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Telework and well-being: are the effect gendered?

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Motivation

- Telework has boomed during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis
 - An acceleration of a slow evolution
 - Now established (at least 28% of jobs could be done remotely in France)
(Boeri et al. 2020)
- Pre-pandemic literature: Ambiguous effects of telework on quality of life and well-being
 - Positive effects: less commuting time, more autonomy at work, better work-life balance (Bailey & Kurland 2002; Dockery & Bawa 2018; Gajendran & Harrison 2007; Hill et al. 2003; Maruyama et al. 2009; Hibrecht et al., 2008; Sullivan, 2012)
 - Negative effects: increased working hours, blurred frontiers btw work and personal life, desynchronisation with colleagues and spouse, isolation, reduced social interaction (Arntz et al. 2019; Hallépée & Mauroux 2019; Rupiotta & Beckmann 2018; Tremblay et al. 2006; Voydanoff 2004; Dockery & Bawa, 2018; Christensen 1987; Bailey & Kurland 2002; Gajendran & Harrison 2007)

- Mixed results on different indicators of well-being
 - Increased life satisfaction, reduced work stress and improved parent-child relationships and shared parenting (Gueguen & Senik, 2022; Allen et al. 2015; Angelici & Profeta 2020; Dockery & Bawa 2018)
 - Lower well-being and poorer perceived health and mental health (Gueguen & Senik, 2022; Lunau et al. 2014; Grant et al. 2013, 2019; Song and Gao, 2019; Haleppee & Mauroux, 2019)
- Effects depend on telework modalities (constrained, autonomy, nb days), work context (work organisation, sector of activity), extra-professional factors (housing conditions, experience, social relations, family responsibilities)

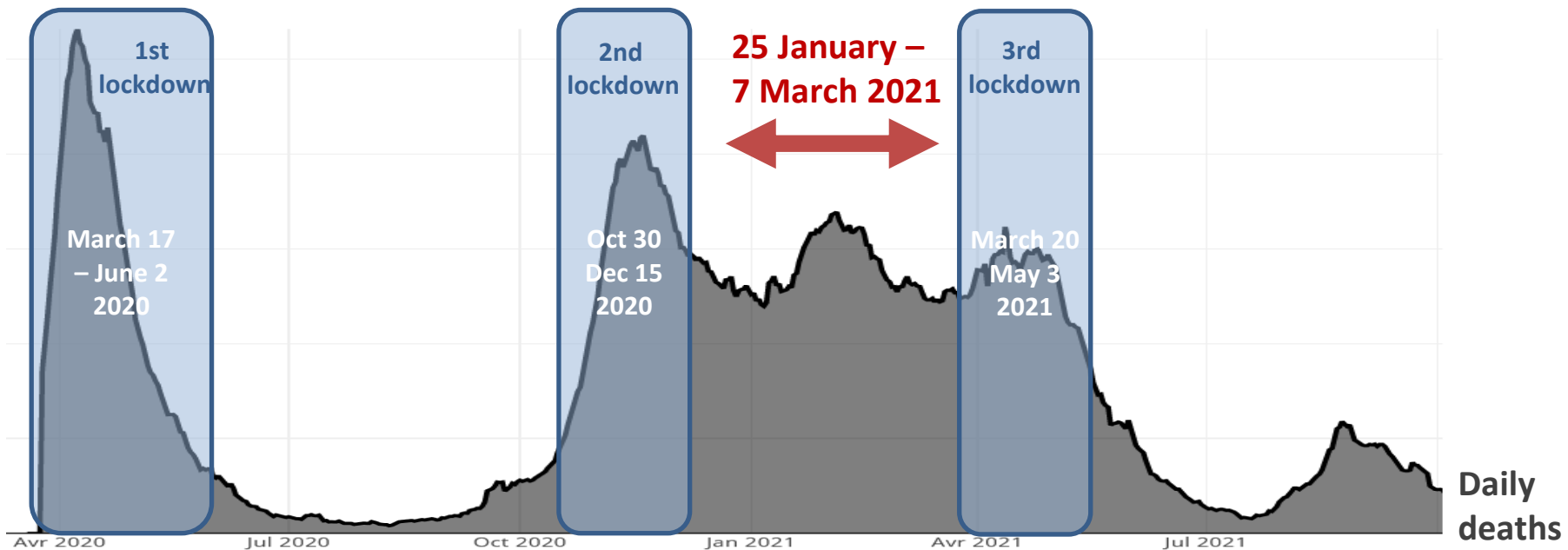
- Gender effects not clear-cut
 - Better management of family and work commitments for women (Chung and Van der Lippe, 2018; Angelici & Profeta 2020)
 - Increases women's total workload, altering the quality of their working time, and increasing role conflict (Sullivan and Lewis, 2001; Lyttelton et al., 2022; Duxbury et al., 2018)
 - Decreased well-being and increased levels of burnout and stress among teleworkers, more so for women than for men (Windeler et al. 2017; Bolger et al. 1989; Duxury et al. 2018; Fan et al. 2019)
- Most literature based on quantitative studies of a small number of employees in companies implementing proactive policies
- Difficult to identify the specific effect of telework in the context in which it is implemented

