

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: PENALTIES AND PREMIUMS: CLARIFYING PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACE

Kathleen E. Denny, Doctor of Philosophy 2014

Dissertation Directed By: Prof. Melissa A. Milkie, Department of Sociology

Parental status inequality is pervasive in American workplaces. Mothers' wage penalties and fathers' wage premiums are well-documented, with much academic and policy interest invested in explaining why we observe these disparate earnings patterns. Employer discrimination and biased perceptions of parents are likely, although not easily researchable, culprits. In this dissertation, I contribute to the ongoing effort to explain parental status inequality at work by examining how parents are perceived and evaluated in the context of the professional workplace, beyond differences by gender alone. I advance the literature by assessing how perceptions of mothers and fathers vary based on three dimensions: a) their level of involvement with children; b) their race/ethnicity; and c) characteristics of the perceivers. Data come from three sources: two parallel experimental vignette studies in which nationally representative samples of employed adults rated a fictitious job applicant, one male and one female, who varied on parenthood status (non-parent, nominal parent, less involved parent, highly involved parent) and race/ethnicity (white, African-American, Latino, Asian), as well as a semi-

structured interview study of 15 employers in the professional sector. Together, results from these studies expound upon our existing knowledge of workplace parental penalties and premiums, yielding three major findings: 1) Fathers received an *involvement premium* as highly involved fathers, but not mothers, were offered higher salaries than their childless and less involved counterparts; 2) The documented *perceptual penalty* leveled at mothers in the workplace was most acutely directed at white mothers, whereas Asian mothers, by contrast, were perceived most favorably among women; and 3) Mothers may suffer from an *interpersonal penalty* in the workplace as employers observed that their childless employees perceive parent coworkers with resentment and as being unfairly advantaged. Together, these results bring the cultural terrain of parental status inequality into sharper relief. Following a discussion of the dialectical relationship between culture and policy for reducing parental status inequality at work, I conclude by calling for a reconceptualization of the ideal worker norm based on evidence of a cultural shift underway in how parenthood, namely fatherhood, is interpreted in the workplace.

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THE PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACE

by

Kathleen E. Denny

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2014

Advisory Committee:
Professor Melissa A. Milkie, Chair
Professor Natasha Cabrera
Professor Philip Cohen
Professor Meredith Kleykamp
Professor Jeffrey Lucas

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To my husband, daughter, and mother – you have given me everything

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and express my tremendous gratitude to Professor Melissa Milkie for being the ultimate mentor, advisor, co-author, teacher, and role model. Graduate school was a true pleasure from beginning to end because of her. I also wish to thank my committee members for their individual contributions to and support of this project. A very special thank you to Professor Meredith Kleykamp for being so generous with her time and expertise. Finally, I want to thank my husband for his unfailing support and encouragement throughout my graduate school career.

This research was supported by a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, two Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences Grants, and a Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship from the Graduate School at the University of Maryland.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The battle for gender equality in the workplace has been long-fought and many victories hard-won. Still, much progress has yet to be made on several fronts, including further narrowing the gender wage gap, increasing women's proportionate representation in positions of power, and desegregating rigidly gendered occupational sectors. It is now widely accepted that progress on these fronts in the fight for gender equality at work is contingent on a fight for *parental status* equality. The intersection between gender and parental status is a crucial one in the workplace. For men, parenthood confers status, prestige, and a higher wage. For women, it is a workplace albatross, lowering expectations of and for mothers, as well as depressing their career trajectories and earnings.

Achieving parental status equality in the workplace requires a two-pronged approach, necessitating changes to both social policy and culture, which are themselves inextricably intertwined and dialectically related. Thus, the plight for parental status equality, and, by extension, gender equality, in the workplace are at once dependent on shifts in policies designed to accommodate parents' caregiving responsibilities and shifts in culture and the meaning of parental status at work. In short, women will remain underpaid, underrepresented, and undervalued at work until ameliorative policies *and* the meaning of parenthood are rewritten in the workplace. This dissertation is principally concerned with the latter – evaluating the meaning of parenthood in the professional workplace to gain better insight into the current cultural landscape of parental status inequality at work, ultimately sharpening the focus for designing more effective, comprehensive work-family policies.

Statement of the Problem

Parental status inequality in the workplace is a problem worth a great deal of academic and policy attention. Its implications are problematic, though not equally severe, for both women and men. For women, outcomes at work are crucially dependent on their parental status (Crittenden 2010; England and Budig 2001; Williams 2001), and the workplace “marginalization of motherhood” (Crittenden 2010) has far-reaching consequences.

Workplaces indifferent to or neglectful of parents’ caretaking responsibilities outside of work are referred to as inhospitable or inflexible workplaces that can put primary caregivers (read: mothers) into an untenable position when their work and home worlds conflict. Without reasonable accommodations that facilitate (or at least do not inhibit) women’s ability to perform their roles as both workers and mothers, women can get forced into lower-wage, lower-prestige part-time work or out of the labor force altogether in order to find a workable solution to the conflict (Stone 2007).

For working-class and single mothers, the devaluation of motherhood and the refusal to better accommodate their needs can force mothers to choose between a paycheck and their children, an impossible choice that ultimately pushes many women out of the workplace and, with their children, into poverty (Crittenden 2010; Misra, Moller, and Budig 2007). For the highly educated, inhospitable workplaces structured by parental status inequality can also lead women to exit the workforce altogether. Although with less dire financial consequences for those married to high-earning men, professional women’s “opting out” seizes them of their careers on which they spent so much time, money, and energy, not to mention their formerly central worker identities (Stone 2007).

For men, being a father has far rosier implications. Fathers, by contrast, are perceived as responsible, reliable members of the workforce (Coltrane 2004; Hodges and Budig 2010) and are remunerated as such (Killewald 2013). Importantly, however, scholars assert that fathers (and mothers) are subject to rigid masculine norms in the workplace that deter fathers' greater family involvement (Williams 2010). Existing theorizing on the "ideal worker" maintains that the workplace exemplar is the breadwinning father with a stay-at-home spouse whose home life does not interfere or appear to take priority over his work life (Williams 2001). This model of masculinity to which men are beholden propels inequality between fathers and mothers at work but also disadvantages men who want or need to deviate from it. Although fathers -- even "non-ideal" fathers -- are much less likely to be forced out of work and pushed into poverty than mothers, it is important to emphasize that fathers too are disadvantaged by workplace cultures that adhere to traditional, rigid masculine norms (Williams 2010).

In this dissertation, I contribute to our understanding of parental status inequality by assessing the meaning of parenthood at work. Specifically, I examine how mothers and fathers are perceived and evaluated in the context of the professional workplace. A wealth of existing research has paved the way for this study, providing rich knowledge of how people are perceived and rewarded differently by gender and parental status. I expound upon this literature by drilling deeper to understand how parents are evaluated based on other critical dimensions of difference, beyond gender alone. In doing so, I heed the call of intersectionality theory (Collins 1994, 2000) and avoid conceiving of people and patterns in overly generalizing, monolithic terms (i.e., all mothers or all fathers).

I examine how perceptions of parents vary in the professional workplace by their race/ethnicity and by how involved they are with their children. By moving beyond the well-trodden path of research that examines the dual-status interaction of gender and parental status and breaking new ground in understanding how perceptions differ at the intersection of multiple key statuses, I am able to provide an even clearer picture of the landscape of parental status inequality in the workplace. Having access to a more focused picture of the cultural context is critical not only for more effective policy development but for workplace and employer *awareness* more generally. A better understanding of the problem will yield more effective attempts at solutions.

In the next section, I describe the state of the field more generally, briefly laying out the major patterns identified in the literature on parental status inequality in the workplace in terms of both earnings and perceptions. I then provide a brief description of each chapter that follows, as well as outline the justification for focusing on the context of the professional workplace.

Parental Status Inequality in the Workplace

Mothers' wage penalty (Benard and Correll 2010; Benard, Paik, and Correll 2008; Budig and England 2001; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007; Kalist 2008; Loughran and Zissimopoulous 2007; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Zhang 2009) and fathers' wage premium (Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010; Keizer, Dykstra, Poortman 2010; Koslowski 2011; Lundberg and Rose 2000) are well-established in the literature. All else being equal, these studies find that fathers earn more on average than men who aren't fathers and all women, whereas mothers are the lowest earners in the labor force. The

extent of the premium varies by study, where most research finds wages of fathers between four and nine percent higher than non-fathers controlling for a range of human capital factors and the wages of mothers between five and seven percent lower than non-mothers controlling for a similar range of factors.

Scholars account for this pattern of paternal advantage and maternal disadvantage through several explanations, including: a) that fathers are more productive (e.g., work more hours) than their workmates and that mothers are less productive, b) that the same men who become fathers are just better workers and the same women who become mothers are just poorer workers (selection bias), and c) employers consciously or unconsciously perceive fathers more favorably and perceive mothers less favorably, evaluating the former more positively, promoting them more readily, and offering them higher wages. Two additional explanations are common within the motherhood penalty literature to account for mothers' wage disadvantage – d) that mothers are more likely to work in “child friendly” occupational sectors that are less lucrative but more hospitable to seasonal and part-time work, and e) that mothers have amassed less education and work experience than their workmates because they have been bearing and caring for children. Overall, explanations a, b, d, and e account for a significant proportion -- though not all -- of the observed wage penalties and premiums among mothers and fathers, respectively. Researchers contend that biased employer perceptions (explanation c) are an important link helping to explain wage inequality by parental status.

Outside of a statistical residual, however, it has proven methodologically challenging to effectively study employer discrimination in the workplace. Experimental studies are a valuable method for assessing bias. They can, and have, shown that holding

all else constant, mothers are evaluated least favorably on consequential workplace outcomes, such as perceived levels of commitment and competence, whereas fathers are found to be evaluated most favorably on these dimensions (Correll et al. 2007; Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2004; Etaugh and Folger 1998; Fuegen et al. 2004). Although these studies have made great strides in shedding light on parental status inequality in the workplace by elucidating preference for fathers over equally qualified others, questions remain on several fronts.

First, much of the research assessing perceptions of parents in the workplace describes a very similar type of parent – often a white nominal parent; that is, a parent in “name only” whose name suggests that she/he is white (e.g., “Ann/Scott Davis”). In other words, we know very little about how perceptions of parents vary by important status characteristics other than gender.

Second, the majority of the research assessing workplace biases toward parents uses experiments based on relatively small samples of undergraduate students. Although they have been considerably valuable to the field, gaps remain in our knowledge as to how older, employed respondents better versed in workplace norms and culture evaluate parents in a work context.

Further, without larger, more diverse samples, studies have been limited in the extent to which they can assess variation in perceptions of parents by characteristics of the perceivers. This “three paper” dissertation, as I describe below, approaches the topic of parental status inequality through a cultural lens and will clarify and expand the literature on perceptions of parents in the workplace.

The Current Study

In this dissertation, I address these gaps in our knowledge of workplace parental status inequality by examining how perceptions of parents differ by two important dimensions of difference among parents – their level of involvement with their children and their race/ethnicity – as well as how perceptions of parents vary by potentially relevant characteristics of the perceivers, including their gender, race, and parental status.

Data to address these objectives come from two experimental vignette studies and a semi-structured interview study of employers. In the vignette studies, nationally representative samples of employed adults rated a fictitious job applicant, one male and one female, who varied on race (African-American, Latino, Asian, white) and parental involvement (non-parent, nominal parent, less involved parent, highly involved parent). To supplement these findings and add nuance to the quantitative patterns, I also conducted 15 interviews with employers in a diversity of occupations within the professional sector. The interviews afforded insight into the sometimes subtle images, stereotypes, and narratives employers hold of parents, and different types of parents, in the workplace. I variously draw on data from both vignettes and the interviews in the three papers that constitute this dissertation.

