of having to lower the living standard by employment situation. Unemployed individuals (of whom the majority was already unemployed before the crisis) perceived the highest risk of having to lower their living standard (36% compared to 6% on average) and were also more likely to report some risk (27%). The self-employed were another group who perceived a higher risk of having to lower their living standard with 14% indicating a high risk and 27% indicating some risk. The most stable situation was observed among apprentices and interns, as well as among inactive and employed people (low risk perceived by 83-86% within these categories).

Table 4.4: Work status and risk of lower living standard (N=5035)

Work Status	low risk	Some risk	high risk or already happened
Employed	83%	13%	4%
Self-employed, employed in own business	59%	27%	14%
Apprentice /intern	86%	10%	4%
Unemployed, looking for a job	37%	28%	36%
Inactive (e.g. in education, retired, stay-at-home parent/partner, unable to work due to disability etc.)	85%	9%	6%
Total	81%	13%	6%

5. TIME USE, FAMILY LIFE AND STUDYING FROM HOME

5.1 TIME SPENT ON PAID AND UNPAID WORK

During the semi-confinement period when the measures were strictest, there were important changes in how people spent their time. Figure 5.1 shows that compared with the last wave (Wave 21), time spent on paid work decreased notably for employed and self-employed people. Self-employed women (which constituted 9% of the sample of working women) reported the largest reduction in time spent on paid work, from 30 to 10 hours per week, whereas self-employed men (14% of the working men) went from 43 to 32 hours per week. Female employees decreased from an average of 33 work hours per week to 23 hours, which was from 41 to 36 hours among male employees. Apprentices decreased workhours the least: from 37 to 31 among men and from 35 to 30 among women (both 4% of the respective sample of working men and women).

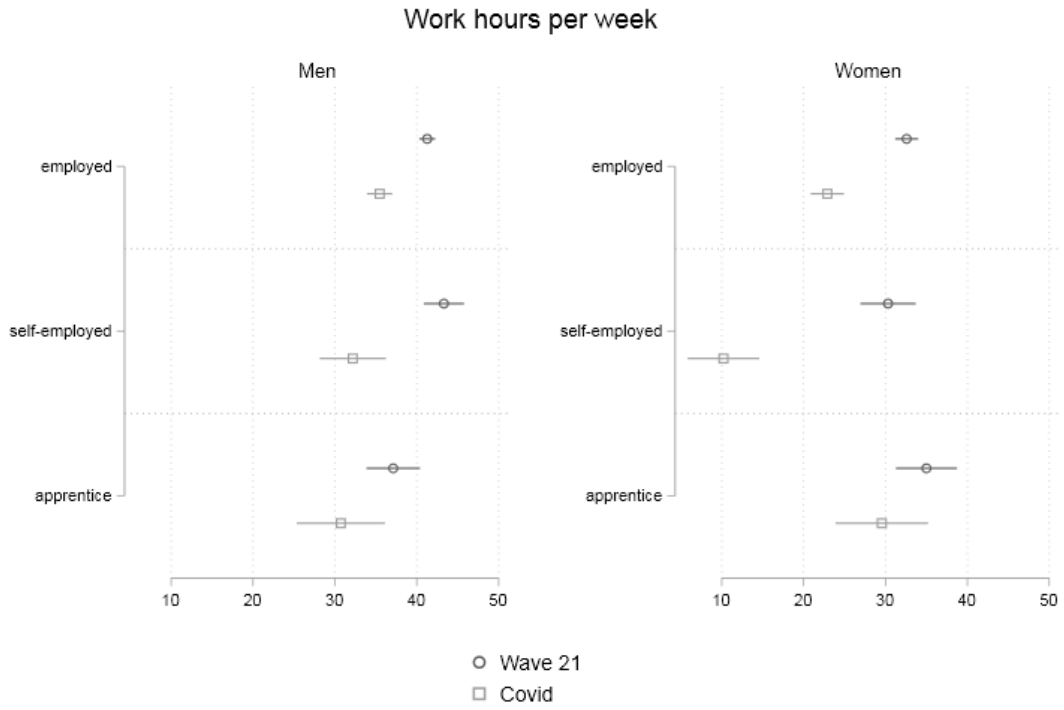


Figure 5.1. Average time spent on paid work in hours per week with 95% CI by employment status for men (2521 observations from 1451 respondents) and women (2605 observations from 1594 respondents)

People spent more time on housework and care for household members. On average, in the last wave, respondents spent 8.8 hours on housework and 5.8 hours on care work per week. When confinement measures were strictest, this increased to 11.7 hours of housework and 8.5 hours of care work.

Figures 5.2 to 5.3 show the change in time spent on housework and care by household composition for men and women separately.

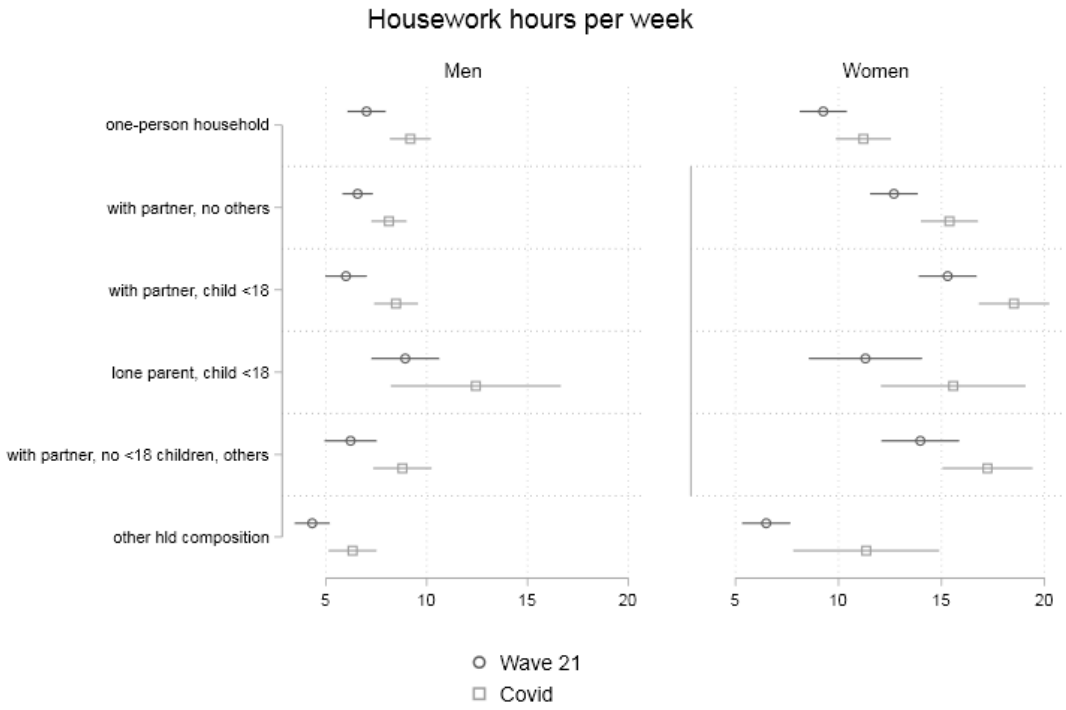


Figure 5.2 Time spent on housework in hours per week by household composition for men (4783 obs. from 2600 respondents) and women (5719 obs. from 3160 respondents)

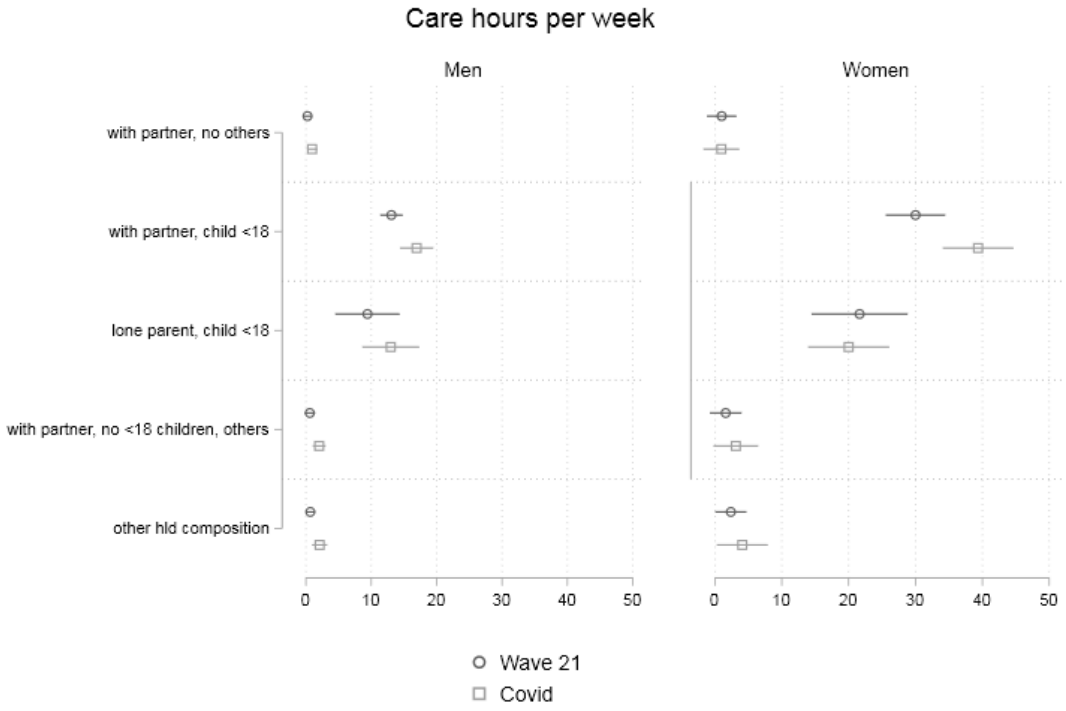


Figure 5.3 Time spent on care in hours per week by household composition for men (4057 obs. from 2229 respondents) and women (4518 obs. from 2537 respondents)

Figure 5.2 shows that time spent on housework increased for men in most household compositions, whereas for women the increase was most notable for women living with a partner, and with a partner and children under 18. Increases in time spent on care were mostly concentrated among those living with a partner and children under 18 (Figure 5.3). Men in this group increased time spent on care from 13 to 17 hours per week, whereas for women this went from 30 to 39 hours per week. This indicates that parents, and in particular mothers with children under 18 carried most of the housework and care burden during the semi-lockdown.

