Measuring the impact of COVID-19 on women and men via trade: Microdata linking approach

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The economic consequences of the pandemic and the lockdown measures are not gender neutral.

Lack of gender differentiated data hampers understanding of human consequences and appropriate policy responses.

Investments in statistical infrastructures that allow linking microdata can address (some) of the measurement challenges.
The effects of the pandemic are not gender neutral – regressing unemployment versus Covid-19 prevalence


April (50 countries)  June (50 countries)  July (30 countries)

Note: red rectangles indicate unemployment y-y growth of women, red line is a population weighted relationship between unemployment and Covid-19 prevalence. Blue circles and blue lines represent male data.
Is male employment likely to suffer more as the crisis spreads to industries and international trade plummets?

Cyclical component of women's and men's unemployment

International trade y-y growth vs. women's/men's unemployment

Evidence from the EU: male employment is related to trade fluctuations and reacts more strongly to business cycles.

Societal consequences and impact on jobs are still unfolding.
Microdata linking as a tool for a better policy

• The above evidence is silent about reasons, relies strongly on assumptions, is not particularly detailed, and it is limited to countries with sex disaggregated employment data.

• More granular data and statistics are needed to explore causality and inform policy

• An example: how to assess the relationship between trade and women’s and men’s employment.
Statistical sources for gender and trade analyses at national statistical offices

- Statistical Business Register (SBR)
- Foreign Affiliate Statistics (FATS)
- International Trade in Goods Statistics (ITGS)
- International Trade in Services Statistics (ITS)
- Structural Business Statistics (SBS)
- Combined employer-employee data

- Firms, activity sectors, ownership links, ultimate controlling institutional unit
- International sales/imports, trade partners...
- Performance indicators (productivity...)
- Workers, occupations, education, earnings.
Gender pay gap and participation to trade: evidence from Finland

Gender pay gap: two-way traders vs. non-traders

- Women are less often found in firms that trade internationally and are concentrated in support functions.
- Gender pay gap is larger within international traders overall, but smaller among managers and professionals in two-way trader than in non-traders.
- International trade more likely to impact male employment in the business sector.
- The lower skill level professions may be at risk, however.

Source: Statistics Finland database
Conclusions

➢ Employment consequences of Covid-19 are not gender neutral due to occupation and industry segregation

➢ Detailed data of women and men in trade would allow better assessments of human consequences

➢ Countries can invest in statistical infrastructures that allow linking and reusing existing data.

➢ For many countries these data are already at hand.
thank you!