This research

- Is there gender differences in the link between telework and well-being in France in a pandemic context?
 - **Our hypothesis** : while appearing gender neutral, telework may affect men and women differently, as the home remains marked by persistent inequalities in domestic work
- What is the mediating role of changes in work organisation?

Data

- Tracov survey (French Ministry of Labour)
 - *Ad hoc* survey on working conditions in time of pandemic
 - Around 20,000 individuals from 20 to 62, in employment at the beginning of the pandemic



Method

- Scope: In employment, who have not changed employer since the beginning of the pandemic
- Outcomes:
 - World Health Organisation- Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5)
 - Bad perceived health
 - More emotional stress at work
 - Increased sleep problems
 - More depression or anxiety due to work
- Interest variables: on site / former teleworker / new teleworker

1- As counterfactual we keep non-teleworkers who have similar characteristics as teleworkers

→ Multicategorical matching procedure based on the two teleworking modalities (former teleworkers and new teleworkers) - inverse probability weighting

2- Mediation analysis to take into account the interrelation between teleworking and work characteristics (knb)

5 mediators: organizational work factors (compared to before the pandemics):

- Evolution of work-life balance (better/same/worse)
- More autonomy
- More work overload
- Less support at work
- More digital issues

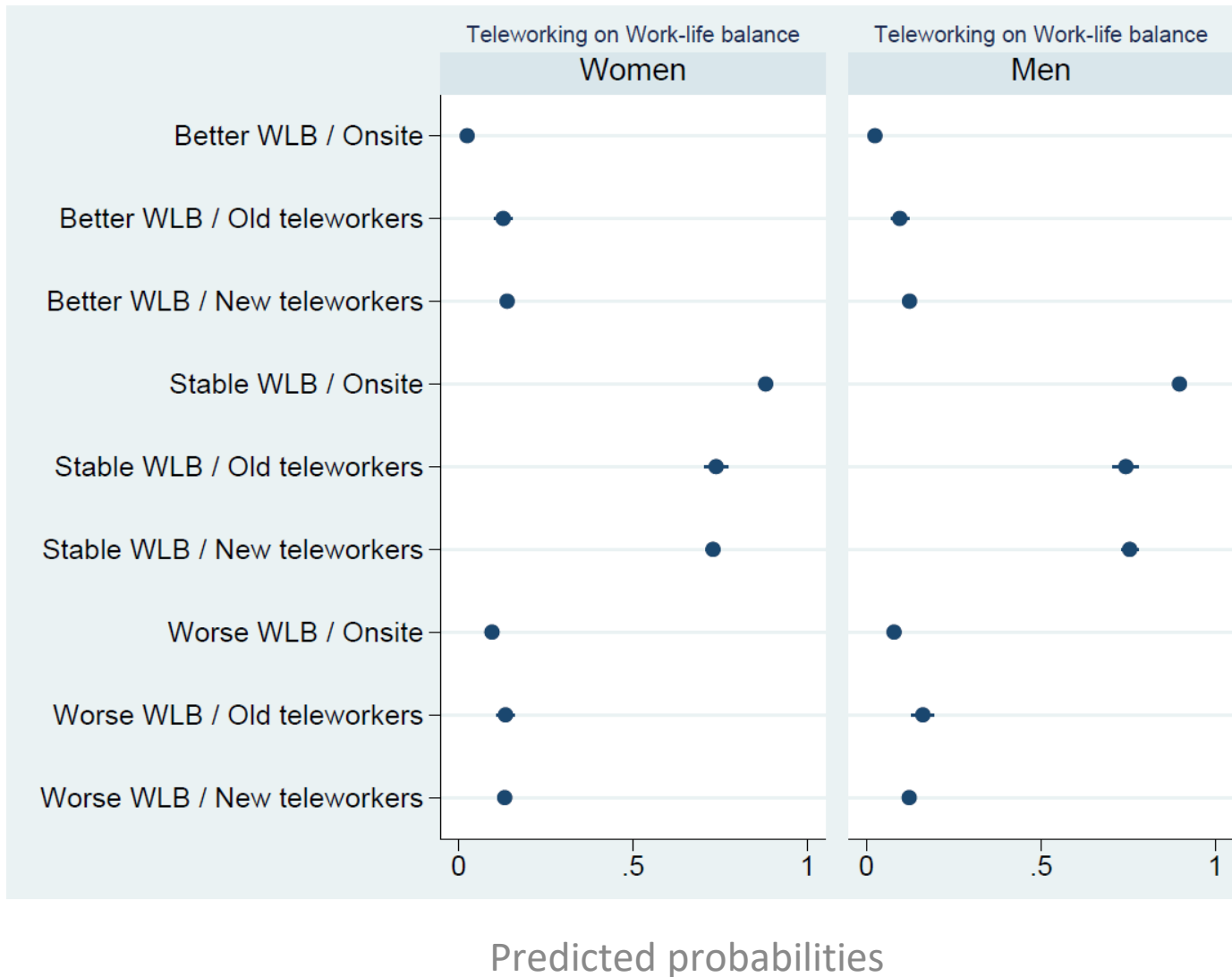
Decomposition between direct effect and indirect effect (mediators)