5.2 FREQUENCY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Overall, the number of days on which people practiced for half an hour minimum a physical activity which made them slightly breathless increased from a little less than three days to four days during the semi-confinement period. This increase did not vary by gender, education or household composition, but it varied by age: the increase in physical activity was larger among older individuals, as well as among the youngest group (see Figure 5.4).

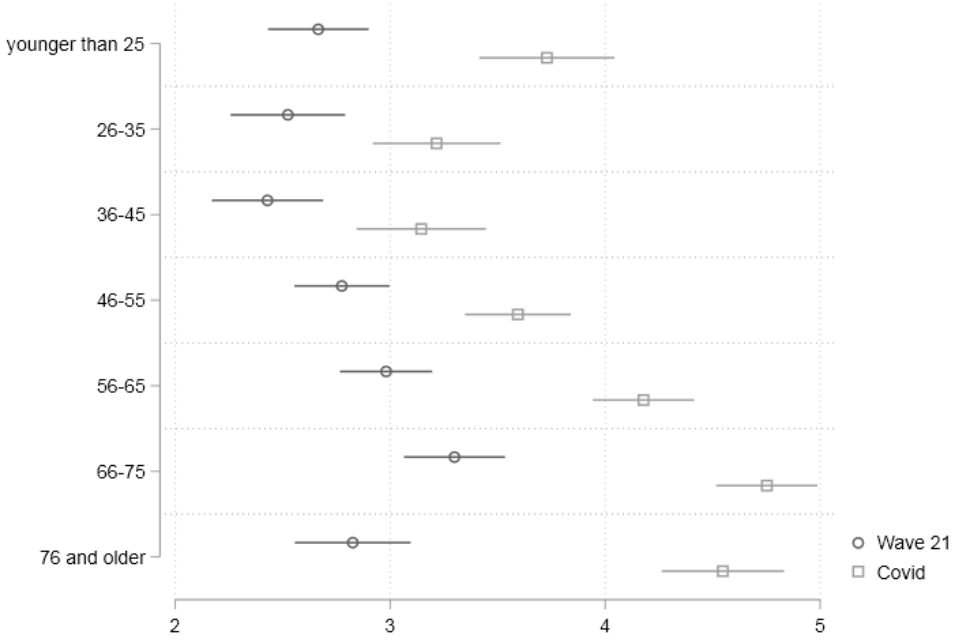


Figure 5.4: Physical activity of at least half an hour in times per week (10938 obs. from 5831 respondents)

5.3 CHANGES IN TIME SPENT VOLUNTEERING

Whereas volunteers made the news with, for example, delivering groceries to persons at risk, many organisations had to stop their activities during the semi-lockdown. Hence, overall, people reported a decrease in time spent on volunteering. Whereas about 52% reported time spent on volunteering remained the same, 31% reported a decrease and only 18% reported spending more time on volunteering.

Table 5.1 shows results by age, demonstrating that especially older individuals decreased their time spent on volunteering. Above the age of 65, half of the respondents spent less time than usual and only few spent more time (7% and 4% for the age groups 66-75 and 76+, respectively). This suggests that overall activities diminished, and additionally older adults may have withdrawn more from volunteering, probably for health risk reasons.

Table 5.1. Changes in time spent on volunteering by age (N=4707)

	Less time	About the same	More time
14-25	21%	65%	14%
26-35	17%	64%	19%
36-45	26%	54%	21%
46-55	25%	46%	29%
56-65	31%	50%	20%
66-75	50%	43%	7%
>75	49%	47%	4%
Total	31%	52%	18%

5.4 RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND NON-WORK LIFE

We asked respondents in paid work (N=3362) if there had been any changes in how difficult it was to combine work and non-work life since the introduction of the measures during the semi-confinement period. 40% reported no changes and about 30% responded that it had become easier or harder, respectively (see Table 5.2).

Parents with children younger than 18 were most likely to report that it had become harder (41% for coupled parents and 40% for lone parents). However, there were also 27% of coupled and 35% of lone parents finding it easier to combine work and non-work life during the semi-confinement period.

Table 5.2: Difficulties in combining work and non-work life by household composition (N=3362)

	much/ somewhat easier	stayed the same	much/ somewhat harder
One-person household	28%	43%	28%
Couple, no others	34%	44%	23%
Couple and at least 1 child <18	27%	32%	41%
Lone parent with at least 1 child <18	35%	26%	40%
Couple, no <18 children, with others (e.g. older children)	25%	52%	23%
Other household composition (e.g. adult child living with parents, living with others)	26%	42%	32%
Total	29%	40%	31%

Higher educated individuals experienced more changes in difficulty of reconciling work and private life, with the share of those finding it easier and those finding it harder being nearly equal for the high (34% each) and medium educated (25% finding it easier and 27% harder).

In contrast, for the low educated less change was observed, but if there were any changes it was more likely to become harder (28% against 20% finding it easier).

Furthermore, there was an association with language. The French-speaking respondents were most likely to report a change in reconciliation (in both directions), followed by German speaking and finally Italian speaking individuals.

Although women overall showed a bigger increase in their number of hours dedicated to housework and childcare (see also section 5.1) and were less satisfied with how housework was shared (see below), interestingly this did not translate into more difficulties to combine work and non-work life for employed women compared with men. Working from home may have cushioned part of the burden of women's surplus house- and care work: 45% of women who partially or entirely worked from home experienced some relief and 30% found it harder to combine work and non-work life (against only 22% of women not working from home finding it easier and 30% finding it harder).

5.5 CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES FOR FAMILIES

Due to the closure of schools and childcare facilities for most children, families found themselves spending more time together. Also, parents had to support their children in their schoolwork at home.

Four questions assessed how parents adapted to this situation (see Table 5.3). Approximately 20% of the parents felt at least somewhat overwhelmed by having the children at home and helping them with their schoolwork and reported more tensions when everyone was at home. However, 73% also agreed that the situation was an opportunity to spend more time with the children.

Table 5.3: Consequences of closed schools and childcare facilities (N=1305)

	disagree completely/ somewhat	**partly agree, partly disagree**	**agree somewhat/ completely**
Child/children at home overwhelms me sometimes.	55%	25%	19%
Helping with schoolwork overwhelms me sometimes.	63%	18%	20%
Opportunity to spend more time with my child/children.	8%	19%	73%
More tensions when everyone is at home.	52%	27%	21%

Notes: Excluded were "Don't know", "No answer", "Does not apply to me": 126, 328, 97, and 63 cases for the items respectively.

Men and women did not differ much in their experiences, with the sole exception that mothers were more likely to feel somewhat or completely overwhelmed by helping their children keep up with schoolwork (25% compared with 14% of fathers). Helping with schoolwork was also experienced as a higher burden for those with low educational level.

25% of respondents with tertiary university education were more likely to feel overwhelmed by having the children at home compared with 9-18% in the other groups. This result may be

explained by a higher likelihood of this group to experience changes in the work situation. A considerable 71% of them worked partially or entirely from home, compared to 25-42% in the other educational groups. The feeling of being overwhelmed by having the children at home may be a consequence of also having to work from home.

Interestingly, there were clear-cut differences in how families experienced the closure of schools and childcare facilities by interview language. As shown in Table 5.4, French-speaking respondents were much more likely to agree somewhat or completely to feeling overwhelmed by having the children at home and by helping them keep up with schoolwork. They were also more likely to report more tensions when everyone was at home. We conclude that the French-speaking parents reported to suffer more from the semi-lockdown.

Table 5.4: *Agree somewhat* or *completely* on consequence of school closure by linguistic region

	French speaking N=388	**German speaking N=834**	**Italian speaking N=84**
Child/children at home overwhelms me sometimes.	27%	16%	10%
Helping with schoolwork overwhelms me sometimes.	30%	15%	17%
Opportunity to spend more time with my child/children.	79%	70%	80%
More tensions when everyone is at home.	25%	20%	21%

Notes: Excluded were „Does not apply to me “, „Don’t know “and „No answer “(2.1%, 5.6%, 1.7%, and 1.1% for the items respectively).

5.6 SATISFACTION WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

Satisfaction with the partner relationship

Respondents were asked how happy they were in their current couple relationship with answers ranging from 0 “very unhappy” to 10 “very happy”. Since the last wave, we observed an overall decrease in partnership satisfaction from 8.7 to 8.3 for both men and women.

Satisfaction with the partner relationship was also associated with age. Before and during the crisis, the youngest and the oldest respondents were most satisfied and relationship satisfaction was lowest for those in between. Since the last wave relationship satisfaction decreased significantly for the age groups between 26 and 75, with the exception of those between 36 to 45 years.

The lower relationship satisfaction among many middle-aged individuals may partly be explained by the fact that middle-aged individuals were most likely to live with minor children - a period in life that is known to put a big strain on couples (Zemp et al. 2017). This was confirmed by our data: Satisfaction with the partner relationship during the Covid-19 crisis was lowest for those living with minor children, especially among lone parents with a partner outside the household (8.1 for couples with children and 7.3 for lone parents). The *decrease* in partnership satisfaction was significant only for those living with their partner in the same

household, but not for those with a partner living elsewhere (see Figure 5.5). Although the decrease was highest for couples living together, their satisfaction remained higher than for couples not living together.

