



Swedish Agency for Work
Environment Expertise

Remote Work and Gender Equality in the Labour Market

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Background & Purpose

- Government assignment
- Main question: How does increased remote work after the COVID-19 pandemic affect gender equality in the labour market?
- **Two projects**
- A systematic literature review
- A quantitative analysis



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The Impact of Remote Work on Gender Equality – A Literature Review

Authors

Lena Grip, Associate Professor of Human Geography, Department of Geography, Media, and Communication, *Karlstad University*.

Ulrika Åkerlund, PhD in Human Geography, Department of Geography, Media, and Communication, *Karlstad University*.



Research Questions

- Examine how increased remote work after the COVID-19 pandemic affects gender equality in the labour market.
- Research questions:
 - 1. How do conditions for remote work differ between women and men?
 - 2. How does remote work affect career and salary development, productivity, and work–life balance from a gender equality perspective?



Methodology

- Systematic literature review (PRISMA).
- Searches conducted September 2024.
- Databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PsycInfo.
- Included: 68 peer-reviewed studies + 18 grey literature reports.
- Focus: 2020–2024 (Not-pandemic specific impacts).



Findings: Career & Salary

- Remote work may expand labour market access for women (place-bound workers).
- Mixed evidence on wage gaps: access to work hours may reduce income differences, but promotion and wage premiums may suffer.
- Reduced workplace presence can limit career progression, especially for women and mothers.





Findings: Norms & Expectations

- Gender norms shape how remote work is perceived and organised.
- Men often expected to be more productive when working remotely; mothers often assumed less efficient.
- Stereotypes influence opportunities for advancement and pay.





Findings: Work–Life Balance

- Remote work enables better integration of paid and unpaid work, especially for women.
- Women more often multitask and extend workdays, reducing leisure and recovery time.





Conclusions

- Remote work can promote gender equality by expanding access and flexibility.
- Risks: reinforced gender norms, reduced visibility, and longer working days (especially for women).
- Overall effects are paradoxical: both positive and negative outcomes.
- Policy and workplace design are crucial to mitigate risks and promote equality.





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An Analysis of the Relationship Between Remote Work and Working Hours

