OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers
No. 246

Working during COVID-19: Cross-country evidence from real-time survey data

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https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/34a2c306-en

OECD

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

DELSA/ELSA/WD/SEM(2020)11

Unclassified English text only

24 July 2020

DIRECTORATE FOR EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Working during COVID-19: Cross-Country Evidence from Real-Time Survey Data

OECD SOCIAL, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION WORKING PAPERS No. 246

JEL Classification: J21, I30.

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This working paper has been an input to the analysis in Chapter 1 of the *OECD Employment Outlook 2020: Worker Security and the COVID-19 Crisis* on "COVID-19: From a Health to a Jobs Crisis".

Authorised for publication by Stefano Scarpetta, Director, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs.

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JT03464234

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Nicola Bariletto and Marco Lo Faso who provided excellent research assistance. This paper is based on data from the "REPEAT: REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19" survey. The survey has been undertaken as part of the project "Citizens' Attitudes towards the COVID-19 Pandemic", chaired by Sylvain Brouard, Michael Becher, Martial Foucault and Pavlos Vasilopoulos with the collaboration of Vincenzo Galasso (Bocconi University), Christoph Hönnige (University of Hanover), Hanspeter Kriesi (European University Institute), Richard Nadeau (Université de Montréal), Vincent Pons (Harvard Business School) and Dominique Reynié (Sciences Po, CEVIPOF et Fondapol). The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support by Unicredit Foundation and ANR.

Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the unprecedented measures taken by many countries to slow down the spread of the coronavirus caused large economic and psychological costs. This paper uses real time survey data from two waves run at the end of March and in mid-April to provide a snapshot of the actual labour market outcomes in twelve countries. Our study reveals large cross-country differences. At the end of March, when large disparity existed in the diffusion of the pandemic and in the lockdown measures, a large share of employed individuals had stopped working in France (38%) and Italy (47%), but much less in Australia (13%) and the US (10%). Large differences remained in mid-April. Yet, some common patterns emerge. Labour market outcomes varied according to workers' educational attainments and occupation types. College graduates and white collars worked more from home and less from the regular workplace. Instead, low educated workers and blue collars were more likely to remain in the regular work place or to stop working. Similar patterns emerge with respect to the workers' (family) income. This evidence suggests that initial labour market effects of COVID-19 (and of the lockdown measures) may have contributed to increase pre-existing inequalities.

Resumé

L'épidémie de COVID-19 et les mesures sans précédent prises par de nombreux pays pour ralentir la propagation du coronavirus ont entraîné des coûts économiques et psychologiques importants. Ce document de travail utilise les données d'une enquête en temps réel menée en deux vagues fin mars et mi-avril pour fournir un aperçu de la situation sur le marché du travail dans douze pays. Notre étude révèle de grandes différences entre les pays. À la fin du mois de mars, alors qu'on observait des disparités importantes dans la diffusion de la pandémie et dans les mesures de confinement prises par les pays, une grande partie des personnes en emploi avant la crise avaient cessé de travailler en France (38 %) et en Italie (47 %), mais beaucoup moins en Australie (13 %) et aux États-Unis (10 %). De grandes différences subsistaient encore à la mi-avril. Cependant, certaines tendances communes se dégagent. La situation sur le marché du travail varie en fonction du niveau d'éducation des travailleurs et du type de profession. Les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur et les cols blancs ont davantage travaillé à domicile et moins sur leur lieu de travail habituel pendant le confinement. En revanche, les travailleurs à faible niveau d'éducation et les cols bleus étaient plus susceptibles de rester sur leur lieu de travail habituel ou d'avoir cessé de travailler. Des tendances similaires se dégagent en ce qui concerne le revenu (familial) des travailleurs. Ces données suggèrent que les effets initiaux du COVID-19 (et des mesures de confinement) risquent d'avoir augmenté les inégalités pre-existantes.

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Introduction

1. On March 9, with the official count of COVID-19-positive individuals at 7,985 and of deaths by COVID-19 at 463, Italy was the first European country to enter into a comprehensive, nation-wide lockdown. Containment measures were tightened further on March 22, when a Prime Minister's Decree mandated the shutdown of any unessential productive activity, de facto bringing to a halt a large chunk of the Italian economy. Other European countries immediately followed: Austria on March 16, France and Germany on March 17, the UK on March 23.

2. The aim of these unprecedented measures was to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, to limit pressure on the national health system and, of course, to contain the death toll. The exact nature and extent of containment policies varied significantly across countries (OECD, 2020[1]). Non-pharmaceutical interventions included school closures, interruption of non-essential business activities and institutions, limitations to public transports, prohibitions of large meetings, quarantine of people entering the country and border closures. Moreover, individuals were suggested (or mandated) to follow health and physical distancing measures, such as, regularly washing hands, coughing in the elbow, stop hugging or greeting, keeping physical distance from the others, staying at home, avoiding crowed places, stop meeting friends. Early studies (Open COVID-19 Data Working Group, 2020[2]) show that these measures were effective in reducing COVID-19 spread in the province of Hubei in China. However, these restrictive measures also cause economic and psychological harms for the restrained individuals (Brooks et al., 2020[3]) and have economic consequences – see Baldwin and di Mauro (2020[4]) for a review – which remain largely uncertain at the time of writing.

3. Faced with unprecedented uncertainty, the OECD Economic Outlook (OECD, 2020[5]) has taken the unusual step of presenting two equally likely scenarios for the outlook ahead – one in which the virus is brought under control, and one in which a second global outbreak hits before the end of 2020. If a second wave of infections is avoided, global economic activity is expected to fall by 6% in 2020 and OECD unemployment to climb to 9.2% from 5.4% in 2019. If a second outbreak occurs triggering a return to lockdowns, world economic output is forecast to plummet 7.6% this year, before climbing back 2.8% in 2021. At its peak, unemployment in the OECD economies would be more than double the rate prior to the outbreaks, with little recovery in jobs next year.

4. This paper uses real-time survey data from two waves launched at the end of March and in mid-April to provide a snapshot of the actual labour market outcomes in twelve countries, after that many restraining measures were implemented. The main aim is to analyse the short-term effects on the labour market of the different physical distancing measures adopted in these countries. Survey data from the project REPEAT (REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19) allow a comparison of these labour market responses, which may differ across countries, since countries were at different stages of the epidemic and thus featured different public health measures at the time of the survey. In most countries, the first wave of the survey was launched between few days (Austria, UK) and three weeks (Italy) after the (state-specific, in the case of the United States) beginning of lockdown – with the exception of Germany, where the lockdown was implemented immediately after the survey date. The second wave typically came three to six weeks into the lockdown. Hence, data from the first wave capture the effect of the initial shock, while those from the second wave account for some small adjustments made by both individuals

and firms after the lockdown. Our analysis uses mostly second wave data and concentrates on three labour market outcomes for those individuals, who were employed at the beginning of the year. Our surveys have information on whether these individuals continued to work in their regular workplace, whether they were working from home or whether they stopped working (at least temporarily) – thereby remaining idle.

5. To study the differential effect of COVID-19 – and of the lockdown measures – on these labour market outcomes, we break down the analysis according to different workers' characteristics, such as educational attainments, family income group, occupational type, employment status, age, gender, geographical location.

6. Since the early lockdown measures, there has been a large debate on the economic effects on the labour market of physical distancing measures (Koren and Peto, 2020[6]; Barrot, Grassi and Sauvagnat, 2020[7]) and mandatory lockdowns (Brouard, 2020[8]). Some studies have tried to provide an estimate of the jobs can be done with limited risk of contracting COVID-19 (Basso et al., 2020[9]) or that can be performed directly from home – see, among many, Dingel and Neiman (2020[10]). Others have focused on the surge in unemployment (Coibion, Gorodnichenko and Weber, 2020[11]). Some authors suggested a possible trade-off between public health and economic motives (Glover et al., 2020[12]): lock-down measures reduce contagion and deaths (with important social and economic benefits), but at the risk of a complete shutdown of the economy – with important effects on economic growth. To limit this risk, policy recommendations have been made to allow for a transition back to normal (or almost) while preserving the most vulnerable, such as the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions (Ichino et al., 2020[13]). These policies may have an important role to play, given for instance the gender differences in complying with public health rules (Galasso et al., 2020[14]). Other studies considered the distribution effects and argued that COVID-19 will likely increase income inequality, due to a stronger negative effect on more vulnerable categories of individuals, such as young (Bell et al., 2020[15]), women (Alon et al., 2020[16]), low educated (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020[17]), gig economy workers (Stabile, Apouey and Solal, 2020[18]).

7. Our study reveals large cross-country differences in the effect of COVID on labour market outcomes. At the end of March, a large share of employed individuals had stopped working in France (38%) and Italy (47%), but much less in Australia (13%) and the US (10%). While these disparities can be explained by the different timing of the diffusion of the pandemic and of the lockdown measures, large differences remained in mid-April, when the spread of the coronavirus had reached most countries, but different public policy measures were implemented.

8. In spite of these differences, some common patterns emerge in all countries. Everywhere, labour market outcomes varied according to workers' educational attainments and occupation types. College graduates' and white collars' response to the pandemic was overwhelmingly to work more from home and less from the regular workplace. This did not happen for low educated workers and blue collars, who were instead more likely to remain in the regular work place or to stop working. Similar patterns emerge with respect to the workers' (family) income, with individuals in the top quartile of the (family) income distribution being more likely to work from home, while those in the bottom quartile are more likely to stop working. This evidence suggests that initial labour market effects of COVID (and of the lockdown measures) was to increase inequality.

9. The paper proceeds as follow. In the next section, we describe the survey and the data used in the analysis. We then present the overall picture that emerges from our data. Finally, for each country, we provide a country fiche with more detailed results.

1. Real-time Survey Data

10. We use data from a real-time survey administered in several countries in March 2020 as part of the REPEAT project "REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19" (Brouard S. et al., 2020[19]), which collects information on perceptions and individual behaviour related to COVID-19 and the associated public health measures. Here, we consider the information on the current labour market status of the respondents and on their life satisfaction.

11. The first wave of the survey was administered in seven countries (Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, UK and US) by IPSOS and CSA between March 20 and March 30, for a total of 9,624 observations. As shown in Table 2.1, at the time of the survey, all these countries, but Germany, had already implemented lockdowns either nationally or in some regions. The second wave was administered in twelve countries (Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Sweden, UK and US) by IPSOS and CSA in mid-April (April 15-20, except for Brazil and Poland where it was launched in April 30-May 2), for a total of 15,045 observations. The survey was performed online (CAWI method) and reweighted in order for each country sample to be representative of the domestic population with respect to gender, age, occupation geographical location and political orientation.

12. In both waves, respondents were asked about their current labour market situation. In particular, in this paper, we exploit answers to the following question: "Currently, are you still working?" Respondents have the following options: (1) "Yes, I am still working outside of my home (in a company, factory or a vehicle, etc.)"; (2) "Yes, I am working from home"; (3) "No, I stopped working" or (4) "Not concerned/I don't work habitually". We restrict our analysis to the employed individuals – thereby disregarding those, who answered (4). We construct three relevant categories: individuals working in the usual workplace, individuals working from home and individuals, who stopped working and are idle. It is worth noticing that this last category does not necessary coincides with individuals being unemployed. In fact, in many countries, individuals were not laid-off, but rather asked to stay at home and to use different available arrangements, such unused maternal leaves and extraordinary redundancy fund.

13. In both waves of the survey, we obtain socio-economic and demographic information on the respondents. In particular, we have individual information on gender, age, education, family monthly income groups, geographical location (according to the city density), employment status (full time or part time worker, self-employed, unemployed or out of the labour force), type of occupation (blue collar, service worker, white collar, no occupation).[1] Moreover, we use a life satisfaction question whose possible answers are: (i) dissatisfied; (ii) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and (iii) satisfied.

[1] The questionnaires were designed to ensure cross-country comparability. However, small differences exist. No data are available on service workers in Australia, Brazil, New Zealand and the US, on self-employed in Australia, on the type of occupation in Canada and on city density in Canada and the US. Family income groups' data are at annual level in Australia, Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

2. The Overall Picture

14. The REPEAT project allows comparing labour market outcomes in the early phase of the COVID-19 crisis across several advanced economies. Table 2.2 reports this comparison at the end of March (wave 1). Large differences emerge. In some countries, such as Italy and France, a large share of employed individuals stopped working, but much less in others, such as Australia and the United States. Clearly, part of this difference is due to the different timing and magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic and to the different degree of implementation of the restrictive measures. Table 2.1 provides information on the lockdown date and on the number of deaths at the date of the lockdown for each countries. At the end of March, a large share of workers – from one (in Germany) to two workers (in the United States) out of four – moved to working from home. Few workers remained in the regular workplace in Italy (18%) or in the United Kingdom (22%), but many more in Germany (53%).

15. Some adjustments in the labour market have occurred in the three weeks between the first and the second wave. Those countries – namely France and Italy, which were hit early and hard by the COVID-19, were able to reduce substantially the share of idle workers, by increasing the share of workers in the regular workplace (France) or both from home and in the regular workplace (Italy). The snapshot at the labour market in mid-April, reported in Table 2.3, shows still large heterogeneity across the twelve countries. The share of idle workers is small in Sweden, Australia and the United States (around 11%), but much larger in Canada and Italy (34%). Only 18% of the workers is still in the original workplace in New Zealand opposed to 61% in Sweden. Finally, 60% of the individuals work from home in New Zealand, but only 28-29% in Sweden, Canada and Poland.

16. To study the differential effect of COVID-19 – and of the lockdown measures – on these labour market outcomes, for each country, we analyse different categories of workers. More specifically, we look at how the labour market status (working in the regular workplace, working from home and stop working) of a given worker varies according to the following eight dimensions: educational attainment (no high school, high school and college); family income (in quartiles in the income distribution); occupation (blue collars, white collars and service workers, corresponding respectively to 6-9, 1-2 and 3-5 in the 1-digit ISCO classification); employment status (full-time, part-time and self-employed); age (young 18-34, prime time 35-49, fifties 50-59, senior 60+); gender; geographical location (low, middle and high density areas) and life satisfaction. These calculations are reported in the country fiches (Section 3.

17. Despite the large cross-country differences shown in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2, strong common patterns emerge in the analysis of the effect of COVID-19, and the related lockdown measures, on the different categories of workers.

18. Large differences emerge in labour market outcomes depending on the educational attainments of the workers (see Figure 1 in the country fiches). In every country, college graduates work from home more than workers with no high school or with high school diploma only. Compared to lower educated workers, college graduates work less from the regular workplace and – in most, but not all countries in our sample – are less likely to remain idle. Cross-country comparisons of the labour market outcomes for workers with high school diploma and with college degree are shown respectively in Figure 2.1 (Panel A and B).

19. An analogous pattern arises according to occupation types (see Figure 3 in the country fiches). White collars work more from home, but less from the regular workplace, than blue collars. In some countries (France, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, UK), this implies that white collars stop working less than blue collars. Service workers (a definition not available in every country) feature similar, but less pronounced labour market outcomes to white collars. Cross-country comparisons of the labour market outcomes for blue collars and white collars are shown respectively in Figure 2.2 (Panel A and B).

20. Some differences emerge also according to the working condition (Figure 4 in the country fiches). In particular, part-time workers are more likely to stop.

21. Clearly, education and occupation types are strongly related – and so is, at least to some extent, family income (see Figure 2 in the country fiches). In fact, in all countries (but Poland and Sweden), workers in the highest quartile of the income distribution work more from home than the others (particularly than the low-income workers). No major differences emerge in working from the regular workplace. Hence, in half of the countries in the sample (Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand and the UK), high-income workers are less likely to be idle. On the contrary, individuals in the lowest quintile of the income distribution tend to work less from home and are more likely to find themselves idle.

22. Gender gaps in labour outcomes emerge in some, but not all, countries (see Figure 6 in the country fiches). Typically, women work more from home than men (the opposite happens in Austria and Sweden), but less in the regular workplace. In many countries, these changes produce only a compositional effect and the share of idle workers is the same across gender. However, in some countries (Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Poland and Sweden) gender differences emerge, as women stop working more than men do.

23. Finally, no systematic difference arises in labour market outcomes across age groups (see Figure 5 in the country fiches) – despite the negative health effect of COVID-19 being stronger on elderly individuals. Analogously, no clear rural-urban differences, as captured by population density (see Figure 7 in the country fiches) emerge.

24. To summarise, some categories of individuals – college graduates, white collars and high-income people, were largely able to continue to work from home – and hence not to remain idle. Instead, blue collars, workers with no high diploma and low-income people were less likely to work from home and often had to stop. These large differences in labour market outcomes have economic consequences and affect the level of life satisfaction. In fact, in almost all countries in the sample, there are more individuals satisfied with their life among those working from home (see Figure 8 in the country fiches).

