Gender Norms and Household Responses to Economic Shocks

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Abstract

Do gender norms lead to an inefficient reallocation of resources? This study investigates the role of gender norms in how households respond to major economic shocks. We leverage rich longitudinal data from the UK on couples' employment, time use, and self-reported gender norms, to test whether gender norms prevent households from achieving income-maximizing arrangements after a negative employment shock. We find that, after a layoff, men are more likely than women to return to work in the long run. This asymmetry is fully explained by women who subscribe to traditional gender norms: progressive women have the same labor market response to a layoff as men. We plan to use the estimates to inform a search and matching model to quantify the role of gender norms-induced frictions in the speed of recovery after economic downturns.

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1 Introduction

Men and women in the labor market look more similar than ever before. However, gender norms persist: there is ample evidence of gendered patterns in couples' time use, even when financially suboptimal (Ichino et al., 2024; Giommoni and Rubolino, 2022; Siminski and Yetsenga, 2022; Jessen et al., 2024; Andresen and Nix, 2022; Bertrand et al., 2015; Hancock et al., 2024). But how much are couples willing to pay to abide by gender norms? Do the same norms that bring households to deviate from income maximization when the money at stake is relatively low also shape how they cope with large shocks, such as losing one's job?

The answer is macro-relevant. During the first months of Covid-19, job losses were greater among women than men, leading commentators to characterize the downturn as a 'she-cession' (Alon et al., 2022). If laid-off women are more likely to retreat into home production instead of returning to the labor force, this could affect the speed of recovery. Aggregate employment dynamics would then depend not only on how many jobs are lost, but also on which spouse loses them and on the couple's underlying views about breadwinning and caregiving. Yet the literature has little evidence on whether large, involuntary separations trigger gender-asymmetric adjustments, on whether any asymmetry is stronger in norm-conservative families, or on whether this has aggregate implications.

This paper fills this gap. Using rich longitudinal data from the United Kingdom, we first provide empirical evidence on how heterosexual couples' employment and home production changes when one partner is laid off. In the short run, men and women respond similarly to their own layoff: they are broadly equally likely to be out of employment and to take on additional responsibilities in home production. Instead, large asymmetries emerge in the longer run: two to ten years after their layoff, women are twice as likely than men to remain out of employment and four times as likely than men to have taken on additional household responsibilities. Strikingly, the entirety of the labor market asymmetry can be explained via gender norms: progressive women have the same post-layoff labor market behavior as men, and the entirety of the long-run divergence is driven by gender conservative women. In the second part of the paper, we outline a plan to embed these asymmetric responses into a search and matching model and use it to quantify the role of gender norms in shaping the speed of recovery from recessions.

To interpret our results, we outline a framework of joint household decision-making. Following Ichino et al. (2024), a couple derives utility from consumption and a public good (e.g. children's wellbeing). The former is purchased with income earned from time in paid work, and the latter is produced via time in home production. Gender norms enter through the symmetry and magnitude of the elasticity of substitution between women's and men's time in the production of the public good. A symmetric and high elasticity of substitution characterizes "progressive" couples. In this case the two inputs are easily substituted - either partner can take over any task with little loss of efficiency. An asymmetric and low elasticity of substitution describes "traditional" couples. In this case the inputs are near complements; reallocating tasks from the wife to the husband is costly because it clashes with internalized gender roles. When an adverse labor market shock affects one partner, progressive couples can shift time seamlessly from home to market activity (or vice-versa), mitigating the effect of the shock on the amount of consumption and of the public good; in contrast, traditional couples cannot, and the household ends up further away from the income-maximizing allocation.

A testable implication of this framework is that, if gender norms did not matter, the time spent in paid work and home production of men and women would respond similarly to an economic shock irrespective of who received it, and irrespective of gender norms. We test this implication directly. Formally, we estimate both own and partner's response to a layoff, separately for households where the person being laid off is the man or the woman, and heterogeneously by revealed gender norms.

The primary data source for this study is the Understanding Society survey, a rich longitudinal household survey conducted in the United Kingdom since 1991 (University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research, 2024). This nationally representative panel follows individuals and households over time, collecting detailed information on employment, time use, and attitudes toward gender roles. The survey includes all household members, which allows for a comprehensive analysis of intra-household dynamics. We construct a "progressiveness index" based on the answer to questions such as "how much do you agree or disagree with the statement: A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works." We combine the answers to four of these questions using principal component analysis, and dichotomize the resulting variable to classify individuals as "progressive" or "conservative". We construct intensive and extensive margin measures of paid work using questions about hours worked and job status, and of home production using questions

on time spent and degree of responsibility for activities such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare.

We are in the process of incorporating other datasets: the European Restructuring Monitor (Eurofound, 2025), which will allow us to identify mass layoff events (and thus leverage a more exogenous form of variation for our layoffs), and administrative data from the linked Censuses of England and Wales and the Annual Surveys of Hours and Earnings to improve precision.

In the micro-level analysis, we employ an event study and a difference-in-differences approach. The event is a layoff and the control group are couples in which neither partner is ever laid off in the sample. We compare how a heterosexual household responds to either the man or the woman's layoff, and analyze how the reaction varies with the level of progressiveness of the couple. The household outcomes of interest are time spent in paid work or home production, on the intensive and the extensive margin, by the laid off individual and his or her partner.

In the short run, there are no significant differences across men and women in their labor market and housework responses to their own or their partner's layoff. Immediately after their own layoff, both men and women work approximately 11 fewer hours and are approximately 25pp less likely to be employed. Regardless of gender, the laid-off individual raises his or her time doing housework by roughly 1.3 hours, although women are twice as likely to take on more responsibilities at home, 2pp compared to 1pp. In response to their partner's layoff, neither men nor women are more likely to spend time on paid work, despite the fact that they spend less time on home production.