In Chapter Three, following a brief methodological overview, I examine how parents are evaluated differently by level of involvement with children. Current conceptualizations of the “ideal worker” indicate that the unconstrained, fully committed work devotee is regarded most favorably in the workplace. Accordingly, we would presume that parents, both men and women, who were identified as less involved with their children would be evaluated more positively in terms of future work success than

parents identified as more involved. Results from existing empirical research, however, lead to ambiguous conclusions about how, especially men's, parental involvement is evaluated in the workplace. In this chapter, I draw on data from both vignette studies as well as the supplemental interview data to examine how different levels of father involvement were perceived at work and the resulting implications for our understanding of the ideal worker standard thought to undergird American workplaces.

Chapter Four assesses how evaluations of applicants' parenthood status varied by their race/ethnicity based on quantitative results from both vignette studies. Theories of status interaction, particularly intersectionality and expectation states theories, submit that workplace outcomes, including and especially others' perceptions, depend considerably on how one's status characteristics are permuted. Moreover, although statuses are individually associated with dis/advantage (i.e., greater advantage associated with being a man than being a woman), intersectionality theory emphasizes that statuses are not purely additive in their dis/advantage but instead that "the subtle machinations of power, domination, and subordination work in complex ways for various groups" (Wingfield 2012, p. 3). Accordingly, I draw from both vignette studies to ascertain how the tri-status interaction among gender, parental involvement, and race, is associated with performance and reward expectations of applicants.

Chapter Five examines how parents are perceived by colleagues at work as interpreted by their employers. In the previous chapters, I use vignette results to examine how respondent gender and parental status (Chapter 3) and respondent race (Chapter 4) influence evaluations of the fictitious job applicants. In Chapter Five, I present results of an exploratory study of the interview data examining employers' accounts of how

childless co-workers perceive of their parent colleagues. Unlike the more conventional vertical approach to studying negative perceptions of parents -- that is, how employers (superiors) evaluate their employees (subordinates) -- I explore negative perceptions *among* co-workers. I term this “lateral backlash” and speculate on its consequences for exacerbating parental status inequality at work.

In all, these three studies bring into sharper focus the current picture of parental status inequality in the professional workplace. By more precisely identifying who is on the receiving end of parental penalties and premiums and who is on the distributing end, we are better equipped to pursue effective solutions that broaden the premiums and abate the penalties through policy development and workplace initiatives.

A Focus on the Professional Workplace

I focus this research in the context of the professional workplace for several reasons. First, by and large, the majority of experimental research on the topic of parents and workplace discrimination has taken place in the white-collar context. In order to engage with and expand upon existing research in this area, I followed precedent and located both my vignette and interview studies in the professional sector. The vignettes describe an applicant applying for a job at a marketing firm, and the interview participants worked in a range of occupations within the professional sector, from an international health nonprofit to the telecommunications industry.

Second, the bulk of the experimental literature is focused on the white-collar sector because wage analyses show that parental wage inequality may be greatest in this context. Research shows that the effects of gender discrimination are more severe at

higher income levels (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 1999; Padavic and Reskin 2002), and is where scholars have found the greatest fatherhood premiums (Hodges and Budig 2010).

Finally, scholars locate the origins of the ideal worker, a concept on which much of the dissertation is based, in the early 20th century corporate office place (Davies and Frink 2014), and indeed, a rich body of qualitative work has historically found evidence of its influence in high-power white-collar workplaces (Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007; Williams 2001, 2010). Therefore, for these reasons and to be able to most effectively engage with these literatures, I position my study within the professional sector, as well.

Summary

In sum, in this dissertation I address how parents are differentially perceived and evaluated in the workplace in order to provide a clearer picture of the cultural terrain of parental status inequality in the workplace. I assess how men and women are differently perceived based on their involvement level and race, as well how the race, gender, and parental status of the perceivers influence their perceptions. Better understanding how parents are perceived and by whom will contribute not only to the fatherhood premium/motherhood penalty literatures specifically, but is more generally expected to be a crucial step in efforts to pursue effective policy solutions and dismantle organizational processes that do their part to sustain gender and parental status inequality in the workplace (Acker 1990; Ridgeway 1997).

CHAPTER TWO

Methodological Introduction and Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the three sources of data drawn on in the dissertation: two vignette experiments and semi-structured interviews with 15 employers. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce readers to these methods through a description of the design and sample for each data source, as well as to provide a brief background of their origination and development. I include relevant elements of this information (sometimes verbatim), along with more detailed information on measures and coding procedures, in the Methods sections of each of the succeeding three results chapters.

Vignette Experiments

Design

In the experimental vignette studies, respondents acted as hiring managers of a marketing firm who received a memo drafted by the hiring company's human resources ("HR") department summarizing an interview with a fictitious job applicant. The vignettes were identical except for the gender of the applicant: one vignette described a male applicant (henceforth, the "father vignette"), and the other described a female applicant (henceforth, the "mother vignette"). In all, respondents received a short set of instructions, a description of the fictitious job, the HR memo detailing the applicant's professional and personal history, and a set of six evaluation items. The memo, with conditions in brackets, is included below:

Our department has completed its interview with [respondent name] for the position of Business Development Analyst. Her/His relevant professional experience includes three years as assistant director of marketing at SALVO, Inc., a small private marketing firm in Buffalo, New York. Before that she/he worked as an analyst in the marketing and community outreach office for the city of Buffalo. When asked whether she/he preferred working in the public or private sector, she/he mentioned benefits associated with each. She/He received a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from Ithaca College and served on various clubs and committees at school. The candidate also shared a few personal details during the interview – she/he was born and raised in Albany, and she/he lives with her/his husband/wife and [doesn't have any children; their two children; their two children (seems as if she/he is not very involved with her/his children); their two children (seems as if she/he is very involved with her/his children)]. In all, the interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
HR

The full vignette instrument, including respondent instructions, is shown in Appendix I.

Given the objectives of the dissertation, the two manipulations in each vignette were the applicant's race/ethnicity and her/his parenthood status, including level of involvement with children. For the race manipulation, I followed precedent (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Kleykamp 2009) and signaled applicants' race using "ethnically identifiable names" (Pager 2007: 609). The white applicant's name was "Greg/Allison Baker," the African-American applicant's name was "Jamal/Keisha Washington," the Latino applicant's name was "Victor/Victoria Rodriguez," and the Asian applicant's name was "Samuel/Susan Wong."

Parenthood status was varied using a set of four status indicators: non-parent, nominal parent, less involved parent, and highly involved parent. The non-parent or childless condition indicated that the applicant "lives with his/her wife/husband and

doesn't have any children.” The nominal parent condition indicated that the applicant “lives with his/her wife/husband and their two children.” The less involved parent condition indicated that the applicant “lives with his/her wife/husband and their two children (seems as if he/she is not very involved with his/her children).” The highly involved parent condition indicated that the applicant “lives with his/her wife/husband and their two children (seems as if he/she is very involved with his/her children).” The parenthetical clauses were intended to be interpreted as an HR interviewer note to the employer as if the candidate had discussed his/her home life during the interview and the interviewer was conveying an impression of that discussion.

Table 2.1 shows the distribution of the experimental conditions for both the mother and father studies. The conditions were randomly assigned to respondents and were fairly equally distributed in both samples.

Measures

Respondents completed a six-item evaluation based on their assessment of the applicant. These items included: ratings of the applicant as hardworking, likable, and committed, anticipated late days, likelihood of hire, and a starting salary offer.¹ In addition to answering the six evaluation items associated with the vignette, respondents also answered a battery of demographic profile items. These included their own: race, sex, age, education, household income, marital status, religiosity, political affiliation, occupational sector, self-employment status, region, and presence of children under 18 in

¹ The father vignette study included three additional items (ratings of the applicant's responsibility, trustworthiness, and likelihood of promotion) that were dropped from the mother vignette study for lack of funding. However, little information was lost due to this omission. Responses to the responsible and trustworthy items were highly correlated with the hardworking and likable items that remained in both studies (data not shown); the promotion item was flawed due to poor variable construction and would not have been useable in the father study anyway.

the household as proxy for parental status. More detailed information on measures is included in the results chapters.

Not all evaluation items are used in each analysis or always used as dependent variables. Chapter 3 uses the likelihood of hire and salary items as dependent variables and the likability, lateness, and commitment items as mediating variables. I focus on hirability and salary -- referred to there as “work success” -- as outcomes in Chapter 3 because they are the most connected to the wage penalty and premium literatures and are most theoretically relevant for assessments of ideal worker norms. I include potential mediators in an effort to shed light on explaining why parental status may be positively associated with work success for fathers but not mothers.

Chapter 4 uses two categories of outcome variables and no mediating variables. The two sets of outcome variables – performance expectations (hardworking and lateness items) and reward expectations (likelihood of hire and salary items) – are drawn from the Expectation States literature, which, along with intersectionality, serve as the chapter’s theoretical foundation.

I use different outcome variables, and refer to them in different ways, in Chapters 3 and 4 because of the chapters’ distinct theoretical aims and because they will ultimately be treated as independent papers during the journal submission process. For readers’ benefit, tables and figures are presented immediately following each chapter rather than at the end of the dissertation.

Background on TESS and GfK

The father and mother vignettes were evaluated by independent, nationally representative samples of employed adults ages 18 - 65 ($n_{\text{mother}} = 2,046$ and $n_{\text{father}} = 2,250$) through two separate Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS) grants. Currently headed by Jeremy Freese and James Druckman at Northwestern University, TESS, itself funded by the National Science Foundation, “provides investigators an opportunity to run Internet-based experiments on a random, probability-based sample of the population” (TESS 2014). All proposals are peer-reviewed and are subject to the same three-tiered decision system as journal manuscripts (accept, reject, and revise and resubmit). TESS contracts with GfK (formerly, Knowledge Networks), a government and academic research firm, to field the experiments and collect the data.

GfK administers studies to a representative sample of U.S. households (“KnowledgePanel”). Households are recruited into the sample randomly through address-based sampling (ABS). Households selected into the sample without Internet access are provided both Internet access and the necessary computer equipment to participate in the Panel. The sample selection process employed by GfK results in a representative sample of the U.S. population, including representation of “difficult-to-survey” populations, such as racial minorities and cell phone-only households (GfK 2014).

Pretesting

In preparation for both TESS submissions, the vignettes were pretested on undergraduate students in sociology courses. Both the father and mother vignettes were

pretested twice, on separate samples of students, once for the original submission and once during the revise and resubmit process. In all, I conducted four pretests.

In the original submission of the father vignette, I conceived of involvement in “general” and “specified” terms. I pretested an instrument with general and specified non-father conditions and general and specified father conditions to examine how evaluations of men differed by race when involvement was and was not specified. The general childless applicant was “involved in his community”; the specified childless applicant was an “officer in his neighborhood association”; the general father applicant “has children”; and the specified father condition was an “officer in his children’s Parent-Teacher Association.” The applicant names have remained the same from the beginning.

Pilot results ($N_{\text{pilot1}} = 296$) showed greater variation in evaluations of men applicants within the general father compared to the specified father condition, suggesting that when greater involvement information was not specified, respondents relied on racial stereotypes to make evaluations about men’s parenting. Respondents in this pilot did not privilege whites as expected, potentially due to the diversity of the sample (approximately 40% minority, although demographic information was not collected).²

Reviewers of the father vignette submission recommended three major changes: to 1) modify manipulations so that *level* of involvement was explicitly varied, 2) add more objective behavior ratings (i.e., expected late days) to account for shifting standards issues (Biernat and Kobrynowicz 1999), and 3) specify in the memo that the applicant

² All pretest data (not shown), from all four pilots, were analyzed using two-sample mean-comparison t-tests; I also ran power analyses in each pilot to test for projected statistical significance on the size of sample requested in the grant.

resided with his wife and children and was born and raised in the United States to circumvent race-based assumptions about nonresident fatherhood and immigrant status.

The instrument that resulted from these revisions is the final instrument shown above and in Appendix I. Upon making the recommended revisions and edits, I ran a second pilot to test the new instrument ($N_{\text{pilot2}} = 108$). Results from the second pilot are largely consistent with dissertation results presented herein. Highly involved fathers were expected to be late to work more often than childless men ($p < .05$), providing confidence in the manipulation. High involvement among white and Asian men was more favorably evaluated compared to their childless counterparts than it was for Latino and Black fathers. The father vignette was funded and fielded following this resubmission.

