

STUDY ON U.S. PARENTS' DIVISIONS OF LABOR DURING COVID-19

Study Description

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered family life in the United States. Over the long duration of the pandemic, parents had to adapt to shifting work conditions, virtual schooling, the closure of daycare facilities, and the stress of not only managing households without domestic and care supports but also worrying that family members may contract the novel coronavirus. Reports early in the pandemic suggest that these burdens have fallen disproportionately on mothers, creating concerns about the long-term implications of the pandemic for gender inequality and mothers' well-being. Nevertheless, less is known about how parents' engagement in domestic labor and paid work has changed throughout the pandemic, what factors may be driving these changes, and what the long-term consequences of the pandemic may be for the gendered division of labor and gender inequality more generally.

The Study on U.S. Parents' Divisions of Labor During COVID-19 (SPDLC) collects longitudinal survey data from partnered U.S. parents that can be used to assess changes in parents' divisions of domestic labor, divisions of paid labor, and well-being throughout and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of SPDLC is to understand both the short- and long-term impacts of the pandemic for the gendered division of labor, work-family issues, and broader patterns of gender inequality.

Survey data for this study is collected using Prolific (www.prolific.co), an opt-in online platform designed to facilitate scientific research. The sample is comprised U.S. adults who were residing with a romantic partner and at least one biological child (at the time of entry into the study). In each survey, parents answer questions about both themselves and their partners. Wave 1 of SPDLC was conducted in April 2020, and parents who participated in Wave 1 were asked about their division of labor both prior to (i.e., early March 2020) and one month after the pandemic began. Wave 2 of SPDLC was collected in November 2020. Parents who participated in Wave 1 were invited to participate again in Wave 2, and a new cohort of parents was also recruited to participate in the Wave 2 survey. Wave 3 of SPDLC was collected in November 2021. Parents who participated in either of the first two waves were invited to participate again in Wave 3, and another new cohort of parents was also recruited to participate in the Wave 3 survey. This research design (follow-up survey of panelists and new cross-section of parents at each wave) will continue through 2024, culminating in six waves of data spanning the period from March 2020 through September 2024. An estimated total of approximately 6,500 parents will be surveyed at least once throughout the duration of the study.

SPDLC data will be released to the public two years after data is collected; Wave 1 will be publicly available in April 2022, Wave 2 will be publicly available in November 2022, Wave 3 will be publicly available in November 2023, etc. Data will be available to download in both SPSS (.sav) and Stata (.dta) formats, and the following data files will be available: (1) a data file for each individual wave, which contains responses from all participants in that wave of data collection, (2) a longitudinal panel data file, which contains longitudinal follow-up data from all available waves, and (3) a repeated cross-section data file, which contains the repeated cross-section data (from new respondents at each wave) from all available waves. Codebooks for each survey wave and a detailed user guide describing the data are also available.

Keywords: housework, childcare, employment, parents, COVID-19, gender, well-being