In the long run, households respond very differently to whether it is the man or the woman who is laid off. Two to ten years later, most laid-off men have returned to paid work and given up the responsibility for household tasks that they picked up when they were laid off. In contrast, a sizeable share of laid-off women remain non-employed and maintain the higher level of responsibility for household tasks. Regardless of gender, there is still no labor market response, and only a negligible decline in home production, on behalf of the partner.

The gender asymmetry in the long-run labor market response to one's own-layoff is entirely driven by women who hold conservative gender attitudes. Two to ten years after their own layoff, they are 23pp less likely to be employed, while gender-progressive women are only 10pp less likely to be employed. This puts the latter in a similar position to men, who are 11pp less likely to be employed, regardless of their gender attitudes. Interestingly, there is no difference in the home production behavior of women regardless of their gender progressivity.

In the future, we will incorporate these micro-estimates into a search and matching model to quantify the aggregate consequences of these frictions. The starting point is the search model of Faberman et al. (2022), which features endogenous search effort, on-the-job search, wage bargaining, and vacancy creation. We plan to extend their model to incorporate endogenously heterogeneous search effort across men and women. In our baseline framework, search effort by members of the couple is closely tied to the partners' substitutability in home production, and we will use the estimated micro-elasticities to discipline this search and matching model.

Ultimately, we will use the model to evaluate how the economy responds to business cycle shocks, counterfactually ask whether the recovery would be faster if households behaved as progressively as the most gender-egalitarian ones, and inform alternative policies for business cycle recovery. Crucially, the model will also allow us to consider the distribution of shocks across sectors and how men and women might be differently exposed to them in the first place. While recessions most commonly impact the manufacturing and construction sectors more, women tend to be employed in the services sector. If women do return to work at a slower pace than men, the aggregate recovery from services-led recessions such as the COVID pandemic would be particularly slow and most-likely warrant policy intervention.

Related Literature A substantial body of empirical work documents that, although in the last decades male and female labor market profiles have converged, material disparities persist, and they are particularly sharp when it comes to home production. In the United Kingdom, women still perform almost 80% more unpaid care and housework than men and supply about 30% fewer paid hours; in the United States, the numbers are comparable (OECD, 2024). Evidence from developed countries shows that gender gaps in earnings are relatively small at labor market entry but widen sharply with the arrival of children, when the requirements of home production increase exponentially; in most OECD economies at least 40%, and usually the entirety, of the remaining earnings gap is now attributable to "motherhood penalties" (Kleven et al., 2024). These penalties cannot be rationalized by biology or static comparative advantage (Andresen and Nix, 2022) but map closely to spatial and cohort variation in gender-norm indicators (Kleven, 2022; Boelmann et al., 2025). Thus, understanding the division of home production, and the role of gender norms in how it is shared between partners, is crucial for explaining the remaining gender gaps in the

labor market.

We contribute to this literature by showing that, while progress has been made in terms of female labor market participation - indeed, we do see that progressive women respond to labor market shocks in ways that are comparable to men's - the same cannot be said of the household: progressive women do almost as much home production as conservative women, and returning to work after a job loss does not translate into a decrease of home production, as it does for men, making the time "squeeze" (Low, 2025) more binding.

A newer strand of research shows that couples willingly incur private income losses in order to uphold gender norms. Small fiscal or ranking perturbations - e.g. marginal tax-rate changes (Ichino et al., 2024) or spouse-based tax credits (Giommoni and Rubolino, 2022) - prompt shifts in time use that leave joint earnings below the feasible frontier. Gender norms impact whether and how much couples respond to public policies, such as childcare provision (Mensinger and Zimpelmann, 2024). These studies, however, examine relatively low-stakes incentives. Whether the same normative frictions bind when households confront large, exogenous shocks remains largely unexplored. Understanding this margin is essential: if gender norms hinder efficient reallocation after layoffs, trade disruptions, or other macroeconomic shocks, both household welfare and aggregate recovery suffer. By focusing on severe employment shocks, the present project moves the literature from "micro nudges" to high-cost events, thereby testing whether norms only shape the equilibrium allocation of labor or also impede its redeployment when economic circumstances change dramatically.

Our work also speaks to the literature on job loss (Jacobson et al., 1993). While a few papers have documented the unequal impact of job loss on men and women (Illing et al., 2024; Ivandi and Lassen, 2023), consistently with our findings, we are the first to map this asymmetry to gender norms and to analyze its implication for the aggregate economy.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we present a conceptual framework linking gender norms and households' choices of time use. In Section 3 we present the data and our variables' construction, and in Section 4 the methodology. Section 5 discusses the micro-level results on household responses to layoffs, and Section 6 (will) introduce the search and matching model, augmented to account for gender norms. Section 7 concludes.

2 Conceptual Framework

To fix ideas, we briefly outline a conceptual framework linking gender norms and household allocation of time. This framework builds on Ichino et al. (2024).

Setup We assume that households, composed of heterosexual couples, maximize a joint utility function, U, which depends on two primary components: consumption (C) and a common household good (G):

$$U = U(C, G)$$

Consumption (C) is purchased with the total income of the household, which is the sum of both partners' labor earnings:

$$C = w_f W_f + w_m W_m$$

where w_f, w_m are hourly wages and W_f, W_m are hours spent in the labor market, for the woman and the man respectively. The household good (G) is produced using time inputs from both partners in home production:

$$G = f(H_f, H_m)$$

where H_f and H_m denote the hours spent on home production by the female and male partners, respectively. Each partner faces a time constraint:

$$T_g = W_g + H_g \quad \text{for } g = f, m$$

where T_g is the total time available, divided between paid work (W_g) and home production (H_g).