Controls: **Sex, Age, diplome, PCS, Couple, Age of youngest child, Chronic illness, Financial difficulties of the household, Sector of activity**, Sector (public/private), Fear of Covid, Type of contract, Part-time, Hours worked, rooms in dwelling/person, Density (commune of residence) 8

Direct and indirect effects of teleworking on well-being and health

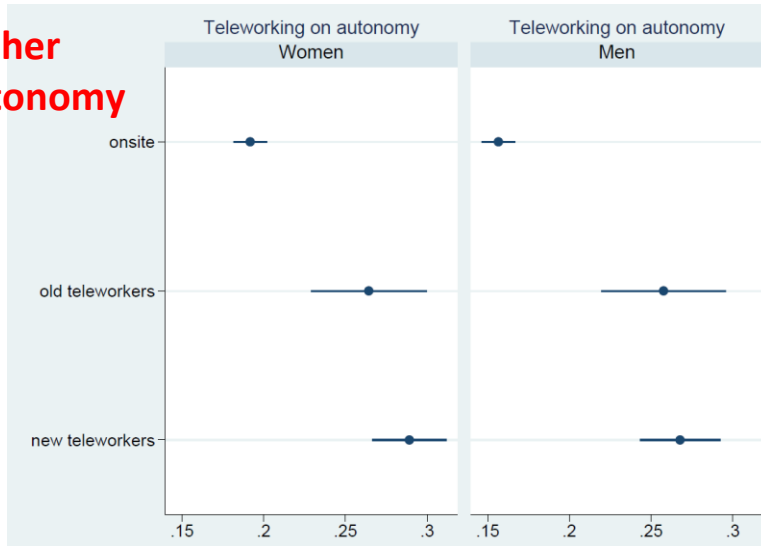
ref= Onsite workers		Low well-being		More sleep issues		More stress at work		Bad perceived health		More Anxiety issues	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Former teleworker	Total effect	1,70***	0,95**	0,28	0,31**	0,04	-0,12	0,33*	0,11	0,41	-0,09
	Direct effect	1,14*	0,61	0,1	0,17	-0,13	-0,24	0,25	0,05	0,24	-0,23
	Mediated effect	0,56**	0,33**	0,18***	0,14***	0,17**	0,12	0,07	0,06	0,17**	0,14*
	Share mediated effect	33%	35%	65%	46%	427%	-97%	23%	58%	41%	-155%
New teleworker	Total effect	1,45***	1,11***	0,57***	0,53***	-0,13	-0,18*	0,31***	0,25**	0,04	0,13
	Direct effect	1,08***	0,67***	0,41***	0,35***	-0,29**	-0,34***	0,26**	0,17*	-0,1	-0,05
	Mediated effect	0,37	0,44***	0,15**	0,18***	0,15*	0,16**	0,05	0,08*	0,14*	0,18**
	Share mediated effect	25%	39%	27%	34%	-115%	-91%	15%	32%	324%	141%

Effects of teleworking on organizational work factors (mediators): Work-life balance