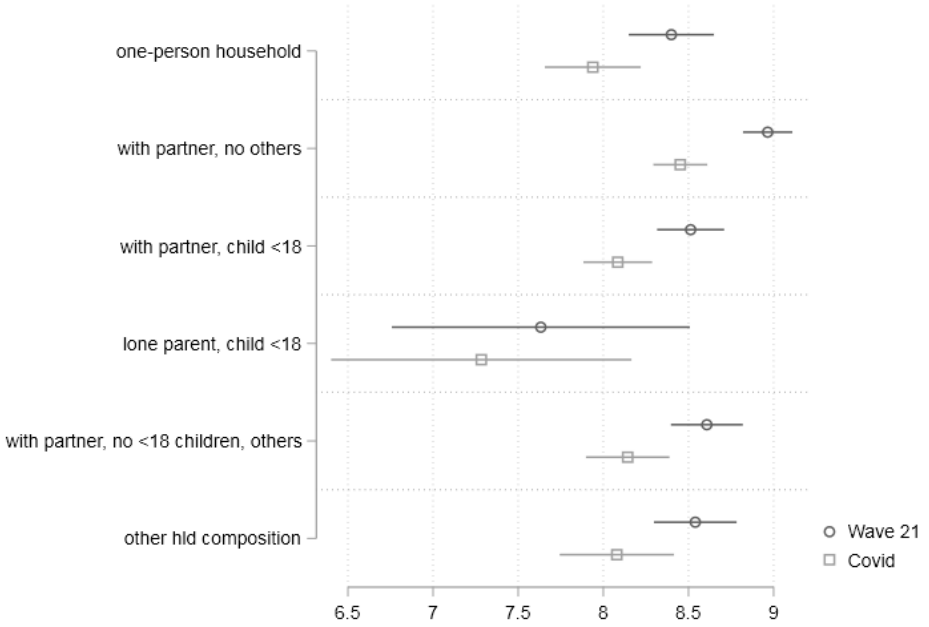


Figure 5.5: Mean satisfaction with the partner relationship by household composition in Wave 21 and the Covid-19 Wave with 95% CI (8876 obs. from 4594 respondents)

Satisfaction with the partner relationship was lower amongst French- and Italian-speaking respondents (8.2) compared with the German-speaking respondents (8.4). When looking at the changes since the last wave of the SHP, the decrease in partnership satisfaction was significant for German-speaking respondents and approximated significance for the French speakers.

Satisfaction with how housework is shared

Respondents were also asked to what extent they were satisfied with the way the housework (such as washing, cooking, or cleaning) was shared within the household since the introduction of the semi-confinement measures. Answers ranged from 0 “not at all satisfied” to 10 “completely satisfied”.

As shown in Section 5.1, during the semi-lockdown both men and women increased their hours spent on housework; women increased slightly more than men. Interestingly, these changes did not translate into a shift in satisfaction with how housework is shared during the Covid crisis, as it remained stable since Wave 21 of the SHP, with men (8.4) being more satisfied than women (7.7). The results of the present report are in line with Steinmetz and Monsch (2020) who also found high satisfaction with how housework was shared during the semi-lockdown.

Satisfaction with living alone or together

Depending on their situation, respondents were asked to what extent they were satisfied with living on their own or living together in the household. Answers ranged from 0 "not at all

satisfied" to 10 "completely satisfied". Out of the 5843 respondents, 17.5% (1022) were living alone and 82.5% (4821) were living together with other persons.

For satisfaction with living alone, we found a general drop during the semi-lockdown. We observed that men were less satisfied with living alone (6.4) than women (6.9). Both men and women reported lower levels of satisfaction compared to Wave 21, down from 7.1 for men and 7.9 for women), but *changes* did not differ significantly between men and women. We further found an association with age in the Covid-19 Wave: Those aged up to 55 years old were less satisfied with living alone than the older respondents. A decrease in satisfaction approached significance only for individuals up to 35 years of age (see Figure 5.6). Finally, also the unemployed experienced a significant drop since the last wave.

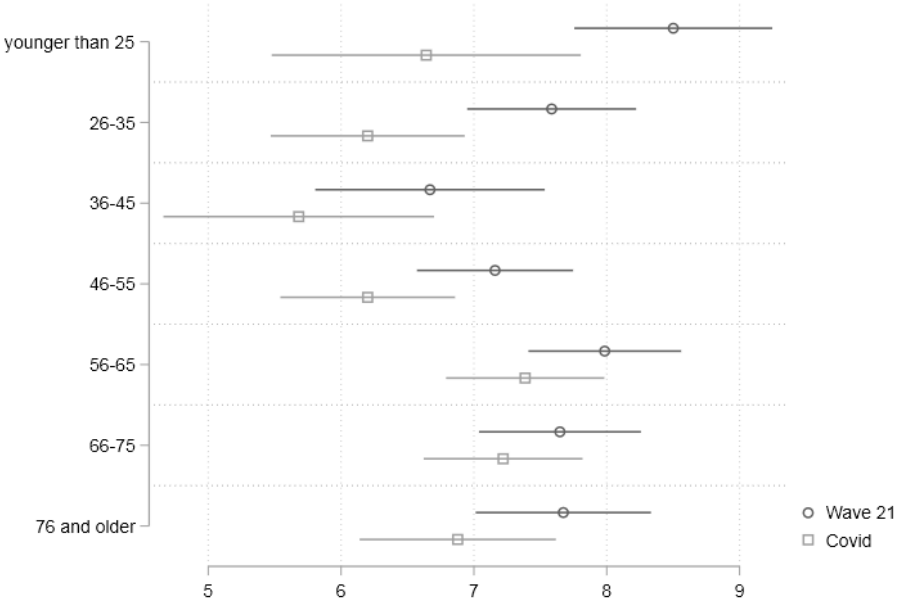


Figure 5.6: Satisfaction with living alone by age (2085 obs. from 1128 respondents)

There were no significant changes in satisfaction with living together since the last wave (8.4 overall in both waves). Men were more satisfied with living together than women (8.5 versus 8.3), which is in line with men being less satisfied with living alone (see above). We found older individuals to be more satisfied with living together than younger individuals (on average 8.0 for those between 14 and 55 and 8.6 for the 56+) and the unemployed (7.6) and apprentices (7.5) to be less satisfied than the other employment groups (8.3 on average). Moreover, couple households stood out with being the most satisfied (8.7). In contrast, lone parents were least satisfied (7.6) and couples living with children or other adults were somewhere between the other groups.

In sum, the close cohabitation experienced during the semi-lockdown may have been a burden for some people, but interestingly it did not translate into reduced satisfaction with living together. In contrast, living alone seemed to be the bigger challenge.

5.7 STUDYING WHEN SCHOOL BUILDINGS WERE CLOSED

For respondents aged 14 to 30 who were enrolled in school or university, the survey included a number of questions on the experience of home-schooling during the semi-lockdown period. Due to school closure students had to follow the curriculum from home.

On average, pupils spent 22 hours a week on their schooling, which is more than 12 hours less than in the last wave. Split by age, Figure 5.7. shows that whereas age groups did not differ much in time spent on studies in the last wave, the decrease in hours was sharpest among the youngest age group. The 14-15-year-old age group decreased study hours from 36 to 19 hours per week. Differences became smaller among older students.

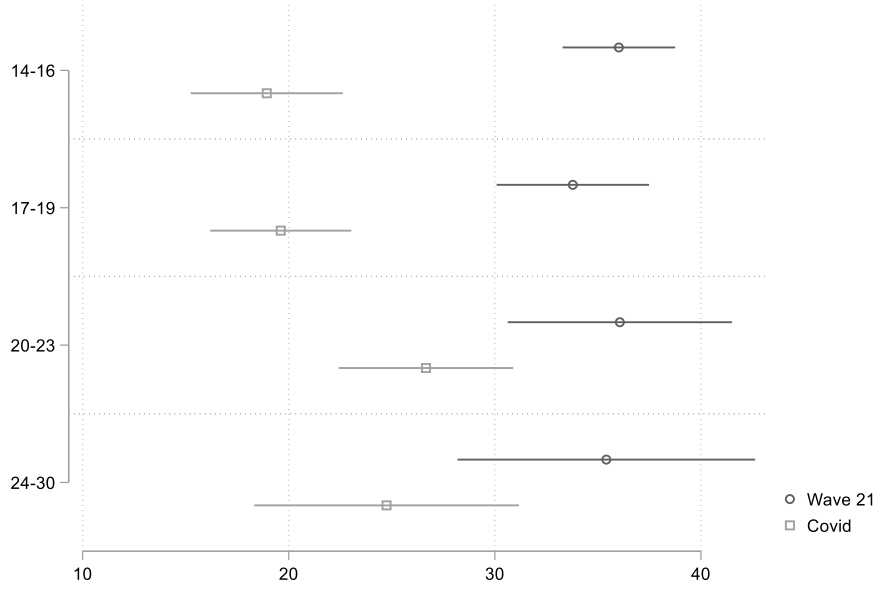


Figure 5.7. Mean time spent on study in hours per week by age in Wave 21 and Covid-19 Wave, 95% CI (747 obs. from 474 respondents)

Table 5.5 shows an overview of items on the experience of home-schooling. A large share of students found it harder to follow the curriculum (40%), additional analyses showed that this was especially the case for women/girls and Italian speakers.[13] About 50% missed the routine of going to class. This was more strongly the case for girls, 20-23-year-old students and Italian speakers. Also, almost half of the students reported teachers made a great effort. This was especially strong among the French speakers, although the Italian speakers tended to disagree most with this statement. Almost half of the respondents living with their parents agreed with the statement that parents helped and supported them with schoolwork. This was stronger among women and Italian speakers.

Only few students felt that other duties at home interfered with schoolwork. This was more prevalent among older students and women.

Table 5.5. Experience of home schooling (under 30 years old and enrolled in education, N=487)

[13] It should be noted, however, that the sample of students and pupils contained only 20 Italian-speakers.

	disagree completely/ somewhat	partly agree, partly disagree	agree somewhat/ completely
More difficulty following the curriculum than before	34%	25%	40%
I missed the routine of going to class	28%	22%	50%
My teachers made a great effort to help me study	17%	35%	49%
Other duties at home interfered with my school work	64%	19%	17%
If living with parents: My parents helped and supported me with schoolwork	33%	18%	49%

Notes: Excluded were „Don't know "and „No answer ": 27, 19, 31, 17 and 51 cases for the items respectively. 80 respondents did not live with their parents and were excluded for the last item.

6. PHYSICAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING

6.1 PHYSICAL HEALTH

The Covid-19 questionnaire included questions from the main questionnaire on how often in the last few weeks respondents experienced a number of common health problems: back pain, headaches, sleeping difficulties and a general feeling of weakness. When contrasting whether or not respondents experienced these problems, we found no overall changes in sleeping problems, back pain or headaches, but for weakness we found an overall decline since the last wave (see Figure 6.1). When further split out by age, we found a significant increase in the likelihood of having sleeping problems for those younger than 25. In sum, there is little evidence of the crisis having had an immediate effect on physical health. Young individuals, however, were the only group facing negative health consequences in the form of sleeping problems.

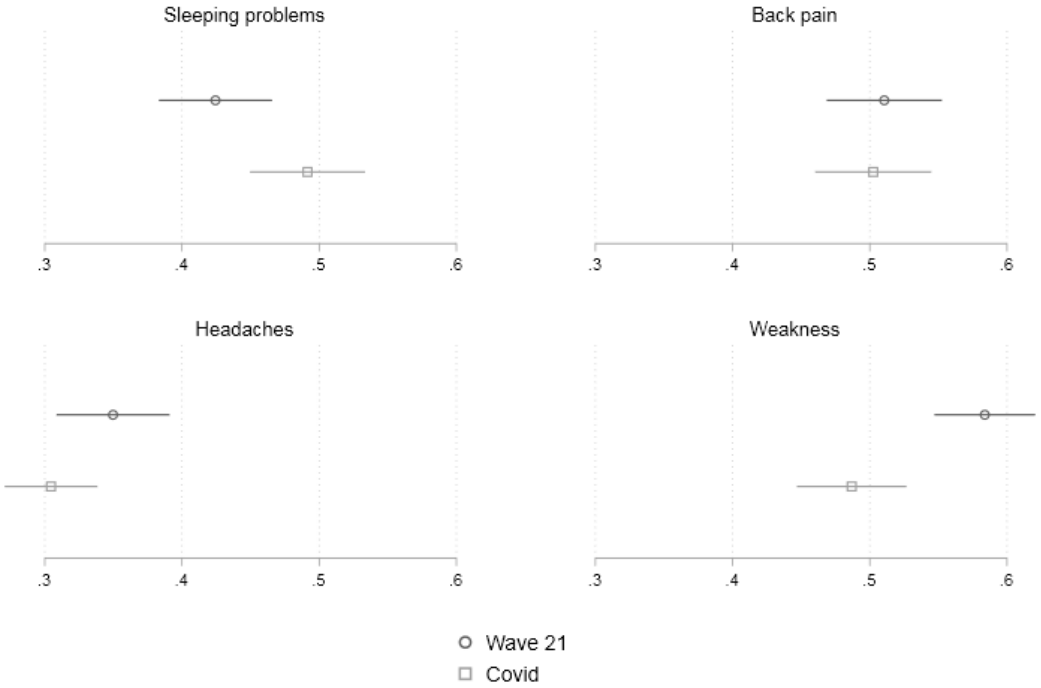


Figure 6.1 Probability of experiencing health problems in the last four weeks in Wave 21 and in the Covid-19 Study with 95% CI (observations: 11561 for sleeping problems, 11555 for back pain, 11526 for headaches and 11541 for weakness, from 5843 respondents).

6.2 LIFE SATISFACTION, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECT, LONELINESS

Table 6.1 presents four items to measure subjective wellbeing included in both the SHP main survey and the Covid-19 questionnaire. They include life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and loneliness (Watson et al., 1988; for an overview of subjective wellbeing, see also Diener et al., 1999). Positive affect is a state of high energy, activity and enthusiasm. In contrast, negative affect is characterized by negative mood states such as distress, anger or nervousness (Watson et al., 1988). The exact wording of each question is found in the Appendix.

In general, subjective wellbeing remained stable since Wave 21. Overall, there were no significant changes in life satisfaction, negative affect, positive affect nor loneliness.

Table 6.1: Mean values for subjective wellbeing indicators (N=5843)

	W21 Mean (SE)	Covid wave Mean (SE)
Satisfaction with life (0 not at all, 10 completely)	8.00 (.05)	7.96 (.05)
Positive affect (0 never, 10 always)	6.89 (.08)	6.92 (.08)
Negative affect (0 never, 10 always)	2.14 (.08)	2.41 (.08)
Loneliness (0 not at all, 10 very much)	2.13 (.13)	1.99 (.13)

Notes: Excluded were "No answer" and "Does not know": 66, 50, 39 and 54 cases respectively for each item in the Covid-19 Wave and 4, 3, 4, and 5 cases in Wave 21. Mean values in Wave 21 are corrected for mode.

When assessing changes in wellbeing by age, we found that life satisfaction decreased significantly for younger persons, aged 14 to 25. This age group also significantly increased the frequency of having negative affect, as did the 46 to 55-year-old group (see Figure 6.2) Negative affect also increased significantly for university graduates, employed individuals and couples living with children under eighteen in the household. For positive affect and loneliness no changes could be observed for any of the sociodemographic groups.

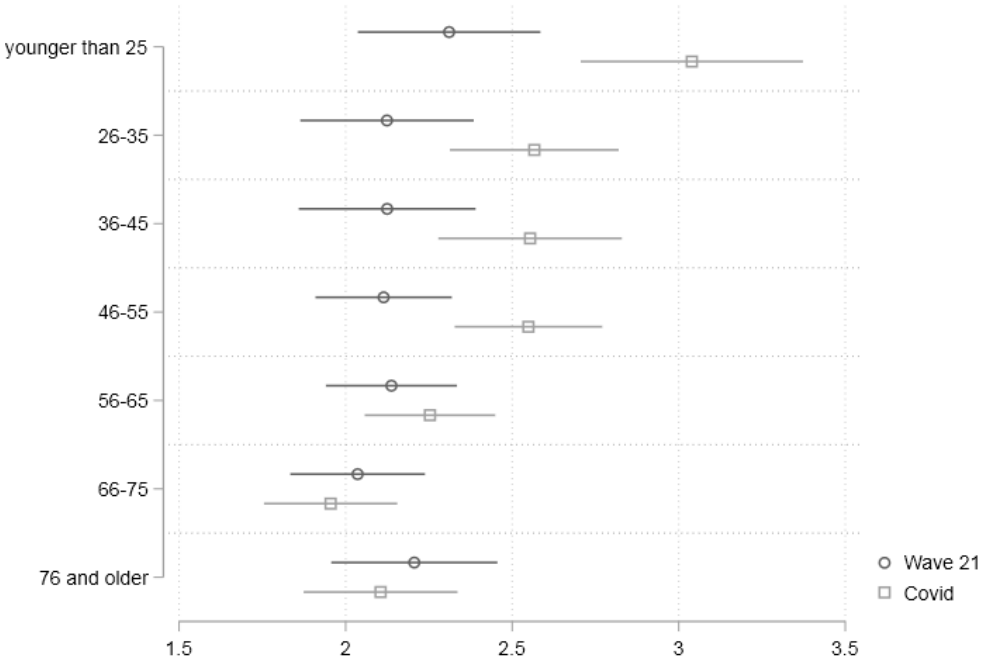


Figure 6.2: Mean negative affect in Wave 21 and Covid-19 Wave by age with 95% CI (scale 0-10, 11637 obs. from 5841 respondents)

6.3 STRESS

We asked respondents how often they had felt stressed during the previous four weeks. The answers ranged from 1 "never" to 5 "very often". Half of the respondents had never or almost never felt stressed. 34% reported feeling stressed "sometimes" and 15% reported to feel it "often" or "very often".

Respondents reported significantly less stress in the Covid study than in the previous wave. However, the drop was not significant for all socio-demographic groups. Stress decreased significantly for those aged between 26 and 65, those with a medium or high level of

education as well as the employed and self-employed. Although apprentices, unemployed and inactive respondents also tended to experience less stress, their decrease was not significant (see Figure 6.3).

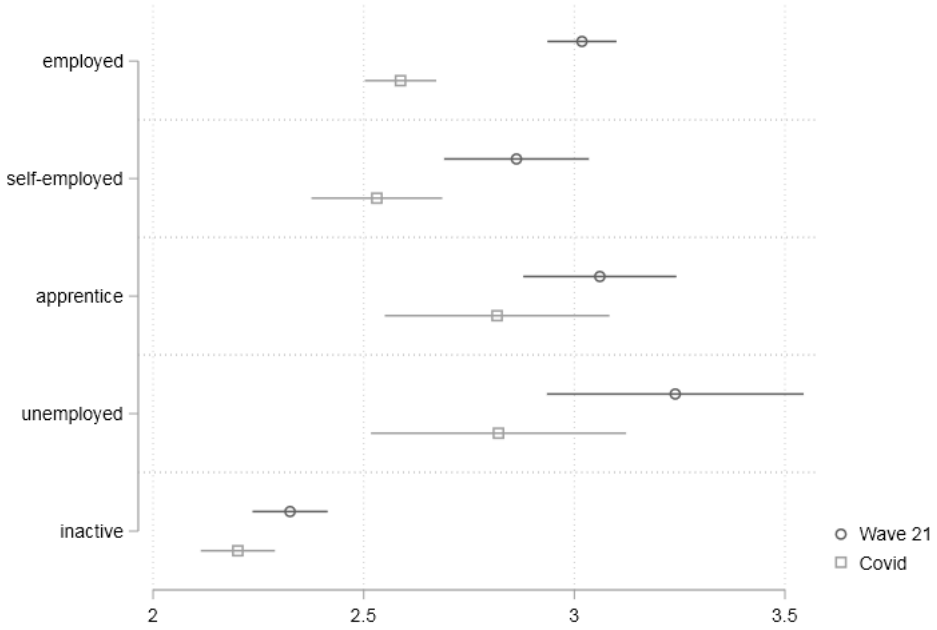


Figure 6.3: Mean level of perceived stress by employment status in Wave 21 and Covid-19 Study with 95% CI (scale 1-5, 11501 obs. from 5760 respondents)

6.4 ANXIETY AND POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS

The questionnaire included two questions that capture common symptoms of posttraumatic stress (Weiss, 2007; Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Löwe, 2006) (see Table 6.2). Results show that 34% of respondents had reported some level of anxiety in the last week. Yet, as the question was not specifically focused on the Covid-19 crisis and not included in the SHP main study, we cannot draw any conclusions as to whether anxiety increased as a result of the crisis. 19% reported some physical reaction indicating posttraumatic stress when thinking about their experience with the Covid-19 crisis, which suggests that for a minority of the respondents the impact on wellbeing was quite severe.