The Role of Gender Norms Gender norms are introduced into the framework as they influence the elasticity of substitution between H_f and H_m in the production of G. This elasticity serves as a proxy for the rigidity of gender norms: a symmetric, high elasticity indicates progressive norms, where male and female inputs are highly substitutable, allowing for flexible reallocation of tasks; an asymmetric, low elasticity indicates traditional norms, where substitution is limited, constraining the households ability to adapt to shocks. For example, in households with low elasticity of sub-

stitution, traditional gender norms may prevent men from taking on home production tasks, even when they are fully free from work. By contrast, households with high elasticity can reallocate tasks more efficiently, mitigating the effects of shocks on utility.

Gender norms, and thus the elasticity of substitution in this simple framework, not only impact the welfare of the couple, by determining the ability of the couple to reallocate their time-use following an economic shock, but, at the aggregate level they may affect the economy's ability to respond to a shock.

Hypotheses

The are different ways to conceptualize how gender norms influence a households response to shocks and which hypotheses to test.

Null Hypothesis: Gender norms do not influence household responses to economic shocks. Men and women respond symmetrically to shocks, and household reallocation of labor and home production occurs efficiently.

Alternative Hypotheses: Gender norms do influence a household's response to shocks:

- **Short-Term Asymmetry:** Following their own layoff, women increase home production to compensate for lost income, enabling their male partners to maintain or increase paid work. Men do not reciprocate this behavior when roles are reversed.
- **Long-Term Asymmetry:** Men are more likely to return to the labor force after a layoff, while women remain out of paid employment and focus on home production.

We will see that, while we do not find support for the first alternative hypothesis, we do find substantial support for the second: women do return to work at a lower rate than men after a layoff, and this asymmetry is only present in traditional couples.

3 Data

In this section we describe our main dataset (*Understanding Society*), our main outcome variables (intensive and extensive margin of employment and home production), and how we construct our measure of gender norms.

3.1 Data Sources

The primary data source for this study is the *Understanding Society* survey, a longitudinal household survey conducted in the United Kingdom since 1991 (University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research, 2024). This nationally representative panel follows around 40,000 households over time, including following individuals as they form new households. All adult household members are interviewed, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of intra-household dynamics.

The *Understanding Society* dataset provides detailed data on employment outcomes, home production activities, and gender norms. In addition to information on employment, such as hours worked and job status, the survey asks about time spent on home production activities like cooking and cleaning, as well as the degree of responsibility for such activities, which is crucial to define an "extensive margin" of home production as we describe below. It also includes questions about gender norms, which are used to construct a "progressiveness index" to classify individuals. This feature is critical for investigating whether the rigidity of gender norms influences household responses to shocks.

We are currently merging this dataset with information on restructuring events from the European Restructuring Monitor (Eurofound, 2025), in order to identify which layoffs in our data are linked to restructuring events and are thus more plausibly exogenous.

Finally, we plan to complement the analysis above with administrative data, in order to minimize measurement error and more credibly claim causality. For the UK, administrative data from the linked Censuses of England and Wales and the Annual Surveys of Hours and Earnings will allow us to minimize measurement error in earnings, and the ONS Business Structure Database will allow us to identify planned closures and mass layoff events.

3.2 Main Outcome Variables

Our main outcome variables are paid work and home production, both on the intensive and on the extensive margin.

Labor market variables are quite straightforward: individuals are explicitly asked about labor force status and number of hours spent in paid work.

The intensive margin of home production is also directly observable in the dataset. Respon-

dents are asked how many hours per week they spend on common household tasks (e.g. cleaning, cooking, etc), omitting childcare. The question is asked biyearly, so we impute missing years using the average of the two adjacent years.

The extensive measure of home production is novel. In particular, we do the following: in the survey, respondents are asked explicitly who does the cooking, who does the grocery shopping, who does the cleaning, who does the washing; respondent can answer: it's mostly me, we share equally, it's mostly my partner. For each task, we create a dummy variable equal to 1 if the respondent answers "mostly me", and 0 otherwise.[1] We then average this value across tasks to obtain our measure of the extensive margin of home production ("Fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for"). This measure is important because the same number of hours of home production can have a very different impact on welfare and productivity on the labor market depending on whether they also require planning, being on call, etc.: the infamous "mental load". This is the concept we capture with our extensive margin measure of home production.

3.3 The economic shock: Layoffs

Layoff shocks are large, salient disruptions to an individual's employment. In the *Understanding Society* survey, layoffs are identified based on self-reported reasons for ending a job, specifically responses indicating that the individual was "made redundant" or "dismissed/sacked."[2] Layoffs provide a clear and immediate shock to household labor supply, making them a valuable setting for studying household responses. However, potential endogeneity concerns arise, as layoffs may be correlated with unobserved individual characteristics, such as poor job performance or pre-existing financial instability.

To address this issue, we are in the process of combining this survey with the European Restructuring Monitor (Eurofound, 2025), a database of restructuring events in Europe which will allow us to identify which of the layoffs reported in the survey are part of a mass layoff event, and thus in principle more exogenous to the worker than general layoffs.

[1] Respondents can also indicate "others", though this answer is given only 2% of the times. In this case, we set the dummy to missing.