Table 2.1. Lockdown Information

Country	Lockdown Date	National or Regional Lockdown	Number of Deaths at Lockdown Date
Australia	23/03/2020	National	7
Austria	16/03/2020	National	3
Brazil	17/03/2020	Regional	1
Canada	18/03/2020	National	9
France	17/03/2020	National	175
Germany	23/03/2020	National	123
Italy	9/03/2020	National	463
New Zealand	25/03/2020	National	0
Poland	24/03/2020	National	10
Sweden	//	//	//
United Kingdom	23/03/2020	National	359
United States	19/03/2020	Regional	239

Note: For Brazil, it refers to the State of Santa Caterina. For the United States, it refers to California.

Table 2.2. Labour Market Outcomes (Wave 1)

	Time (survey)	Work from home	Work in the usual workplace	Stopped working
Australia	27-28 March	46	41	13
Austria	24-26 March	38	33	29
France	24-25 March	36	26	38
Germany	20-21 March	24	53	23
Italy	27-30 March	35	18	47
United Kingdom	25-26 March	46	22	32
United States	25-27 March	54	36	10
Average		40	33	27

Note: Figures refer to the percentages of active people in January 1st
Source: Authors' elaboration using the REPEAT (REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19) survey.

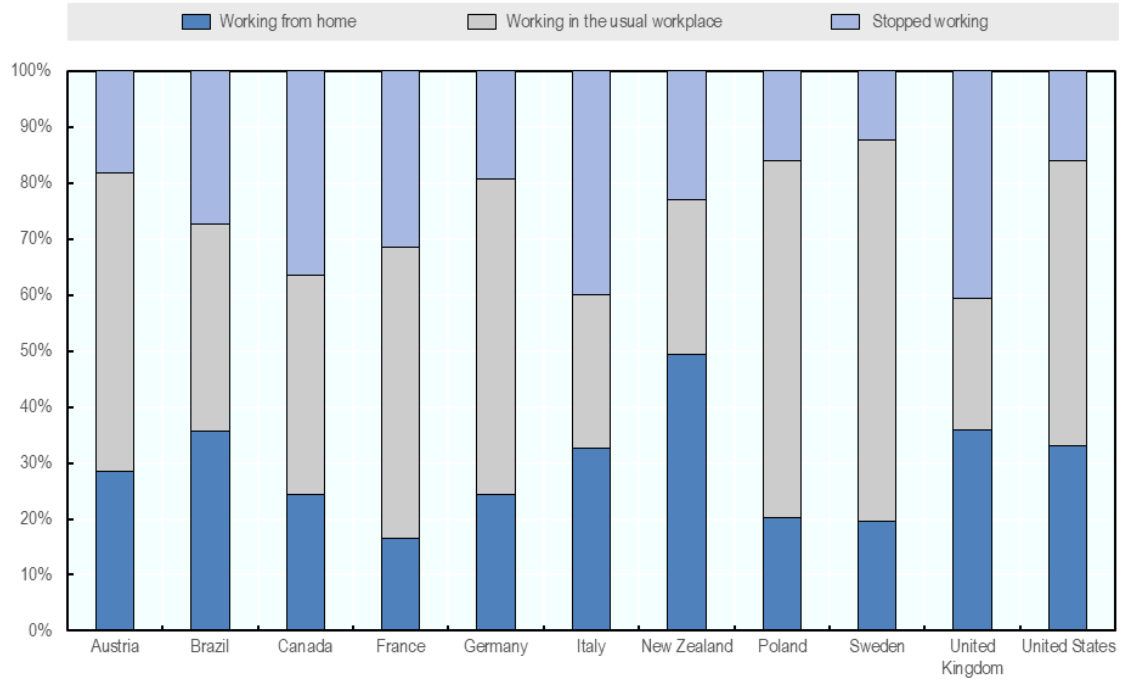
Table 2.3. Labour Market Outcomes (Wave 2)

	Time (survey)	Work from home	Work in the usual workplace	Stopped working
Australia	15-20 April	47	40	13
Austria	15-18 April	36	47	17
Brazil	30 April / 2 May	42	36	22
Canada	14-17 April	29	37	34
France	15-16 April	33	41	26
Germany	16-18 April	31	49	20
Italy	15-17 April	41	25	34
New-Zealand	15-18 April	60	18	22
Poland	30 April / 2 May	29	56	15
Sweden	16-17 April	28	61	11
United Kingdom	15-17 April	49	20	31
United States	16-18 April	50	37	13
Average		39.5	39	21.5

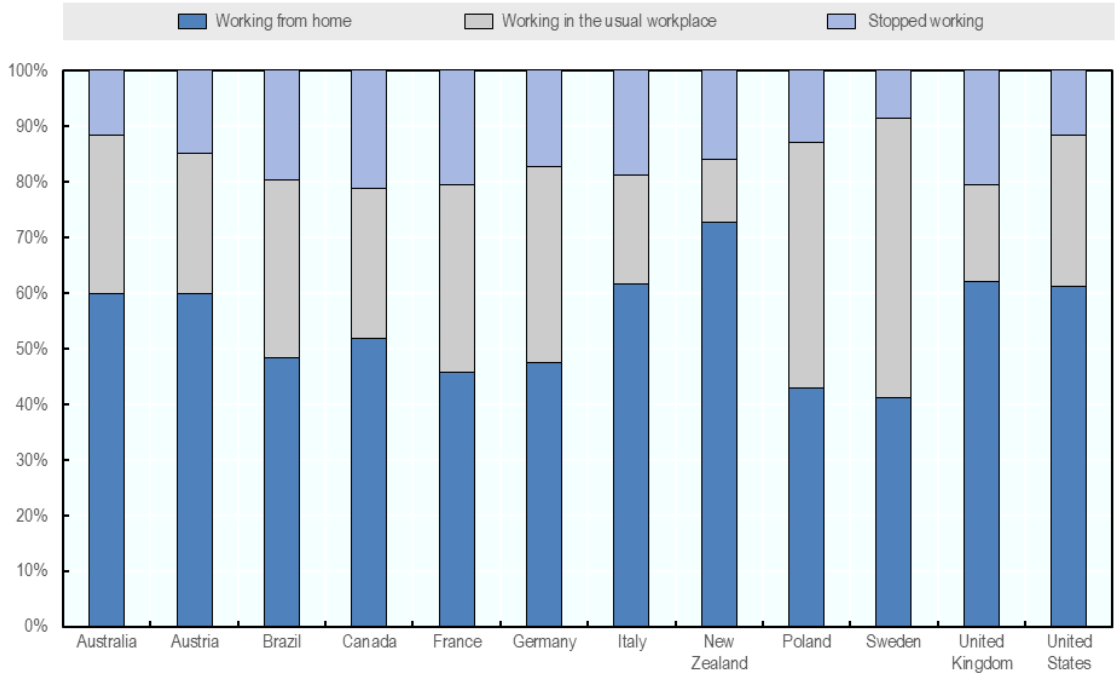
Note: Figures refer to the percentages of active people in January 1st
Source: Authors' elaboration using the REPEAT (REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19) survey.

Figure 2.1. Cross-country comparisons of the labour market outcomes for workers with high school diploma and with college degree

Panel A: Employment Status for Workers with High School Diploma



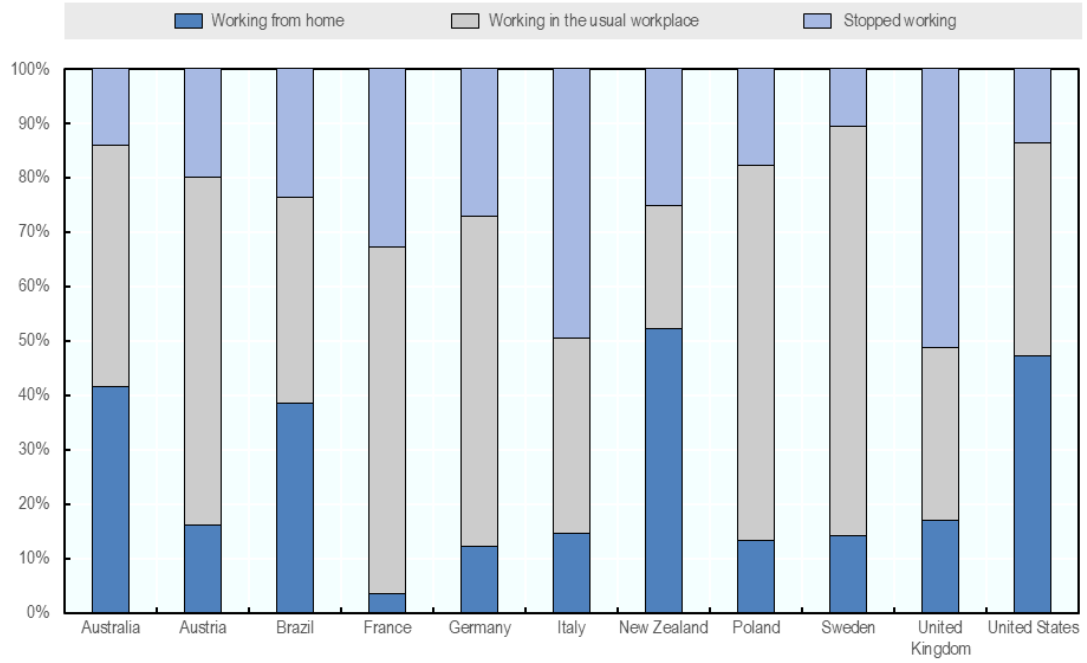
Panel B: Employment Status for Workers with College Diploma



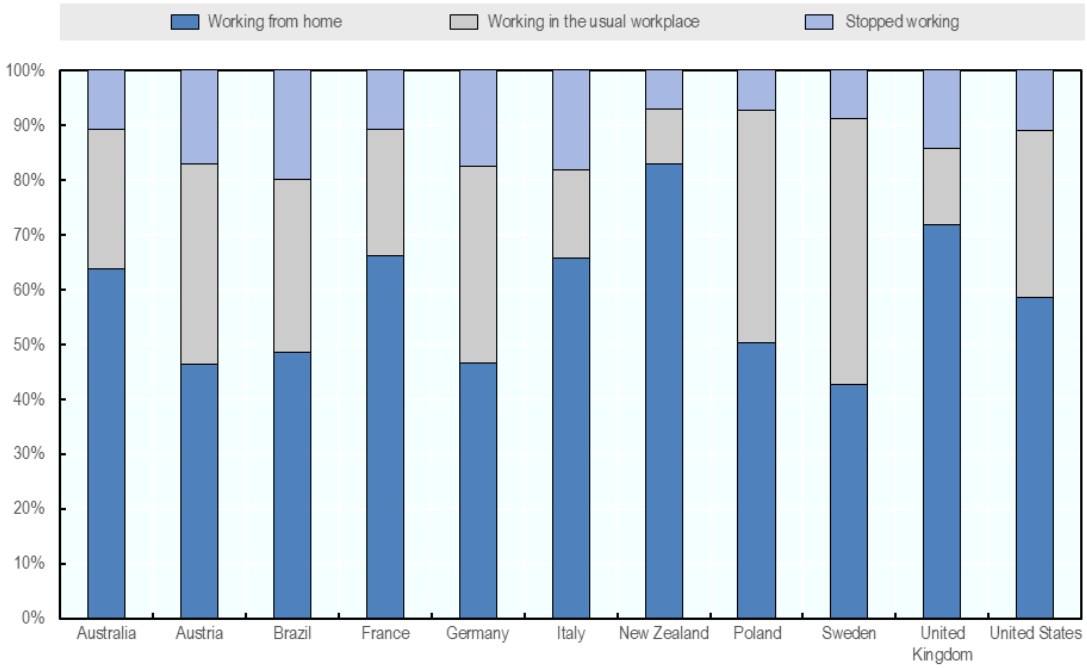
Source: Authors' elaboration using the REPEAT (REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19) survey.

Figure 2.2. Cross-country comparisons of the labour market outcomes for blue collars and white collars.

Panel A: Employment status for blue-collar workers



Panel A: Employment status for white-collar workers



Source: Authors' elaboration using the REPEAT (REpresentations, PErceptions and ATtitudes on the COVID-19) survey.

3. Country fiches

AUSTRALIA

25. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 15-20, 2020. Sample size: 1,007 respondents]

26. Australia imposed physical distancing rules on 21 March at a federal level, while the different States started to impose some stricter rules, which also included the shutdown of non-essential services. These measures notwithstanding, there was not a proper lockdown. At the time of the survey, the country had been under these rules for almost a month.

27. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 indicate that, during both waves, the majority of people was either working from home (47%) or from the usual workplace (40%); only the 13% stopped working.

28. Figure 1 shows a clear distinction between people holding a college degree (59% were working from home) and people with a lower level of education as they were more likely to work from their usual workplace. High-income individuals are more likely to work from home (Figure 2). Figures 3 and 4 indicate that white collars and full-time workers were working from home more than respectively blue collars and part-time workers, with a difference of around 20% in both cases. Figure 4 shows also that part-time workers were more likely to stop working than full-time workers. Figure 5 indicates that young workers work from home more than workers aged 50+. Workers in their fifties represent the greatest share of those working from their usual workplace. No large gender emerges in stop working: 15% of women were idle against 12% among men.

29. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working from home more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who stopped working, more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