Table 6.2: Distribution of anxiety and posttraumatic stress (N=5843)

	not at all or < 1 day	**1-2 days**	**3-4 days**	**5-7 days**
[…] feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge? (anxiety)	66%	23%	7%	3%
[…] physical reactions, when thinking about your experience with the Corona crisis?[a] (posttraumatic stress)	81%	14%	4%	1%

Notes: For the exact question formulation see the appendix. Excluded were “No answer” and “Don’t know”: 204 and 216 cases for the items respectively.

6.5 POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

Although the pandemic and the semi-lockdown were a high burden for many people, adverse life circumstances can also lead to remaining positive consequences called posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). These positive changes can englobe different aspects, for example a higher appreciation of life, greater perceived personal strength, new possibilities in life, or a greater spirituality. Therefore, we introduced four questions to measure these dimensions of posttraumatic growth with response categories ranging from 0 “not at all” to 10 “very much”. The general approval of the statements was low to moderate (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Posttraumatic growth (N=5843)

	Range	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
New path for my life.	0-10	2.4	1	0	2.7
Can handle difficulties.	0-10	4.7	5	0	3.3
Changed life priorities	0-10	4.4	5	0	3.2
Stronger spirituality/ religious faith.	0-10	1.8	0	0	2.8

Notes: For the exact question formulation see the appendix. Excluded were “No answer” and “Don’t know”: 240, 471, 284 and 278 cases for the items respectively.

On all four questions women scored higher than men. Besides gender, age was significantly associated with posttraumatic growth: Younger respondents were more likely to state that they established a new path in life and that their priorities changed. In contrast, older individuals got more confidence that they could handle difficulties and experienced a stronger spirituality or religious faith.

When looking at the employment status of the respondents, the unemployed stood out with respect to posttraumatic growth. Their approval was significantly above those of the other employment groups. The high approval rates of the unemployed could be observed on all the posttraumatic growth questions. When distinguishing between those who became unemployed before and during the semi-lockdown, the ones who lost their jobs during the semi-lockdown agreed most to have established a new path in life. One possible explanation could be that unemployed individuals are at a crossroad in life and they might be searching to establish a new path. This is in line with the theory of posttraumatic growth stating that positive consequences emerge when individuals have gone through a stressful life event and when they think repeatedly about the impact of this event and possible positive consequences. (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006).

We also found that the worse self-reported health, the higher the agreement with the statement about establishing a new path in life. Approval was also higher for increased spirituality and religious faith among respondents who rated their health as (rather) bad. It is possible that the Covid-19 crisis drew the attention on one’s health status, and that for some this negative evaluation lead to a re-evaluation of their life and experiences of posttraumatic growth.

Furthermore, educational level was related to posttraumatic growth. The lower the educational level, the higher was the agreement to having changed priorities about what is important in life. Moreover, those with high educational level scored lowest on the statement that as a result of the crisis they know they can handle difficulties. Also, those with low educational level were most likely to report an increase in spirituality or religious faith.

Although general agreement on our questions was moderate, many individuals made the experience of growth during or shortly after the semi-lockdown. Interestingly, those who were

in more vulnerable groups (that is unemployed, individuals in bad health, low educated) were the most likely to experience growth.

To sum up, we could observe a mixed trend for wellbeing. In general, only few changes could be observed. Surprisingly, general stress levels decreased. This was especially the case for the middle-aged, the employed and those with higher levels of education. The youngest age group seemed to experience a decrease in wellbeing. Especially vulnerable groups seemed to be able to experience posttraumatic growth through the crisis.

7. WHAT OCCUPIES RESPONDENTS – COVID-19-RELATED WORRIES

7.1 OVERVIEW OF COVID-19-RELATED WORRIES

We asked whether respondents were worried about a number of aspects (see Table 7.1 for an overview). Respondents could indicate a score between 0 (not at all worried) and 10 (extremely worried), which we recoded into three categories (0 to 3: not or very little, 4 to 7: somewhat worried, and 8 to 10: very worried).

Table 7.1 shows that respondents worried the least about whether they would receive the necessary medical treatment in case of an infection with the new Covid-19 virus. When the survey was in the field, the number of hospitalisations had already started to decrease, making this worry a less pressing one. The economy in general and the health of close ones raised most concerns, with 26% reported being very worried (a score of 8 or higher). The own economic situation was less a source of worry than the economy in general. In addition, people were less worried about their own health than the health of close others. Similarly, people were more concerned about solidarity in society than their own social relationships. There were relatively few worries about life style and share prices and investments.

Table 7.1. Overview of Covid-19-related worries (N=5843)

	not or very little (0-3)	somewhat worried (4-7)	very worried (8-10)
Economy in general	21%	51%	26%
Own economic situation	52%	35%	12%
Own health	49%	37%	13%
Health of close ones	28%	44%	26%
Whether receive necessary medical treatment in case of infection	74%	17%	7%
Solidarity in society	38%	46%	14%
Own social relations	60%	31%	7%
Life style	64%	28%	7%
Share prices and investments	57%	25%	9%

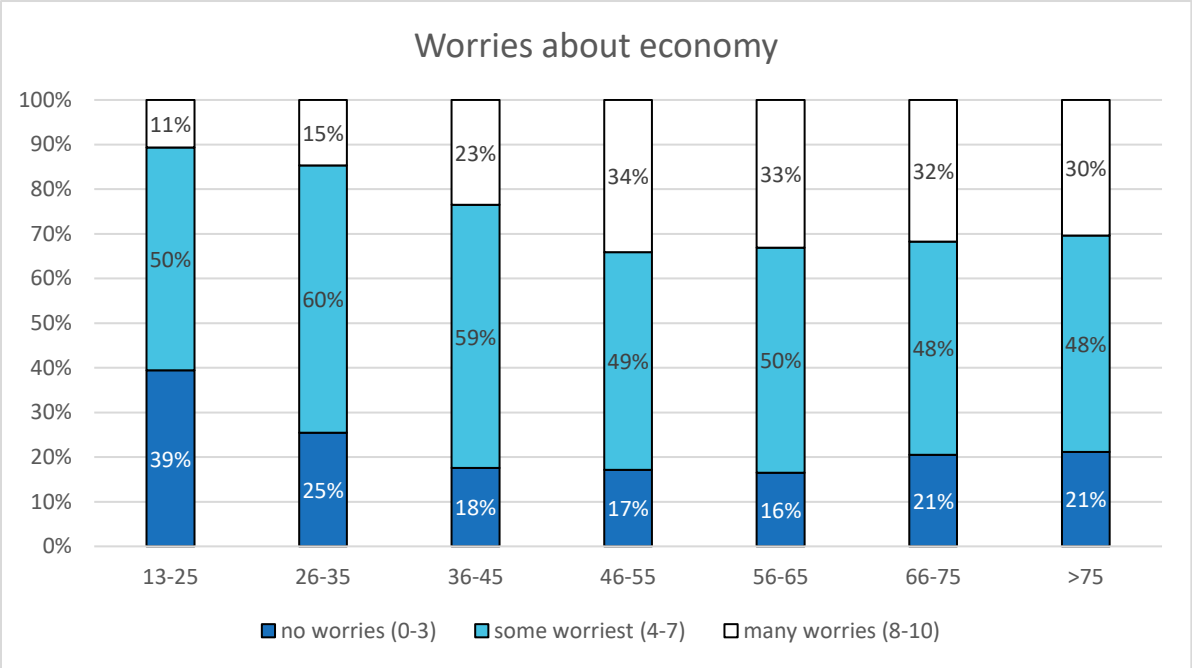
Notes: For the exact question formulation see the appendix. Excluded were "No answer" and "Don't know": 139, 107, 72, 92, 147, 155, 109, 98, and 547 cases for the items respectively.

In the following we focus on concerns about the economy in general and about the health of close ones, as these were the most common worries.

7.2 WORRIES ABOUT THE ECONOMY IN GENERAL

There was a significant difference by linguistic region in the level of worries about the economy. Italian-speaking individuals showed the highest level of worries, followed by German-speaking respondents and the French speakers. While they were more affected than German-speaking individuals, French-speaking respondents worried much less about the economy and 28% responded that they did not worry, or worried very little, about the economy in general (this was 19% for German speakers and 14% for Italian speakers). There appears to be more confidence in the economy among French-speaking respondents. Worries about the economy also varied by level of education. We observed that those with most worries were those with medium educational background, whereas those with low educational background worried the least.

Younger respondents were on average less worried about the economy (11% with many worries, figure 7.1). The 46 to 55-year-old appeared to be partly very worried (34%), partly not worried at all (17%). The age categories from 46 onwards all indicated a high level of worries about the economy in general (30% or more).