[2] Other possible reasons respondents could give are: promoted, left for better job, temporary job ended, took retirement, health reasons, left to have baby, look after family, look after other person, moved area, other reason

3.4 Measuring Gender Norms

We construct a measure of gender norms based on people's self-reported beliefs. Specifically, we quantify gender norms using an individual's level of agreement with the following statements:

- A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
- All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
- Both the husband and wife should contribute to the household income.
- A husband's job is to earn money, a wife's job is to look after the home and family.

For each statement, individuals can choose from a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 "Strongly agree" to 5 "Strongly disagree". In order not to impose cardinality to these ordinal variables, for each possible answer we create a separate dummy variable. We then aggregate the resulting 20 dummy variables using principal component analysis (PCA) to construct a "progressiveness index": Appendix Figure A.1 shows how this constructed progressiveness index relates to the level of agreement with the statement "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job."

Individuals are then classified as "progressive" or "traditional" based on whether their index score is above or below the median.

3.5 Sample restrictions

The analysis focuses on heterosexual couples. Same-sex couples constitute less than 1% of the sample, which limits statistical power. Individuals and couples with multiple layoffs are excluded to isolate the effect of a single shock. In the current analysis, we restrict to couples which remain married / cohabiting, though we plan to relax this restriction in future iterations.

4 Empirical Strategy

The empirical analysis combines event studies and difference-in-differences (DiD) to estimate the causal effects of economic shocks on household's allocation of time.

We start with an event-study approach, where the event is a layoff and the control group are individuals who are never laid off in the sample (and whose partner is never laid off in the sample).

The specification is as follows:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \delta_t + \beta_{h(i)} + \sum_{k=-5, k\neq -2}^{10} \gamma_k D_{it}^{(k)} + \epsilon_{it}, \tag{1}$$

where Y_{it} is the outcome of interest for individual i in year t, $D_{it}^{(k)}$ is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the individual is k years from experiencing a layoff, and α_i, δ_t and $\beta_{h(i)}$ are individual, time, and age fixed effects, respectively. In future iterations, we will instrument the layoff shocks with the mass layoff events collected in the Restructuring Monitor.

We also summarize the results in a simpler difference-in-differences specification:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \delta_t + \beta_{h(i)} + \gamma^{SR}(\text{Post}_{it}^{SR} \times \text{Treatment}_i) + \gamma^{LR}(\text{Post}_{it}^{LR} \times \text{Treatment}_i) + \epsilon_{it} \tag{2}$$

where $Treatment_i$ is a dummy indicating whether the individual experienced a layoff, $Post_{it}^{SR}$ is a dummy indicating the year of the layoff and the following year, $Post_{it}^{LR}$ is a dummy indicating years 2 through 10 after a layoff.

We test for heterogeneous effects by gender norms by including an interaction between $Treatment_i$ (and both $Post^{SR}$ and $Post^{LR}$) with the dummy for being progressive, as described in Section 3.4.

5 Results: Evidence from Layoffs

In this section we show how households respond to a layoff. In what follows, we first show the impact of a layoff when a woman is laid off and how her partner responds, then we show the impact when a man is laid off and how his partner responds, and finally we present a direct comparison of the outcomes for men and women.

5.1 Response of the Household when a Woman is Laid Off

Figure 1 and Table 1 show what happens to a woman and her partner when she loses her job.

When a woman experiences a layoff, her paid work hours drop significantly, while her time spent in home production increases. As shown in panel (a) of Figure 1 and in the first column of Table 1, after a layoff women reduce their weekly hours of paid employment by approximately 10

hours on impact (the year of the layoff and following), with a very partial recovery in the following years. In the long run (2 to 10 years after the layoff), women work approximately 7 fewer hours per week compared to pre-layoff levels. The reduction in paid work is accompanied by an increase in housework hours. Panel (b) of Figure 1 shows that women increase their weekly housework hours by approximately 1.6 hours immediately following the layoff, and this increase persists in the long run. This pattern indicates a reallocation of time from market work to home production.

The male partners of women who are laid off also adjust their behavior, albeit in limited ways. As shown in Figure 1 (panels a and b) and as detailed in Table 1 (columns 3 and 4), male partners reduce their housework contributions slightly, by about 0.6 hours per week in the long run. However, they do not significantly increase their own paid work hours, despite having more time available due to their reduced housework contributions. This limited response suggests a lack of compensatory adjustments by male partners in response to their female partners layoff. The responsibility for household tasks also shifts following a womans layoff: panel (c) of Figure 1 shows that women take on a greater share of household tasks (cooking, cleaning, washing, and grocery shopping), for which they report being "mostly responsible", allowing their partner to be responsible for fewer of them.

5.2 Response of the Household when a Man is Laid Off

The household's response to a man's layoff does not differ dramatically from that of a woman's, at least in the short run. As shown in Figure 2(a) and in Table 2, men reduce their weekly paid work hours by about 13 hours on impact (the year of the layoff and the following). Unlike women, however, men exhibit a steady recovery in employment over time. In the long-run, which we take as being the average in the years 2 through 10 after the layoff, men work approximately 6 fewer hours per week compared to their pre-layoff levels, indicating a stronger long-term recovery relative to women.

In terms of housework, men increase their contributions significantly following a layoff. Panel (b) of Figure 2 shows that men increase their weekly housework hours by approximately 1.4 hours in the short run, with a slight decline over the long run. The female partners of men who are laid off reduce their housework contributions by about 1 hour per week, as shown in Table 2 (Column

4). However, similar to male partners of laid-off women, these female partners do not significantly increase their paid work hours, as demonstrated in Figure 2 (a) andTable 2 (column 3). In terms of household tasks, panels (c) and (d) of Figure 2 indicate that men take on a greater share of responsibilities for tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare following a layoff. However, their increased involvement in household tasks diminishes over time as they return to the labor market, demonstrating the temporary nature of this adjustment.