Author

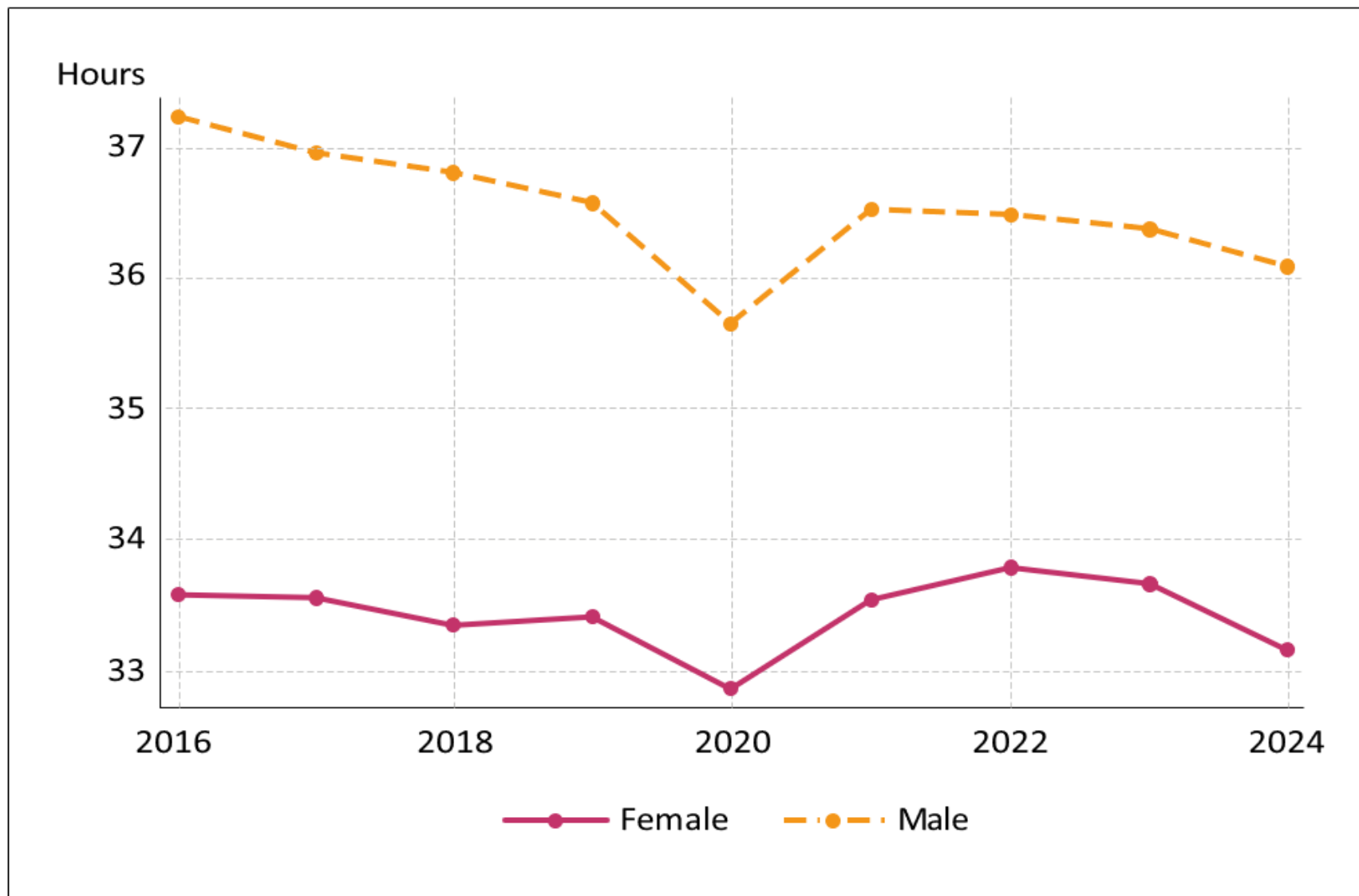
Karin Halldén, Associate Professor of Sociology at the Swedish Institute for Social Research at *Stockholm University*.



Aim & Research Question

- Investigates whether increased remote work has reduced the gender gap in weekly working hours.
- Comparison of men's and women's actual working hours, distinguishing between those who worked remotely and those who did not.

Actual weekly working hours among employees aged 20–64 (hours).