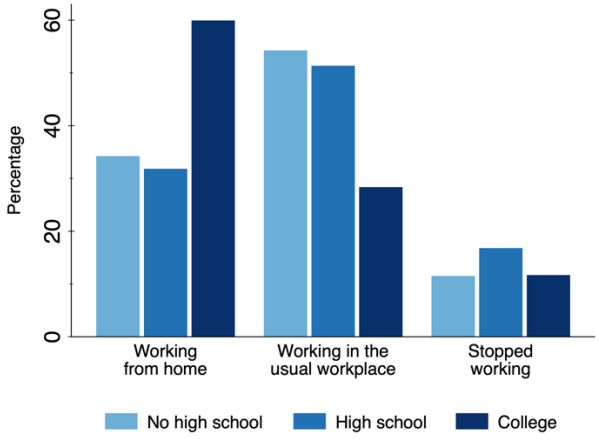


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

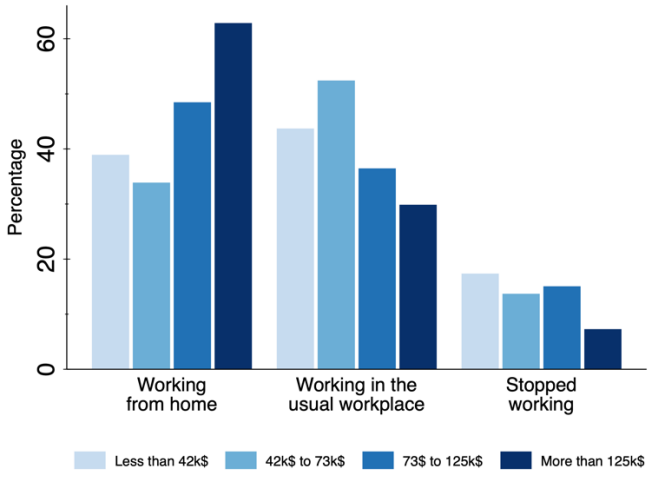


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

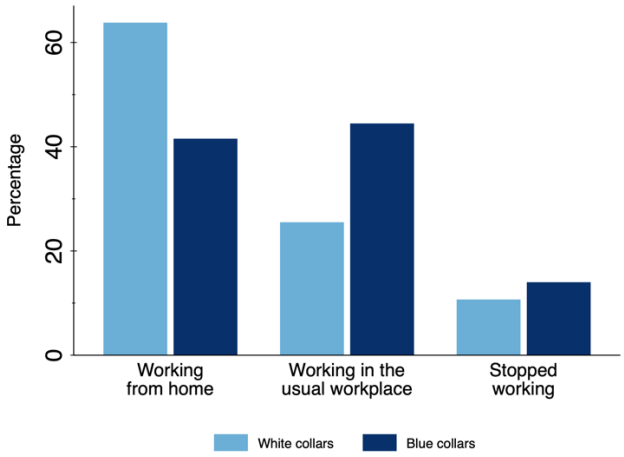


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

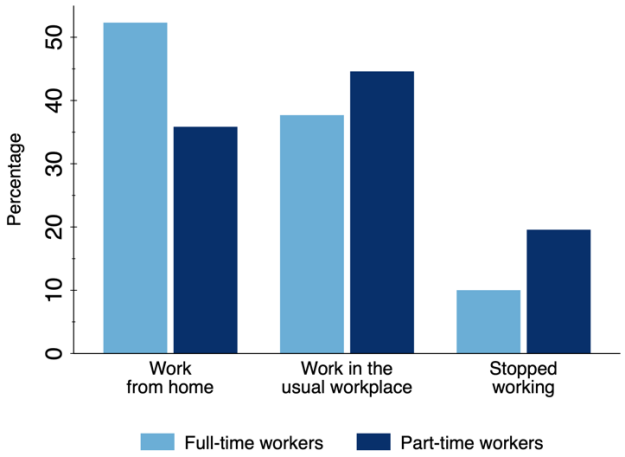


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

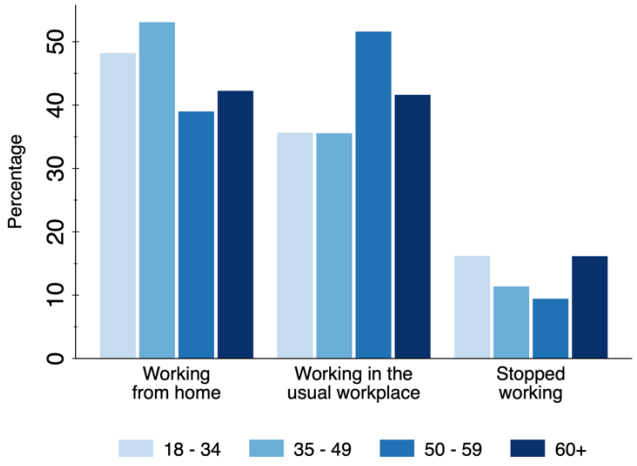


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

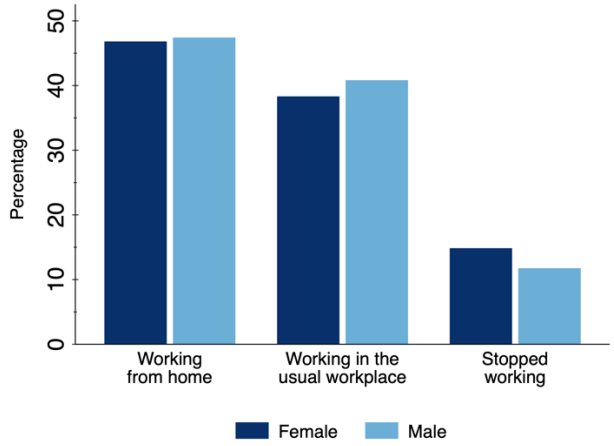


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

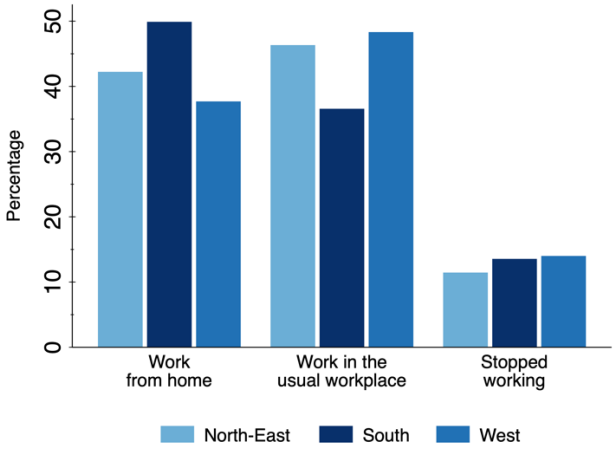
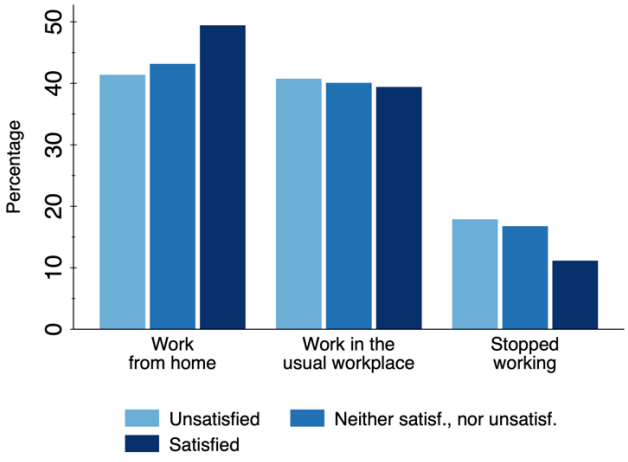


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



AUSTRIA

30. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 15-18 2020. Sample Size: 1,000 respondents]

31. The COVID-19 pandemic reached Austria at the end of February. Between March 10 and March 15, universities and schools were closed and public events gathering many people cancelled. On March 16, the federal government imposed a national lockdown. On April 14, wearing facemasks in public places became mandatory and the government allowed some stores to reopen.

32. The first wave of the survey was administered on 24-26 March, during the lockdown, and the second wave on 15-18 April, when the lockdown had just been lifted for some activities. The overall share of respondents working from home remain similar (around 36%) between waves, while the share of people working in their usual workplace increased from 33% to 47% and the share of those who had stopped working dropped from 29% to 17%.

33. Figure 1 shows a large difference in working conditions according to education: 60% of college graduates were working from home, 25% in their usual workplace and 15% had stopped. Among non-college graduates, 28% were working from home, 53% from their usual workplace and 18% were idle.

34. Figure 3 shows that similar shares of white collars and service workers working from home and in their usual workplace. On the other hand, only 16% of blue collars reported working from home, while 64% were working in their usual workplace. The shares of white collars, blue collars and service workers reporting that they stopped working was around 17-18%. Self-employed were more likely that full-employed workers to work from home and less from the usual workplace (see Figure 4).

35. Figure 5 shows that young workers were more likely than old workers to be working in their usual workplace, while older workers were more likely to work from home. Figure 6 displays a substantial gender gap: women were more likely than men to have stopped working: 22% versus 13%. Figure 7 shows that workers living in urban areas were more likely to be working from home and less in the usual workplace than workers in rural areas.

36. Surprisingly, if compared with other countries, answers to a question on life satisfaction, displayed in Figure 8, suggest that among the individuals working from home more people expressed low life satisfaction, while among those who work in the regular workplace more persons were satisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

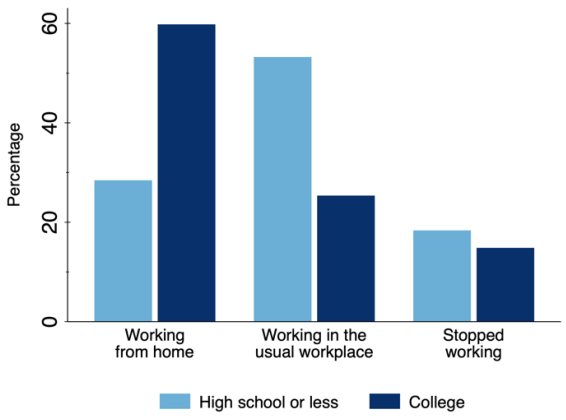


Fig. 2. Current working status by income

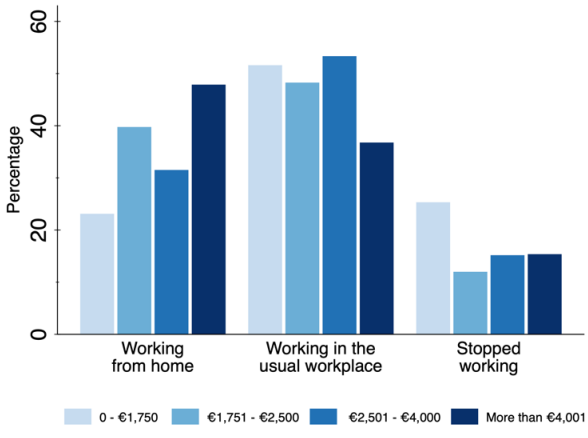


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

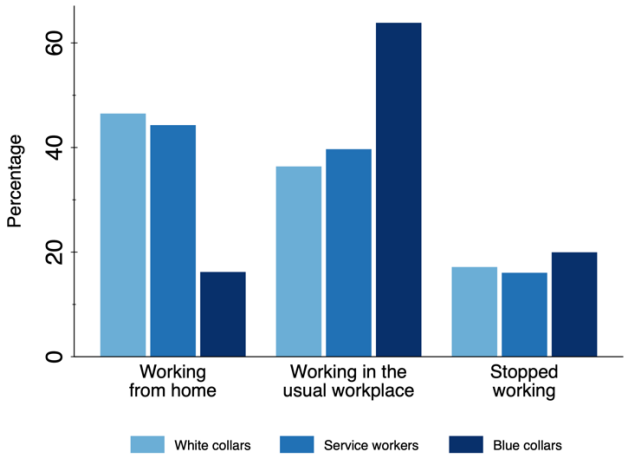


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

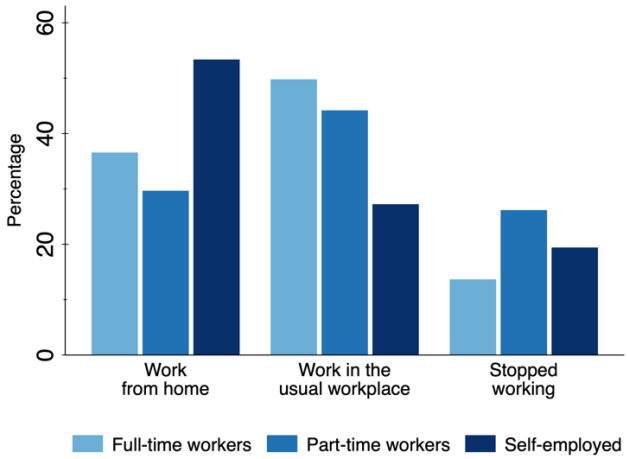


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

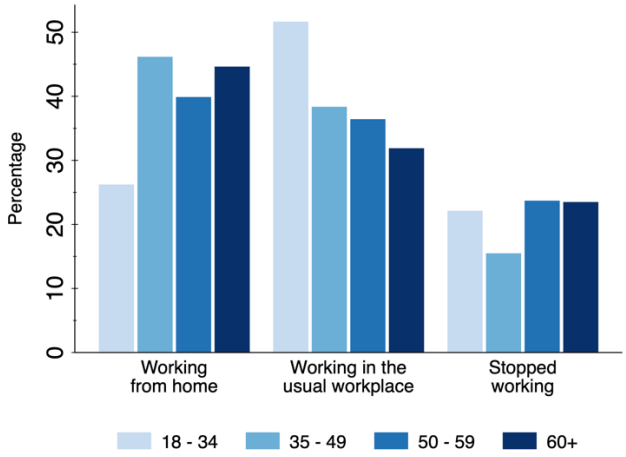


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

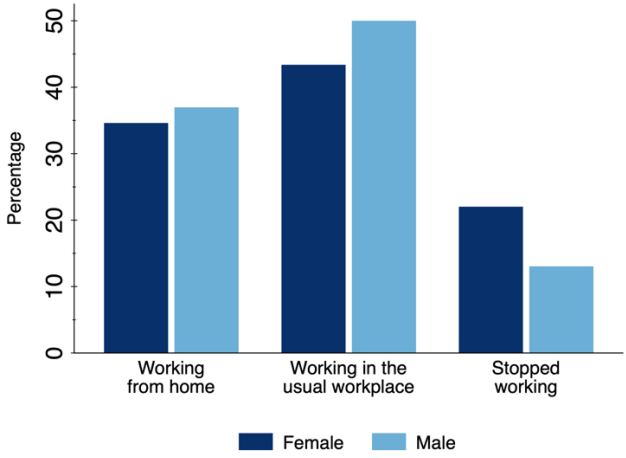


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

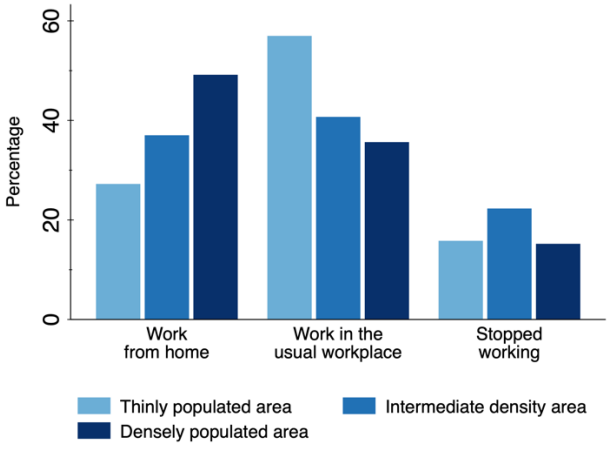
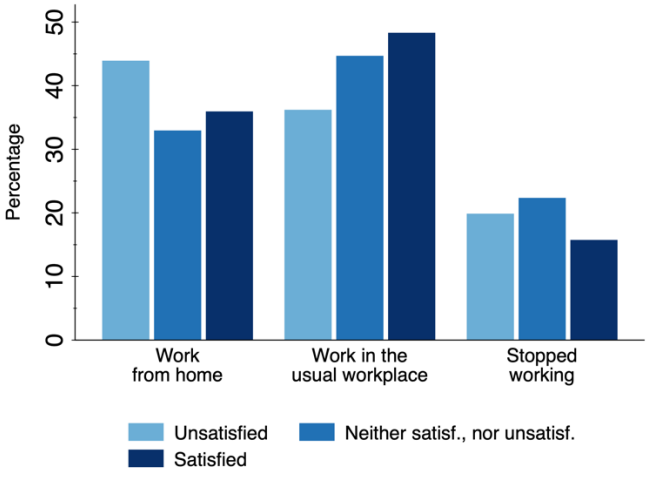


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



BRAZIL

37. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 30-May 2, 2020. Sample Size: 1,000 respondents.]

38. Brazil did not adopt a nation-wide lockdown, although from March 17 many State governors imposed some restrictive measures. On March 18, several municipalities including Rio de Janeiro declared a State of emergency and on March 24 the State of São Paulo imposed a lockdown lasting until April 22. At the time of the survey, many Brazilian states had therefore been in lockdown for roughly 40 days, although some measures, in the meantime, had been eased.

39. As shown in Table 2.1, 42% of people in our sample were working from home, 36% in their usual workplace and 22% stopped.

40. Figure 1 shows that 64% of people in our sample with no high school diploma were still working in their usual workplace, compared to 32% among college graduates. Figure 2 indicates that people with higher income were more likely to work from home and less likely to stop than lower income people. White collars were also more likely to work from home, less from their usual workplace and also less likely to be idle (see Figure 3). Figure 4 shows that self-employed were more likely to work from home, less from the workplace and more likely to stop than full-time workers were.

41. More than 70% of the elderly people (aged 60+) were working from home – this is more than 30% higher than in other age group. A large gender gap emerges in Figure 6: women were more likely to work from home than men (44% vs 39%), less in the regular workplace (31% vs 41%) and hence more likely to stop working (25% vs 20%). People in the cities work more in the regular work place than from home (Figure 7).

42. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working from home more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who stopped working, more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

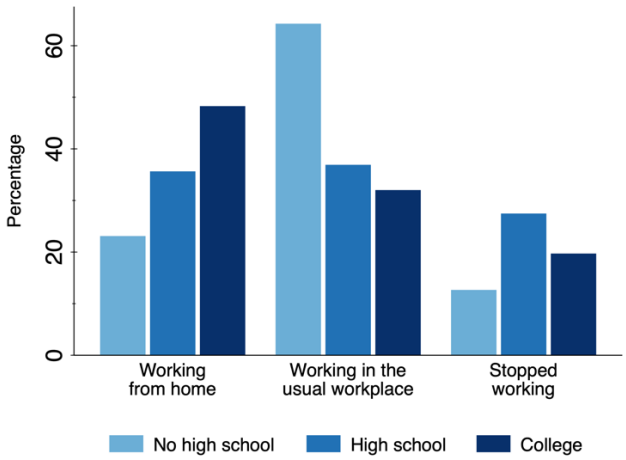


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

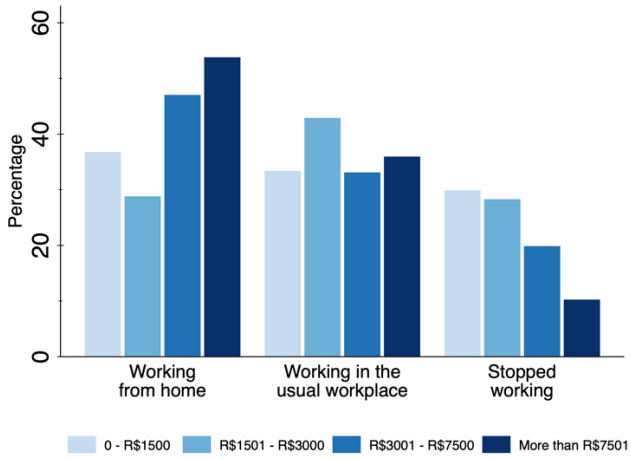


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

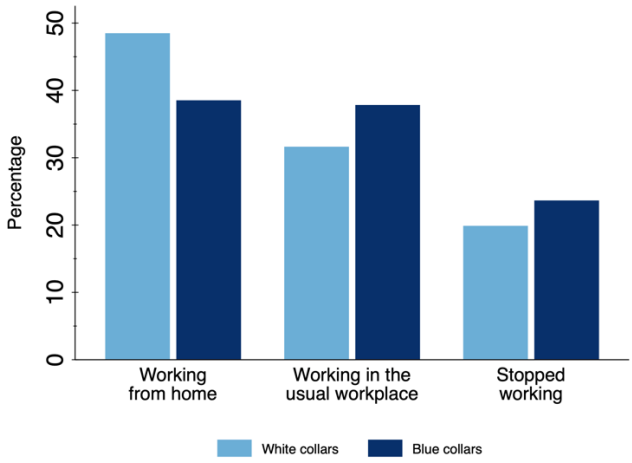


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

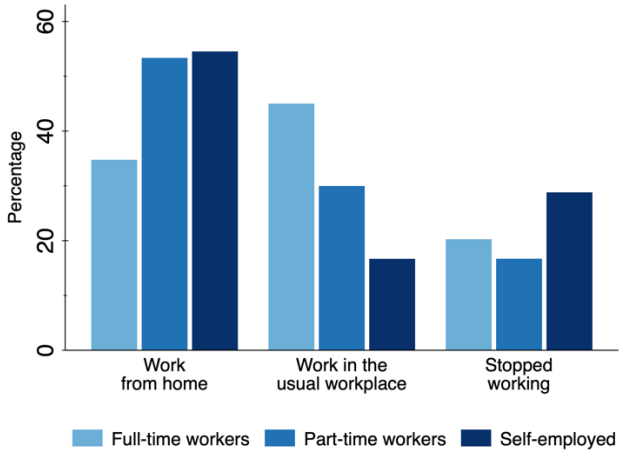


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

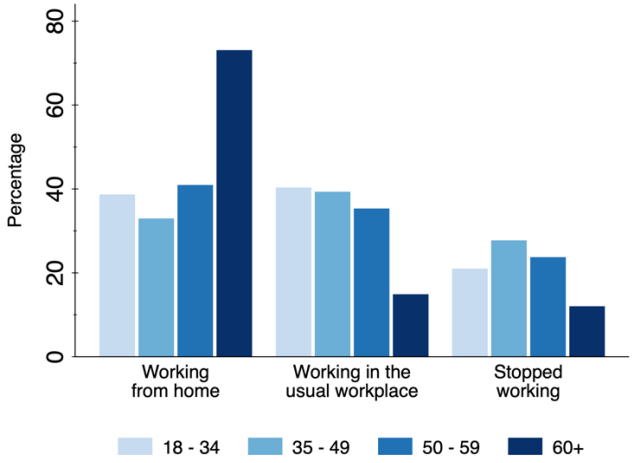


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

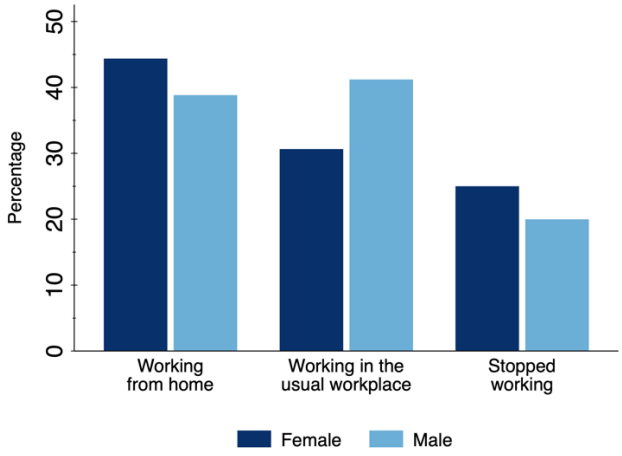


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

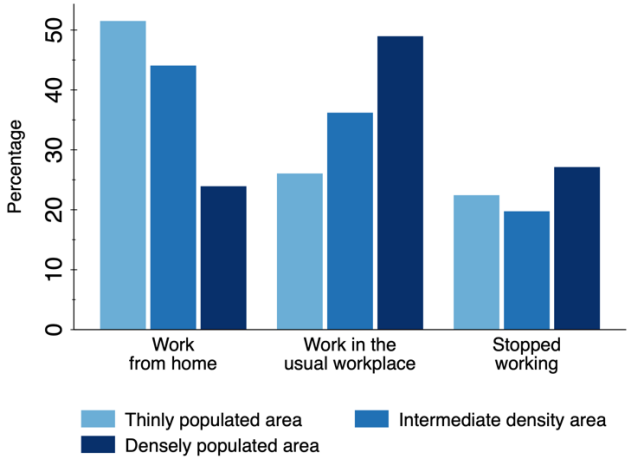
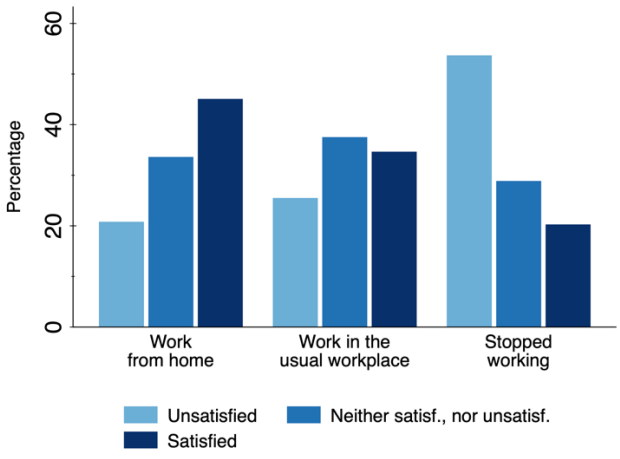


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



CANADA

43. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 14-17, 2020. Sample size: 1,006 respondents.]

44. The COVID-19 pandemic reached Canada at the end of January, but only in mid-March, all provinces and territories closed non-essential activities, schools, universities and the country entered into lockdown.

45. At the time of the survey (one wave only), launched between 14 and 17 April, when the country was into a lockdown. Among the respondents, 37% were working in the usual workplace, 29% from home and 34% were idle.

46. Figure 1 shows that 52% of college graduates were working from home, 27% were working in their usual workplace and 21% stopped working. Instead, among workers with no high school diploma, 45% stopped working, 44% were working in their usual workplace and only 11% from home.

47. A similar picture emerges from Figure 2, which shows the breakdown by income quartiles. Among individuals in the top quartile of the income distribution, 45% were working from home and 21% were idle, whereas almost one of two individuals in the first quartile of the income distribution reported had stopped working, and only 15% were working from home.

48. Self-employed are much less likely than full-employed workers to continue working in the usual workplace and more likely to be idle (Figure 4). Figure 6 displays large gender differences in the labour market. Women tend to work much less in their usual workplace, in comparison to men (29% vs 44%) and are more likely to be idle (40% vs 28%).

49. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working from home more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those, who worked in the usual workplace, more persons were unsatisfied.

50. Figure 3 and 7 are not available for Canada.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

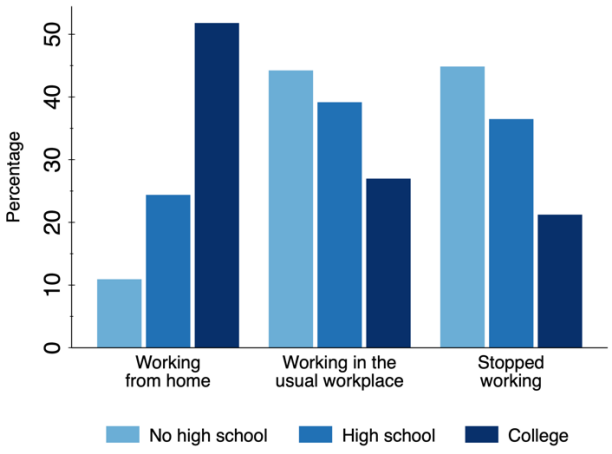


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

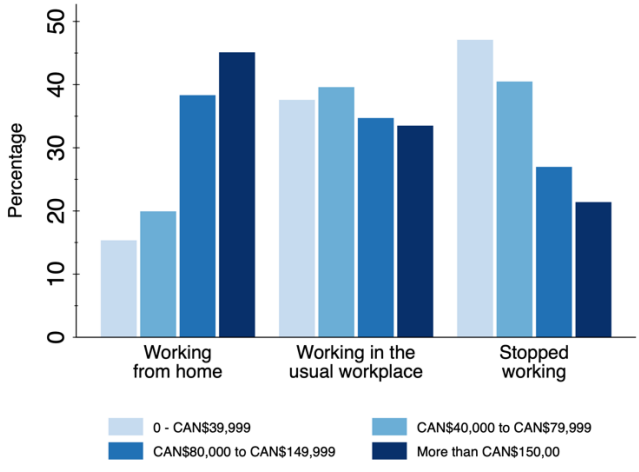


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

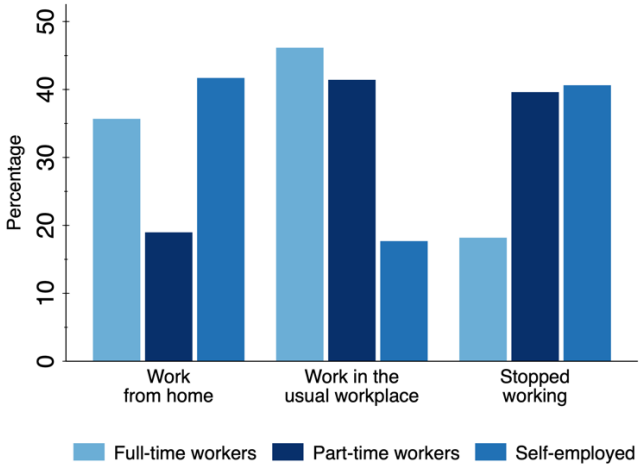


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

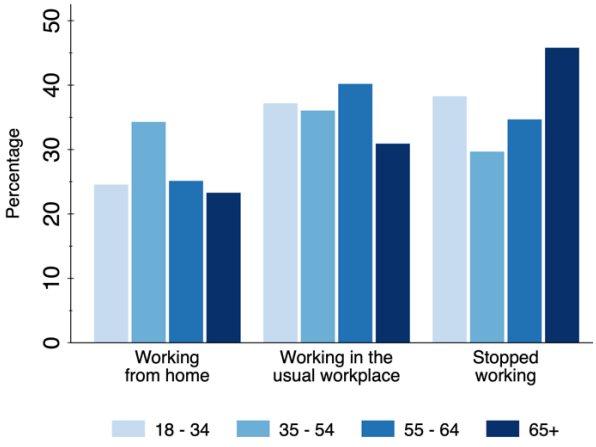


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

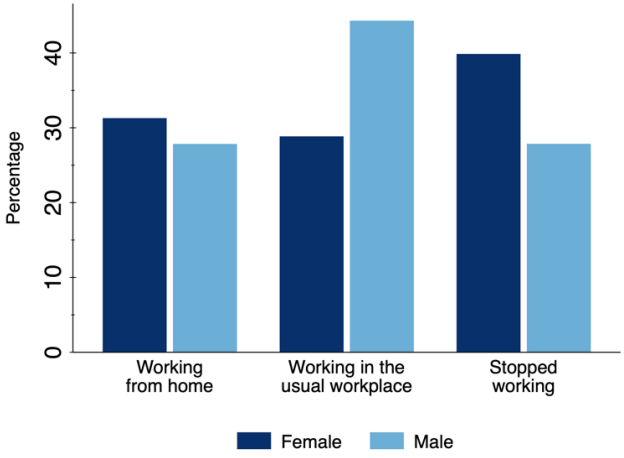
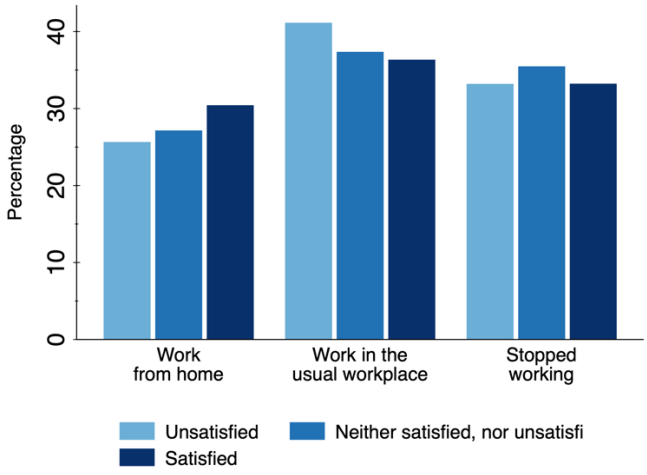


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



FRANCE

51. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 15-16, 2020. Sample Size: 2,020 respondents.]

52. France entered into lockdown on March 17 – a week before the first wave of the survey. At the time, 38% of the respondents had stopped working, 26% remained in the workplace and 36% were working from home. Some adjustments had occurred in the French labour market between the two waves, since in mid-April, 41% of the respondents were working from the usual workplace, 33% from home and 26% remained idle.

53. Figure 1 indicates a large difference in labour market outcome according to education: college graduates were mostly working from home or in the regular workplace and only 21% were idle. Instead, the (few) individuals with no high school diploma mostly stopped working. Among high school diploma workers, one of two was working in the regular workplace, but one of three was idle.

54. High-income individuals were more likely to work from home and less to be idle than low income workers (Figure 2). Similarly, Figure 3 indicates that most white collars (66%) were working from home and only 11% were idle, while blue collars were working from the usual workplace (64%), but one of four had stopped working. Service workers were working both from home and in the workplace, but almost one of four was idle. Self-employed were more likely than full-time workers to work from home, but less in the workplace (Figure 4).

55. Elderly workers (60+) were more likely to have stopped working (38%). No significant gender gap emerges in the idle workers (27% among women and 25% among men), with women more likely to work from home and less from the workplace (Figure 6). Among urban workers, more people work from home and less in the regular workplace.

56. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working – either from home or in the usual workplace – more people expressed high life satisfaction, while, among those who stopped working, more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