5.3 Comparison Between Men and Women

A direct comparison between laid-off men and women reveals important long-run asymmetries in how they and their households respond to layoffs, which is harder to see in cross-figure comparisons. Panel (a) of Figure 3 shows that both men and women experience an immediate decline in employment following a layoff, but the long-term trajectories diverge sharply. Men are significantly more likely to return to the labor market, with their employment rates recovering steadily over time. By contrast, women exhibit a much lower probability of returning to work, with many remaining permanently out of the labor force.The persistence of these labor market differences is mirrored in household labor allocation. Panel (b) of Figure 3 shows that women's increased housework contributions following a layoff are more persistent than those of men. Women continue to bear a greater share of household responsibilities in the long run, whereas men's increased housework contributions fade as they reintegrate into the labor market. These gendered patterns suggest that traditional gender norms might play a significant role in shaping household responses to layoffs. Women are more likely to assume additional domestic responsibilities and less likely to reenter the labor force, reinforcing traditional divisions of labor. Men, on the other hand, exhibit stronger labor market recovery and a more temporary adjustment to household tasks.

Partners of laid-off individuals adjust their housework contributions but do not significantly change their labor market behavior, suggesting the presence of frictions in translating a reduced housework load into more hours in the labor market.

5.4 Heterogeneity by Gender Norms

The role of gender norms in driving these asymmetries is evident when analyzing heterogeneity across households with different levels of progressiveness. Households are classified as "progressive" or "traditional" based on their responses to survey questions about gender roles, as described in Section 3.4. In progressive households, as shown in Table 3, women are significantly more likely to return to the labor market after a layoff compared to women in traditional households: Column 1 shows that progressive women close the employment gap with men, with their long-term reemployment rates resembling those of their male counterparts (displayed in column 1 of Table 4). This finding underscores the importance of progressive gender norms in mitigating labor market scarring for women. For men, responses to layoffs are relatively similar across progressive and traditional households, as shown in Table 4. Regardless of household norms, men exhibit a relatively strong labor market recovery. This symmetry in male responses suggests that gender norms primarily affect womens labor market outcomes, rather than those of men.

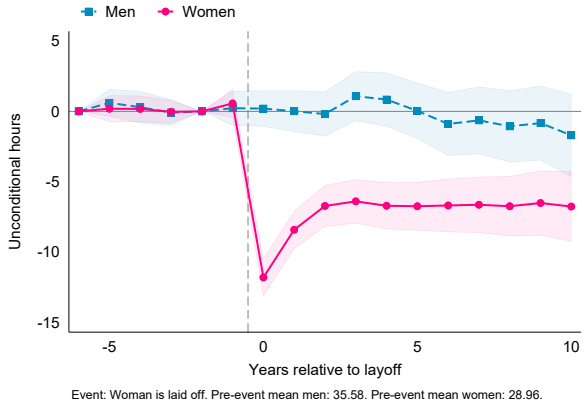
However, while progressive women do return to the labor market after a layoff, they don't symmetrically reduce their responsibility for household tasks. While progressiveness helps women close the gap in the labor market, it does not seem to do the same within the household.

7 Conclusion

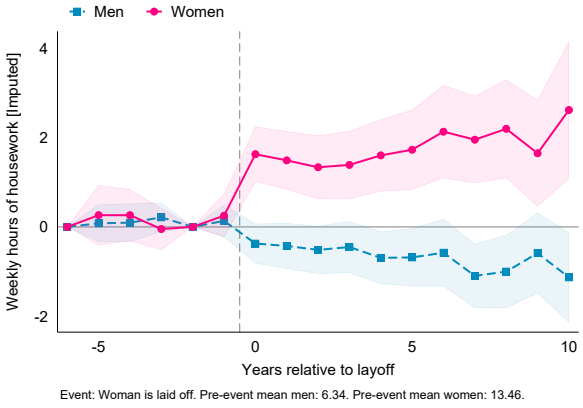
This paper contributes to our understanding of how households respond to economic shocks by highlighting the central role of gender norms. The findings demonstrate that traditional norms reinforce gendered patterns of labor market adjustment and household labor allocation, with significant implications for womens long-term economic outcomes. Progressive households exhibit more equitable responses in the labor market, with women returning to the labor force at rates comparable to men, though not in the household. These results suggest that gender norms might be a critical barrier to the efficient reallocation of resources in response to economic shocks, and that a more progressive society might make both households and the economy as a whole more resilient to economic shocks.

