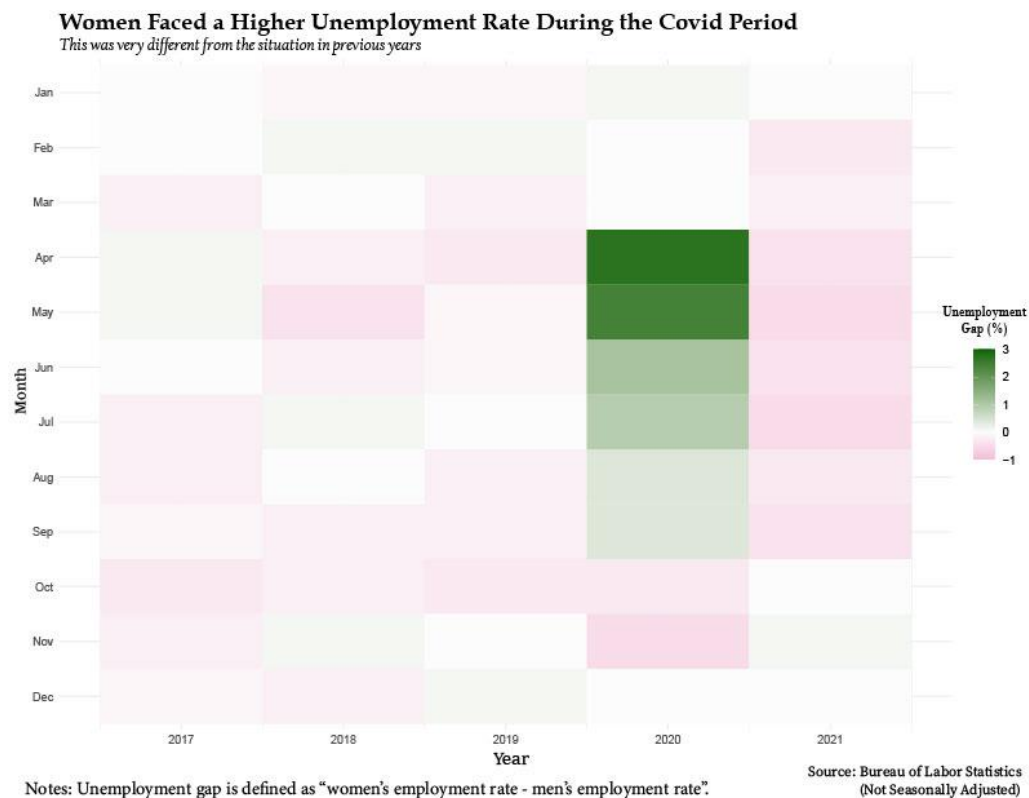


# Does Covid “Forced Women 10 years back” in the Labor Market?

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The covid has brought unprecedented challenges to the US economics and changes in people’s life, the shutdown of firms, the transformation to on-line working, the closure of schools, etc. Among them also came with the fear that different from several previous economic crisis, the Pandemic might bring the gender-related inequality in US labor market backwards, due to the increasing need of taking care of children and the overrepresenting of women in non teleworkable industries, which were the most seriously affected by the pandemic.