The original submission of the mother vignette was identical to the fielded father vignette. The only differences were the applicant first names and gendered pronouns of the applicant and applicant's spouse. Results from the original piloting of the mother vignette ($N_{\text{pilot3}} = 112$) showed that highly involved mothers overall were seen as more likable and likely to be late more often than the less involved mothers ($p < .05$), consistent with dissertation results presented here. By race, there was greater deviation from dissertation results with a more positive evaluation of white mothers and more racial variability on the salary item. The fact that highly involved mothers were expected to be late more often than their childless and less involved counterparts once again provided confidence in the manipulation.

Reviewers of the original mother vignette recommended two major changes: 1) add a nominal mother condition and 2) modify manipulations to make the low involvement condition seem less judgmental. One reviewer offered alternative wording

about “childcare responsibilities,” and one reviewer suggested I specify number of hours spent on childcare (i.e., ten hours for the low condition and 20 hours for the high condition). Although the latter would probably have been high on internal validity and the most effective in terms of manipulation clarity, it was lower on external validity compared to the first reviewer’s suggested wording about childcare responsibilities.

Despite being invested in maintaining the original involvement conditions in order to be able to compare the father and mother data, I piloted the instrument with the suggested childcare wording: low involvement (“she seemed to indicate she had few childcare responsibilities”) and high involvement (“she seemed to indicate she had many childcare responsibilities”). Piloting of the revised mother instrument ($N_{\text{pilot4}} = 170$) showed that there were no significant differences in mean ratings of highly involved mothers by wording. There were two significant differences in evaluations of the less involved mothers by wording, with those with “few childcare responsibilities” expected to be late more often than those who were “not very involved” ($p < .05$), whereas mothers with “few childcare responsibilities” were seen as more likable than those who were “not very involved” ($p < .05$). Although it was a sound manipulation, the childcare language did not allow for an effective comparison with fathers, ultimately leading to the decision, endorsed by the TESS PIs, to field the original involvement manipulations and run the alternate wording conditions on white and African-American mothers only (results shown in Table A.3).

The final funded and fielded mother vignette included six involvement conditions: childless woman, nominal mother, less involved mother, highly involved mother, mother with few childcare responsibilities, and mother with many childcare responsibilities. The

first four conditions were run for all four race conditions, and the latter two were run for the white and Black race conditions only due to funding. I also used the fielding of the mother vignette as an opportunity to include a nominal father condition that would ultimately be appended to the existing father vignette data. I purchased the alternate mother wording and nominal father wording conditions using funds from my NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant.

Both the father and mother vignette studies received a decision of revise and resubmit before being ultimately accepted for funding and fielding. The father vignette study was fielded in June 2012 and the mother vignette study was fielded in July 2013.

Interview Study

Design

The semi-structured interview study was originally designed as a supplement to the father vignette study. Accordingly, the interview schedule (shown in Appendix II) was geared toward understanding employers' perceptions, images, and stereotypes of fathers in the workplace overall and by race/ethnicity and involvement. All interviews were conducted using the original instrument. Nine of the interviews were conducted prior to the fielding of the mother vignette. Although the remaining six interviews were conducted after the mother vignette data had been collected, the original instrument was still used for the sake of coherency and comparability within the interview data.

The interview schedule was divided into three main parts. In the first part, I asked participants to reflect on general and hypothetical questions about parents in the workplace. Topics in this first section included: (a) participants' definition of a "good

employee;” (b) how being a parent affects someone’s ability to be a “good employee;” and (c) preference of most employers to hire a parent or non-parent.

In the second portion, I asked participants to provide explanations for or insights on existing research findings. I asked them to speculate on why: (a) fathers earn more than mothers; (b) fathers earn more than childless men; and (c) highly involved fathers earn more than less involved fathers (Koslowski 2011). In this second phase, respondents also predicted whether fathers would be evaluated more positively than childless men by race/ethnicity (white, African-American, Latino, Asian) and explained their predictions. Although somewhat unorthodox, the objective nature of the questions was an important element of the design. Existing research (Kennelly 1999; Moss and Tilly 2001) and insights from two pilot interviews (conducted in February, 2012) suggested that actual employers are more forthcoming when they do not feel that they or their workplace is being judged.

I asked participants to reflect on their own workplaces in the third phase of the interview. This line of questioning was purposefully reserved for the final portion of the interview to avoid the potential for early disengagement. The following topics were addressed in the third and final phase of the interview: (a) differences between fathers and childless men and mothers and childless women in their workplace; (b) discussions of parental status during the hiring process; and (c) frequency and nature of salary negotiations during the hiring process by gender and parental status. Following the interview, participants were asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire

including their age, race, gender, parental status, marital status, a brief work history, and the demographic make-up of their employees.³

Sample

To be eligible for participation, participants had to identify as an “employer,” which I defined as someone involved in the hiring, firing, and promoting of employees within the professional white-collar work sector. They were employed in a diversity of industries within the professional sector, ranging from the international nonprofit to the telecommunications industries. The interview sample consisted of 10 women and 5 men. Eleven participants were white, three were African-American, and one was Asian American. A participant roster is included as Appendix III.

Potential participants were identified through colleagues with contacts in the professional sector and contacted via email to solicit their participation. Additional participants were recruited within organizations through snowball sampling. Accordingly, the sample of 15 participants derived from 11 different organizations. Eleven interviews took place in person at the participant’s place of business, and four interviews were conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Following transcription, I read the transcripts several times and conducted multiple rounds of coding. In the first round, I coded the data using literal coding (Hesse-Biber 2007) to assess patterns in responses to the interview questions themselves. In second and third passes through the data, I engaged in open and axial coding to assess themes, patterns, and interconnections across the data regardless of question (Neuman 2007). Open coding was conducted in NVivo and 20 themes were generated through this

³ Ten participants completed the demographic questionnaire in its entirety; four completed it partially; and one participant did not complete it at all.

phase of coding. Axial coding was conducted by hand using hardcopy printouts of the coded excerpts. Appendix IV provides a list of the 20 thematic codes (and attendant sub-codes) identified through open coding of the interview data.

Summary

In all, the experimental vignettes provided data on how a representative sample of U.S. adults evaluated parents in the professional workplace setting by race and level of parental involvement, and the semi-structured interviews provided data on the types of images, narratives, and assumptions on which those evaluations may be based. The two modes of data collection substantiate and inform each other. In the next chapter, I draw on vignette and interview data to demonstrate how parental involvement, especially father involvement, was evaluated and interpreted in the context of the workplace.

Table 2.1 Experimental Conditions Matrix, Distribution of Conditions

	White	African-American	Latino	Asian	
	<i>Greg/Allison Baker</i>	<i>Jamal/Keisha Washington</i>	<i>Victor/Victoria Rodriguez</i>	<i>Samuel/Susan Wong</i>	Total N
Childless	153/135	142/128	138/118	154/126	587/507
Nominal	136/125	120/114	135/133	126/129	517/501
Low Involvement	137/135	138/148	166/130	147/136	588/549
High Involvement	134/120	152/123	140/120	132/126	558/489
Total N	560/515	552/513	579/501	559/517	2250/2046

CHAPTER THREE

Workplace Evaluations of Parents by Level of Involvement with Children: Men's "Involvement Premium" and the Ideal Worker Standard

ABSTRACT

Although we conceive of the ideal worker as someone who can be fully devoted to work, research shows that fathers – not childless individuals – do best in terms of earnings and evaluations. Presumably fathers who are less involved in family life would be preferred in the workplace, but existing evidence is equivocal. As fathers become more involved with their children, how is their ideal worker status affected? The current study used a vignette experiment based on a nationally representative sample of employed adults to examine the evaluations of a man job applicant varying on paternal involvement. Results show that highly involved fathers were evaluated *most* favorably compared to other men. The premium for high involvement did not extend to mothers, however. A parallel vignette experiment with a woman applicant showed that highly involved mothers were rated as less likely to be hired after controlling for a protective likability factor. Further, it was male respondents who propagated men's "involvement premium." Data from supplemental interviews with employers suggest that professional workplace culture may be increasingly supportive of fathers' involvement in family life, though how employers interpret the concept of involvement must be considered. In all, the study argues for a reconceptualization of the ideal worker norm that takes men's involvement premium into account while recognizing that such privilege does not extend to a) mothers or b) fathers who act like mothers.

INTRODUCTION

The so-called “ideal worker” has been conceived of as the employee who can be unconditionally committed to the demands of the workplace (Acker 1990; Blair-Loy 2004; Davies and Frink 2014; Moen and Roehling 2005; Williams 2001). With the primary criteria being undivided commitment and unwavering devotion to the job, especially within the professional sector, the ideal worker is ostensibly a gender-neutral standard. In reality, however, the ideal worker is theorized to be “embodied by a White, middle-class family man with stay-at-home spouse” (Davies and Frink 2014: 19). Indeed, empirical research finds that the highest paid and most well-regarded employee in the American workforce is a married, co-residential father (Killewald 2013; Lundberg and Rose 2000; Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010).

If privileged workplace evaluations of fathers are based on the assumption that fathers are not very involved in family life (presumably because they have a homemaker wife), how might such evaluations change for highly involved fathers? Would the highly involved father be considered less ideal? Alternatively, would the less involved mother be considered more ideal? As fathers report being increasingly involved in their children’s lives and daily care (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Bianchi et al. 2012), it is especially critical to understand how greater paternal involvement is interpreted in the workplace.

Research about interpretations of parenting behavior at work yields ambiguous and even contradictory conclusions. On the one hand, there are studies examining evaluations of parents in the workplace that either do not specify or do not manipulate parental involvement. In the former, experimental studies assess evaluations of “nominal

parents,” parents in “name only,” compared to non-parents (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2004; Fuegen et al. 2004); in the latter, parental status is signaled by only one type of parenting behavior (i.e., PTA officer in the case of Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007). When involvement level is either not specified or not manipulated, results often show that fathers are evaluated as more competent and more committed than childless men and mothers.

On the other hand, there is a growing body of research examining how a particular type of high involvement -- family leave-taking behavior -- is evaluated among parents. By and large, this research shows that fathers are regarded less favorably compared to childless men and mothers when they are shown to take or request leave to care for a child (Butler and Skattebo 2004; Rudman and Mescher 2013; Vandello et al. 2013). Interpreting leave-taking as an indicator of involvement, results from these studies suggest that higher parental involvement, and especially paternal involvement, is not favorably evaluated in the workplace.

Why the disparity in evaluations of parental involvement in the workplace? Equivocation may derive, at least in part, from two issues: conceptualizations of involvement and sample composition. First, in terms of how involvement is conceived and operationalized, much of the experimental research on the topic exists at the poles of parenting, with participants rating either “nominal parents” with no involvement information or rating parents who have made or are requesting major family-related schedule changes (i.e., reducing their work hours by 50 percent, Vandello et al. 2013). Further, operationalizing involvement as leave-taking to care for a newborn child, as is common in this research, is a snapshot of involvement at a very particular and unique

time in a parent's life – the first few weeks, when parenting happens typically over two decades. Although it is crucial to know how parents are perceived for requesting family-related schedule changes, it is also relevant to understand how parents' less exceptional, more day-to-day involvement over children's life courses is interpreted at work (Berdahl and Moon 2013). Indeed, Stone (2007: 217) notes that women in her sample "felt themselves much more strongly pulled by school-age and adolescent children," bolstering the motivation for assessing perceptions of involvement outside the newborn setting.

Second, a great deal of the experimental research done in the area of parenthood at work has been conducted on relatively small samples of undergraduate students. Use of undergraduate samples may drive some of the ambiguity, especially if they are more critical of men's family leave-taking. With presumably little experience in both the professional workforce and world of parenting, undergraduate students may be heavily relying on gender stereotypes and normative discrimination biases to interpret and evaluate parental status and involvement, more so than older participants with work and parenting experiences.