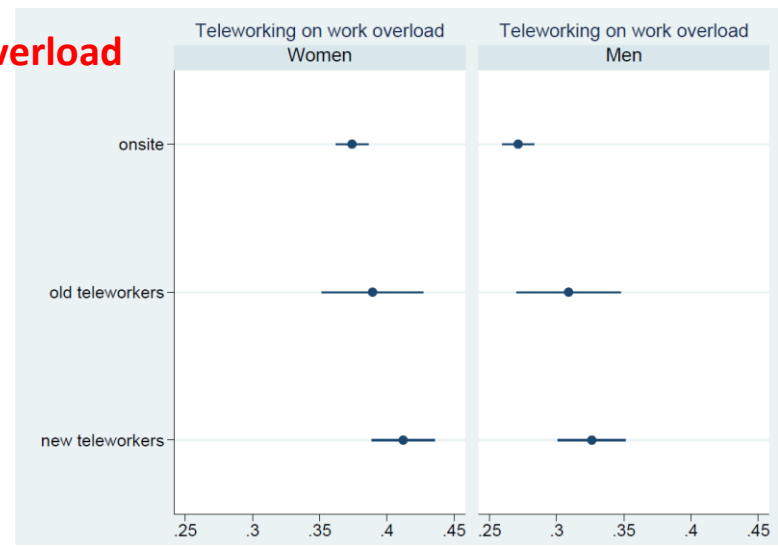


Effects of teleworking on organizational work factors (mediators)