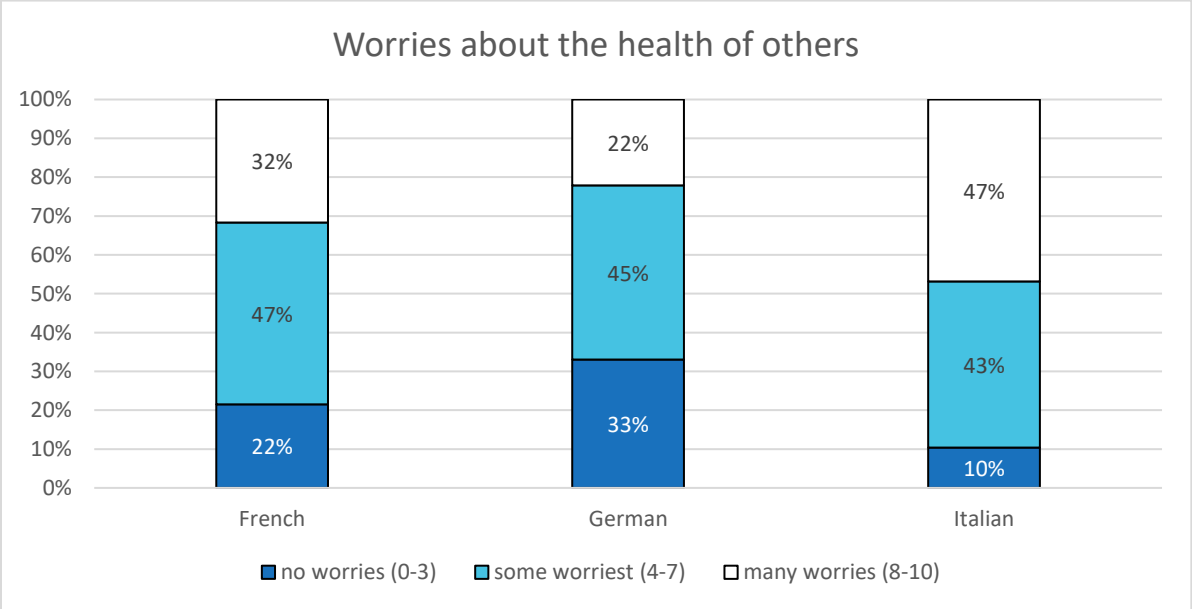


13-25: n=525, 26-35: n=786, 36-45: n=898, 46-55: n=1049, 56-65: n=976, 66-75: n=829, >75: n=642

Figure 7.1: Worries about economy by age groups

7.3 WORRIES ABOUT THE HEALTH OF OTHERS

With respect to worries about the health of others, we observed that notably Italian-speaking respondents were concerned (see Figure 7.2). Only 10% were not worried, while 43% showed some worries and 47% many worries. By comparison, 32% of the French-speaking respondents and 22% of the German-speaking individuals were very worried. This pattern followed regional differences in the spread of the virus.



French: n=1514, German: n=3888, Italian: n=348

Figure 7.2: Worries about the health of others and linguistic region

Older persons were less worried about the health of close others than younger ones. 32% of individuals aged 13-25 responded being very worried, while this was 21% among older ones (66-75).

8. SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL COHESION

8.1 SATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their personal (social and family) relationships on a scale going from 0 "not at all satisfied" to 10 "completely satisfied".

Before the pandemic, women showed higher levels of satisfaction with personal relationships than men. Yet, women experienced a bigger and significant decrease, whereas men showed constant levels (see Figure 8.1). As a result, men and women reported similar levels of satisfaction with their personal relationships shortly after the semi-lockdown.

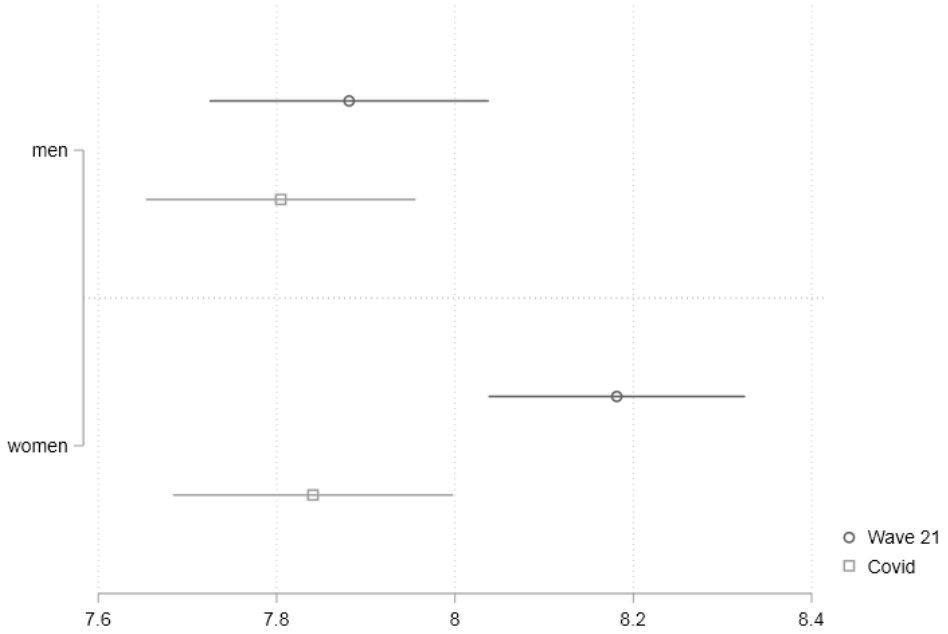


Figure 8.1: Mean satisfaction with personal relationships by gender in Wave 21 and in the Covid-19 Wave with 95% CI (scale 0-10, 11585 obs. from 5841 respondents)

Moreover, we could observe a relationship between satisfaction with personal relationships and age: Figure 8.2 shows that the youngest respondents were the only ones who saw their satisfaction drop significantly, going from being among the most satisfied in Wave 21 to scoring the lowest after the semi-lockdown.

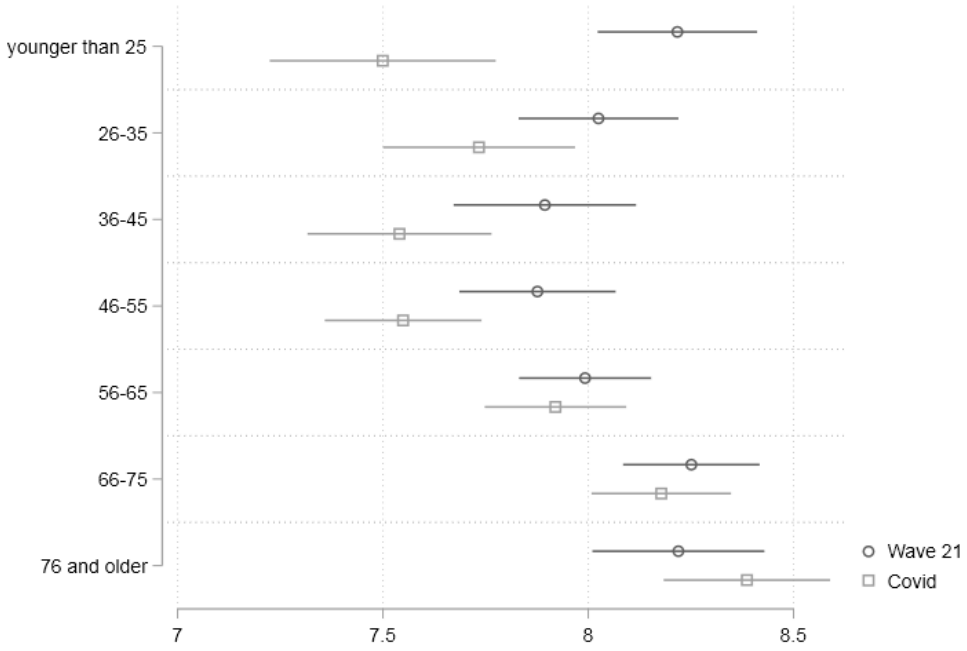


Figure 8.2: Mean satisfaction with personal relationships by age in Wave 21 and Covid-19 Wave with 95% CI (scale 0-10, 11581 obs. from 5893 respondents)

8.2 THE RELATIONSHIP WITH NEIGHBOURS

Although most respondents spent more time at home during the semi-lockdown, for a vast majority of the respondents (72%) the relationship with their neighbours did not change (see Table 8.1). Changes were most likely to be positive. Of those who reported a change, 24% saw their relationships with the neighbours improve and only 4% reported a deterioration. Improvements were particularly frequent for respondents with high educational level (30%) and for those aged between 26 and 55 (27%). This age group is most likely to live with young children, which may have contributed to enhanced neighbourhood relationships. Due to closed schools and childcare facilities, many parents may have helped each other out with supervising children, which may have strengthened neighbourhood relationships. When looking at the household composition, those living with minor children were indeed most likely to report an improvement. Amongst lone parents, a remarkable 37% saw their neighbourhood relationships improve (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Changes in neighbourhood relationships during semi-lockdown by household composition (N=5732)

	deteriorated	stayed the same	improved
One-person household	4%	71%	25%
Couple, no others	3%	74%	23%
Couple, at least 1 child<18	7%	64%	29%
Lone parent, at least 1 child <18	3%	60%	37%
couple, no <18 children, with others (e.g. older children)	5%	76%	19%
Other household composition (e.g. (adult) child living with parents, living with others)	6%	77%	17%
Total	5%	72%	24%

Notes: The total sample excludes 111 cases of "No answer and "Don't know"

8.3 SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CONTACT AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Respondents aged 65 and older who were not in employment answered a number of questions on social support exchange with persons outside the household and contact frequency with family outside the household during the pandemic (Table 8.2).

For the majority of older adults, support received and provided remained stable during the semi-lockdown. Still, 31% reported they received more emotional support and 39% reported an increase in practical support, whereas only very few experienced a decrease. Older persons were more likely than younger ones to report receiving more emotional and practical support (for example, 43% of the 81+ reported an increase in received emotional support, compared with 23% among the 65-70-year-old persons).

At the same time, older adults also remained important support providers. Provision of emotional and practical support remained stable for about 70% of the older adults, whereas 23% provided more emotional support and 15% provided more practical support. Individuals in poorer health were more likely to report a decrease in the provision of emotional support. With respect to giving practical support, the decrease was especially pronounced among women (20% versus 11% among men). Younger individuals in this group were more likely than the older ones to report giving more practical support. Whereas individuals in poorer health gave less practical help than before, those in good health increased the practical help they provided. Interestingly, older adults living alone did not fare worse with respect to giving and receiving help than those living with a partner or others.