Figures

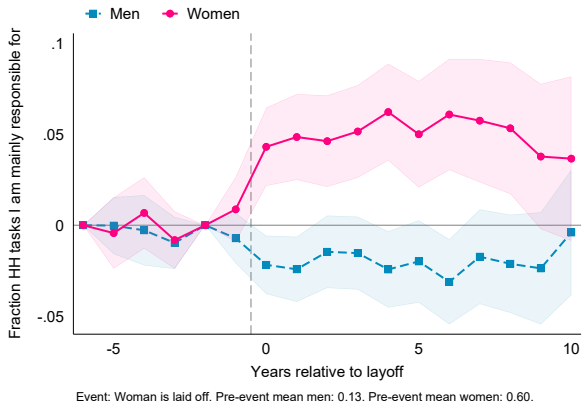
Figure 1: Responses To Woman's Layoff



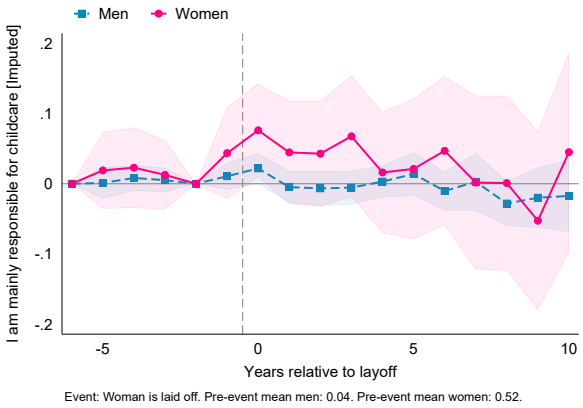
(a) Weekly hours in paid employment



(b) Weekly hours in housework



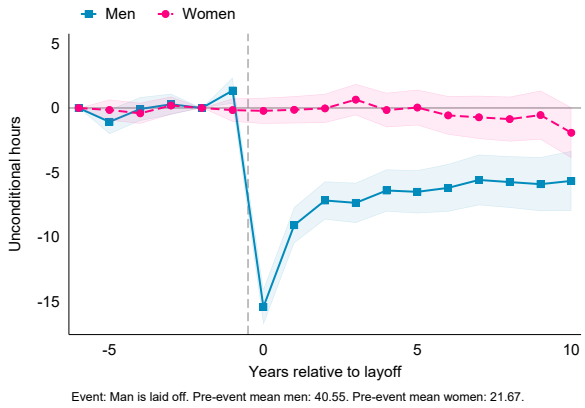
(c) Fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for



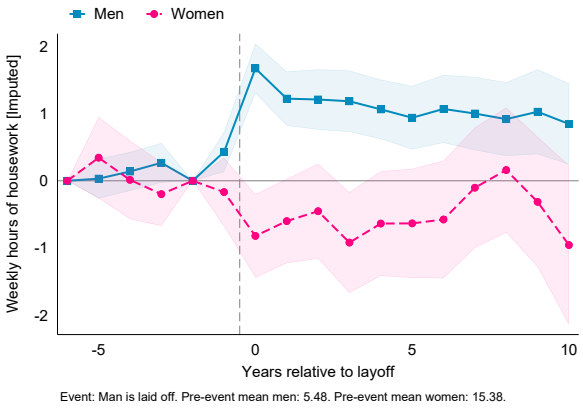
(d) I am mainly responsible for childcare

Notes: The figure shows estimated coefficients on relative-time dummies from running the event-study specification in (1), where the event is the layoff of the woman in a couple. The circles in pink (connected by the solid line) correspond to the estimates for the woman, the squares in blue (connected by the dashed line) correspond to the estimates for her male partner. The outcomes are: in panel (a), the number of weekly hours spent in paid employment; in panel (b), the number of weekly hours spent doing housework; in panel (c), "fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for", constructed as the average of four dummies for responding "mostly me" to the questions "who is responsible for doing the groceries/cooking/cleaning/washing?"; in panel (d), a dummy for answering "mostly me" to the question "who is responsible for childcare". Data: United Kingdom's *Understanding Society*, 1991-2019. The sample includes individuals aged 15 and older. The estimation includes individual, time, and age fixed effects.