Data & Method

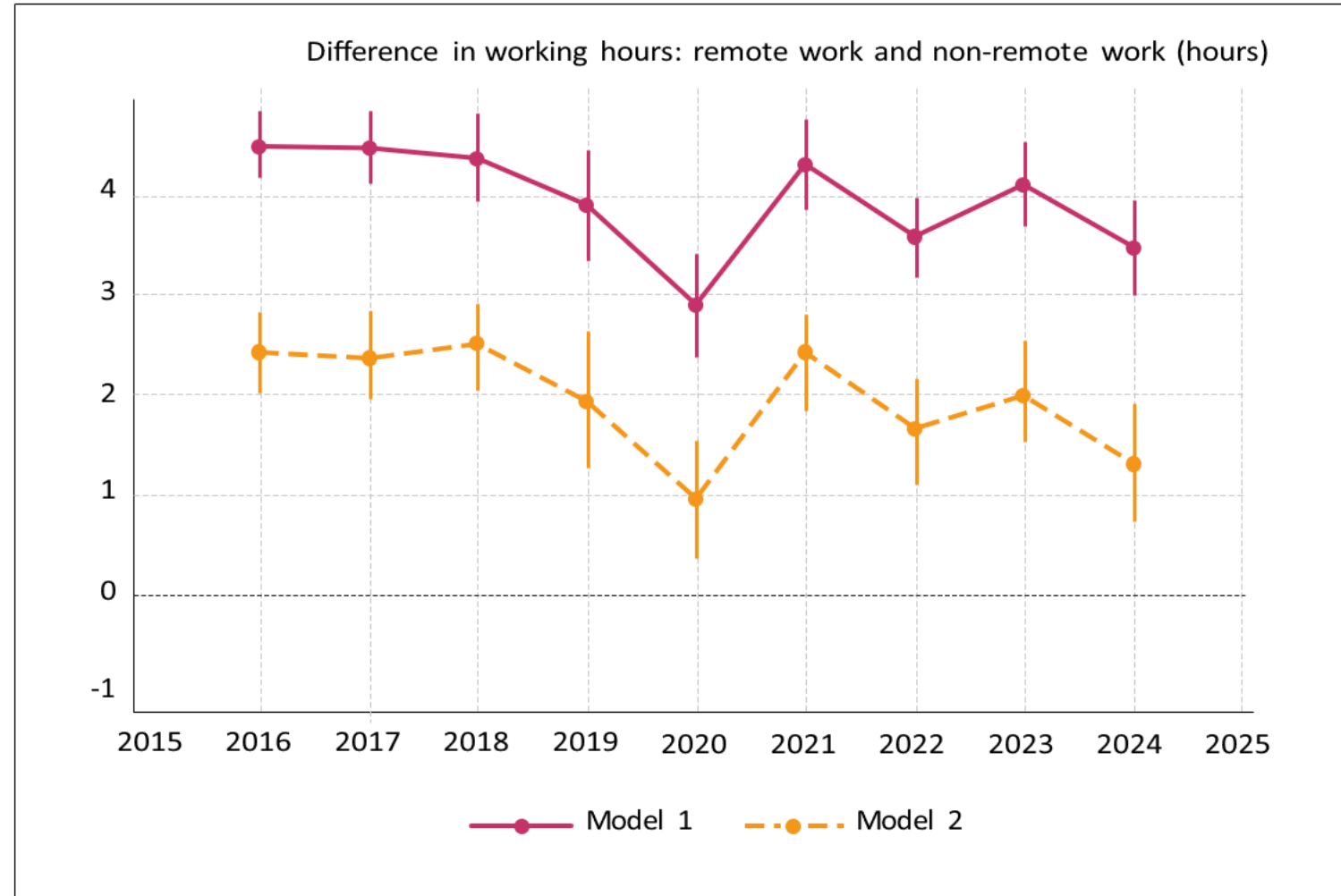
Labor Force Surveys (2016–2024)

Cross-sectional & panel data analyses

Controlled for gender, age, education, family, occupation, etc.



The relationship between remote work and actual weekly working hours among female employees aged 20–64.