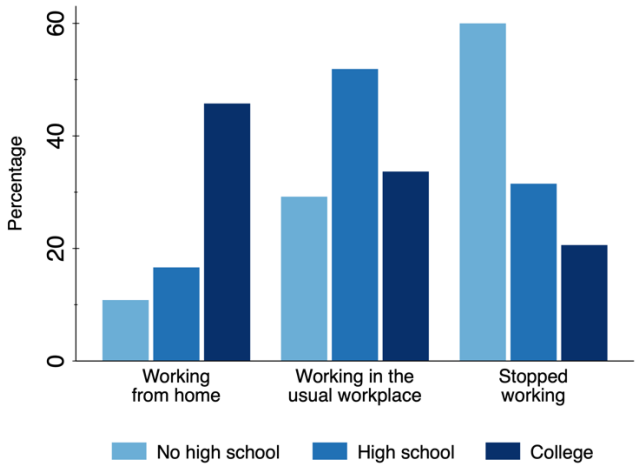


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

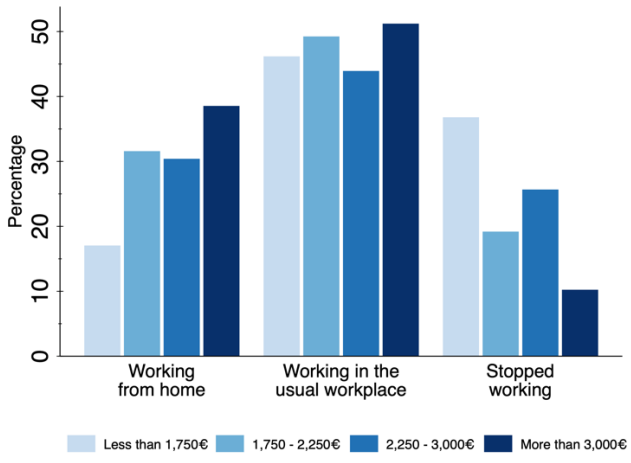


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

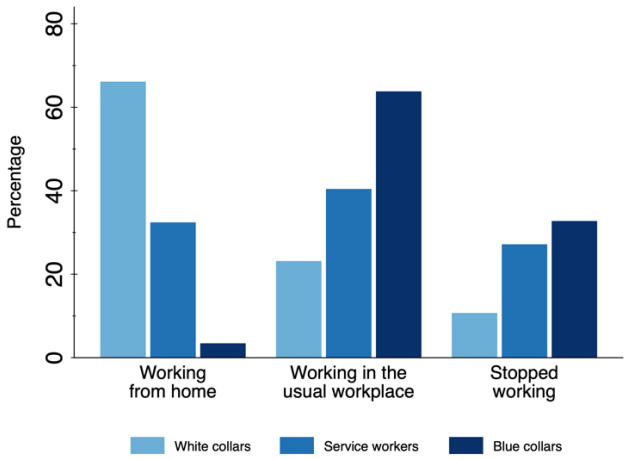


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

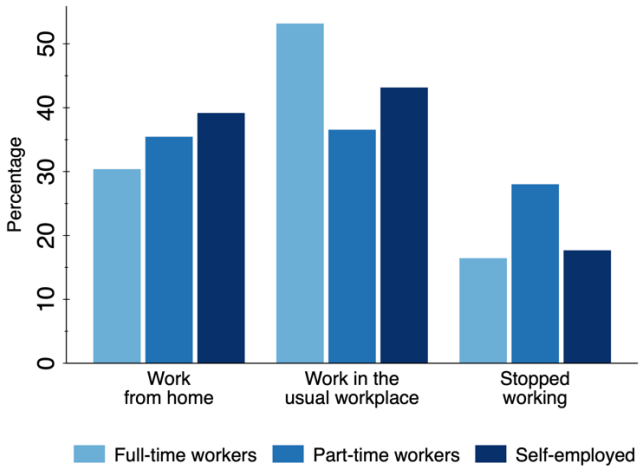


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

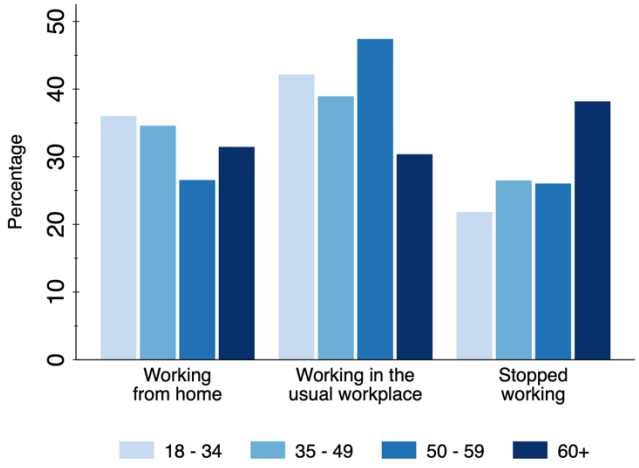


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

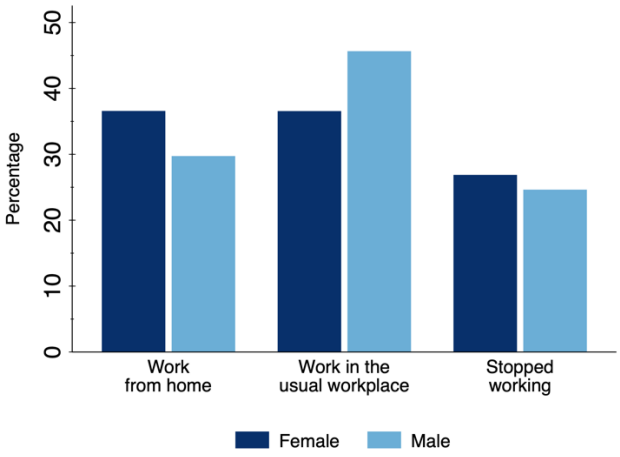


Fig. 7. Current working status by geographical area

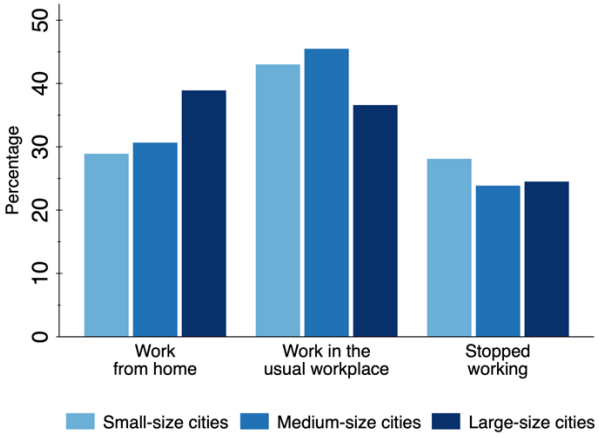
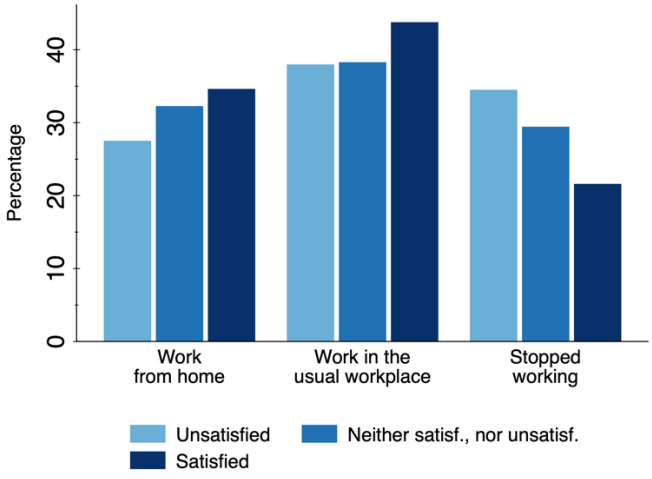


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



GERMANY

57. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 16-18, 2020. Sample Size: 2,000 respondents.]

58. On March 13, Germany closed schools, kindergartens, universities and nursing homes. Most of the country's external borders were closed on March 15. By March 22, all German states decided to impose restrictions to movements in public spaces. The first wave of the survey was conducted on March 20-21, just before the official lockdown, but when most activities were already closed. The second wave was implemented in mid-April.

59. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 show that about one worker out of two continued to work from the usual workplace. Working from home increased from 24% to 31%, while idle workers dropped from 23% to 20%.

60. Figure 1 discloses large difference in labour market outcome according to education: 47% of college graduates were working from home, against only 24% among workers with high school diploma and only 10% of workers with no high school diploma. A large share of non-college graduates was working in the usual workplace, but one of two individuals with no high school diploma had stopped working. Similarly, high-income individuals were more likely to work from home (Figure 2).

61. Figure 3 displays large differences depending on the type of occupation. Blue collars were largely working from the usual workplace or idle. Only 12% of them were working from home. On the opposite, white collars were mostly working from home or from the usual workplace (36%) and service workers mostly from the usual workplace or from home (36%). Figure 4 shows that approximately 70% of self-employed workers were working from home and only very few from the regular workplace. Part-time workers were more likely than full-time workers and the self-employed to be idle.

62. No large differences emerge according to age groups (see Figure 5), although elderly workers (60+) are more likely to stop. Figure 6 shows that women are more likely than men to work from home, but less from the workplace. The percentage of women who stopped working is 21% against 18% for men. Only a small urban-rural cleavage emerges, with individuals in the city working more from home and less from the workplace (Figure 7). Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working in the usual workplace more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who stopped working more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

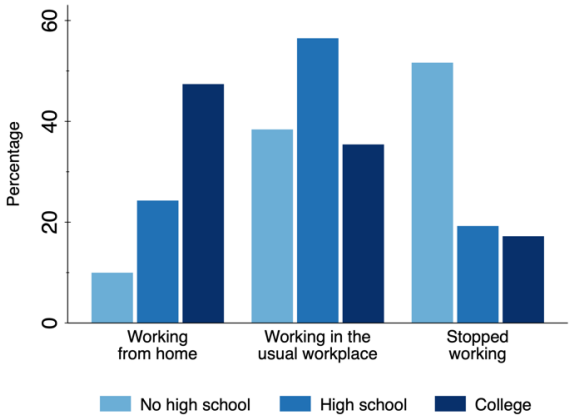


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

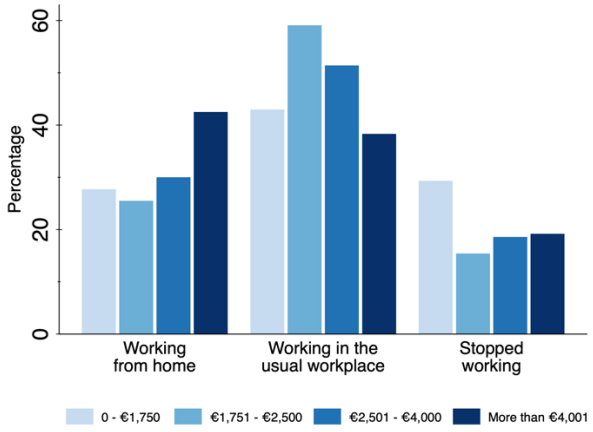


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

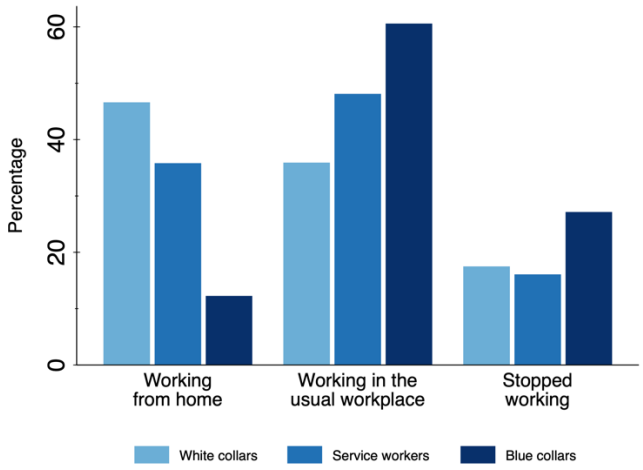


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

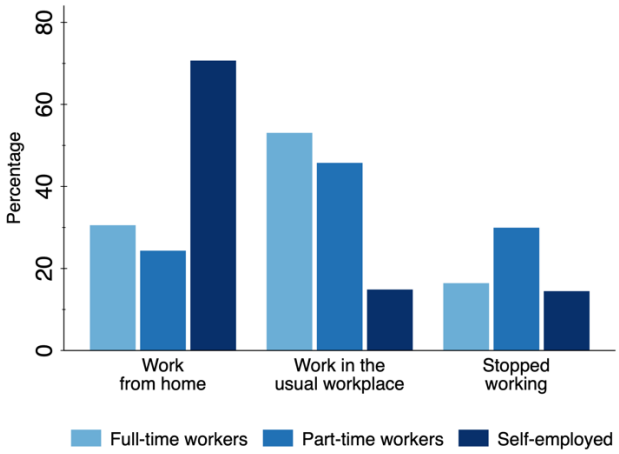


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

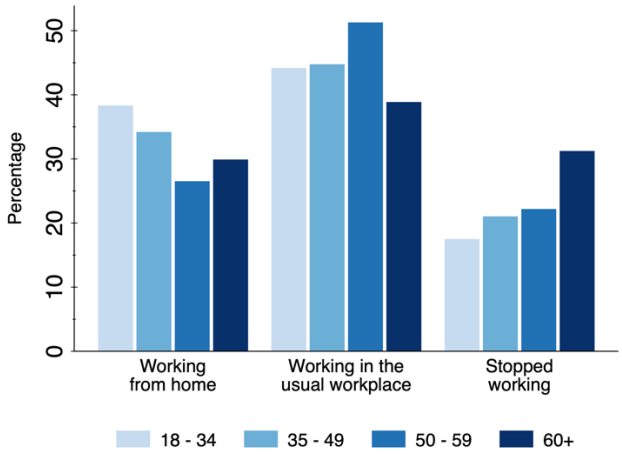


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

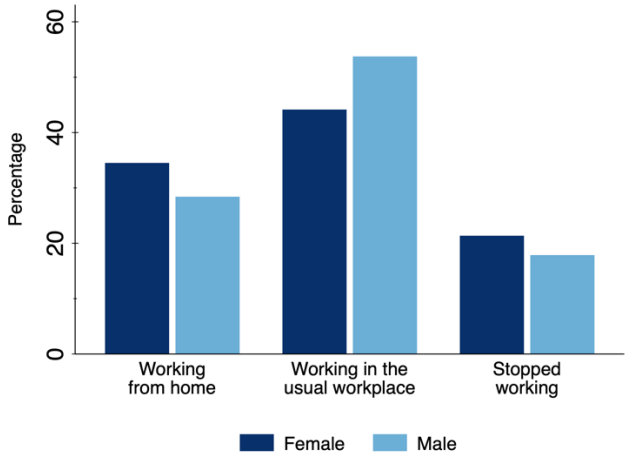


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

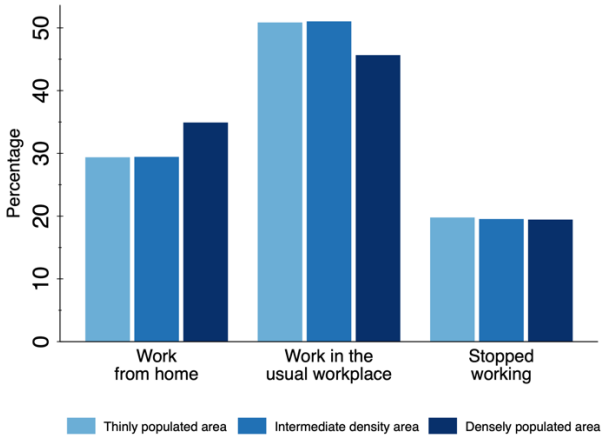
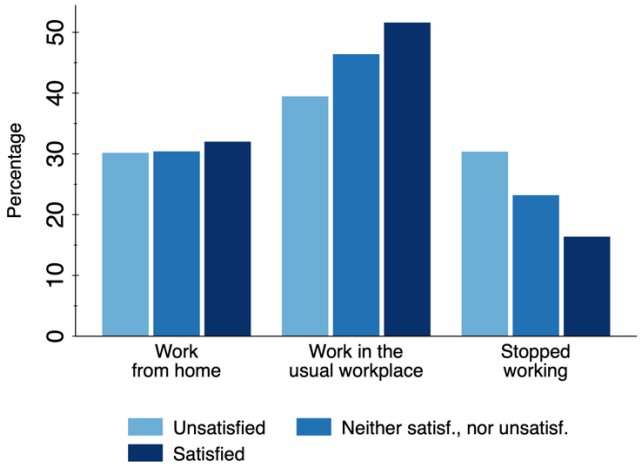


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



ITALY

63. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 15-17, 2020. Sample size: 997 respondents.]

64. Italy has been the third country after China and Korea to be largely hit by COVID-19. On January 31, all flights to and from China were cancelled and a national emergency was declared. In February, eleven municipalities in Lombardy and Veneto were quarantined. On March 9, the lockdown was extended to the entire country. On March 21, the Italian government closed all non-essential economic activities.

65. Hence, both waves (on March 27-30 and on April 15-17) were conducted during the restrictive lockdown. However, in the three weeks between the first and the second wave, large adjustments took place in the labour market. The share of idle workers dropped from 47% to 34%, while the share of individuals working from home increased from 35% to 41% and in the regular workplace from 18% to 25%.

66. Figure 1 displays large differences according to education: 61% of college graduates were working from home, only 19% in the usual workplace and 19% were idle. Among workers with a high school diploma, 33% were working from home, 27% in the usual workplace and 40% had stopped working. The labour market outcome was even gloomier for the (few) respondents with no high school diploma. A similar picture emerges in Figure 2: high earners were more likely to work from home and less likely to be idle than low income individuals.

67. Figure 3 shows large disparities according to occupational status. Around two thirds of white collars worked from home, 16% in their usual workplace and 18% stopped working. Similarly, among service workers, approximately half worked from home, one of five in their usual workplace and one of four stopped. However, among the blue collars, only 15% worked from home, around one third in their usual workplace, but almost half of them had stopped. Part-time workers were more likely to stop (Figure 4).

68. No large differences emerge across age groups, although senior workers (50+) are less likely to be idle (Figure 5). Figure 6 indicates instead a gender gap in labour market outcomes: women are less likely to continue in the regular workplace (22% versus 29%) and more likely to stop (38% vs 30%) than men.

69. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working – either from home or in the regular workplace – more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who stopped working more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

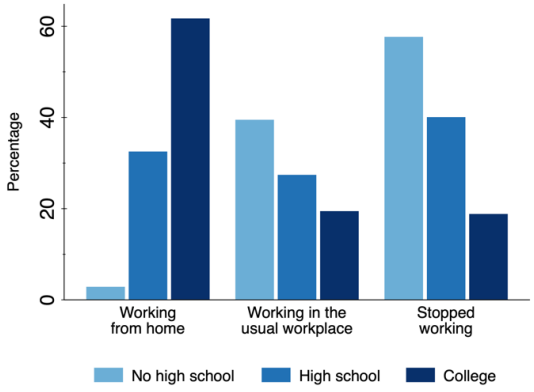


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

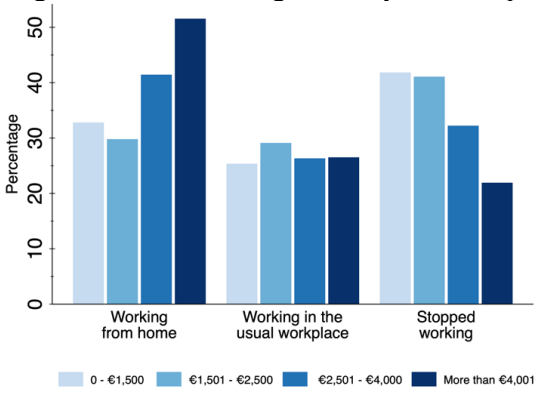


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

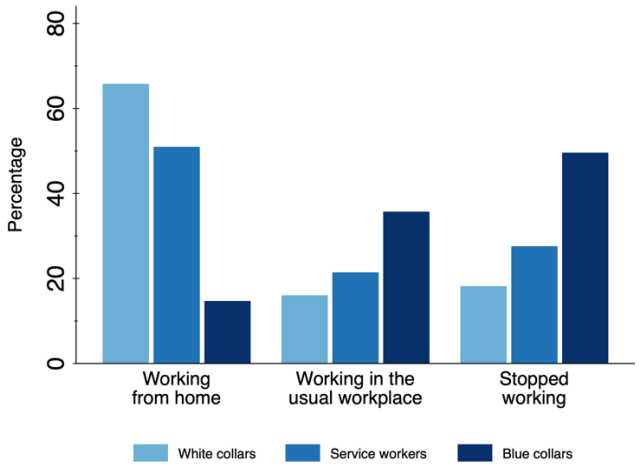


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

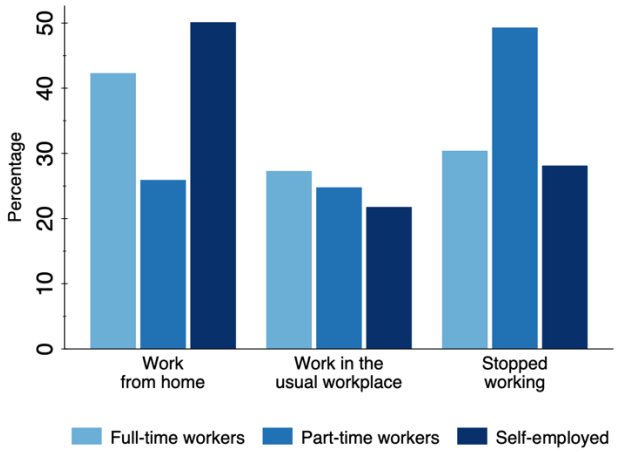


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

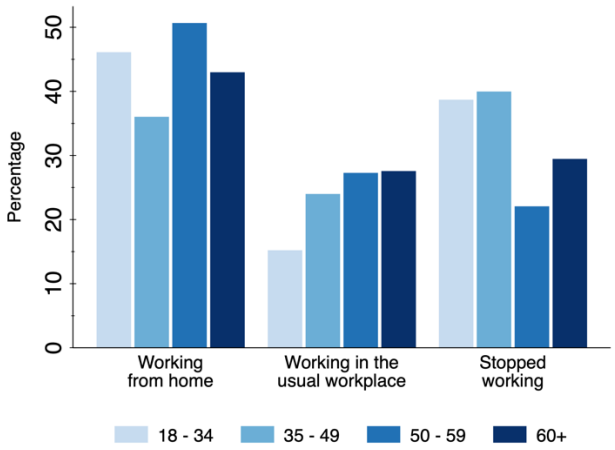


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

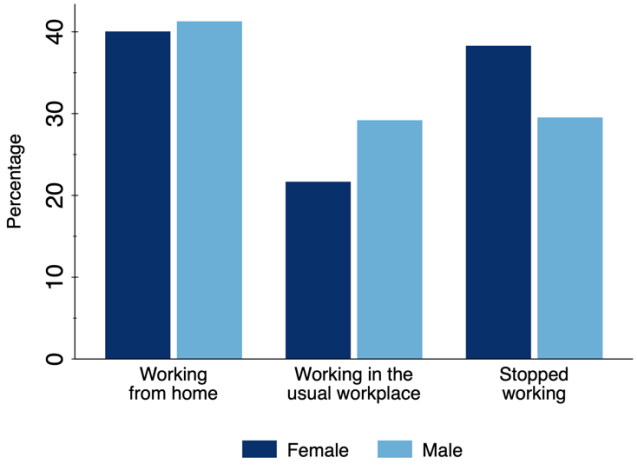


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

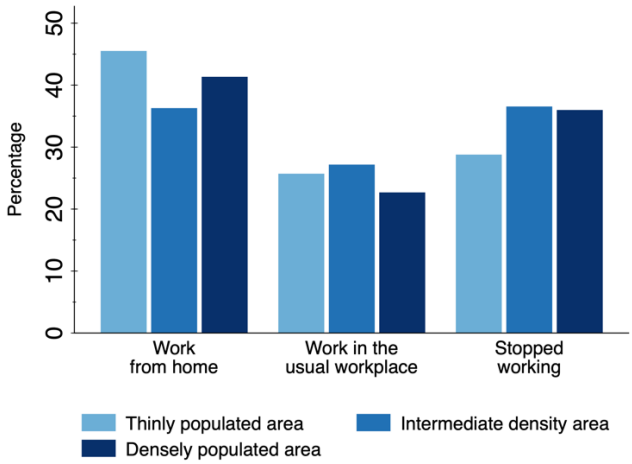
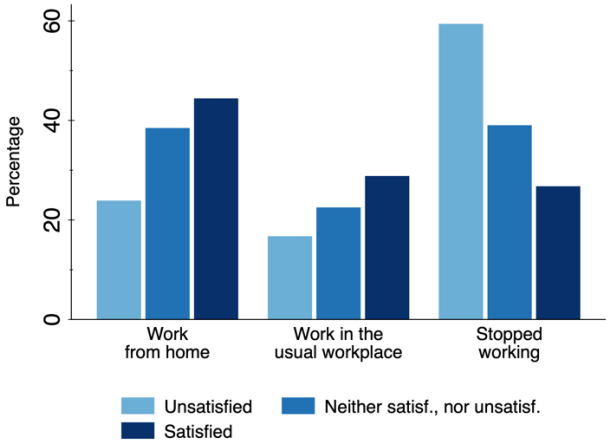


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



NEW ZEALAND

70. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 15-18, 2020. Sample size: 998 respondents.]

71. New Zealand entered into lockdown on March 25th. At the time the survey, the lockdown had hence being in place for 20-23 days. As shown in Table 2.1, New Zealand has the largest percentage of respondents working from home in our sample (60%) and the lowest of those working in their usual workplace (18%), while 22% of individuals stopped working.

72. Figure 1 indicates large differences according to education attainments: 72% of college graduates was working from home, against 49% among individuals with a high school diploma and 35% among those with no diploma. Non-college graduates were more likely to work from the regular workplace, but also to be idle. Figure 2 shows that working from home is predominant among people with the higher family income, who are also less likely to be idle.

73. Large differences emerge also according to occupational status (Figure 3): white collars work more from home, less in the regular workplace and are less likely to stop working than blue collars. Part-time workers and self-employed are more likely to be idle (Figure 4). Prime age workers (35-49) work more from home than the others, but no large difference emerge in the idle workers (Figure 5). Figure 6 indicates that there are no gender gaps in labour market outcomes.

74. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working from home more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who worked in the usual workplace, more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

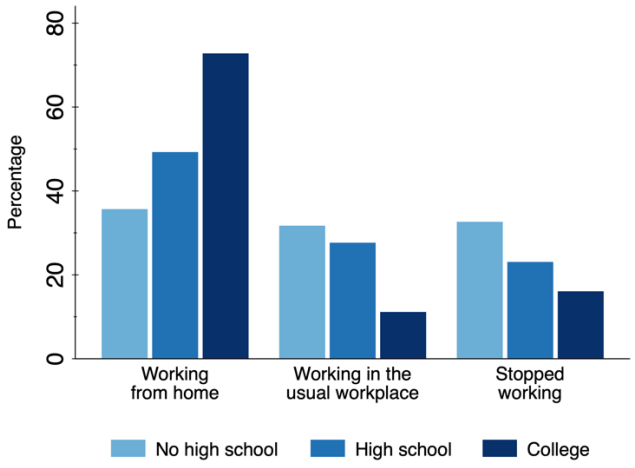


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

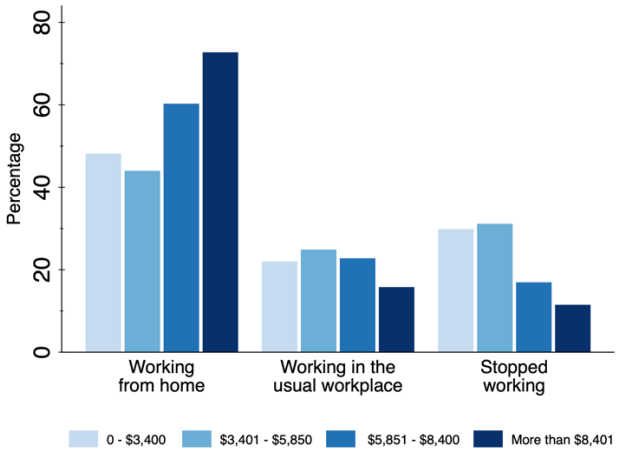


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

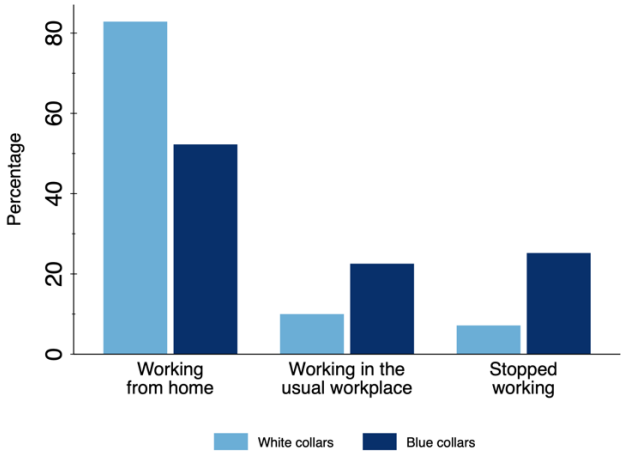


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

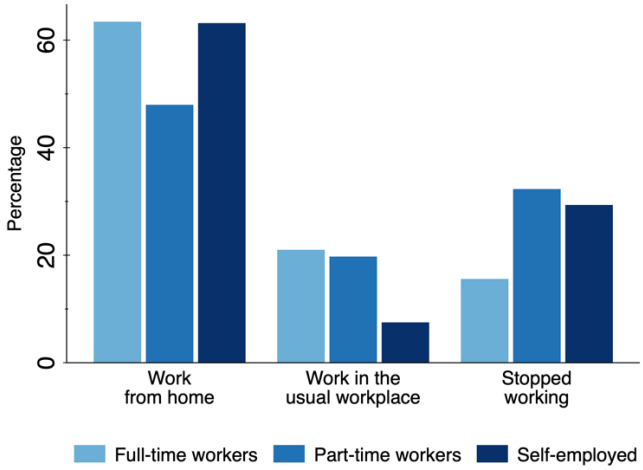


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

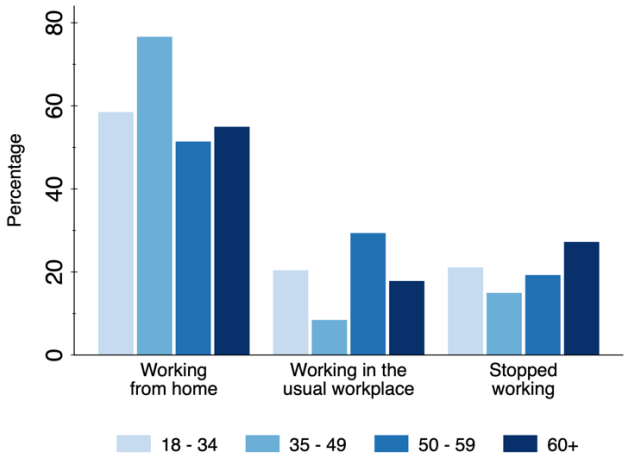


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

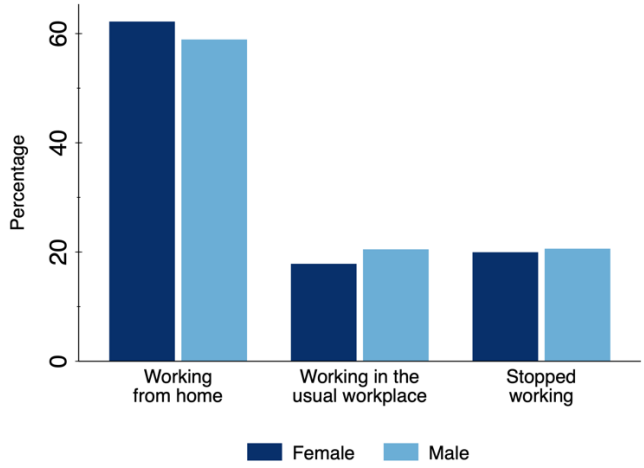


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

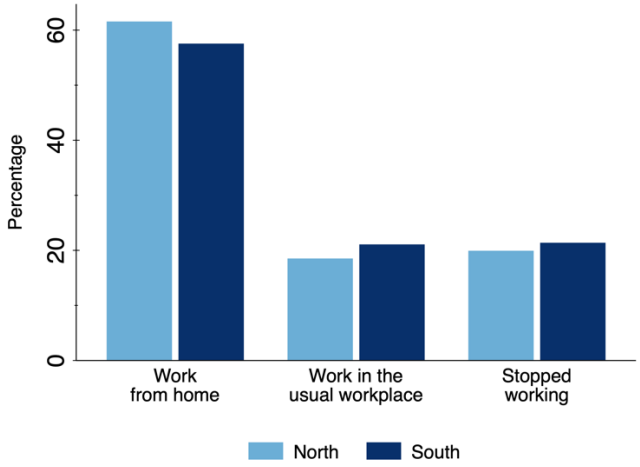
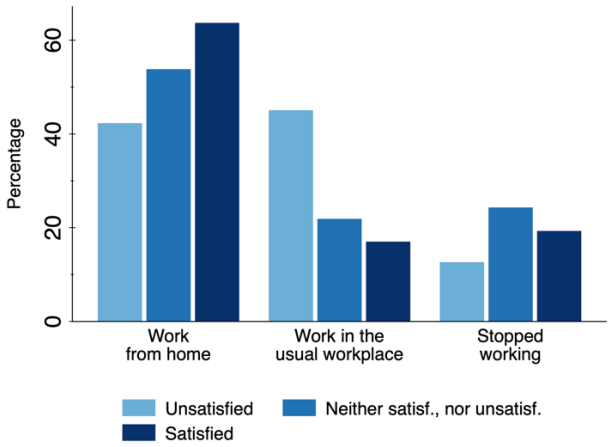


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



POLAND

75. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 30 – May 2, 2020. Sample size: 1,000 respondents.]

76. Polish authorities started imposing anti-COVID-19 measures in mid-March. All mass events were cancelled on March 10 and cultural institutions and schools were closed on March 12th. The lockdown was implemented on March 24 and strengthened on March 31. As of April 20th, some measures were lifted, but the government decided to postpone the Presidential election, which was originally scheduled on May 10th. Hence the survey was launched a month into the lockdown, when some restrictive measures had been already lifted. As shown in Table 2.1, a large majority of the workers (56%) were still in their regular workplace, 29% worked from home and 15% were idle.

77. Figure 1 shows that approximately 43% of college graduates were working from home, against around 20% for those with a high school diploma and 16% for those with less than a high school diploma. Individuals with no college degree were more likely to be work in the usual workplace. The share of idle workers was comparable across educational attainments. Almost no difference emerges according to family income (Figure 2).

78. Figure 3 shows that approximately half of white collars work from home and 42% in their usual workplace, leaving few white collars idle. Blue collars instead work almost exclusively in the regular workplace, while service workers work both from than and in the regular work place. Idle workers are more common among blue collars and service workers. Self-employed are much more likely to work from home – and less in the regular workplace than other workers (see Figure 4).

79. No large differences in labour market outcome emerge by age groups (Figure 5), while gender gaps exist. Figure 6 shows that women work from home more than men (33% vs 26%), but less than men in the regular workplace (46% vs 64%). As a results, more women than men stopped working (21% vs 10%).

80. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working from home more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who stopped working more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

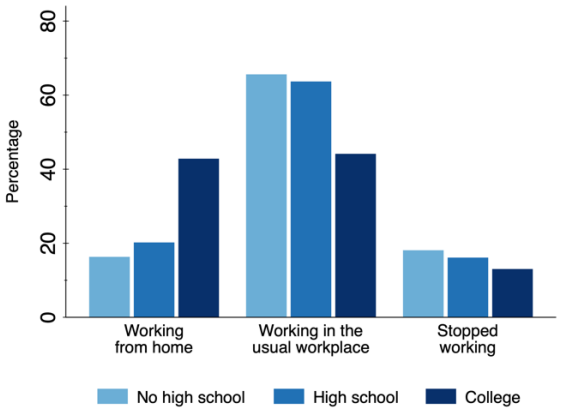


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

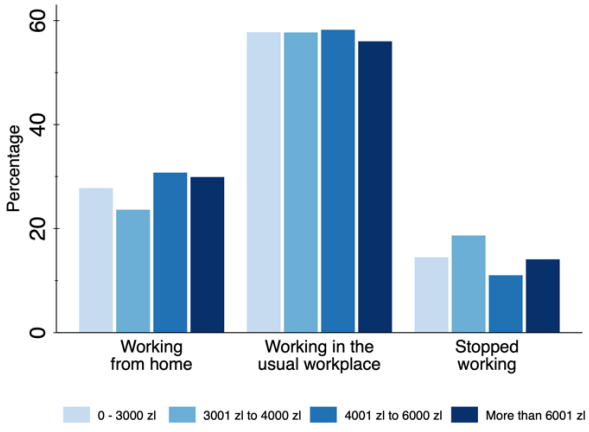


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

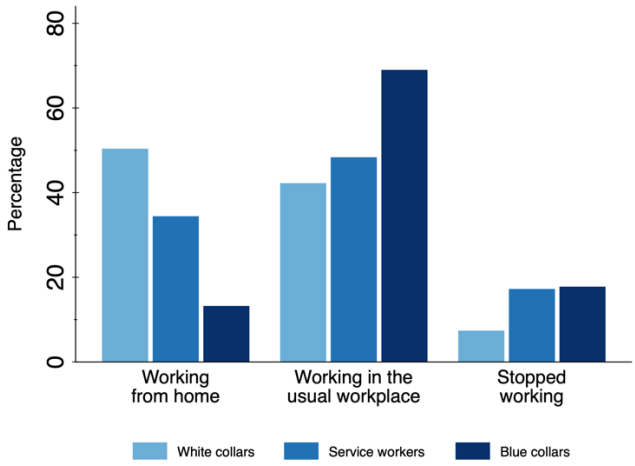


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

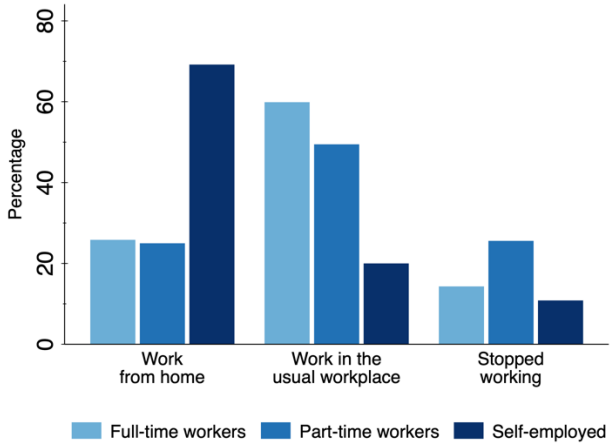


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

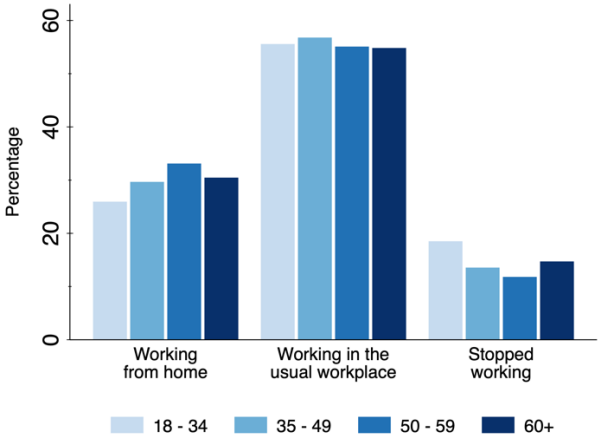


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

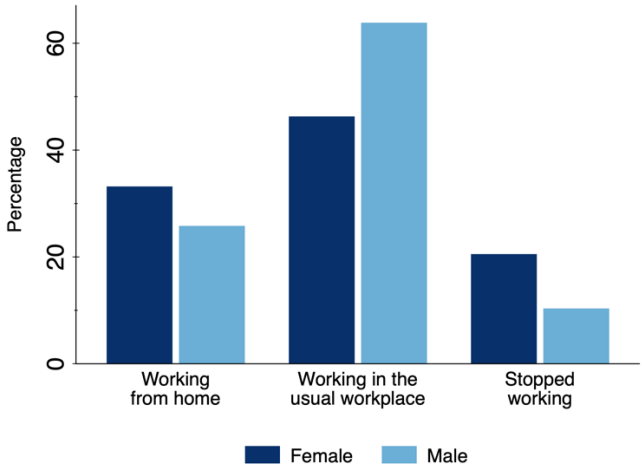


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

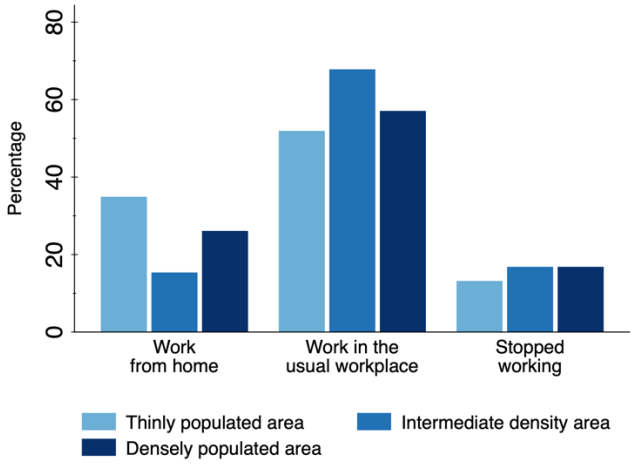
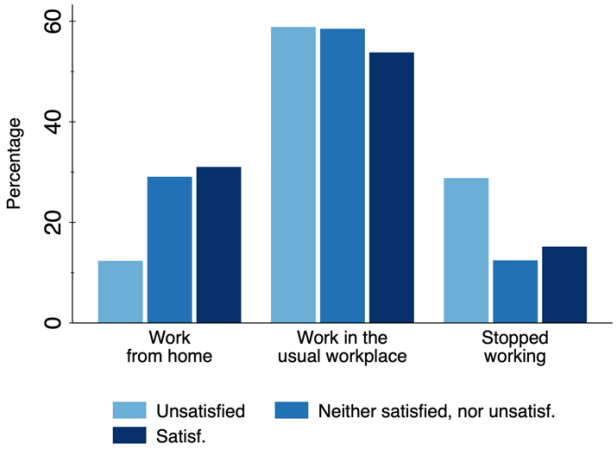


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



SWEDEN

81. [Data come on line surveys (CAWI) on April 16-17, 2020. Sample size: 1,009 respondents.]

82. Unlike most other countries, Sweden did not impose a lockdown. However, on March 16 the government introduced measures to reduce the diffusion of the virus, such as limiting gatherings of more than 50 people or advising elderly people to stay at home. In fact, as shown in Table 2.1, at the time of the survey, 61% of the respondents were still working in their usual place, 28% from home and 11% stopped working.

83. Figure 1 displays a large difference in labour market outcomes by education: the share of college graduates working from home is twice as large as those of non-college graduates. On the other hand, college graduates work less in the regular workplace. The share of idle workers across educational groups is relatively similar. No significant difference emerges by income groups (Figure 2). Instead, large differences exist by occupational types. Figure 3 shows that white collars are more likely then respectively service workers and blue collars to work from home, but less in the regular workplace. Also the self-employed work more from home and less in the regular workplace.

84. No large difference emerge in labour market outcome by age group (Figure 5). Instead, Figure 6 shows some gender gaps: women are less likely than men to work from home (26% vs 32%) and in the regular workplace (60% vs 62%). As a results, more women than are idle (15% vs 7%). In the urban areas, more work is done in the regular workplace (Figure 7).

85. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals who stopped working more people were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

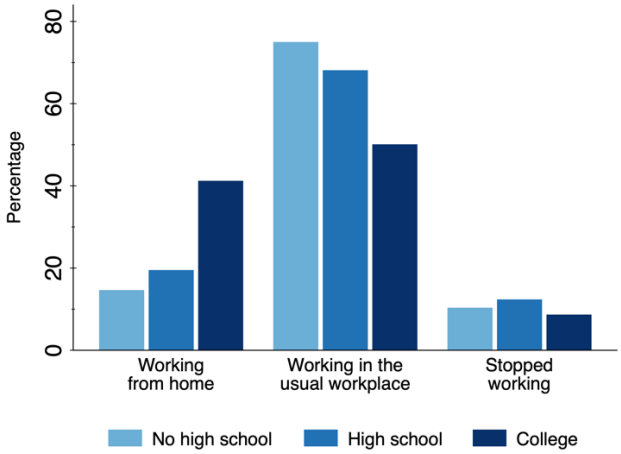


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

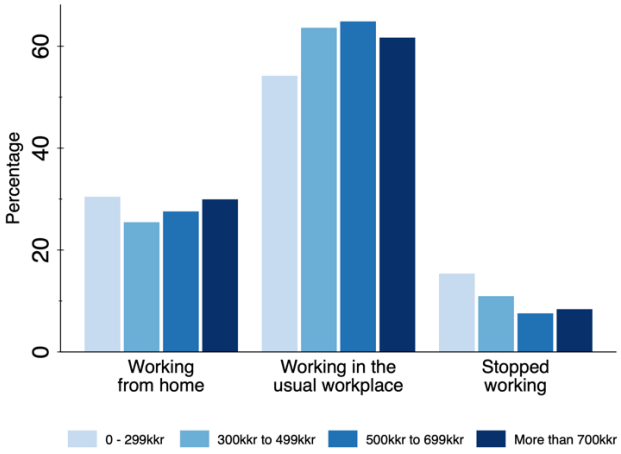


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

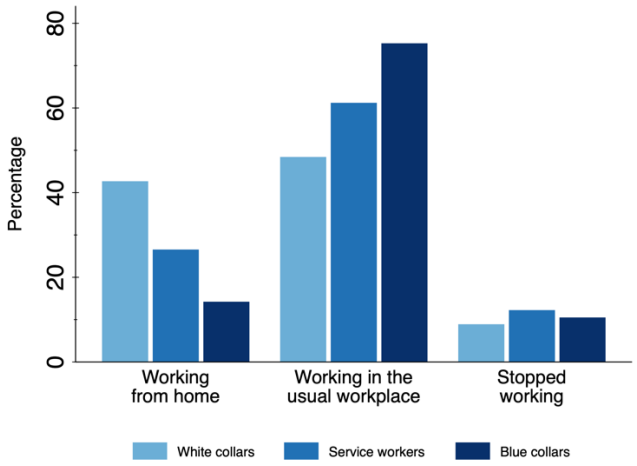


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

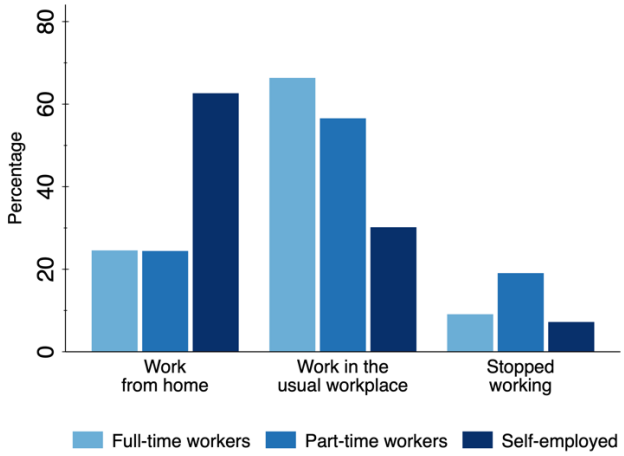


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

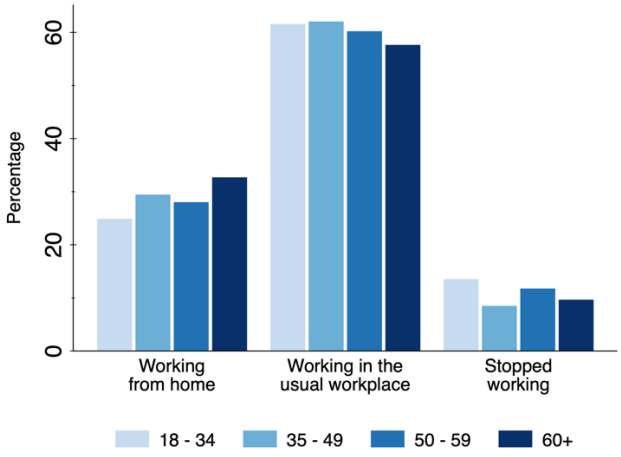


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

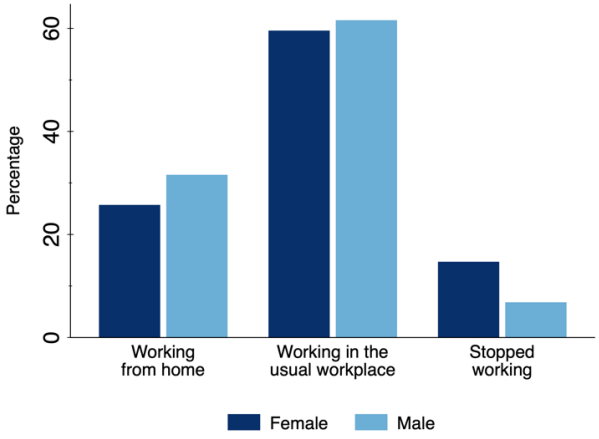


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

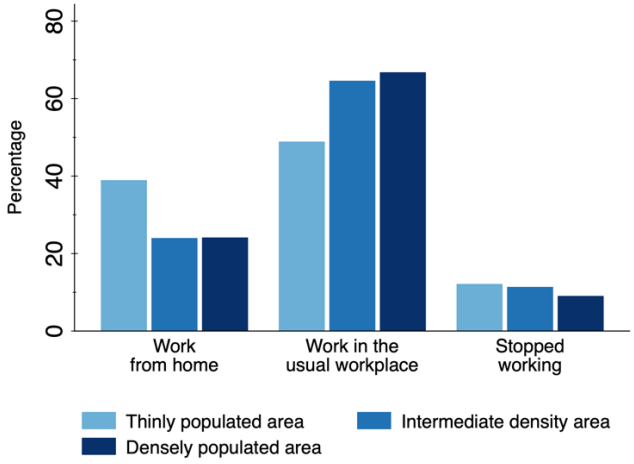
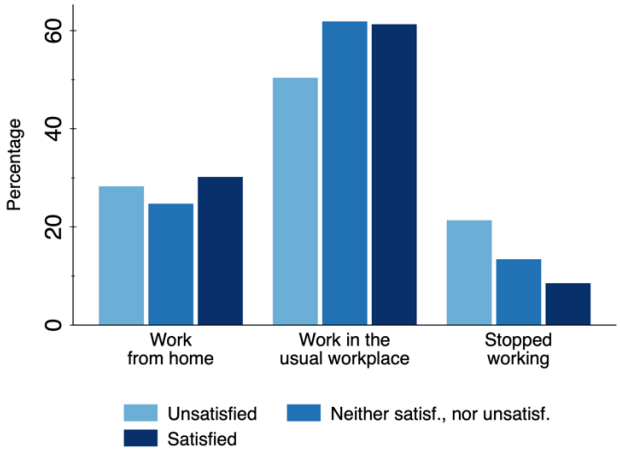


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



UNITED KINGDOM

86. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 15-17, 2020. Sample size: 1,001 respondents.]

87. COVID-19 reached the United Kingdom at the end of January. On March 15, the British population was advised by the government to avoid contact and non-necessary travel. On March 20, schools, universities and non-essential activities were shut down. On March 23, the country entered into a lockdown. The first wave of the survey was launched immediately after, on 25-26 March, and the second wave on 15-17 April. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 show that, already in the first wave, a large share of the population worked from home and about one of three workers were idle. Almost no change took place in the labour market between the two surveys.

88. Figure 1 displays large differences according to education outcomes: 62% of college graduates were working from home and only 20% had stopped working. Instead, among workers with no high school diploma, 27% were working from home and 53% had stopped. A similar picture emerges from Figure 2, as around two thirds of the workers in the top quartile of the income distribution worked from home and less than one out of five stopped working.

89. Figure 3 indicates large differences also across occupational types. Almost three white collars out of four were working from home, but only one blue collar in four. Although blue collars were more likely to work in their usual workplace, half of them stopped working, as opposed to only 14% among the white collars. Service workers worked mostly from home (51%), but 31% were idle. Self-employed worked less than full-time workers in the regular workplace and were more likely to be idle (Figure 4).