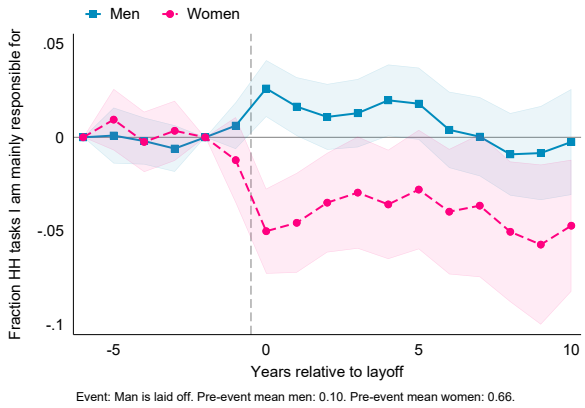
Figure 2: Responses To Man's Layoff



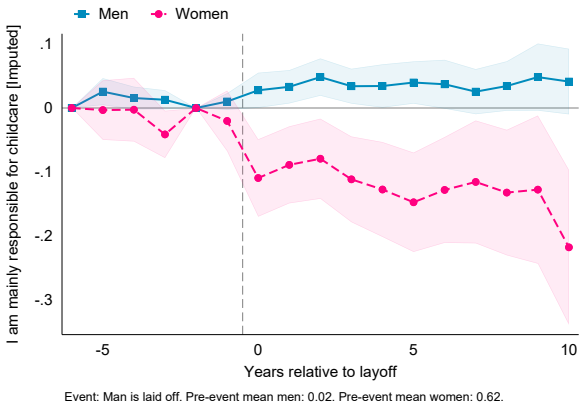
(a) Weekly hours in paid employment



(b) Weekly hours in housework



(c) Fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for

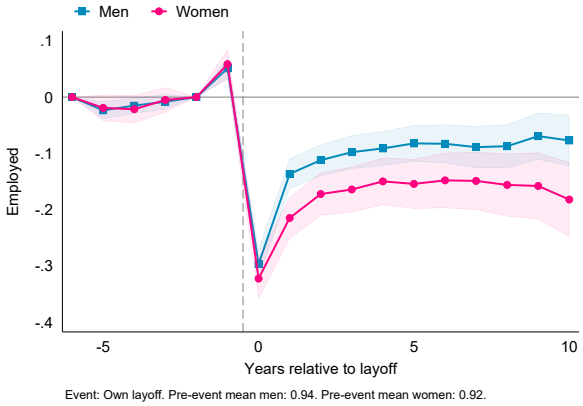


(d) I am mainly responsible for childcare

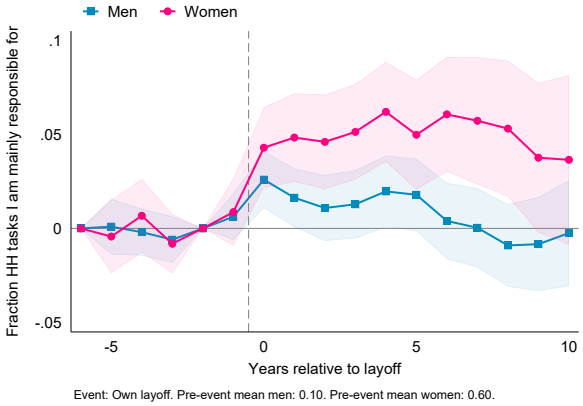
Notes: The figure shows estimated coefficients on relative-time dummies from running the event-study specification in (1), where the event is the layoff of the man in a couple. The circles in blue (connected by a solid line) correspond to the estimates for the man, the squares in pink (connected by a dashed line) correspond to the estimates for the female partner. The outcomes are: in panel (a), the number of weekly hours spent in paid employment; in panel (b), the number of weekly hours spent doing housework; in panel (c), "fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for", constructed as the average of four dummies for responding "mostly me" to the questions "who is responsible for doing the groceries/cooking/cleaning/washing?"; in panel (d), a dummy for answering "mostly me" to the question "who is responsible for childcare". Data: United Kingdom *Understanding Society*, 1991-2019. The sample includes individuals aged 15 and older. The estimation includes individual, time, and age fixed effects.

Figure 3: Comparing Men's and Women's Responses to Own and Partner's Layoff

Own Layoff

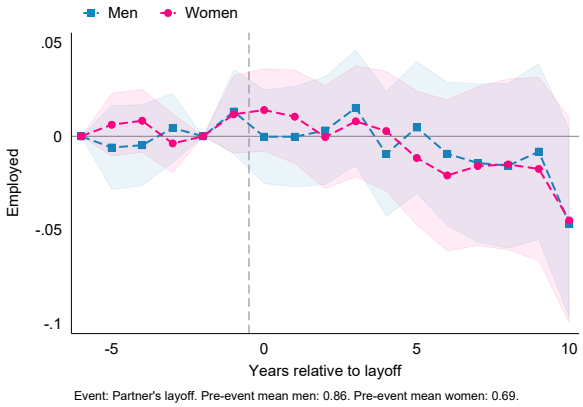


(a) Employment (Own layoff)

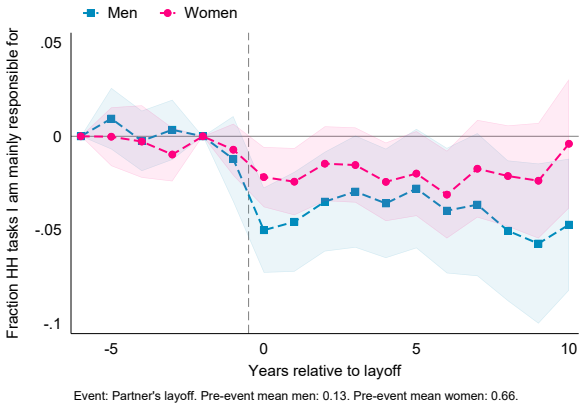


(b) Housework (Own layoff)

Partner's Layoff



(c) Employment (Partner's layoff)



(d) Housework (Partner's layoff)

Notes: The figure shows estimated coefficients on relative-time dummies from running the event-study specification in (1). In panels (a) and (b) the event is own layoff; in panels (c) and (d) the event is partner's layoff. The squares in blue correspond to the estimates for men, the circles in pink correspond to the estimates for women; solid lines (in panels a and b) indicate responses to own layoff, while dashed lines (in panels c and d) indicate responses to partner's layoff. The outcomes are: in panels (a) and (c), a dummy for being in paid employment; in panels (b) and (d) "fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for", constructed as the average of four dummies for responding "mostly me" to the questions "who is responsible for doing the groceries/cooking/cleaning/washing?". Data: United Kingdom *Understanding Society*, 1991-2019. The sample includes individuals aged 15 and older. The estimation includes individual, time, and age fixed effects.

Tables

Table 1: Intensive Margin Responses To Woman's Layoff

	Own		Partner's	
	Paid Work	Housework	Paid Work	Housework
Post-Layoff SR	-10.63***	1.603***	-0.465	-0.347
	(0.649)	(0.328)	(0.571)	(0.212)
Post-Layoff LR	-7.023***	1.534***	-0.171	-0.592*
	(0.698)	(0.380)	(0.726)	(0.242)
Pre-layoff mean	28.90	13.89	37.98	6.233
N	129346	118128	116120	111855
N (Individuals)	16916	15466	15647	14784

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Outcomes are measured in hours per week. Short-run (SR) indicates the year of the layoff and the following; Long-run (LR) indicates years 2 through 10 after the layoff. All regressions include individual, year, and age fixed effects. Errors are clustered at the individual level.

Table 2: Intensive Margin Responses To Man's Layoff

	Own		Partner's	
	Paid Work	Housework	Paid Work	Housework
Post-Layoff SR	-12.84***	1.370***	-0.0895	-0.827**
	(0.636)	(0.180)	(0.448)	(0.277)
Post-Layoff LR	-6.480***	1.028***	0.401	-0.719*
	(0.667)	(0.202)	(0.544)	(0.317)
Pre-layoff mean	41.32	5.344	22.37	15.76
N	121378	117296	134552	122820
N (Individuals)	16332	15437	17579	16081

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Outcomes are measured in hours per week. Short-run (SR) indicates the year of the layoff and the following; Long-run (LR) indicates years 2 through 10 after the layoff. All regressions include individual, year, and age fixed effects. Errors are clustered at the individual level.