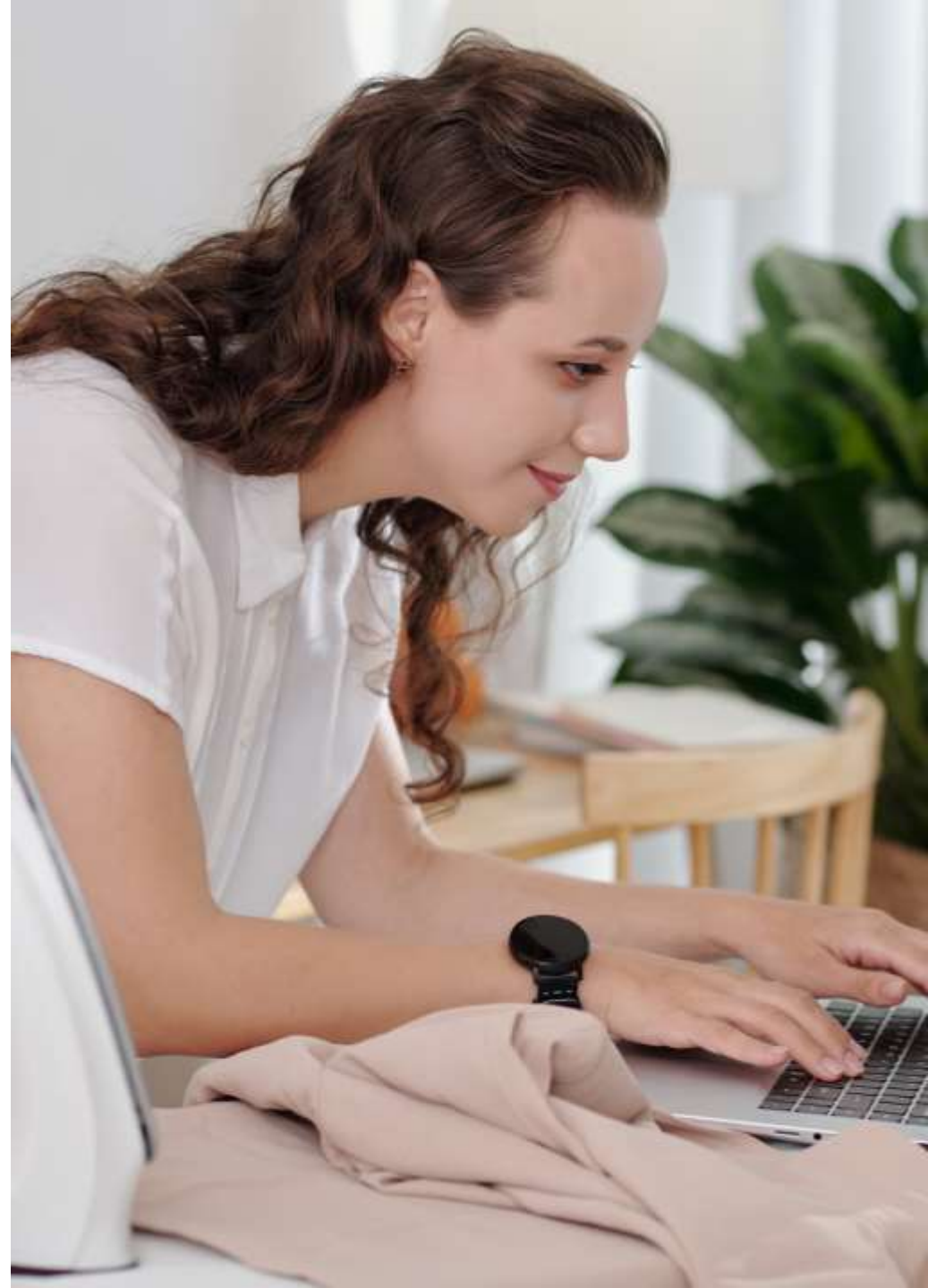


The question is phrased differently in 2020, which is why this measurement point is not comparable with previous or subsequent years. Prior to 2021, the [time period](#) to which the question refers was not specified. Starting in 2021, it was specified as the last month prior to the interview. See Footnote 5 for details. All models include quarterly dummies, Statistics Sweden's weighting factor, and robust standard errors clustered at the individual level. **Model 1** adjusts for age. **Model 2** adjusts for age, education, marital status, number of children, children under the age of seven, occupation, seniority in the occupation, sector, industry, managerial responsibility, workplace size, and type of employment.