The current study is based on two vignette experiments using nationally representative samples of employed adults who evaluated men and women applicants based on their level of parental involvement in the context of the professional workplace, along with supplemental interviews with 15 employers in the professional sector. This research aims to clarify and refine theories of the ideal worker by examining 1) how fathers are evaluated differently by level of paternal involvement, 2) how mothers are evaluated differently by level of maternal involvement, and 3) how respondent gender and parental status are associated with evaluations of involvement.

BACKGROUND

Workplaces have long been theorized as “gendered organizations,” meaning that gender is powerfully present in the symbols, images, norms, and ideologies of organizations (Acker 1990). In the context of the professional workplace where the “ideal worker” reigns, masculine norms, including ideological imperatives that encourage work devotion and discourage demonstrable family involvement, are thought to predominate (Williams 2001, 2010). Accordingly, fathers occupy a privileged status in the professional American workforce. They earn more money than childless men and all women (Hodges and Budig 2010; Keizer et al. 2010; Killewald 2013; Koslowski 2011; Lundberg and Rose 2000), and they are evaluated more favorably according to experimental research (Correll et al. 2007; Etaugh and Folger 1998; Fuegen et al. 2004). Compared to mothers and childless men, fathers are rated as more competent and more committed. Based on these patterns of privilege and consistent with existing theorizing, the married father appears to be the embodiment of the ideal worker in the professional workplace.

Are all fathers equally ideal? There is wide variation within the social category of “father,” including how involved fathers are with their children. As fathers become increasingly involved in their children’s lives, as time diary research indicates that they have, examining how parents are perceived in the workplace based on their parenting behavior (i.e., level of involvement) is especially important. Yet, existing theoretical and empirical research provides conflicting insight into how involvement is interpreted at work for both fathers and mothers.

Competing theoretical perspectives exist on how parental involvement, especially paternal involvement, is likely to be interpreted in the workplace. According to ideal worker and normative discrimination theories, greater family involvement will be negatively regarded in the workplace, especially for fathers. Experimental and survey research on the effects of employees' leave-taking behavior supports this perspective. Alternatively, it could be argued that greater involvement in family life, especially among men, may be positively interpreted in the workplace as a signal of greater workplace commitment given men's culturally engrained, mutually reinforcing worker/provider/father statuses (Townsend 2002). I lay out existing research on each of these perspectives below.

More Involved, Less Ideal: Negative Workplace Evaluations of Parental Involvement

Based on current theorizing of the "ideal worker" standard, we might expect greater family involvement to be unfavorably interpreted for both mothers and fathers in the professional workplace. The "ideal worker" is the "unencumbered worker" (Fuegen et al. 2004: 740) who is "unreservedly devoted to work" (Benard et al. 2008: 1364). Qualitative research has shown that some employers prefer what Hochschild (1997) refers to as "zero drag" employees" who are highly dependable with few perceptible external conflicts (Cooper 2000; Hochschild 1997; Holzer 2005). Employers prioritizing this characterization of the ideal worker would negatively interpret high involvement among men and women because any acknowledgment or demonstration of involvement with children signals the potential for distraction. Non-work investments, especially

family caregiving, are devalued and marginalized from this perspective, and both men and women would be penalized for engaging in it (Acker 1990; Blair-Loy 2003; Cooper 2000; Davies and Frink 2014; Williams 2001).

Further, based on the notion of normative discrimination bias (Benard and Correll 2010), we might expect fathers' high involvement with children to be interpreted especially negatively. In the context of the workplace, a normative discrimination thesis suggests that employers are apt to penalize workers for engaging in behavior that is inconsistent with what is considered appropriate for their sex (Benard and Correll 2010). Because caregiving is inconsistent with normative expectations of masculinity or what men *should* do, employers would negatively interpret and evaluate fathers' high involvement with children (Benard and Correll 2010; Rudman and Mescher 2013). Conversely, given that caregiving is consistent with expectations of women, family involvement may not be as negatively regarded for women at work.

Some empirical studies show evidence of a negative valuation of parental involvement in general, whereas others show evidence of a particular devaluation for father involvement, relative to mother involvement. To begin, recent experimental and survey research on samples of adults have found negative regard for parental involvement in general. Brescoll and colleagues' (2013) experimental study assessing how a sample of 76 managers evaluated male and female employees' requests to adjust their work schedules for either professional development or childcare reasons found that managers were more likely to grant schedule changes for the former than for the latter. However, they found no significant differences by the gender of the requester in that managers were no less likely to grant the male employee's request for family-related schedule flexibility

than they were to grant the female employee's request for the same reason. The authors noted that "the request itself – for a shift in work hours rather than a reduction in work hours – is probably less likely to trigger turndown or bias than other flextime options (e.g., shifting to a part-time schedule) because it requires no cutback in hours" (Brescoll, Glass, and Sedlovskaya 2013: 377). In other words, they suggest that the involvement level was not extensive enough to be considered "gender incongruent" behavior for men and thus did not lead to fathers being subject to greater "backlash" than mothers (Rudman and Mescher 2013).

Consistent with these experimental findings, Coltrane and colleagues (2013) used National Longitudinal Study of Youth data to analyze the earnings of mothers and fathers who either left the workforce or significantly reduced their hours for family reasons and found that women and men received similar earnings penalties for family-driven work interruptions. Although fathers' leave-taking was not more harshly penalized than mothers' leave-taking in either of these studies, employees requesting or taking leave for family reasons were penalized relative to those taking leave for other reasons. These findings suggest that high parental involvement, from men or women, is negatively associated with work outcomes.

Some research, in line with a normative discrimination explanation, finds that *paternal* involvement is especially poorly regarded in the context of the workplace (Butler and Skattebo 2004; Rudman and Mescher 2013; Vandello et al 2013; Wayne and Cordeiro 2008). Rudman and Mescher (2013) make the distinction between fathers and *involved* fathers, noting that although research shows evidence of a bonus for fatherhood, "this bonus is likely due to men's traditional role as the primary breadwinner. That is,

fathers may receive monetary benefits to help support their families, but expressing a desire to otherwise care for their offspring violates gender roles traditionally reserved for women and therefore, should receive backlash” (p. 324-25).

Some experimental evidence on evaluations of men’s leave-taking behavior shows a backlash for fathers. Wayne and Cordeiro (2008) asked 242 undergraduate students to examine the personnel file of a fictitious employee and evaluate that person on measures of altruism and compliance. They found that father employees who were shown to have taken leave to care for a sick child were rated significantly lower on these measures than women who were shown to have done so. Thus, fathers’ greater involvement in family was regarded less favorably than mothers’ involvement, but on measures that may not be as strongly connected as other outcome measures more relevant for workplace advancement, such as promotion and salary decisions (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2004). Vandello and colleagues (2013) examined how parents’ request for flexible work arrangements following the birth of a child were evaluated in terms of both character judgments (i.e., warmth and morality) and objective reward measures (i.e., raise recommendations) and found that men faced more negative character evaluations than women for seeking a flexible arrangement but were not subject to harsher objective reward standards.

Together, this theoretical and empirical body of literature leads to the conclusion that parental involvement is unfavorably evaluated in the context of the workplace. Some scholarship suggests that mothers and fathers are equally disadvantaged for being highly involved in family life, whereas other recent experimental studies indicate that high involvement may be especially penalizing for fathers.

More Involved, More Ideal: Positive Workplace Evaluations of Parental Involvement

Alternatively, it is possible that greater parental involvement has positive workplace implications. For fathers, in particular, greater involvement with children may act as an indicator to employers of a man's deeper commitment to the father role; deeper commitment to the father role, in turn, conveys a deeper commitment to the worker role by virtue of the strong intertwinement of father and breadwinner statuses in the culture (Levine and Pittinsky 1997; Townsend 2002).

Findings from both survey and experimental analyses show some evidence that greater involvement, specifically father involvement, may be favorably regarded in the context of the workplace. Koslowski's (2011) study of European men using the European Community Household Panel showed that men who spent more time with their children spent less time at work but earned more on average than men who spent less time with children and more time at work. In other words, the most involved fathers experienced the greatest premium despite being at work less. Level of paternal involvement was a respondent-reported measure of the amount of time he spent caring for his children in a typical week with the following four response categories: none (no care or not applicable), low (0 – 14 hours), medium (15 – 28 hours), and high (more than 28 hours).

In terms of perceptions, a recent experimental vignette study by Kmec, Huffman, and Penner (2014) found some evidence that involved fathering could be interpreted as a signal of strong rather than weak work commitment. In their study, 509 undergraduate students evaluated a résumé and cover letter of a fictitious job candidate applying for a professional job where applicant sex and caregiver status (parent, elder caregiver, non-

caregiver) were manipulated. Parental caregiver status was indicated by noting in the cover letter that the applicant had taken leave to care for her/his newborn son; elder caregiver status was indicated by noting the applicant had taken leave to help move his/her elderly parents, and non-caregiver status was indicated by noting the applicant had taken leave to recover from a back injury. Among the male candidates, fathers were rated as significantly more employable than male non-caregivers, suggesting that involved fathering may be a positive signal in the workplace. For their part, mothers were not evaluated considerably differently from female non-caregivers, which, the authors point out, is somewhat unexpected given existing research which documents comparatively negative evaluations of mothers (e.g., Correll et al. 2007).

Finally, an experimental study on a sample of Dutch employers (n = 81) found that higher *maternal* involvement was positively evaluated. The study found that married mothers who, along with their spouses, worked reduced hours (4 days per week) were seen as more competent and ambitious at work than mothers who worked full-time and were considered their family's main breadwinner (Vinkenburg et al. 2012). Notably, employers evaluated mothers assumed to be more highly involved in childcare more favorably on the consequential workplace outcomes of competence and ambition.⁴ As mentioned, mothers are often rated as warmer and more likable than other employees, but these "soft" character evaluations are not linked with important workplace rewards like promotions and better salaries (Cuddy et al. 2004).

⁴ The difference in family-friendly work policies between the U.S. and many European countries is an important distinction. Institutionalized paternity leave, for instance, exists in Europe but not in the U.S. (Gornick and Meyers 2003). It is worth bearing in mind that the meanings of father and mother involvement likely varied between American and European cultures as opportunity for greater parental involvement is encouraged in many European countries in the form of parental leave and generous family leave taking policies. In other words, greater parental involvement may be a signal of greater work commitment in a work structure where men's and women's family leave-taking is more normative.

To address the ambiguity in the literature on whether greater parental involvement, and especially greater paternal involvement, is positively or negatively evaluated in the workplace, I examine how parental involvement is perceived and evaluated in a professional workplace context through vignette experiments and interviews with employers. I build on existing research by assessing evaluations of more routine levels of involvement (i.e., not major schedule changes) and by assessing the evaluations of nationally representative samples of employed adults rather than undergraduate students. In the next section, I lay out the study's research questions and competing hypotheses.

Evaluations of Involvement at Work: Research Questions and Competing Hypotheses

The first research question this study addresses is:

Research Question 1: How is level of parental involvement related to evaluations of work success for mothers and fathers?

I draw from existing research to formulate competing hypotheses. According to ideal worker and normative discrimination theories, greater parental involvement should be unfavorably interpreted in the workplace, especially for men for whom greater participation in family life is considered “gender-stereotype incongruent” behavior (Brescoll et al. 2013) or behavior which violates traditional normative gender prescriptions (Benard and Correll 2010; Coltrane et al. 2013; Williams 2001; Williams, Blair-Loy, and Berdahl 2013). Although some experimental work shows evidence confirming these theories, two recent studies show that greater parental involvement is

indeed associated with poor outcomes but equally so for men and women (Brescoll et al. 2013; Coltrane et al. 2013). In all, these studies lead to the following two predictions:

Negative Involvement Hypothesis (H1): Parents who are more involved with their children will receive poorer workplace evaluations than parents who are less involved with their children and childless employees.

Negative Paternal Involvement Hypothesis (H2): Fathers who are more involved with their children will receive the poorest workplace evaluations relative to other men and all women because being highly involved in family life violates prescriptions of normative masculinity.