Table 3: Extensive Margin Responses To Woman's Layoff, interacted with Gender-Progressiveness

	Own		Partner's	
	Employed	Housework Tasks	Employed	Housework Tasks
Post-Layoff SR	-0.314***	0.0422**	-0.00827	-0.0273*
	(0.0286)	(0.0154)	(0.0171)	(0.0109)
Post-Layoff LR	-0.238***	0.0474**	-0.0190	-0.0366**
	(0.0298)	(0.0172)	(0.0224)	(0.0128)
Post-Layoff SR	0.0642+	-0.00801	0.00793	0.0172
× Progressive	(0.0354)	(0.0203)	(0.0219)	(0.0150)
Post-Layoff LR	0.132***	-0.00879	0.000805	0.0384*
× Progressive	(0.0360)	(0.0227)	(0.0280)	(0.0177)
Pre-layoff mean (Progressive=0)	0.869	0.665	0.888	0.108
Pre-layoff mean (Progressive=1)	0.920	0.568	0.901	0.139
N	133762	114520	131046	107874
N (Individuals)	16362	14858	16199	13938

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: The event is a woman's layoff. Columns (1) and (2) report own outcomes, while columns (3) and (4) report partner's outcomes. The outcomes are: in columns (1) and (3), a dummy for being in paid employment; in columns (2) and (4) "fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for", constructed as the average of four dummies for responding "mostly me" to the questions "who is responsible for doing the groceries/cooking/cleaning/washing?". Short-run (SR) indicates the year of the layoff and the following; Long-run (LR) indicates years 2 through 10 after the layoff. "Progressive" is a dummy for individuals with above-median progressiveness, as defined in the text. All regressions include individual, year, and age fixed effects. Errors are clustered at the individual level.

Table 4: Extensive Margin Responses To Man's Layoff, interacted with Gender-Progressiveness

	Own		Partner's	
	Employed	Housework Tasks	Employed	Housework Tasks
Post-Layoff SR	-0.254***	0.0230**	-0.0117	-0.0578***
	(0.0167)	(0.00795)	(0.0157)	(0.0108)
Post-Layoff LR	-0.116***	0.0129	0.000177	-0.0507***
	(0.0170)	(0.00910)	(0.0191)	(0.0123)
Post-Layoff SR	0.0539*	0.00129	0.0159	0.00931
× Progressive	(0.0247)	(0.0126)	(0.0229)	(0.0178)
Post-Layoff LR	0.0320	0.00211	0.00759	0.0182
× Progressive	(0.0250)	(0.0142)	(0.0277)	(0.0200)
Pre-layoff mean (Progressive=0)	0.947	0.0879	0.637	0.709
Pre-layoff mean (Progressive=1)	0.954	0.109	0.812	0.591
N	135254	113937	136121	116149
N (Individuals)	16422	14760	16409	14769

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes: The event is a man's layoff. Columns (1) and (2) report own outcomes, while columns (3) and (4) report partner's outcomes. The outcomes are: in columns (1) and (3), a dummy for being in paid employment; in columns (2) and (4) "fraction of household tasks I am mainly responsible for", constructed as the average of four dummies for responding "mostly me" to the questions "who is responsible for doing the groceries/cooking/cleaning/washing?". Short-run (SR) indicates the year of the layoff and the following; Long-run (LR) indicates years 2 through 10 after the layoff. "Progressive" is a dummy for individuals with above-median progressiveness, as defined in the text. All regressions include individual, year, and age fixed effects. Errors are clustered at the individual level.

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A Appendix Figures

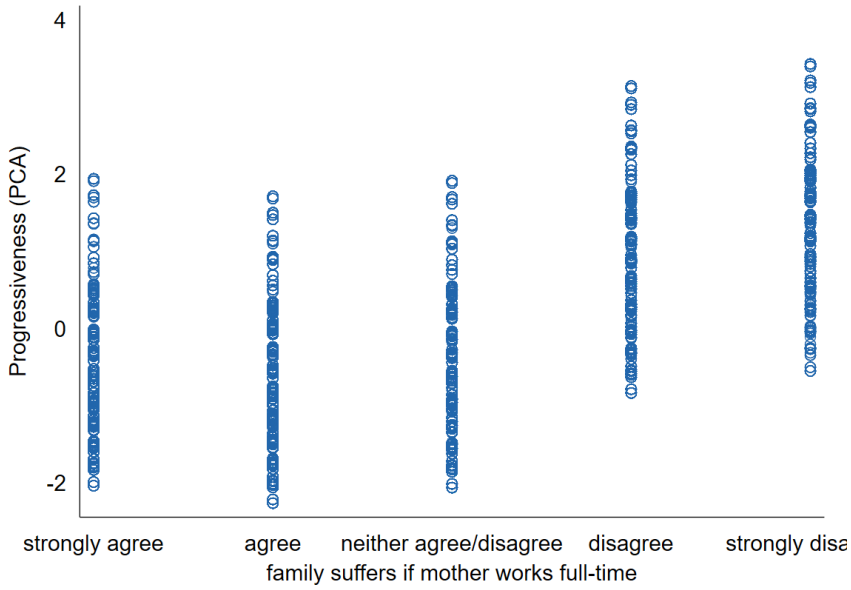


Figure A.1: Scatterplot of the progressiveness index against agreement with "family suffers if woman works full-time"

Notes: The figure shows the progressiveness index, as constructed via principal component analysis, against the level of agreement with the statement "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job."