90. Some small difference emerges also across age groups, with senior workers (50+) working less from home and more likely to be idle (Figure 5). Gender gaps emerged in Figure 6, as women were more likely than men to work from home (53% vs 45%), but less in the regular workplace (15% vs 25%).

91. Finally, using answers to a question on life satisfaction, Figure 8 shows that among the individuals working from home more people expressed high life satisfaction, while among those who stopped working more persons were unsatisfied.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

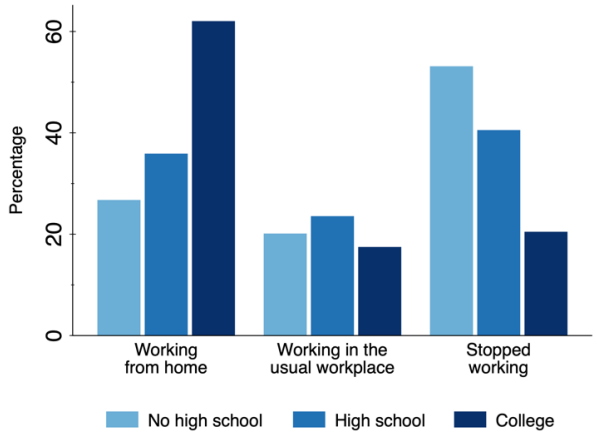


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

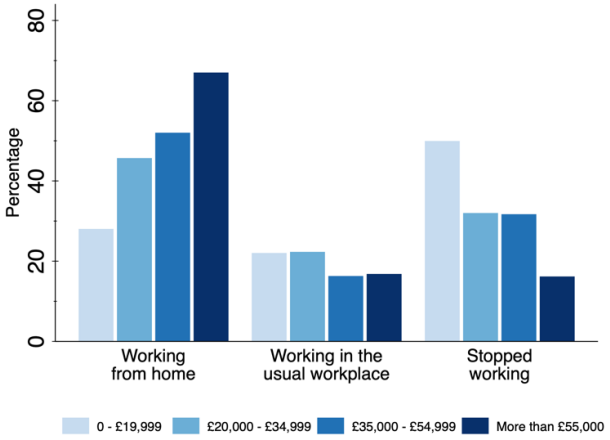


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

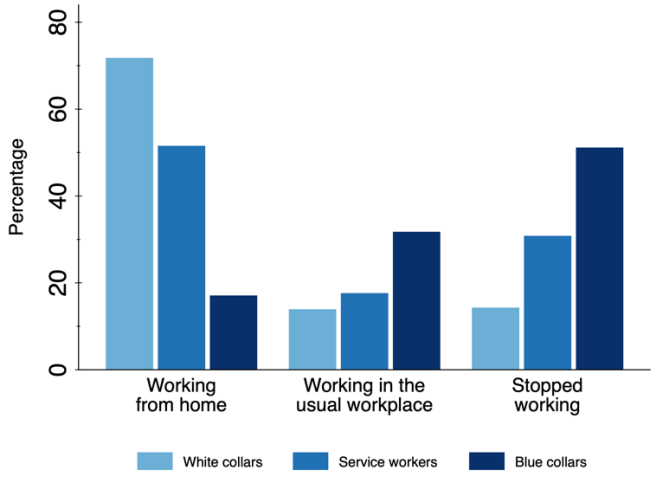


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

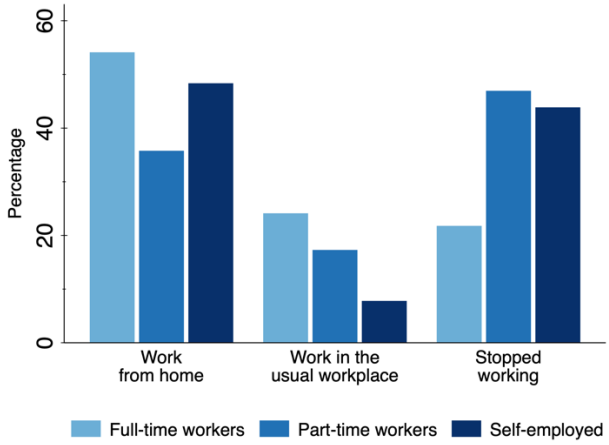


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

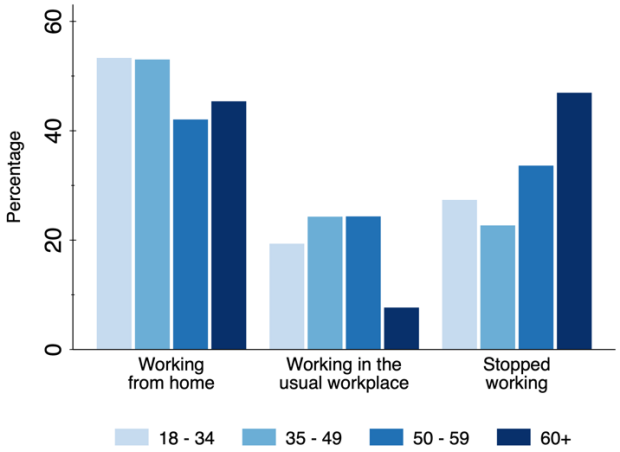


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

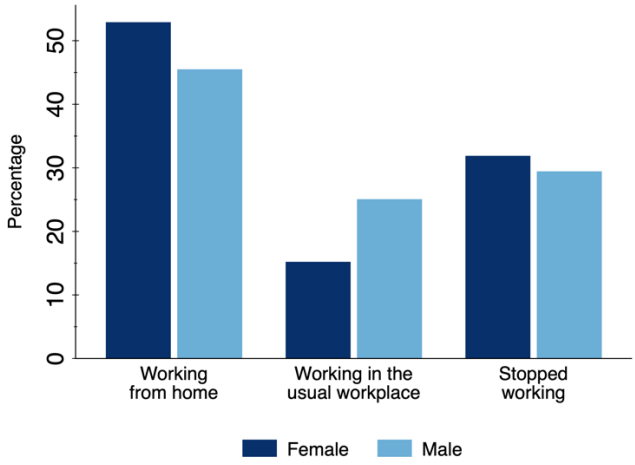


Fig. 7. Current working status by location

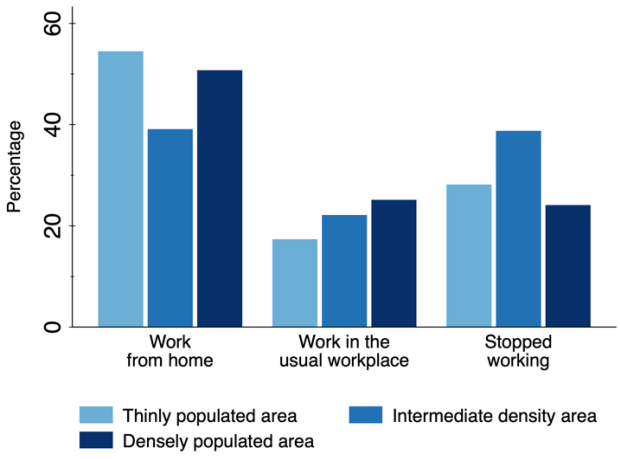
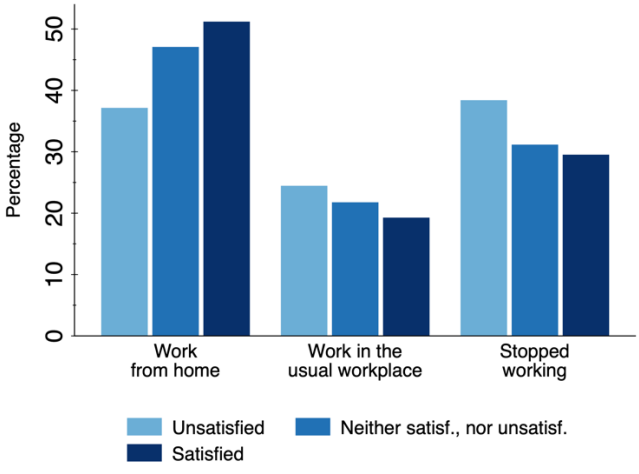


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



UNITED STATES

92. [Data from on line surveys (CAWI) on April 16-18, 2020. Sample size: 2,007 respondents.]

93. No mandatory measures were adopted by the US Federal Government. However, the White House issued some guidelines and different states banned gatherings and closed non-essential services and other activities. Many cities imposed also stricter measures in order to contain the spreading of the virus. At the time of the survey, more than 43 States had issued a 'Stay at home order'. These were mostly issued around 25 March.

94. As shown in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 at the time of the survey around one third of the US workers continued to work in the regular workplace, half of them were working from home and one out of ten had stopped working. Little changes take place between the two surveys.

95. Figure 1 indicates large differences by education attainments: around 60% of people with a college degree were working from home, as opposed to 26% of workers with no high school diploma. Idle workers were much less common among college graduates than among those without high school diploma. Similar differences emerge in Figure 2 across individuals of different income groups. Higher income individuals work more from home, less in the regular workplace and stop working in lower numbers than lower income people do.

96. Figure 3 shows that white collars work from home more than blue collars, who work more in the regular workplace. Full-time workers work more from home than part-time ones and stop working less (Figure 4). No strong pattern emerges by comparing individuals across income groups, although young workers are more likely to be idle (Figure 5). No large differences emerge with respect to gender: women work more than men from home (53% vs 48%), but less in the regular workplace (34% vs 39%). As a result, no gender gap appears in idle workers (Figure 6). Finally, no clear pattern emerges with respect to individual satisfaction with their life (Figure 8).

97. Figure 7 is not available for the United States.

Fig. 1. Current working status by education

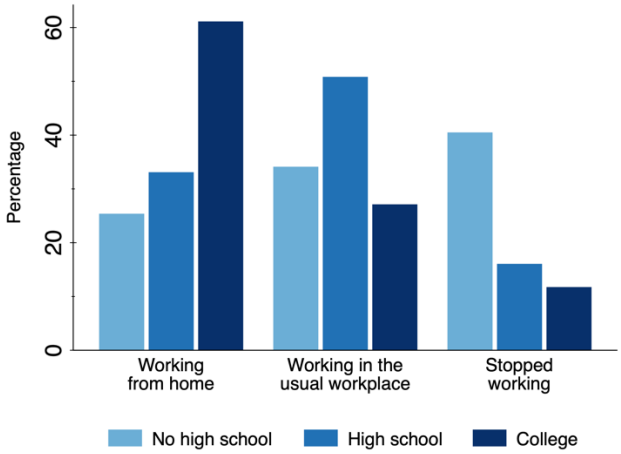


Fig. 2. Current working status by income quartile

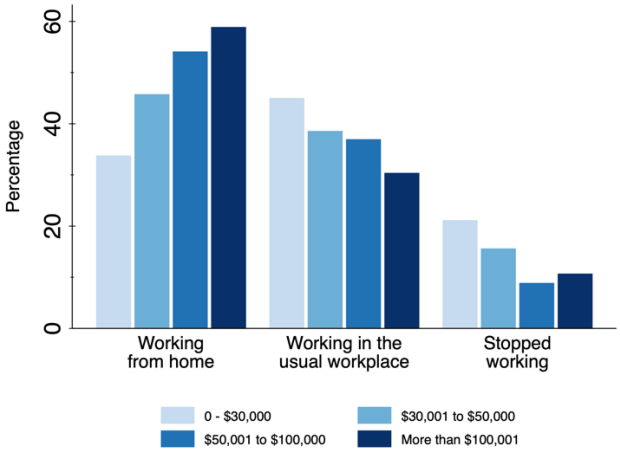


Fig. 3. Current working status by occupation

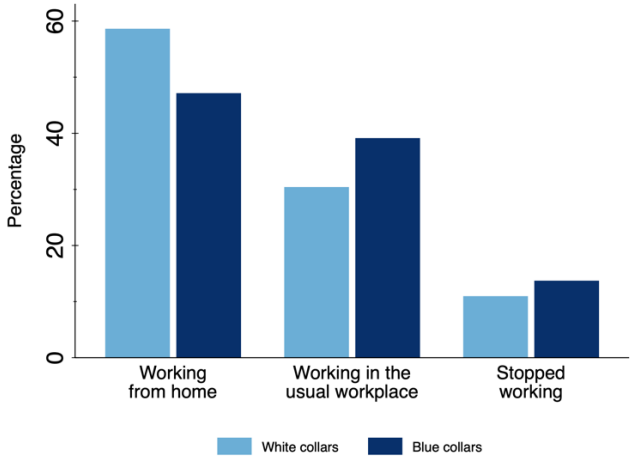


Fig. 4. Current working status by work condition

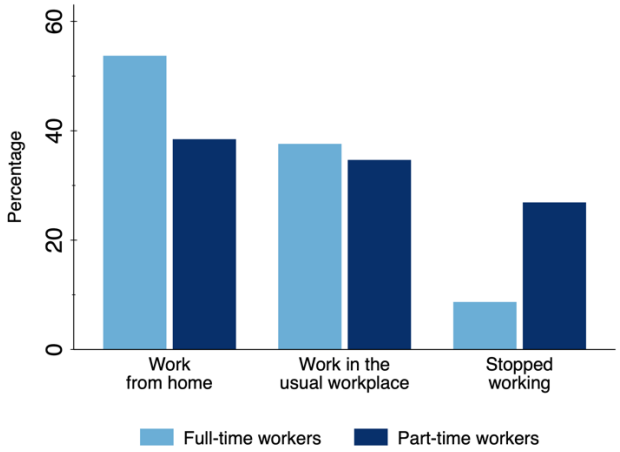


Fig. 5. Current working status by age

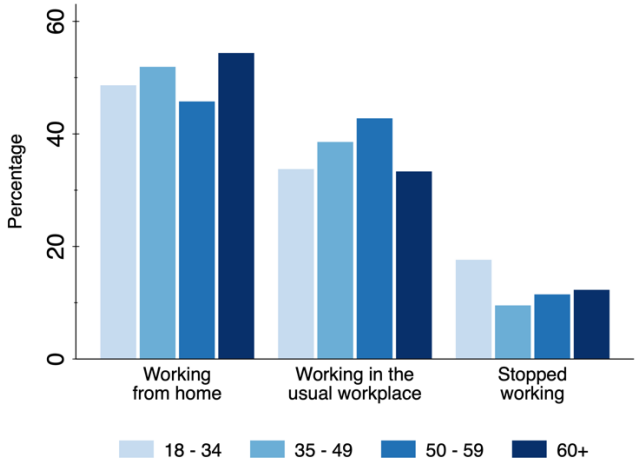


Fig. 6. Current working status by gender

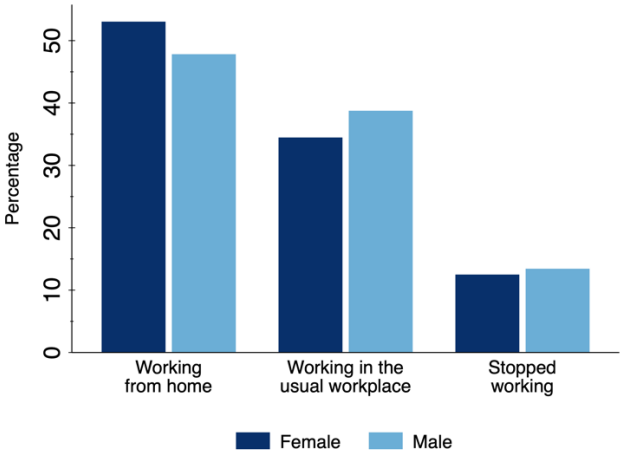
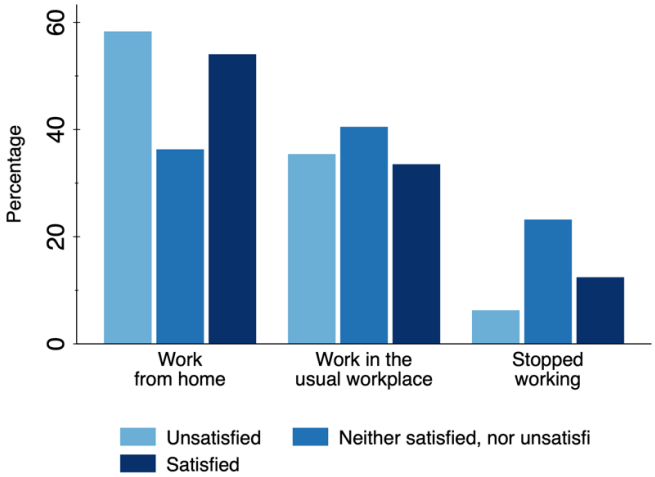


Fig. 8. Current working status by life satisfaction



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