Alternatively, some research suggests that involvement may be positively interpreted at work, especially for fathers. The deep intertwinement between work and father roles for men (Townsend 2002) may render them mutually reinforcing statuses such that greater commitment in one is assumed to mean greater commitment in the other. Further, some empirical research evinces positive workplace regard for men's involvement (Koslowski 2011; Kmec et al. 2014), and a recent study of Dutch employer perceptions even shows some evidence of privileging maternal involvement (Vicksbrug et al. 2012). This research yields the following two hypotheses:

Positive Involvement Hypothesis (H3): Parents who are more involved with their children will receive better workplace evaluations than parents who are less involved with their children and childless employees.

Positive Paternal Involvement Hypothesis (H4): Fathers who are more involved with their children will receive more favorable workplace evaluations than other men and

all women because being highly involved in family life is seen as reinforcing of workplace commitment.

With the focus on employer discrimination as one root cause of wage inequality between mothers and fathers in the professional workplace (Budig and England 2001; Hodges and Budig 2010), it is important to investigate how perceptions of parents differ by the perceiver. Accordingly, the second research question this study addresses is:

Research Question 2: How is the relationship between applicant involvement and evaluations of work success moderated by a) respondent gender and b) respondent parental status?

Existing experimental research has largely addressed this question in terms of gender. Because previous studies are based on data from vignette experiments completed by relatively small samples of undergraduate students, researchers have been limited in the comparisons they can make among sample participants. Nevertheless, most studies on the topic have not found significant differences in evaluations of parents by respondent gender (Butler and Skattebo 2013; Correll et al. 2007; Cuddy et al. 2004; Fuegen et al. 2004; Rudman and Mescher 2013).

Those studies that do find significant differences in how male and female respondents rate parents in the workplace show evidence of greater within-gender policing, the notion that respondents will be harsher in their evaluations of norm-violating members of their own gender (Benard and Correll 2010; Wayne and Cordeiro 2003). For instance, Benard and Correll (2010) had a sample of undergraduate students evaluate matched-pair resumes that varied on applicant gender, parental status, and level of workplace competence. They found that men were harsher in the evaluations of

successful fathers, whereas women were harsher in their evaluations of successful mothers, which, they speculate, could be driven by students' self-concepts feeling threatened by the image of norm-bending mothers and fathers. Based on this literature, I submit two competing hypotheses on how respondent gender influences evaluations of parental involvement in the workplace:

Neutral Evaluation Hypothesis (H5): Respondent gender will be unrelated to evaluations of parental involvement.

Within-Gender Policing Hypothesis (H6): Respondents will evaluate gender atypical behavior more harshly in members of their same gender; thus, men respondents will evaluate highly involved fathers more negatively than women respondents, and women respondents will evaluate less involved mothers more negatively than men respondents.

With most existing research on the topic conducted on undergraduate students, we have very little insight into how perceptions of parents may differ by other potentially relevant perceiver characteristics, such as their parental status. In the absence of informing literature, I submit two hypotheses on the role of respondent parental status:

Neutral Evaluation Hypothesis (H7): Respondent parental status will be unrelated to evaluations of parental involvement.

Parental Support Hypothesis (H8): Parent respondents will evaluate highly involved applicants more favorably than non-parent respondents because they can identify with them and better relate to their circumstances.

I address the study's two research questions and test their attendant hypotheses through two vignette experiments. I also supplement the quantitative analysis with

supplemental interview data from employers. I describe these methods, including their design, samples, and measures, in the next section.

METHOD

Vignette Design

Data come from two parallel experimental vignette studies wherein nationally representative samples of employed adults rated a fictitious job applicant, one male and one female, who varied on parenthood status.⁵ Respondents acted as hiring managers of a marketing firm who received a memo drafted by the hiring company's human resources ("HR") department summarizing an interview with the fictitious applicant. Respondents received a short set of instructions, a description of the fictitious job, and the HR memo detailing the applicant's professional and personal history. The memo is shown in Appendix I.

The experiments were run separately by gender. One sample of respondents (n = 2,046) received the instrument with the woman applicant (henceforth, the "mother sample") and one sample of respondents (n = 2,250) received the instrument with the man applicant (henceforth, the "father sample"). The mother sample response rate was 62.0%, and the father sample response rate was 63.5%.

The vignette included four parental status indicators: non-parent, nominal parent (no involvement information specified), less involved parent, and highly involved parent.

⁵ The applicant also varied on race/ethnicity. For the race manipulation, I followed precedent (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Kleykamp 2009) and signaled applicants' race using "ethnically identifiable names" (Pager 2007: 609). The white applicant's name was "Greg/Allison Baker," the African-American applicant's name was "Jamal/Keisha Washington," the Latino applicant's name was "Victor/Victoria Rodriguez," and the Asian applicant's name was "Samuel/Susan Wong." Although race was manipulated in the experiments, I do not focus attention on variation by race in this paper but focus on how involvement is interpreted overall by gender.

Involvement information was communicated in the HR memo (see Appendix I) as a parenthetical statement intended to be interpreted as an HR interviewer note to the employer as if the candidate had discussed her/his home life during the interview and the interviewer was conveying an impression of that discussion.

The vignette was situated in the context of the professional workplace, a marketing firm, for two main reasons. First, scholars locate the origins of the ideal worker in the early 20th century corporate office place (Davies and Frink 2014), and indeed, some qualitative work has historically found evidence of its influence in high-power white-collar workplaces (Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007; Williams 2001, 2010).⁶ Second, the bulk of the experimental literature is focused on the white-collar sector because wage analyses show that parental wage inequality may be greatest in this context. Research shows that the effects of gender discrimination are more severe at higher income levels (Cotter et al. 1999; Padavic and Reskin 2002), and indeed is where scholars have found the greatest fatherhood premiums (Hodges and Budig 2010).

All applicants are identified as married and living with their children because studies find that the fatherhood wage premium only exists among married co-residential fathers (Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010; Killewald 2013; Lundberg and Rose 2000; Percheski and Wildeman 2008) and that motherhood penalties are most severe for married women (Budig and England 2001).

⁶ Stone (2007) argues that the “legacy of separate spheres has a stronger hold” in the professions than in other types of non-professional work, presumably because the breadwinner-homemaker model of family life is more common among higher earning families than among working-class families where men and women are in the labor force as dual incomes are a necessity.

Samples

The vignette experiments were administered each to a separate nationally representative sample of employed U.S. adults between the ages of 18 and 65 through two separate Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS) grants. TESS contracts with GfK, a government and academic research company, to field TESS studies online. GfK administers TESS studies to a representative sample of U.S. households (the “KnowledgePanel”). Households are recruited into the sample randomly through address-based sampling (ABS). Households selected into the sample without Internet access are provided both Internet access and the necessary computer equipment in order to participate in the Panel. The sample selection process employed by GfK results in a representative sample of the U.S. population, including representation of “difficult-to-survey” populations, such as racial minorities and cell phone-only households (GfK 2012). The mother and father samples are described in greater detail in Table 3.1.

Measures

Respondents completed an evaluation of the applicant based on their reading of the HR memo. These items, which are drawn from previous experimental studies in the parenthood-workplace literature, included how likable he/she was likely to be, anticipated number of late days, level of perceived commitment, likelihood of hire, and a starting salary offer (Correll et al. 2007; Fuegen et al. 2004; Gungor and Biernat 2009). For this analysis, I examined likelihood of hire and salary offer (Evaluations of “Work Success”) as the dependent variables. In mediation analyses, I examined how evaluations of the applicants’ likability, lateness (for mothers), and perceived commitment (for fathers)

(“Mediating Mechanisms”) mediated the relationships between parenthood status and evaluations of work success. Each of these variables is described below.

Dependent Variables: Evaluations of Work Success

Two items represent respondents’ expectations for applicants’ future work success: likelihood of hire and a salary offer. The likelihood of hire item asked: “How likely are you to hire [candidate name] for this position?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “Not at all likely” and 5 was “Extremely likely.” The salary offer item asked: “In the event you end up hiring [candidate name], what would you offer her/him as a starting salary?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “\$60,000-\$65,000” and 5 was “\$80,000-\$85,000.”

Mediating Mechanisms: Likability, Commitment, and Lateness

Based on existing experimental and qualitative research, I examined three potential mediating mechanisms accounting for the relationships between parenthood status and evaluations of work success. First, research shows that both fathers and mothers are perceived as warmer than their childless colleagues (Cuddy et al. 2004). Accordingly, high involvement may have a likability “halo effect” for parents in that it may exacerbate positive evaluations, as existing research shows it does for fathers (Benard and Correll 2010; Fuegen et al. 2004), and/or be protective against more negative evaluations, especially for mothers. The likability item asked: “How likable do you expect [candidate name] to be, relative to other employees in similar positions at the

company?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “Not at all likable” and 5 was “Extremely likable.”

Second, for fathers, perceived commitment may mediate the relationship between involvement and evaluations of work success. Scholars suspect that fathers’ wage premium is, in part, attributable to the belief that fathers are more committed to the workplace than mothers and non-fathers (Coltrane 2004; Hodges and Budig 2010), and experimental research has found that fathers are rated as more committed than other workers (Correll et al. 2007). The commitment item asked “How committed do you expect [candidate name] to be, relative to other employees in similar positions at the company?” Ratings for this item ranged on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 was “More committed than 0-9% of other employees” and 10 was “More committed than 90-99% of other employees.”

Third, for mothers, expectations of lateness may mediate the relationship between involvement and evaluations of work success. Given mothers’ enduring role as children’s primary caregivers, respondents may have expected mothers to be late to work more often and thus, less reliable and less deserving of work success. The lateness item asked “How many times per month would you expect [candidate name] to arrive late or leave early?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “9+ times” and 5 was “0 times.”⁷

I examined commitment and lateness as gender-specific mediators for the theoretical reasons mentioned above, but also because lateness did little to explain variance in the father models, and commitment did little to explain variance in the mother models (data not shown). They were not direct analogues of each other such that more

⁷ This item was reverse coded for analysis.

lateness was equivalent to less commitment and vice versa. Instead, expectations of lateness were more useful for understanding predictions of work success for mothers, and expectations of commitment were more useful for understanding predictions of work success for fathers.⁸

Control Variables

In addition to answering the evaluation items, respondents also answered a battery of demographic profile items. These included their: race/ethnicity, the presence of children under 18 in the household (proxy for parental status), sex, age, education, household income, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region.

Respondent race/ethnicity was measured with a series of four dummy variables, including white, African-American, Latino, and Other. The white group served as the reference category in the regression analysis. The parental status proxy was measured as a dummy variable for the presence of children in the household under the age of 18 (1 = yes, 0 = no). Respondent's sex was coded as a dummy variable (1 = female; 0 = male). Respondent's age was included as a linear variable and ranged from 18 to 65. Respondent educational attainment was a series of dummy variables indicating the highest level of

⁸ For the purposes of the dissertation, I use gender-specific behavioral mediators (commitment for fathers and lateness for mothers) to demonstrate that they appear to have gendered significance in terms of their explanatory power. However, as this chapter is revised for journal submission, I expect to only use commitment as the behavioral mediator and likability as the character mediator to test the explanatory mechanisms associated with the hypotheses. The models will be based on the following mediation explanations. The negative involvement hypotheses posit that involvement will be negatively related to work success through a) negative commitment ratings (H1, via the ideal worker theory) and/or b) negative likability ratings (H2, via normative discrimination, fathers only). The positive involvement hypotheses posit that involvement will be positively related to work success through a) positive likability ratings (H3, via what could be called a "halo effect" for involved parents) and/or positive commitment ratings (H4, via the intertwinement perspective, fathers only).

education completed: some high school, high school diploma, some college, and college degree (reference category). Marital status was measured using a series of dummy variables, including married (reference category), divorced or separated, never married, widowed, and cohabiting.

The models also controlled for respondents' work-related statuses (recall all respondents were employed in the labor force), including their occupational sector and self-employment status. Occupational sector was a series of three dummy variables indicating whether the respondent worked in the white-collar sector (reference category), blue-collar sector, or other sector. Self-employment status was included as a single item (1 = yes, 0 = no).

