1. Title: The short- and long-term consequences of COVID-19 on gender equality

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3. Abstract: The covid-19 crisis has substantially affected the organisation of work in the labor market and in the household. In particular, with the start of the lock-down, virtually none of the typical components of home production can be outsourced to the market, and the closure of schools and nurseries has added education and childcare services to pre-existing home production needs. Increased childcare needs may fall more heavily on women in so far as new loads are distributed among parents according to baseline specialization patterns. However, in 20% of UK households with dependent children, women are working (possibly long hours) in critical jobs, while men are forced at home by the lockdown. In these households, it is plausible to expect a reversal of the usual gap in home production hours, with men taking over the bulk of increased childcare needs during the lockdown.

We will study whether these temporary changes in the organization of work may produce permanent effects beyond the crisis via learning, habit formation and the evolution of social norms. We will combine the annual waves of Understanding Society with the monthly supplements introduced during covid-19 to investigate:
(i) how parents' contribution to childcare is affected during the lockdown, according to their sector of employment and to the possibility of working from home;
(ii) whether some of the observed changes in parental roles will survive once the lockdown is over;
(iii) whether these changes are accompanied by changes in gender norms.

4. Data description: Understanding Society (USoc) is a longitudinal survey of the members of approximately 40,000 UK households, or 100,000 individuals. The survey is conducted annually and contains information on employment, including occupation and industry of current and past jobs held, hours worked, pay and other job characteristics (e.g. whether flexible work arrangements are used). Additionally, information on time use for care and home production, use of formal childcare, the frequency of activities of parents with children and gender attitudes towards the household division of labour (collected at different points in time). Since April 2020, USoc has introduced an additional online survey to assess the impact of the covid-19 crisis on different aspects of life, including employment, health, and care and home schooling responsibilities. We also plan to propose a set of additional questions to the covid-19 modules, covering work arrangements and gender attitudes toward working and family care in the couple. The longitudinal nature of the data will allow us to assess the above research questions using an event-study design.

5. JEL-Codes for the project: D13, J13, J16, J22.

6. Key words: Time-use, gender norms, telework, gender equality.