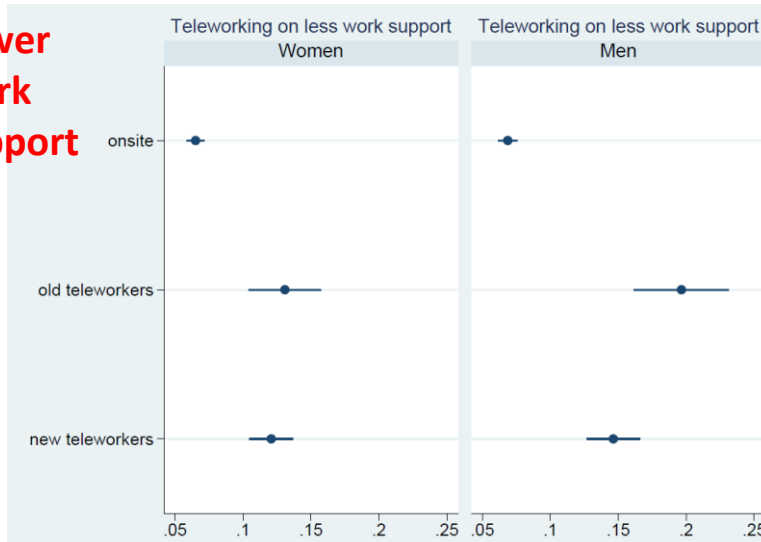
Higher autonomy



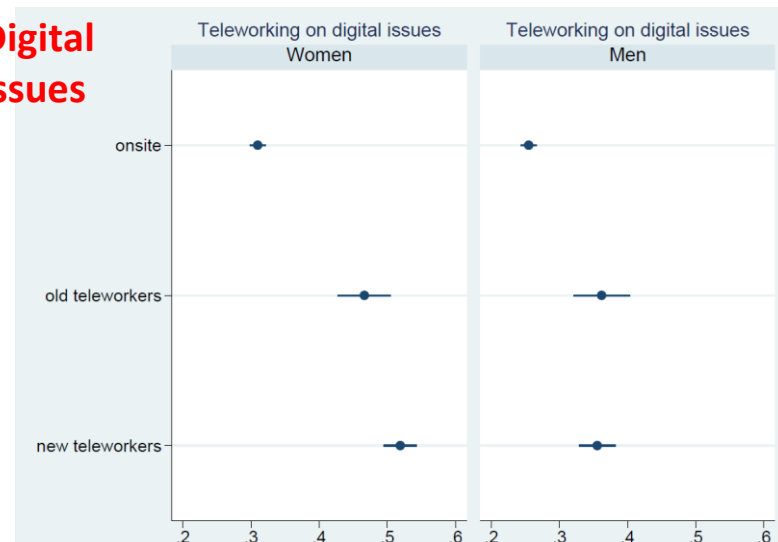
Overload



Lower work support

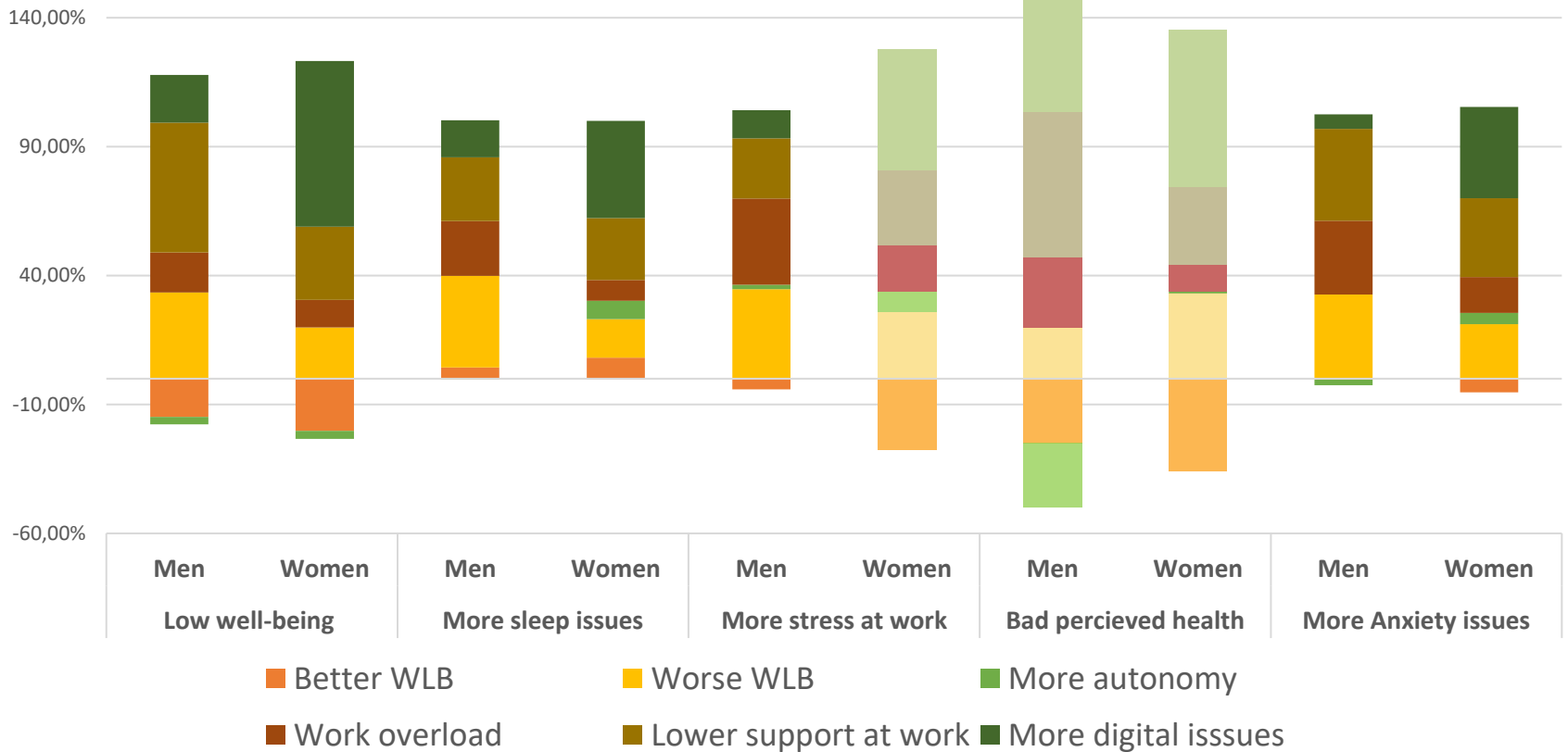


Digital issues



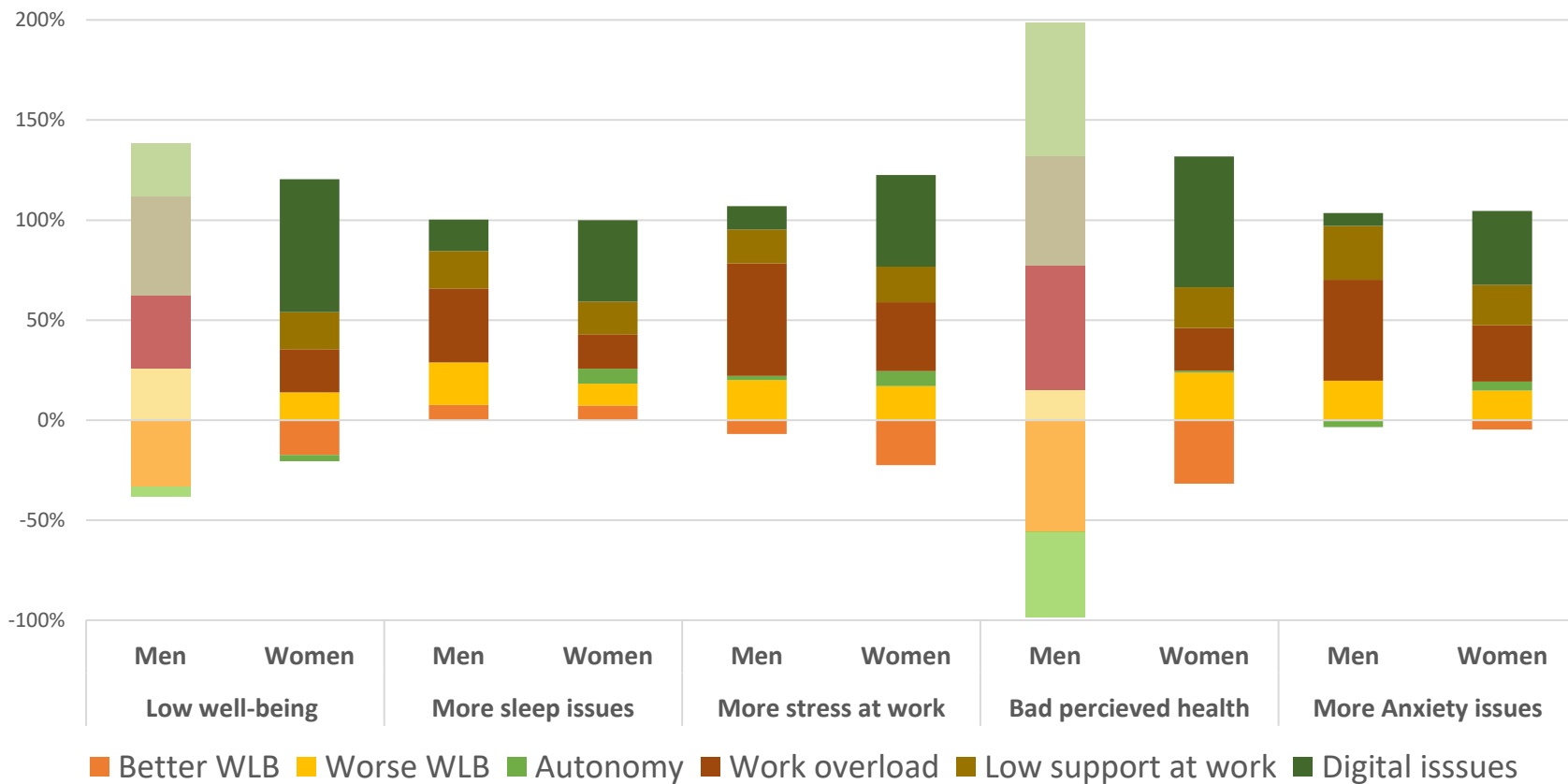
Decomposition of indirect effects

Former teleworkers



Decomposition of indirect effects

New teleworkers



Conclusion

- Mostly negative effects of telework on well-being and health
 - More sleep issues, lower well-being and perceived health
 - Lower stress at work for new teleworkers
- Changes more marked for new teleworkers
- Lower levels of well-being among women but no specific gender effect of telework: our hypothesis not validated
- Organisational work factors (mediators) have expected effects
 - Protective effect of greater autonomy / better work-life balance
 - A deleterious effect of lack of support, work overload and IT problems
- Main effects: IT problems, lack of support and work overload
 - Also deterioration of WLB: work-life spillover and/or specific effect of the pandemic
 - Lack of support for former teleworkers
- Gender differences in mediating effects/mechanisms: More pronounced effects of digital issues for women, more work overload for men
 - Linked to gender segregation of employment

- Direct effect: other factors not taken into account (e.g. social relationships, leisure, domestic time, ...)
- Negative effects raise questions regarding the massive development of telework and the willingness of employees to opt for it
 - Other outcomes not taken into account
- Particular moment in time: pandemics
- Next steps:
 - Number of days teleworked
 - Situation 2 years later with the same set of questions, but a different sample (Tracov2 to come)



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Thanks for your attention

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