Finally, to control for any regional differences, the models included a series of four dummy variables to measure geographic location: whether the respondent lived in the Northwest (reference category), Midwest, South, or West region of the United States.

Supplemental Interviews

To garner greater insight into the quantitative findings from the vignette studies, I conducted 15 supplemental semi-structured interviews with employers in the professional workforce. The interviews were executed in three parts. In Part I, participants were asked general questions about their definition of a good employee and how being a parent affects someone's ability to be a good employee. In Part II, participants were asked to reflect on objective research findings, including fathers' wage premium relative to a) mothers and b) childless men, as well highly involved fathers' wage premium relative to less involved fathers (Koslowski 2011). Consistent with existing literature on interview

studies with employers (Moss and Tilly 2001), this design was expected to tap into the images, assumptions, and stereotypes that employers are familiar with regarding parents in the workplace. Biases or perceptions that often exist at the unconscious level were expected to be drawn out as participants tried to explain these observed research patterns. In Part III, participants were asked about their experiences in their specific workplace, being asked to compare their parent and non-parent employees, as well as their experiences with applicants during the hiring process.

To be eligible for participation, participants had to identify as an “employer,” which I defined as someone involved in the hiring, firing, and promoting of employees within the professional white-collar work sector. They were employed in a diversity of industries within the professional sector, ranging from the international nonprofit to the telecommunications industries. Interviews lasted between 39 and 71 minutes, with an average length of 52 minutes. The interview sample consisted of 10 women and 5 men. Eleven participants were white, three were African-American, and one was Asian American.

Potential participants were identified through colleagues with contacts in the professional sector and contacted via email to solicit their participation. Additional participants were recruited within organizations through snowball sampling. Accordingly, the sample of 15 participants derived from 11 different organizations. Eleven interviews took place in person at the participant’s place of business, and four interviews were conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Following transcription, I read the transcripts several times and conducted multiple rounds of coding. In the first round, I coded the data using literal coding (Hesse-

Biber 2007) to assess patterns in responses to the interview questions themselves. In second and third passes through the data, I engaged in open and axial coding to assess themes, patterns, and interconnections across the data regardless of question (Neuman 2007). Open coding was conducted in NVivo, and axial coding was conducted by hand using hardcopy printouts of the coded excerpts.

Analytic Approach

Following descriptive summary results for all variables used in the analysis, I present results which examined how parenthood status was related to evaluations of work success for mothers and fathers using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. The order of analysis aligns with the research questions. To test the first research question and its hypotheses, I examined the relationship between parenthood status and work success evaluations first without and then with mediating mechanisms.⁹ To test the second research question, I examined whether the relationship between parenthood status and work success evaluations was moderated by respondent gender or parental status. These interaction models included the mediating mechanisms. All regressions were weighted. For the sake of parsimonious presentation, the tables summarize results and only show main and interaction effect coefficients, although all coefficients come from weighted models with all control variables. In the final section of the results, I present qualitative evidence from the supplemental interview study that both corroborate and add nuance to the quantitative results.

⁹ Although not a formal research question, I used these data to corroborate existing research on motherhood penalty and fatherhood premium patterns by comparing the childless and nominal parent categories. Based on previous research, I expected that the nominal mother would be rated less favorably in terms of work success than the childless woman (motherhood penalty) and the nominal father would be rated more favorably than the childless man (fatherhood premium).

RESULTS

Vignette Results

Table 3.1 shows the descriptive results by sample. Overall, respondents from both samples rated the men and women applicants similarly, with the exception of anticipated late days; respondents from the mother sample expected the female applicant to be late to work more often than respondents from the father sample expected from the male applicant. The significant gender differences in lateness are a testament to the reliability of the manipulation.

The demographic composition of the samples was very similar. The majority of respondents from both the mother and father samples were white and middle-aged with at least some college experience. In both samples, over half of the respondents were married and 40 percent had children living at home. The only statistically significant demographic difference between samples was occupational sector: the father sample had proportionately fewer respondents from the white- and blue-collar work sectors than the mother sample.

[Table 3.1 about here]

Table 3.2 shows results from an OLS regression analysis of the relationship between applicant parenthood status and evaluations of work success by applicant gender.¹⁰ Panel A shows results for the men applicants, and Panel B shows results for the women applicants. In both panels, Model 1 presents coefficients from weighted models with all controls; Model 2 adds the likability mediator; and Model 3 adds the commitment mediator (for fathers) and lateness mediator (for mothers).

¹⁰ Table A.1 in Appendix VI shows regression results for the unmediated relationships between parenthood status and each of the study's original six evaluation items by applicant gender for readers' reference.

For the men applicants, there are three notable findings. First, I did not observe evidence of a nominal fatherhood premium. Inconsistent with existing experimental research, I did not find that the nominal father was rated significantly differently in terms of work success than his childless counterpart.¹¹ Second, the less involved father was penalized in terms of likelihood of hire. Model 3 shows that even after controlling for likability and perceived commitment, less involved fathers were still significantly less likely to be hired than their childless counterparts ($b = -0.19, p < .001$). Third, the highly involved father was privileged in terms of salary offer. Model 3 shows that highly involved fathers were offered significantly higher salaries than their childless counterparts even when controlling for likability and commitment ($b = 0.16, p < .05$), themselves two convincing explanations for why involved fathers may be offered higher salaries. Although evaluations of highly involved fathers' commitment and likability partially explained their salary boost, they did not account for it fully, meaning there was some other reason respondents offered these fathers higher salaries. These results provide support for the Positive Paternal Involvement Hypothesis (H4).¹² Figure 3.1 shows the predicted means for men's salary offer by fatherhood status.¹³

¹¹ Table A.1 shows that nominal fathers were not rated significantly differently than childless men on any of the evaluation items. This study may not have been able to replicate the nominal fatherhood premium documented in previous experimental research because those studies are based on samples of undergraduate students and/or cultural norms have shifted to be less privileging of nominal fatherhood (Cuddy et al. 2004; Etaugh and Folger 1998; Fuegen et al. 2004). Young, and typically with less workforce attachment than the respondents in the current samples, undergraduate students may evaluate fathers with a somewhat distorted cultural lens, based, perhaps significantly, on images in the popular media. Therefore, the nominal father premium may have been exaggerated by undergraduate respondents in previous research. It is also possible that cultural norms are shifting and nominal fatherhood does not carry the same cachet in the workplace that it did ten years ago when much of the experimental literature on the topic was conducted. I return to the latter point in the Discussion.

¹² When the nominal father was the referent (analysis not shown), the relationship between high involvement and salary offer was positive and significant prior to mediation ($b = 0.17, p < .05$), marginally significant with the addition of likability ($b = 0.13, p < 0.10$), and just nonsignificant with the addition of commitment ($b = 0.13, p = .10$). The pattern was very similar when the less involved father was the referent

[Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1 about here]

For the women applicants, there are two notable findings presented in Table 3.2. First, results from Model 2 of the likelihood of hire analysis corroborate existing research on the nominal motherhood penalty (Correll et al. 2007; Cuddy et al. 2004). Once likability was taken into account, nominal mothers (and highly involved mothers) were less likely to be hired than childless women ($b = -0.11, p < .05$). Second, the motherhood penalties were fully mediated by evaluations of likability and lateness.

Results show that the hiring penalty for the less involved mother ($p < .001$, Model 1) attenuated once likability was added to the model (Model 2). Thus, less involved mothers were seen as less likable than childless women, and it was this diminished likability that drove the poor hiring evaluations for mothers. Through a suppression effect, likability was protecting highly involved mothers from a harsher hiring penalty. Model 1 does not show a significant difference in hiring evaluations of childless women and highly involved mothers, but once likability was controlled, mothers were significantly less likely to be hired (Model 2, $p < .01$). These results suggest that, as expected in the Negative Involvement Hypothesis, greater involvement was negatively associated with work success for mothers. For all categories of mothers, when lateness was added in Model 3, no significant differences persisted between mothers and childless women. This suggests that likability and lateness (or absenteeism) were the driving considerations affecting respondents' evaluations of mothers.

(analysis not shown): significant prior to mediation ($b = 0.24, p < .01$), marginally significant with likability, ($b = 0.14, p < 0.10$), and just nonsignificant with commitment ($b = 0.13, p = .10$).

¹³ It is also instructive to consider the involvement premium in terms of effect sizes. The effect size for the association between high involvement condition and salary is 0.32, which Cohen (1988) identifies as a medium effect size. This is compared to an effect size of 0.17 for the association between salary and the childless condition and effect sizes less than 0.10 for the nominal and less involved conditions.

Results from Table 3.2 present evidence of an “involvement premium” for fathers and “involvement penalty” for mothers in the context of the workplace. Highly involved fathers received a salary boost and less involved fathers suffered a hiring penalty, whereas highly involved mothers were considered less hireable and less involved mothers were not evaluated significantly differently from childless women after controlling for likability. I next turn to the study’s second research question to examine whether *respondent* characteristics moderated these relationships.

Table 3.3 shows an interaction analysis between applicant parenthood status and respondent parental status and respondent gender by sample. Models contained both mediating mechanisms and all controls. Respondent parental status did not significantly moderate the relationship between applicant involvement and work success for men or women applicants, supporting the Neutral Evaluation Hypothesis (H8). Respondent gender was not a significant moderator in the mother sample but operated in an unexpected way in the father sample.¹⁴

[Table 3.3 about here]

Table 3.3 shows that the relationship between parenthood status and salary offer was significantly different by respondent gender for the men applicants ($b = -0.44$, $p < .01$). This finding is clarified in Figure 3.2, which shows the predicted means for this relationship. Figure 3.2 shows that women respondents offered the men applicants a very similar salary across fatherhood status, but that men respondents offered highly involved fathers a wage *boost* (over \$1500 more than they offered less involved fathers on average

¹⁴ There were no statistically significant interaction effects for the women applicants in models with or without mediators (data not shown).

and \$1400 more than women offered highly involved fathers).¹⁵ Therefore, contrary to what we might assume given existing arguments about masculine norms in the workplace (Williams 2010; Acker 1990) and existing research showing evidence of within-gender policing of atypical gender behavior (Wayne and Cordeiro 2003), men respondents in this study rewarded, rather than penalized, other men's family involvement.¹⁶

[Figure 3.2 about here]

In sum, vignette results support the Positive Paternal Involvement Hypothesis, providing evidence of an “involvement premium” for men but not for women. OLS results show that the highly involved father applicant was offered a significantly higher salary than the childless applicant, even when controlling for his likability and commitment (Table 3.2, Model 3). Results also indicate that this involvement premium was propagated by men, not women (Table 3.3 and Figure 3.2). Men respondents offered significantly higher salaries to the highly involved father than did women respondents, a finding that does not support either hypothesis on the role of respondent gender in influencing evaluations of parents in the workplace. In the next section, I supplement these quantitative patterns with insights from the interview data.

Supplemental Interview Results

Supplemental interviews with 15 employers from a diversity of occupations within the white-collar professional sector shed some interpretive light on the quantitative

¹⁵ It is worth noting that the salary offer for the women applicants followed a fairly similar pattern: women respondents offered childless women and less involved mothers higher salaries than the men respondents; men respondents, however, offered highly involved mothers higher salaries than the women respondents (data not shown). The differences in salary offer by gender for each mother applicant category were very small and not statistically significant. However, it is notable that although men respondents did not offer the same salary premium to highly involved mothers, they also did not penalize them.

¹⁶ The notion that men reward other men's family *involvement* was further reinforced by the finding that the relationship between nominal fatherhood status and work success evaluations was not moderated by respondent gender (Table 3.3).

patterns. Overall, there was consensus that the “traditional” ideal worker, the unattached and unencumbered workaholic, is considered an outdated workplace standard in the industries represented in my sample. Most participants spoke about parents in especially favorable terms and some derided the childless for being unbalanced and unable to prioritize, ironically, because they *can* dedicate so much of their time to the job. Further, specifically regarding fathers’ status and the high involvement premium documented in the vignette study, participants were easily able to discuss why, according to published research, fathers earn more than non-fathers (women and men), and even why highly involved fathers have been shown to earn more than less involved fathers (Koslowski 2011). In many ways, results from the supplemental interviews suggest that employers are increasingly tolerant – and even supportive – of men’s greater involvement in family life. However, when employers thought of an “involved father,” they articulated a relatively work-friendly image of involvement that may explain, in part, why fathers’ but not mothers’ parental involvement is lauded rather than penalized in the professional workplace.