## ■ Covid Did Worsen Women’s Situation in the Labor Market, Compared with Men’s.

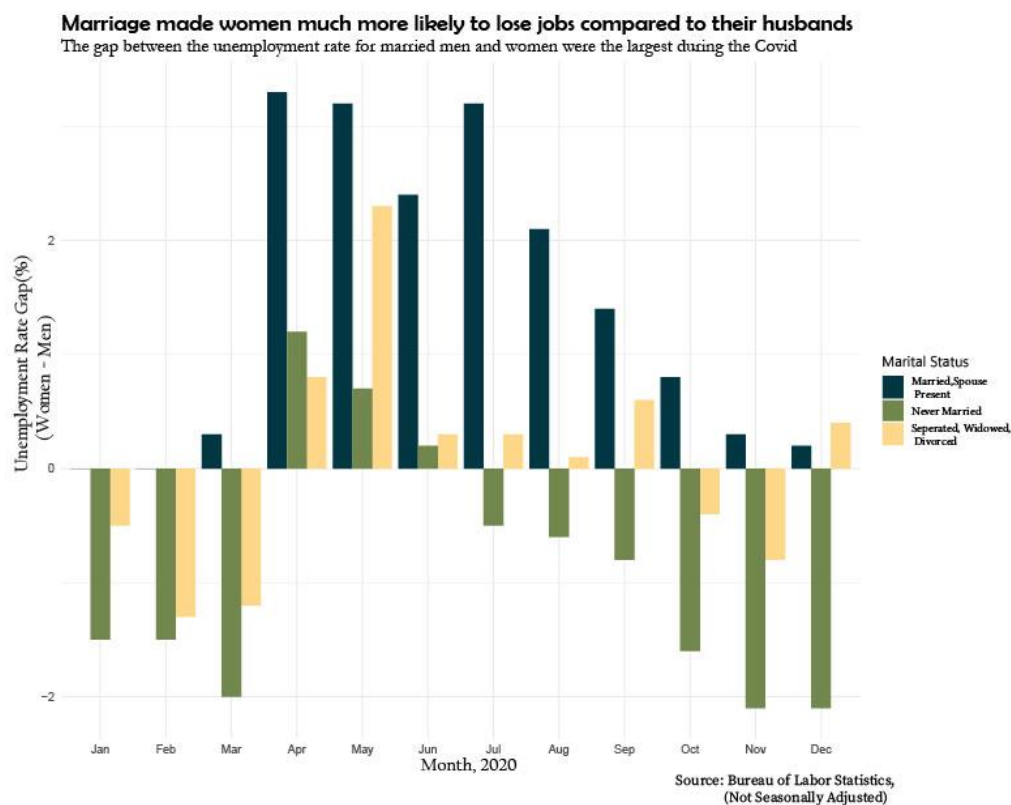


Such fear is supported by the unemployment rate for men and women, data obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. From 2017 – 2019, for most of the months, after being seasonally adjusted, the unemployment rate for women is actually lower than men’s. And the difference between men and women’s unemployment rate was

small by absolute value, generally no more than 0.3%. However, the situation was turned down thoroughly when Covid came. In April, 2020, women's unemployment rate was 2.7% higher than men's, while in the previous years the largest gender unemployment gap, subtracting men's unemployment rate by women's, is only 0.1%. Such large gap persisted for 4 months, and it was only in August that this gap dropped to 0.4%, and returned to the similar situation previous shown in previous years until October.

## ■ Married women's Difficulty

Bloomberg Business used "It's Like This Pandemic Is Forcing Women 10 Steps Back" as the name for an article written in June, 2020, where three women shared the increasing difficulty for them to keep their paying and job or even not exiting the labor market during the Pandemic breakout because of the increasing burden of taking care of children left at home. And they were not individual case, according to Bloomberg business, "23.5 million working moms, who make up almost a third of the female labor force in the U.S., has kids under 18 years old".

