Documents

Fisher, A.N.^a , Ryan, M.K.^a ^b , Liao, Y.-H.^c , Mikołajczak, G.^a , Riedijk, L.^d , Leander, N.P.^e ^f , Abakoumkin, G.^g , Abdul Khaiyom, J.H.^h , Ahmedi, V.ⁱ , Agostini, M.^j ^k , Atta, M.^l , Bagci, S.C.^m , J. Bélanger, J.ⁿ , Berisha Kida, E.ⁱ , B. I. Bernardo, A.^o , Chobthamkit, P.^p , Choi, H.-S.^q , Cristea, M.^r , Damnjanovic, K.^s , Danyliuk, I.^t , Di Santo, D.^u , M. Douglas, K.^v , Enea, V.^w , J. Fitzsimons, G.^x , Gómez, Á.^y , Gützkow, B.^j , Hamaidia, A.^z , Helmy, M.^{aa} ^{ab} , Hudiyana, J.^{ac} , Jovanović, V.^{ad} , Jovanović, V.^a , Kende, A.^{ae} , Keng, S.-L.^{af} , Kieu, T.T.T.^{ag} , Koc, Y.^j , Kreienkamp, J.^j , Kurapov, A.^{ah} , Lantos, N.A.^{ae} , P. Lemay, E.^{ai} , Lueders, A.^{aj} , Malik, N.I.^l , O. McCabe, K.^{ak} , Mehulić, J.^{al} , Molinario, E.^{am} , Moyano, M.^{an} , Muhammad, H.^{ao} , Muluk, H.^{ap} , F. Nisa, C.^{aq} , Nyúl, B.^{ae} , A. O'Keefe, P.^{ar} , Olivias Osuna, J.J.^y , Osin, E.^{as} , Park, J.^{at} , Pica, G.^{au} , Pierro, A.^{av} , Rees, J.^{aw} , Reitsema, A.M.^{ax} , Rullo, M.^{ay} , Samekin, A.^{az} , M. Schumpe, B.^{ba} , A. Selim, H.^{bb} , Stanton, M.V.^{bc} , Tseliou, E.^g , R vanDellen, M.^{bd} , Vázquez, A.^y , Wollast, R.^{be} , Yeung, V.W.-L.^{bf} , Zand, S.^{bg} , Žeželj, I.L.^{bh} , Zúñiga, C.^{bi}

The Precarity of Progress: Implications of a Shifting Gendered Division of Labor for Relationships and Well-Being as a Function of Country-Level Gender Equality (2024) Sex Roles, 90 (5), pp. 642-658.

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- ^a Global Institute for Women's Leadership, The Australian National University, Beryl Rawson Building, 13 Ellery Crescent, Acton, ACT 2601, Australia
- ^b Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands
- ^c Department of Psychology, University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom
- ^d Social, Health, and Organizational Psychology, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands
- ^e Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University, Detroit, United States
- ^f Department of Psychology, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands
- ^g University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece
- ^h International Islamic University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia
- ⁱ University of Pristine, Prishtina, Kosovo
- ^j University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands
- k Wayne State University, 42 W Warren Ave, Detroit, MI 48202, United States
- ¹ University of Sargodha, Punjab, Sargodha, 40100, Pakistan
- m Sabanci University, İstanbul, Turkey
- ⁿ Carnegie Mellon University Qatar, Ar-Rayyan, Qatar
- ^o De La Salle University, Metro Manila, Manila, Philippines
- ^p Thammasat University Rangsit Center, 99 Moo 18 Paholyothin Road, Klong Nueng, Klong Luang, Pathumthani, 12121, Thailand
- ^q Sungkyunkwan University, 25-2 Seonggyungwan-ro, Seoul, South Korea
- r Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS, United Kingdom
- ^s University of Belgrade, Beograd, Serbia
- ^t Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Volodymyrska St, Kyiv, Ukraine
- ^u University of Pisa, Pisa, 56126, Italy
- ^v University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NZ, United Kingdom
- ^w Alexandru Ion Cuza University, Bulevardul Carol I 11, Iasi, 700506, Romania
- ^x Duke University, Durham, NC 27708, United States
- ^y Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain
- ^z Setif 2 University, Setif, Algeria
- ^{aa} Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman
- ^{ab} Menoufia University, Shibin el Kom, 6131567, Egypt
- ac Universitas Indonesia, Kota Depok, 16424, Indonesia
- ^{ad} University of Novi Sad, Dr Zorana Đinđića 2, Novi Sad, 21000, Serbia
- ae Department of Social Psychology, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Egyetem tér 1-3, Budapest, 1053, Hungary
- ^{af} Department of Psychology, School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University 5 Jalan University, Bandar Sunway, Selangor, 47500, Malaysia
- ag HCMC University of Education, Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, 720000, Viet Nam
- ^{ah} University of Salzburg, Kapitelgasse 4/6, Salzburg, 5020, Austria
- ai University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, United States
- ^{aj} University of Hohenheim, Schloß Hohenheim 1, Stuttgart, 70599, Germany
- ^{ak} Carleton University, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6, Canada
- ^{al} University of Zagreb, Ul. Radoslava Cimermana 88, Zagreb, 10000, Croatia
- am Florida Gulf Coast University, 10501 FGCU Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33965, United States