First, 9 of 15 participants discussed the value of parents, both mothers and fathers, in the professional workplace. Among the accolades, respondents praised, and in some cases even admitted to having a preference for, parents based on their maturity, adaptability, and ability to prioritize and multi-task. Some participants noted that their childless employees tended to be less organized and less balanced. A telecommunications executive summarized it this way:

I think that sometimes the ones who haven’t had to deal with children come across as immature in that sense. Everything is a crisis, everything’s an issue. Everything needs to be solved immediately (female telecommunications executive)

Several participants, including the telecommunications executive quoted above, believed that parents actually made better managers because there is a good deal of overlap, from their perspective, in handling children's lives and handling employees' daily operations.

This line of thinking continued and expanded when participants discussed specifically fathers' status in the workplace. When asked to reflect on research findings about fathers' earnings premium relative to childless men (e.g., Hodges and Budig 2010), all participants were able to supply possible explanations. Eleven participants offered supply-side explanations, and 11 participants offered demand-side explanations (7 participants offered both supply and demand side explanations). On the supply side, participants suggested that fathers earn more than childless men because fathers are responsible, stable men. Consistent with the more generic pro-parent language described above, participants articulated what one Human Resources (HR) manager in the international nonprofit industry referred to as the "enabling qualities" of fatherhood. All those positive attributes associated with fatherhood - responsibility, maturity, dependability - are assets in the workplace, as well. This assessment aligns with Hodges and Budig's supposition (2010) that "fatherhood itself may be interpreted by employers as a signal for valued, unobservable individual traits, such as loyalty or dependability" (p. 718). A few participants commented on men's "provider drive" – the motivating force compelling fathers to work hard and earn well for their families.¹⁷ An HR manager in the prescription drug industry described the provider drive this way:

¹⁷ Although employers were most often referring to men when discussing this "provider drive," two participants noted that single mothers are similarly propelled by such a drive. Existing quantitative (Kmec 2011) and qualitative research (Christopher 2010; Damaske 2011) shows that mothers feel strong motivations to provide for their families, as well.

...you're going to do your best to get the best deal you can when it comes to your salary. And maybe for fathers they do that because of the financial responsibilities that they carry, taking care of their children, wanting to take them to things, on vacations, saving for college and then saving for [their] own retirement (female HR manager)

Further, 11 participants offered demand-side explanations to account for fathers out-earning childless men, 4 of whom offered exclusively demand-side explanations. These participants suggested that employers may be sympathetic to fathers' circumstances and pay them more accordingly. Another HR manager at an international nonprofit noted that there "is still a lingering bias or lingering unconscious need to reward men who [employers] feel are the primary income earners whether or not that's accurate" (male HR manager).

A few participants pointed to men's predominance in positions of power in the professional world, a pattern which has a "trickledown" effect on who gets hired and promoted. Another HR executive at the same non-profit organization captured this logic succinctly: "fathers like other fathers, and hire them, because they have something in common with them, and can relate to them, so they pay them more" (female HR director). This employer recounted an experience she had had with a senior manager in her company who, amidst organizational cost-cutting and downsizing, had asked that she commit to finding a position for a vulnerable employee. She went on to say that the manager had asked her to retain the employee "primarily because he is the only person working in the family," which, she clarified, "happen[ed] to reflect the family situation of that [manager] too."

Importantly, and consistent with the vignette results, participants were able to discuss why *highly involved* fathers may be especially privileged at work. Participants

used similar explanations to account for Koslowski's (2011) finding -- that highly involved fathers earned more than less involved fathers. All but one participant were able to articulate possible explanations for highly involved fathers' advantage in line with those articulated to account for fathers' earnings premium relative to non-fathers. Explanations for the "involvement premium" focused more heavily on the logic of positive selection; two-thirds of participants reasoned that men who choose to be highly involved with their children are responsible, stable men who would exhibit similar levels of commitment in the workplace, leading to higher wages and greater rewards compared to their less involved (and thus, less committed, less responsible) co-workers. An HR manager at an educational foundation extrapolated that commitment at home implied commitment everywhere else: "I think at some level that involvement with family can dictate how committed they are *to* things, whether it be work or something else. They're willing to give 100 percent all the time" (female HR manager).

One-third of the participants suggested that highly involved fathers may enjoy an earnings premium because employers might reward their workers' greater paternal involvement. It is noteworthy that a full third of the sample (five participants from five different organizations) mentioned employers' potential privileging of men's involvement with family, over and above men's nominal father status. In the two excerpts below, each employer, the first a male HR manager at an international nonprofit and the second a female research laboratory supervisor in the healthcare industry, articulated why involved fathers may be held in especially high regard in the professional workplace.

I think that there is a positive perception of fathers who are committed to their families and probably increases the overall esteem of that individual. It might cause bias regarding other aspects of work (male HR manager)

I can see that people look better at them because in our society, we don't expect men to participate in the family much. We really would like it, but we don't see that and we don't demand that as much, so when we see any father taking any part in it, we tend to kind of want to reward him for taking that effort (female research laboratory supervisor)

Employers' insights align with vignette results. Employers were easily able to explain why fathers, and even highly involved fathers, may enjoy an earnings premium in the workplace. They also provided explanations that resonate with the mediation analyses presented in Table 3.2. Two-thirds of employers offered supply-side explanations for the involvement premium, and results in Table 3.2 show that the relationship between high involvement and salary was partially explained by men's likability and commitment, what one employer referred to as the "enabling qualities" of fatherhood.¹⁸ However, even net of their likability and commitment, highly involved fathers still received an earnings premium in the vignette, suggesting there remains unobserved reasons for men's involvement premium. This aligns with employers who offered demand-side explanations for the premium – that employers are rewarding men *for being good fathers*, over and above rewarding them for being good workers.

However, despite this alignment, it is important to fully examine how employers interpreted the concept of "high involvement." When asked what a highly involved father meant to them, participants provided similar lists of activities that, when engaged in, would render a father highly involved with his children. There was considerable overlap in these lists, including participating in sports, being active in children's schooling, transporting children to and from activities, and taking children to doctors' appointments. None of the participants indicated that financial provision would, on its own, constitute

¹⁸ The vignette was not actually testing the supply-side selection effects that the employers offered in that the vignette examined *perceptions* of men's qualities rather than the observed qualities themselves or the effects of those qualities.

high involvement, though four clarified that they considered providing financial resources as a baseline or “starting point” for high involvement.

One-third of the employers talked about fathers participating in the “daily care” or “routine care” of the children as constituting high father involvement, what one employer, the female president of a residential property management company, called “the good, the bad, and the ugly” of parenting. Another, an executive in the telecommunications industry, described a highly involved father in terms of participation in routine daily life, characterizing him as one who is:

...with his children on the day-to-day routine stuff. That he’s helping to give them a bath at night and helping to feed them and getting them out to the playground. Doing a lot of stuff which is kind of boring but good stuff...taking them to doctors’ appointments, things like that (male telecommunications sales manager)

Taking children to doctors’ appointments, mentioned by several participants as a dimension of high involvement, is noteworthy for its potential to interrupt the work day. However, although several participants mentioned daily care involvement, leisure-related involvement was the most commonly cited dimension of high father involvement. Being active in children’s sports, either through coaching or game attendance, was the most frequently mentioned dimension of high father involvement with 11 of the 15 participants pointing to it as an example. One participant, a male telecommunications consultant, exclusively described high father involvement in terms of sports.

Further, several respondents used “low bar” qualifiers in their descriptions of high paternal involvement to imply (or state outright) that fathers have a lower standard to meet than mothers to be considered highly involved. Excerpts from two participants

below demonstrate this type of concessionary language when characterizing a highly involved father.

Well, I think a highly involved father should be one that will *help* with the everyday care of the child, pick him up from school. *I'm not saying every day*, but sharing the responsibility of picking him up from school, taking him to school, taking him to the babysitter, arranging for the babysitters... (female research laboratory supervisor, emphasis added)

...they know who their teachers are, they know who their friends are, and they *have a rough idea* of their schedule from week to week. Probably not to the level of detail their mother often has, but they have a rough idea (female telecommunications executive, emphasis added)

In other words, a father's involvement with his family need not be too extensive to be considered extensive and, thus, commendable. Fathers "helping" mothers and being held to a lower standard of high involvement is echoed in children's perceptions of parental roles, as well (Milkie, Simon, and Powell 1997).

One of the questions the supplemental interviews were designed to help elucidate was if employers are rewarding fathers' high involvement, what do they consider "highly involved"? Although several mentioned daily care, transportation, and doctors' appointments (which presumably could interfere with the workday), the majority also mentioned sports and leisure activities as, in part, constituting high paternal involvement and several indicated that high paternal involvement is not commensurate with high maternal involvement. In this way, results from the supplemental interviews bolster fathers' "involvement premium" identified in the vignette findings but also encourage us to further consider the implications of an involvement premium for fathers in the professional workplace given employers' fairly tailored descriptions of high paternal involvement.

DISCUSSION

In sum, results from the vignette studies present three major findings about the relationship between parental involvement and workplace evaluations. First, father applicants received an “involvement premium” in the context of the workplace. Second, men respondents were responsible for distributing this premium. Third, mother applicants did not receive an involvement premium and were instead penalized regardless of involvement level.

I argue that these results, in conjunction with insights from employers in the supplemental interviews, warrant a reconceptualization of the ideal worker norm (Williams 2001). The dominant perspective depicts the ideal worker as the unconstrained work devotee. From this perspective, fathers are ideal workers so long as their family life never perceptibly penetrates the workplace (Cooper 2000; Davies and Frink 2014; Williams 2001). Results from the current study, however, suggest that involvement in family life may not have altogether negative implications at work; in fact, for men, being an involved father may make one more ideal, not less.

However, I argue for a reconceptualization that takes into account this positive regard for men’s family involvement but recognizes that this involvement premium likely does not extend a) to men who are *too* involved with children or b) to mothers. First, although vignette results showed that highly involved fathers were offered higher salaries than their counterparts, interview participants shed light on perceptions of the content of that involvement. When employers pictured a highly involved father, they were not, by and large, picturing a man so deeply involved in caretaking that he would reduce his work hours to part-time due to family considerations (Vandello et al. 2013) or take six months

off of work after the birth of a child (Allen and Russell 1999). They were, however, picturing someone who participates in his children's sports, is involved in their schooling, and takes them to the doctor. These are two different – though not necessarily mutually exclusive – locations on the parenting continuum. A few employers also used qualifying language to distinguish high paternal from high maternal involvement, indicating that fathers' high involvement bar was lower than that of mothers. Being involved – or the “right amount” of involved – in their children's lives is privileged for fathers in the professional workplace, according to results from the current study.

Second, the involvement premium does not extend to mothers. Current findings show that men benefit from greater involvement with children, but women do not. The highly involved mother applicant was rated as significantly less hireable (Table 3.2) in the vignette study after controlling for her likability, providing some support for the Negative Involvement Hypothesis for mothers. The less involved mother was also not preferred to the childless applicant, being rated as significantly less hireable before controlling for likability and as not significantly different from the childless applicant once likability was accounted for (Table 3.2). By and large, these results are consistent with existing empirical and theoretical research which shows evidence of a “marginalization of motherhood” in the workplace (Crittenden 2010).¹⁹

Moreover, not only does not everyone receive the involvement premium, not everyone distributes it either. Inconsistent with both hypotheses submitted on the relationship between respondent gender and evaluations of parental involvement, vignette

¹⁹ Notably, however, during their interviews, many employers enumerated the positive qualities of parents, both mothers and fathers – their perspective, open-mindedness, and organizational proclivities were believed to make them great leaders. Nevertheless, most employers were also *not* surprised to learn that mothers suffered an earnings penalty at work relative to fathers and the childless.

and interview results showed that men were rewarded for their family involvement by other men. Vignette results showed that men but not women offered highly involved fathers significantly higher salaries than they offered childless men, nominal fathers, and less involved fathers (Table 3.3).