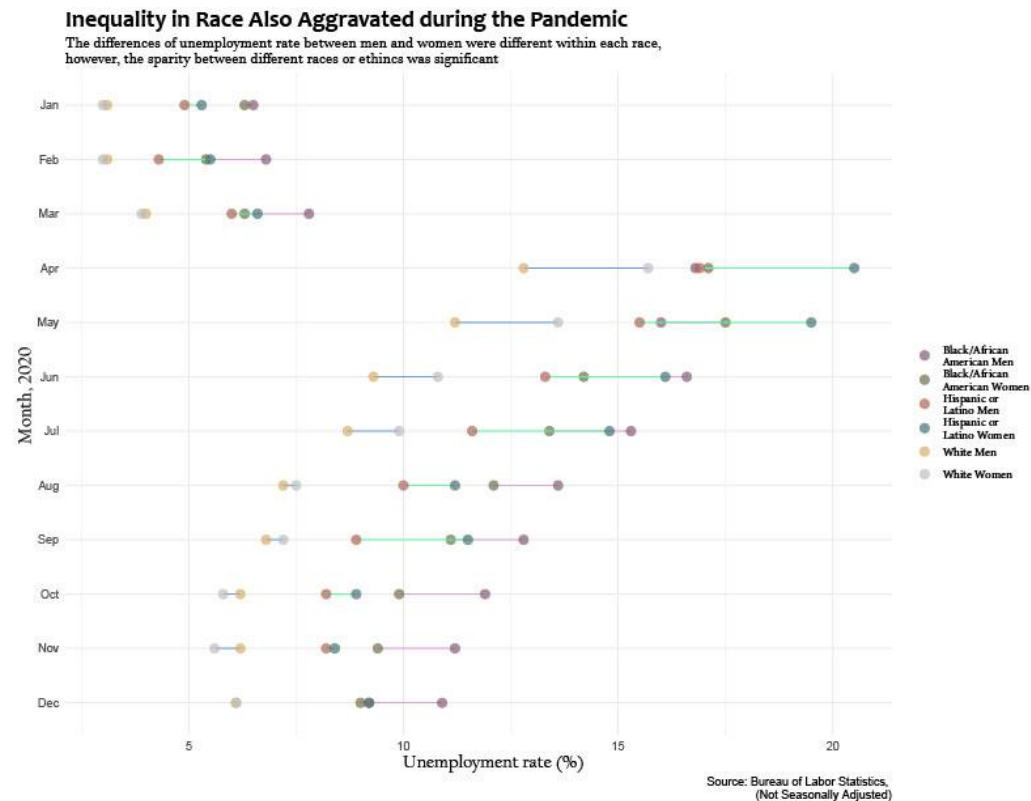


Married women, indeed, were much more likely to lose their jobs, compared with their husbands. The unemployment gap between different genders were enlarged facing the Covid, regardless of marital status, but the gap within the married group was the largest. In a family where both parents worked yet someone has to spend more time on child-caring, it was mother, earning generally speaking less and traditionally considered necessarily to give more efforts on household issues, that would sacrifice her work, whether self-voluntarily or not.

Married women faced around 3% higher unemployment rate during the 4 months mostly affected by the Covid, and such large gap persisted for 7 months until October, also the longest among the 3 different marital status groups. Never married women faced the smallest changes in the unemployment rate gap compared with men of the same marital status during the Pandemic shock, also the fastest to return to normal situation before the Covid, only lasting for 3 months. Widowed, divorced and separated women also faced a suddenly increased higher unemployment gap with men of the same marital status facing the Covid, despite not as large as the married women, and took about 5 months to return.

■ **Not only Gender. Changes among Different Races and Ethics also Worth Noticing.**

Gender was not the only aspect where the systematic inequality in American society went apparent and was to some extent aggravated due to the Covid. Race and ethnic were another aspect.



The gender-based employment differences varied within different races or ethnic groups. Black/African women generally performed better than Black/African men during the Covid, which was similar to the situation before the pandemic. Hispanic/Latino women, on the other hand, suffered much more compared with Hispanic/Latino men. They had the highest unemployment rate among the 6 race/ethnic categories in April and May, roughly 20%, and the gender-based difference in unemployment rate within Hispanic/Latino group lasted for 5 months until September. White women also faced a notable larger shock in April, compared with White men, the effect of which lasting for roughly 4 months, similar to the situation with the overall gender-based unemployment rate difference in the United States.

Yet the disparity between different races or ethnic groups was aggravated with the Covid shock, which has been a long-lasting problem in American society. Even before the Covid, Black/African American had been facing a higher unemployment rate compared with White Americans, and Hispanic/Latino ethnics also faced a higher unemployment rate compared with the non-Hispanic, regardless of which gender. Covid worsen this, as the increase in unemployment rate in the Black/African

American and Hispanic/Latino group after the breakout of Covid, which was between 15% and 20%, was significantly larger than the white American, which was between 10% and 15%. And the Black/African American also faced a slower recovery. At the end of the 2020, they were the group furthest from the general status before February, 2020, the outbreak of Covid.