Table 8.2. Support provided and received and contact frequency (65+, N=1496)

	(strongly) decreased	Remained the same	(Strongly) increased
Emotional support			
Received	2%	67%	31%
provided	6%	71%	23%
Practical support			
Received	2%	59%	39%
provided	15%	70%	15%
Contact frequency			
Face-to-face	73%	20%	6%
Other contact	3%	27%	71%

Notes: Excluded were “No answer” and “Don’t know”: 66, 76, 41, 63, 30, and 26 cases for the items respectively.

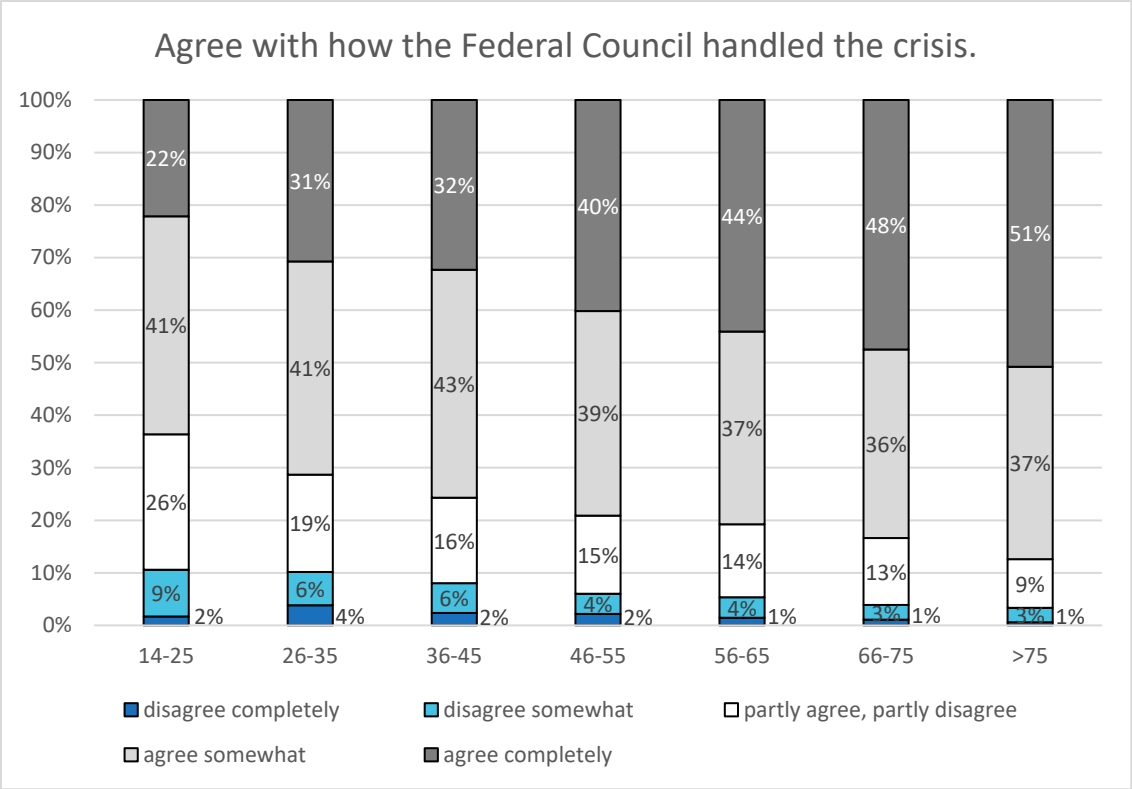
Face-to-face contact with family members outside the household decreased for the large majority of older adults (73%, see Table 8.2). This was compensated by an increase in other forms of contact (e.g. by phone, texting, or through social media) among 71%. Face-to-face contact decreased more among the younger age group (79% of the 65-70-year-old reported a decrease) than the oldest one (63% of the 81+ reported a decrease). Also, the decrease was less pronounced among older adults in poorer health (70% of individuals in poorer health compared with 77% in very good health). The increase in other forms of contact was universal as barely any differences by groups emerged, with the exception of women reporting more often than men an increase in other forms of contact.

9. POLITICS

9.1 PERFORMANCE OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

Figure 9.1 shows the extent to which respondents agreed with how the Federal Council handled the crisis by age. In all age groups, a majority of respondents agreed somewhat or completely with the reaction of the Federal Council (between 63% among 14-25 years-old and 88% among people older than 75 years). The strong support is similar to findings from other studies (Monsch et al., 2020). However, we found a lower acceptance of measures by younger respondents. Disagreement is highest among the youngest (11% disagree).

The high support for the Federal Council is not surprising given that the institution is much trusted among the population (Monsch et al., 2020). We remark that during the time of data collection, the responsibility for handling the crisis was mostly on the federal level, reason why no question on the cantonal decisions was included.



14-25: n=528, 26-35: n=787, 36-45: n=881, 46-54: n=1043, 55-65: n=967, 66-75: n=825, 76+: n=658)

Figure 9.1: Agreement with how Federal Council handled the crisis

Furthermore, we observed that support for the Federal Council was related to education. The least educated showed higher levels of scepticism (10% disagree completely or partially and 68% agree somewhat or completely), while the highest educated showed the highest level of support for how the Federal Council handled the situation so far (7% disagree, 82% agree). That lower educational levels show lower levels of trust is in line with earlier findings (Scheidegger and Staerklé, 2011).

Support for how the Federal Council handled the situation was lowest among Italian-speaking respondents. For Italian, but also to some extent for French speaking respondents, we found more respondents that disagreed with the Federal Council than among German speaking respondents. German speaking respondents showed the highest levels of support. Similar to the previous finding, French speaking respondents already reported lower levels of trust in the Federal Council in other studies (Scheidegger and Staerklé, 2011).

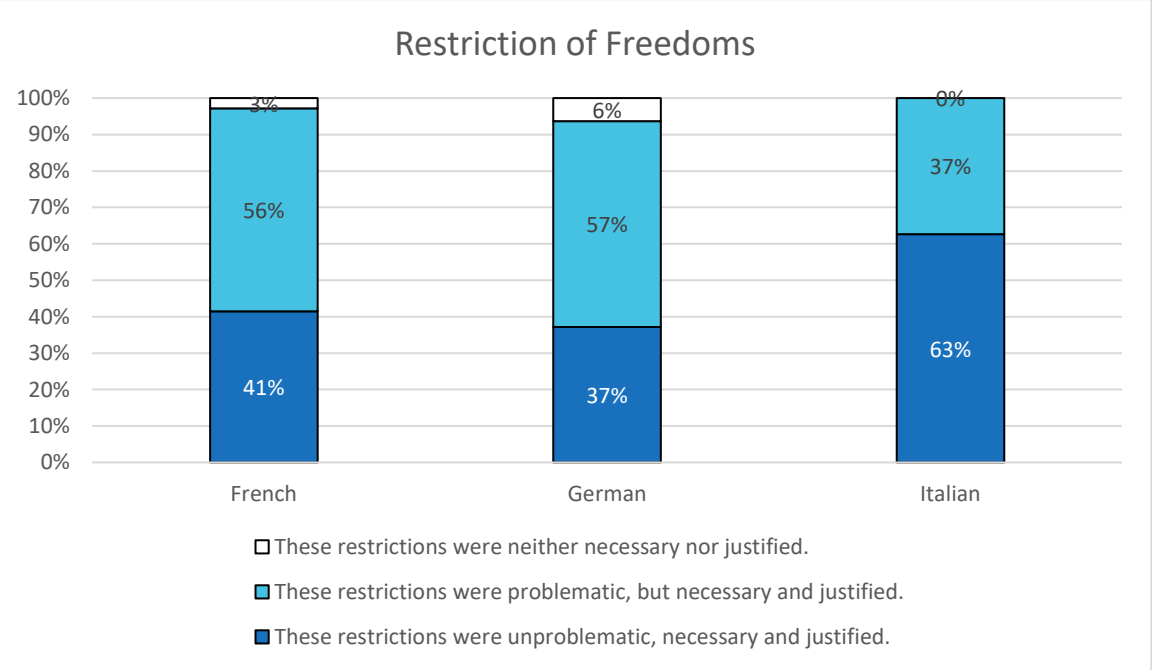
In addition, having children at home decreased the support for the Federal Council's actions. Lone parents and couples with at least one child agreed less often (72% and 75%) as opposed to singles and couples without children who more strongly supported the measures of the Federal Council (81% and 83% respectively).

9.2 RESTRICTIONS OF FREEDOMS

We measured the evaluation of restrictions of freedoms with a question on whether the measures were evaluated as appropriate and necessary. We asked how respondents perceived the restrictions of civil rights imposed by the Federal government (freedom of movement and of assembly). 40% of the respondents identified the measures as unproblematic, necessary and justified, 55% identified the measures as problematic, but necessary and justified and only 5% responded that the measures were neither unproblematic nor necessary and justified, showing a high level of acceptance of these measures across respondents. Still, we identified some important differences across respondents.

Regional differences

There were important differences in evaluations across linguistic regions (Figure 9.2). 63% of Italian-speaking respondents found the restrictions were necessary, unproblematic and justified. All answered that the measures were necessary and justified showing a perceived urgency of the problem probably in line with the situation in neighbouring Italy. German-speaking respondents were most critical and estimated with 6% that the restrictions were neither necessary nor justified. Still, although seen as problematic, the majority of German- and French-speaking respondents saw the restrictions of freedoms as necessary and justified.