- ^{an} University of Cordoba, Córdoba, Spain
- ^{ao} University of Peshawar, Rahat Abad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar, 25120, Pakistan
- ap Universitas Indonesia, Jl. Lingkar, Pondok Cina, Kecamatan Beii, Jawa Barat, Kota Depok, 16424, Indonesia
- aq Duke Kunshan University, Suzhou, China
- ar University of Exeter Business School, Exeter, EX4 4PU, United Kingdom
- as University of Paris Nanterre, 200 Av. de la Républiqu, Nanterre, 92000, France
- at nucb business school, 1 Chome-3-1 Nishiki, Aichi, 460-0003, Japan
- au University of Camerino, Macerata, 62032, Italy
- ^{av} University "La Sapienza" Rome, Roma, 00185, Italy
- ^{aw} Bielefield University, Universitätsstraße 25, Bielefeld, 33615, Germany
- ^{ax} Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 8, Utrecht, 3584 CS, Netherlands
- ay University of Siena, Siena, Italy
- ^{az} School of Liberal Arts, M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, Astana, 010000, Kazakhstan
- ba University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1012 WP, Netherlands
- bb King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- bc California State University, East Bay, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd, Hayward, CA 94542, United States
- bd University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, United States
- be Université Clermont-Auvergne, 26 Av. Léon Blum, Clermont-Ferrand, 63000, France
- ^{bf} Lingnan University, 8 Castle Peak Rd, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong
- ^{bg} University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, 20126, Italy
- bh University of Belgrade, Studentski trg 1, Beograd, Serbia
- bi Universidad de Chile, Av. Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 1058, Santiago, 8330111, Chile

Abstract

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic saw a shift toward a more traditional division of labor—one where women took greater responsibility for household tasks and childcare than men. We tested whether this regressive shift was more acutely perceived and experienced by women in countries with greater gender equality. Cross-cultural longitudinal survey data for women and men (N = 10,238) was collected weekly during the first few months of the pandemic. Multilevel modelling analyses, based on seven waves of data collection, indicated that a regressive shift was broadly perceived but not uniformly felt. Women and men alike perceived a shift toward a more traditional division of household labor during the first few weeks of the pandemic. However, this perception only undermined women's satisfaction with their personal relationships and subjective mental health if they lived in countries with higher levels of economic gender equality. Among women in countries with lower levels of economic gender equality, the perceived shift predicted higher relationship satisfaction and mental health. There were no such effects among men. Taken together, our results suggest that subjective perceptions of disempowerment, and the gender role norms that underpin them, should be considered when examining the gendered impact of global crisis. © The Author(s) 2024.

Author Keywords

Division of labor; Gender equality; Gender roles; Interpersonal relationships; Relationship quality; Well being

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٠

Correspondence Address

Fisher Å.N.; Global Institute for Women's Leadership, Beryl Rawson Building, 13 Ellery Crescent, Australia; email: Alexandra.fisher@anu.edu.au

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