

The *good life* in the lockdown? Differences between women and men with and without children in the household during the Covid-19 lockdown 2020 in Switzerland

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The concept of a *good life* and how to reach one are long debated philosophical issues. Based on the “capability approach” (Senn 1999; 2012), the *good life* can be described as the potential and freedom to be able to aim for what a person would like to reach in life. The COVID-19 pandemic was an external shock, which provoked countries over the globe to put in place different versions of lockdowns, described as the closure of many services. In Switzerland from March 16, 2020 to May 11, 2020 most schools remained closed and most families had to take care of their children and other dependent household members. In this moment, the potentials, and freedoms to aim for what each person likes to reach in life was restricted to a high extent. However, not everyone was affected similarly. Therefore, this paper asks: Who could best reach *good life* during lockdown in spring 2020 of the Covid-19 crisis: Women or men with or without children in the household (HH)?

This paper is based on an online survey with about 1'000 people – students and employees from the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts – Social Work – living in Switzerland during the lockdown. We analyzed the data that was answered between April 23 and May 21, 2020. The following research questions were asked for the four groups of interest, women, and man with or without children in the households: Which differences between the groups emerge during the lockdown in the change of (Q1) behavior, (Q2) consequences from the lockdown as well as (Q3) the support system? We analyzed four questions from the survey by analyzing differences in the responses between the four groups: women and men with and without children in the household. Means have been compared with a variance analysis (ANOVA) and Post-hoc analysis after Bonferroni and Items with a nominal scale have been analyzed with a Chi²-analysis.

Our results show for all three research questions main differences between persons with children in households, who were restricted more than persons without children in households. By focusing on gender differences in households with children, we find that women with children in the household were restricted the most in how they could aim for their *good life*. We found these results by looking at their *behavior*, which was constrained by childcare activities; at the *consequences* from the lockdown, such as personal conflicts; and a lack of private *support system*, e.g., support from friends and families.

From our results, we conclude that women did most of the care-work. However, our results also reveal some unexpected gender-patterns: Men with children in the household expressed restrictions in their behavior and felt a lack of institutional support even stronger than women, which could have positive effects on gender equity. Our analysis suggests the need for better-elaborated family policies in Switzerland and a formalized support in childcare during a lockdown. Those measures would help people with children in the household to live the *good life during a lockdown*.