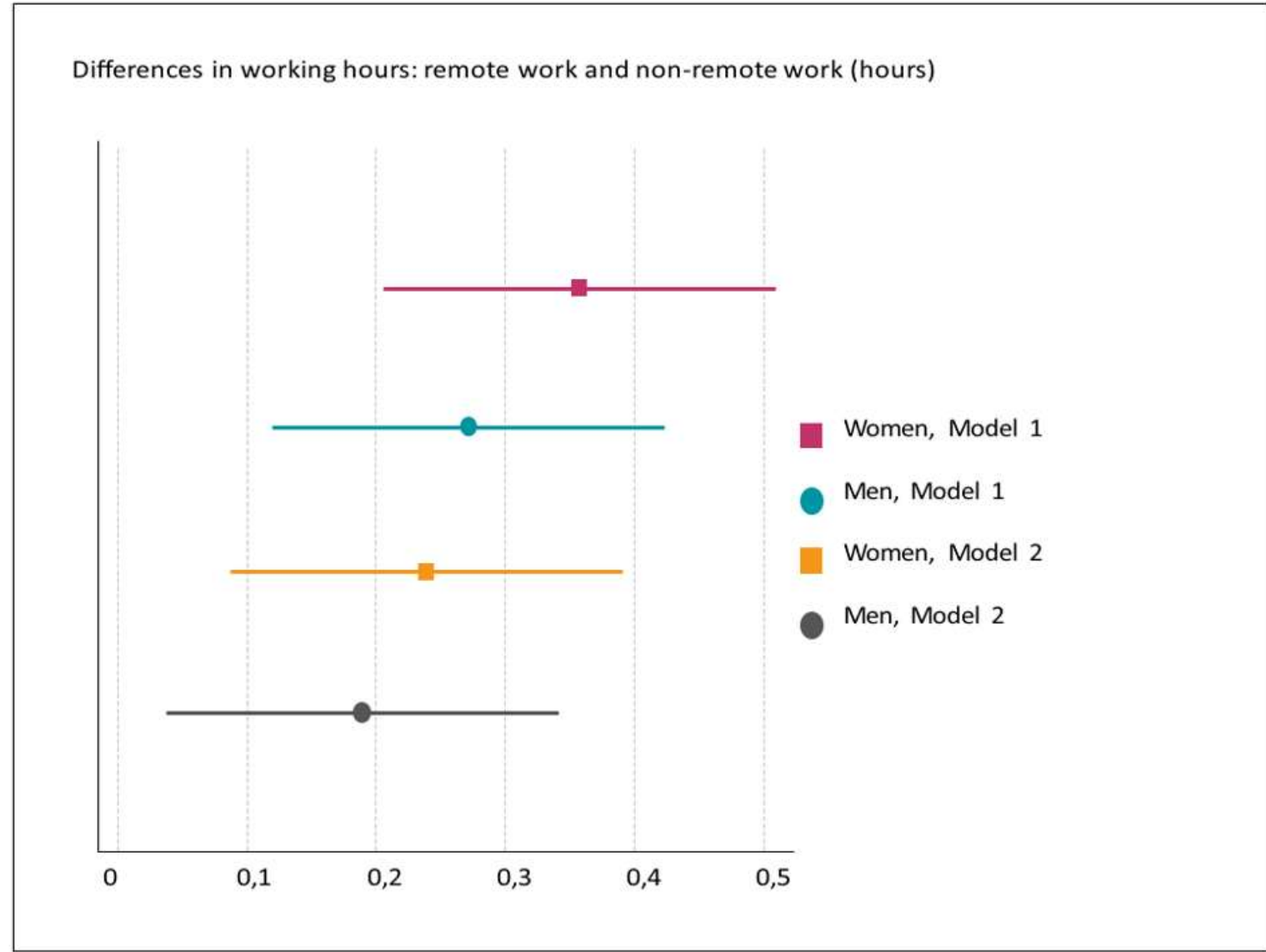


Results – Cross-sectional Analyses

- Positive association between remote work and actual weekly working hours.
- Effect somewhat stronger for women than for men.



The effect of remote work on actual weekly working hours among employees aged 20–64 over the period 2016–2024.



The analyses include quarterly and annual dummies as well as robust standard errors clustered at the individual level. **Model 1** adjusts for age. **Model 2** adjusts for age, education, marital status, number of children, children under the age of seven, occupation, seniority in the occupation, sector, industry, managerial responsibility, workplace size, and type of employment.



Conclusions

- Remote work increases working hours for both women and men.
- Positive but weaker correlation when using panel data
- Statistically significant only for mothers among parents with young children.
- Panel-data shows that most of the correlation is most likely selection effects.



Thank you for your attention!

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