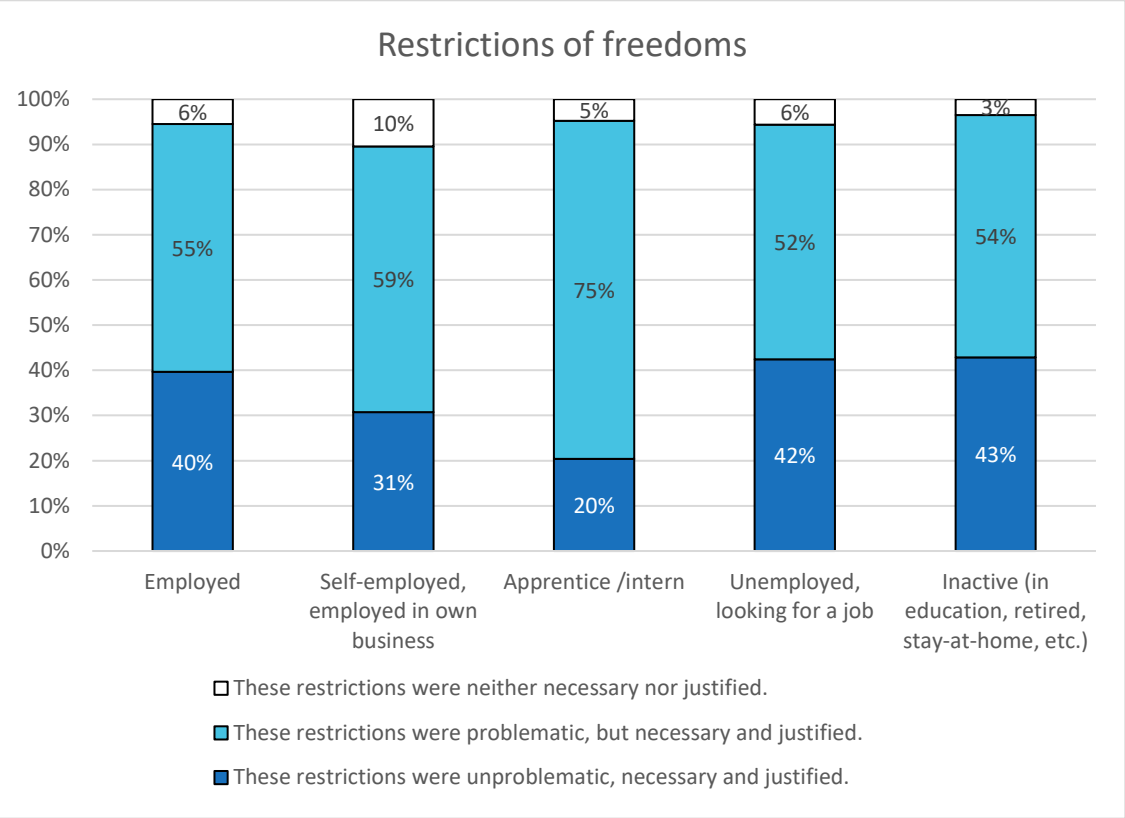
French: n=1485, German: n=3786, Italian: n=345

Figure 9.2: Perception of the restrictions of freedoms imposed by the Federal Council

The critical self-employed

Furthermore, we observed a relation between the evaluation of the restrictions and work status, where self-employed and apprentices/interns deviated from the average (see Figure 9.3). In line with the experience of financial losses and affected businesses, we saw that self-

employed people saw the restrictions of freedoms most critically. Within this group, we found that about 10% estimated that the measures were neither necessary nor justified compared with only 5% on average. The number of persons that unconditionally supported the restriction was, however, lowest among apprentices and interns. They were critical, but saw the measures still as necessary and justified. Employed, unemployed and inactive persons showed similar levels of support for the restrictions, but only 3% of inactive persons found that the measures were unnecessary and not justified. Interns and apprentices indicated with a lower level that measures were unproblematic (20%), necessary and justified, but still tended to see measures as necessary and justified, but problematic (75%).



Employed:n=2844, self-employed: n=374, apprentice/intern: n=147, unemployed: n=106, inactive: n=2066

Figure 9.3: Perception of restrictions of freedoms by work status

There were specific age groups that were more sceptical than others. Notably about 7% of people aged between 26 and 46 responded that the restrictions were neither necessary nor justified compared to fewer younger as well as older respondents. The absolute support for the restrictions (unproblematic, necessary and justified) was highest among the oldest respondents. Still, a majority across all age groups saw the restrictions in freedoms as problematic but necessary and justified (between 53 and 58%, average 55%).

10. CONCLUSION

The pandemic and the semi-lockdown widely affected our lives. The present report analysed data from the SHP Covid-19 study that was conducted in the aftermath of the semi-lockdown that lasted for about 2 months (mid-March until mid-May). Results represent thus the short-term impact of the pandemic in Switzerland. More long-term impacts on the social and economic life of the Swiss population will be observed thanks to the upcoming waves of the SHP that will replicate most of the questions treated here.

The SHP Covid-19 study found that for the population as a whole the short-term consequences of the Covid-19 crisis were relatively benign: the vast majority had not experienced negative financial consequences, life satisfaction remained high with no indication of increased social isolation. We found no overall decline in health, but rather a decrease in stress levels. Also, support for how the federal government dealt with the crisis was high. Those findings are similar to what other studies found (Monsch et al., 2020, Steinmetz et al., 2020)

Yet, the most important lesson we can draw from this report is that the semi-lockdown affected different groups within the population in different ways in the short run, revealing a less positive picture. Young people were particularly affected by the semi-lockdown. School closures had a very specific impact on young people. Especially the youngest pupils spent less time on school work. Overall, many had more difficulties following the curriculum and missed the routine of going to class. The semi-lockdown had repercussions for their wellbeing. Younger people became less satisfied with their life in general, their personal relationships and they reported increased negative affect. These negative experiences may be what made them more sceptical about how the Federal Council handled the crisis.

Older adults were affected in other life domains. They seemed to have benefited from their life experience reflected by their strengthened belief that they can handle difficulties. Although there was a considerable shift from face-to-face contacts towards other forms of communication, they could still rely on support from others outside the household and remained providers of support as well and increased their level of physical activity during the semi-confinement more than other age groups. In contrast, the volunteering activities of elderly decreased somewhat.

Work-life-balance was a particular challenge for those living with young children: They saw their hours of care increase. The surplus work at home resulting from school closure and spending more time at home was shouldered disproportionally by women/mothers: they increased time spent on housework and especially care more than men and they decreased time spent on paid work more than men. This increased the already existing gender inequality in the division of paid and unpaid work. Despite this increased burden, women's satisfaction with how household work was shared, although lower than men's, did not decrease with respect to before the semi-lockdown.

Spending more time at home meant spending more time alone for single-person households. The challenges of isolation were apparent in our study: satisfaction with living alone dropped significantly since the crisis. On the other hand, living through the semi-lockdown with household members came also with certain negative consequences: Both men and women who were living with their partner became less satisfied with their partner relationship since the last wave, especially if they also had children in the household.

Of course, the work situation with increased short-term work changed for many workers during the semi-lockdown. Our study showed a divide with respect to educational attainment, with the higher educated shifting their work more often to home and the lower educated being more likely to face the precarious position of short-time work and a higher perceived job insecurity. We did not encounter substantial numbers of unemployed persons, but the small group of unemployed individuals were widely affected by the Covid-19 crisis, especially with respect to their financial situation in the near future. The unemployed perceived a higher risk of having to use their savings and to have to lower their standard of living.

The self-employed were also strongly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Almost six out of ten saw their business affected by the regulations, a lack of demand or due to problems with suppliers. Many of them had to put themselves or their employees on short-time work or apply for a Covid credit. As a result, the self-employed were more likely to report a deterioration in their financial situation and perceived a high risk of having to lower their living standard and losing their job. Perhaps as a consequence, the self-employed were more skeptical about the measures of the Federal Council.

Across the different domains we observed some regional differences, which is in line with how the virus spread within Switzerland at the time of the fieldwork. Overall, French- and Italian-speaking individuals were more affected than German-speaking respondents. In the family domain French speakers seemed to suffer most: They were most likely to feel overwhelmed by home schooling and by having their children at home. They also reported more tensions at home. French and Italian speakers also reported lower partner satisfaction, perceived more job insecurity and a higher risk of having to use their savings. In general, Italian speakers were most worried, not only about the economy, but also about the health of others. Italian-speaking respondents were also least skeptical about the measures taken by the Federal Council.

To conclude, our study demonstrates that the ways in which the initial aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis affected the Swiss population has been quite diverse and tended to affect certain groups disproportionally. The extent to which the consequences of the crisis will be of short duration or will persist needs further analysis, once future waves of the Swiss Household Panel become available. Hence, we underscore the need for more detailed analyses of the impact of the semi-confinement on different socio-economic groups across different regions in the short term and in the coming years.

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APPENDIX

Wording of Questions

Subjective Wellbeing

Life satisfaction: In general, how satisfied are you with your life if 0 means "not at all satisfied" and 10 means "completely satisfied"?

Positive affect: Are you often plenty of strength, energy and optimism, if 0 means "never" and 10 "always"?

Negative affect: Do you often have negative feelings such as having the blues, being desperate, suffering from anxiety or depression, if 0 means "never" and 10 "always"?

Loneliness: How alone do you feel in your life, if 0 means "not at all lonely" and 10 "extremely lonely"?

Anxiety and posttraumatic stress

Anxiety: In the past week, how often have you felt nervous, anxious, or on edge?

Posttraumatic stress: In the past week, when thinking about your experience with the Corona crisis (e.g., social distancing, loss of income/work, concerns about infection), how often have you had physical reactions, such as sweating, trouble breathing, nausea, or a pounding heart?

Posttraumatic Growth

Indicate for each of the statements below the degree to which this change occurred in your life as a result of the Corona crisis.

- I established a new path for my life.
- I know that I can handle difficulties.
- I changed my priorities about what is important in life.
- I have a stronger spirituality/ religious faith.

Worries

How concerned are you about the following? 0 means “not at all”, 10 “very much”

- the economy in general
- your own economic situation
- your health
- the health of your close ones
- about whether you will receive the necessary medical treatment if you do contract the coronavirus
- solidarity in our society)
- your life styles
- share prices and other forms of investments