Employers also referenced men's interpersonal advantage during their interviews. Recall the HR executive who observed that "fathers like other fathers...[they] can relate to them, so they pay them more" (female HR director). Another employer, a program manager in the federal government, expanded on fathers' interpersonal insularity:

I think, if they are fathers, they're going to look at other fathers favorably because they're going to bond over yeah, my kid's football team or baseball team or whatever. I think that probably fathers value other fathers... They're going to probably give them more pay as well. They're going to relate to them different, you know, in a different way... (female program manager, federal government)

Men privileging other men, especially highly involved fathers, is a somewhat surprising finding given existing experimental research which shows either no differences by respondent gender or evidence of greater within-gender policing of normative gender behavior (Benard and Correll 2010; Wayne and Cordeiro 2003). However, studies that find men less tolerant of other men's fathering behavior, because, according to Benard and Correll (2010), it is threatening to their self-concepts, are based on samples of relatively young undergraduate students. It could be that the older, employed men that made up both the vignette and interview samples (or were referenced by women during their interviews) of the current study were less threatened by other men's paternal involvement, as many were fathers themselves, and thus were more willing to recognize and reward it.

It is also worth considering whether the involvement premium observed here is representative of some moralistic imperative to privilege fathers in the workplace. Deriving perhaps from the now ostensibly defunct “family wage system” where U.S. employers were at one time allowed and encouraged to pay fathers higher wages (Carlson 1996), employers, especially men employers, may continue to feel morally obligated to account for men’s familial responsibilities more so than those of women (Blair-Loy 2003). Although plausible, this explanation does not take involvement into consideration and does not explain why highly involved – but not less involved or nominal – fathers would be offered higher salaries than childless men.

The professional work context may be central to the operation of men’s involvement premium. In other words, the involved father/ideal worker may only be an operative standard in certain types of work environments. During the supplemental interviews, employers noted that the flexibility inherent in their work (i.e., office work) is what allows parents to be appreciated – and fathers to be applauded – in their workplaces.

Several of the older participants recalled a time when physical presence in the office was paramount, which routinely left mothers at a disadvantage relative to men and childless women. Now, they pointed out, with technological advancements that allow work to get done from anywhere at any time, there is far less disapproval for missing work due to family issues. A telecommunications executive in his late 50s compared today’s technology-enabled flexible workplace to what he called the “old world” where face time and physical presence were rewarded:

I think today, being a parent is much easier than it was years ago. Today, we have access to certain tools that mitigate presence; so for example, we have things like WebTool²⁰ that allow our consultants to be in virtual

²⁰ Pseudonym for a web conferencing program.

contact with the client. As a matter of fact, this morning, we just went through an evaluation of a document where everybody was able to see it on the screen. No one was in the office. Everybody was teleworking today, and that capability, I think, is a major milestone in the ability of people to work where they want. Years ago, that option didn't exist, and it probably was very hard to be a parent where you had to be onsite all the time to do your job.

It should also be noted, however, that none of the participants worked in so-called “round-the-clock professions” that have been identified in past research as firmly structured by masculine norms and putting a premium on face time and undivided devotion (Cooper 2000; Stone 2007; Williams 2001). In these types of professions, such as corporate law firms (Stone 2007) or the technology bubble of Silicon Valley (Cooper 2000), parental involvement, among men or women, may continue to be devalued and denigrated, although continued research is warranted. Experimental results, along with insights from employers in the supplemental interview study, suggest that outside of these hyper-competitive, very high-status professions, there may be greater support for specifically fathers' family involvement.

This constellation of findings can be interpreted in two different lights. On the one hand, there is cause for optimism that any amount of family involvement is positively regarded among fathers. Considering the deeply engrained ideal worker expectations that have been applied more strictly to men than women, it is promising that men's paternal involvement is not entirely stigmatized (Davies and Frink 2014; Williams 2001). The observed involvement premium may also be reflective of easing or shifting masculine norms structuring the professional workplace (Williams 2010). Given the gendered nature of organizations, and the long-standing notion that workplaces are structured according to traditional masculine norms (Acker 1990; Williams 2001), it is therefore

encouraging that a representative sample of employed adults not only did not disparage men's high involvement but in fact rewarded it in terms of salary offer. Although patterns observed in the vignette experiment are not necessarily fully or even partially reflective of what is happening in actual workplaces, the favorable evaluation of men's high involvement may be suggestive of a cultural shift in process that has, can, or will trickle into the workplace and ease what have been found in previous research and theory to be rigid masculine norms structuring American workplaces.

On the other hand, women are excluded from the involvement premium altogether, and there appears to be a cutoff point for "acceptable" levels of paternal involvement. Men may well experience an involvement premium up to a point, but privilege may quickly deteriorate into backlash (Brescoll et al. 2013, Williams et al. 2013) if men's involvement crosses the threshold from "work-friendly" to "excessive" (wherever that threshold may be). Moreover, women do not enjoy any involvement premium. Although their character evaluations did not suffer because of it, greater involvement among mothers was not associated with expectations of work success. Being identified as less involved with their children also did not benefit mothers' evaluations.

Overall, it seems encouraging that father involvement is not a verboten concept in every corner of the professional sector, as current conceptualizations of the ideal worker may lead us to expect. However, the unfortunate intractability of other dimensions of the ideal worker standard, including that women are not perceived to embody it, are further reminders that there is much progress yet to be made in not only reconciling perceptions of people as good workers and good parents but providing employees the tools that genuinely allow them to be both (Correll et al. 2014; Stone 2007; Williams 2001, 2010).

Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables, Mediating Mechanisms and Controls, by Applicant Gender

	Men Applicants		Women Applicants		Range	Significant Difference
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<u>Dependent Variables</u>						
<i>Work Success</i>						
Hire	3.71	0.81	3.71	0.85	1 - 5	
Salary	2.12	1.02	2.12	1.06	1 - 5	
<u>Mediating Mechanisms</u>						
Likable	3.61	0.76	3.61	0.80	1 - 5	
Late Days	1.78	0.84	1.86	0.92	1 - 5	**
Commit	6.68	2.09	6.69	2.20	1 - 10	
<u>Respondent Characteristics</u>						
<i>Race</i>						
White	0.67	0.47	0.67	0.47	0 - 1	
African-American	0.10	0.30	0.11	0.32	0 - 1	
Latino	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.35	0 - 1	
Other	0.08	0.27	0.08	0.27	0 - 1	
Parental Status (1=parent)	0.40	0.49	0.39	0.49	0 - 1	
Gender (1=female)	0.47	0.50	0.47	0.50	0 - 1	
Age	41.52	12.42	41.40	12.59	18 - 65	
<i>Education</i>						
Some High School	0.08	0.27	0.08	0.27	0 - 1	
High School Diploma	0.27	0.44	0.27	0.44	0 - 1	
Some College	0.30	0.46	0.31	0.46	0 - 1	
College Degree	0.35	0.48	0.34	0.48	0 - 1	
<i>Marital Status</i>						
Married	0.58	0.50	0.55	0.50	0 - 1	
Divorced/Separated	0.10	0.30	0.11	0.31	0 - 1	
Never Married	0.21	0.41	0.23	0.42	0 - 1	
Widow	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.12	0 - 1	
Cohabiting	0.11	0.31	0.10	0.29	0 - 1	
<i>Occupational Sector</i>						
White-Collar	0.53	0.50	0.56	0.50	0 - 1	*
Blue-Collar	0.31	0.46	0.36	0.48	0 - 1	***
Other	0.16	0.37	0.08	0.27	0 - 1	***
Self-Employed (1=yes)	0.11	0.31	0.11	0.32	0 - 1	
<i>Region</i>						
Northwest	0.18	0.39	0.18	0.39	0 - 1	
Midwest	0.22	0.42	0.22	0.42	0 - 1	
South	0.37	0.48	0.37	0.48	0 - 1	
West	0.23	0.42	0.23	0.42	0 - 1	
N	2,250		2,046			

Note: Percentages and means are weighted.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 3.2 Work Success Evaluation Items Regressed on Parenthood Status and Mediating Mechanisms with Controls, by Applicant Gender

Panel A		Men Applicants					
		Hire			Salary		
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Parenthood Status</u> ¹							
	Nominal	-0.09	-0.08	-0.08	0.03	0.03	0.03
	Less Involved	-0.35 ***	-0.20 ***	-0.19 ***	-0.04	0.02	0.03
	Highly Involved	0.03	-0.05	-0.06	0.20 *	0.16 *	0.16 *
<u>Mediating Mechanisms</u>							
	Likable		0.57 ***	0.45 ***		0.24 ***	0.17 ***
	Committed			0.11 ***			0.06 ***
	N		2,198			2,197	
	R-squared	0.07	0.33	0.39	0.05	0.08	0.09

Panel B		Women Applicants					
		Hire			Salary		
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Parenthood Status</u> ¹							
	Nominal	-0.09	-0.11 *	-0.07	0.03	0.02	0.03
	Less Involved	-0.23 ***	-0.10	-0.07	-0.03	0.03	0.04
	Highly Involved	-0.08	-0.15 **	-0.07	0.04	0.02	0.06
<u>Mediating Mechanisms</u>							
	Likable		0.57 ***	0.53 ***		0.23 ***	0.21 ***
	Late			-0.19 ***			-0.09 *
	N		2,008			2,000	
	R-squared	0.04	0.31	0.35	0.03	0.06	0.07

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

¹ Childless serves as the reference category

Note: Showing weighted coefficients from models controlling for participant race, parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

Table 3.3 Work Success Items Regressed on Interaction between Applicant Parenthood and Respondent Gender and Parental Status with Mediating Mechanisms and Controls, by Applicant Gender

Panel A	Men Applicants			
	Hire		Salary	
<u>Applicant Parenthood Status</u> ¹				
Nominal	-0.10	-0.09	0.07	0.03
Less Involved	-0.20 **	-0.19 **	0.04	0.01
Highly Involved	-0.06	-0.03	0.37 **	0.10
<u>Respondent Characteristics</u> ¹				
Woman Respondent	0.00		0.18	
Parent Respondent		-0.03		-0.20
<u>Interaction Terms</u>				
<i>Gender</i>				
Nominal x Woman	0.05		-0.08	
Less Involved x Woman	0.02		-0.03	
Highly Involved x Woman	0.01		-0.44 **	
<i>Parent</i>				
Nominal x Parent		0.02		0.00
Less Involved x Parent		-0.01		0.05
Highly Involved x Parent		-0.06		0.15
N	2,198		2,197	
R-squared	0.39	0.39	0.09	0.09
Panel B	Women Applicants			
	Hire		Salary	
<u>Applicant Parenthood Status</u> ¹				
Nominal	-0.10	-0.06	0.07	-0.01
Less Involved	-0.07	-0.03	0.04	0.05
Highly Involved	-0.08	-0.03	0.09	0.02
<u>Respondent Characteristics</u> ¹				
Woman Respondent	0.03		0.00	
Parent Respondent		0.12		-0.01
<u>Interaction Terms</u>				
<i>Gender</i>				
Nominal x Woman	0.07		-0.08	
Less Involved x Woman	0.01		0.01	
Highly Involved x Woman	0.02		-0.08	
<i>Parent</i>				
Nominal x Parent		-0.02		0.12
Less Involved x Parent		-0.09		-0.03
Highly Involved x Parent		-0.08		0.11
N	2,008		2,000	
R-squared	0.35	0.35	0.07	0.07

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

¹ Childless, Men and Non-Parents serve as reference categories

Note: Showing weighted coefficients from mediation models controlling for participant race, parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

Figure 3.1 Predicted Salary Offer for Men Applicants by Fatherhood Status

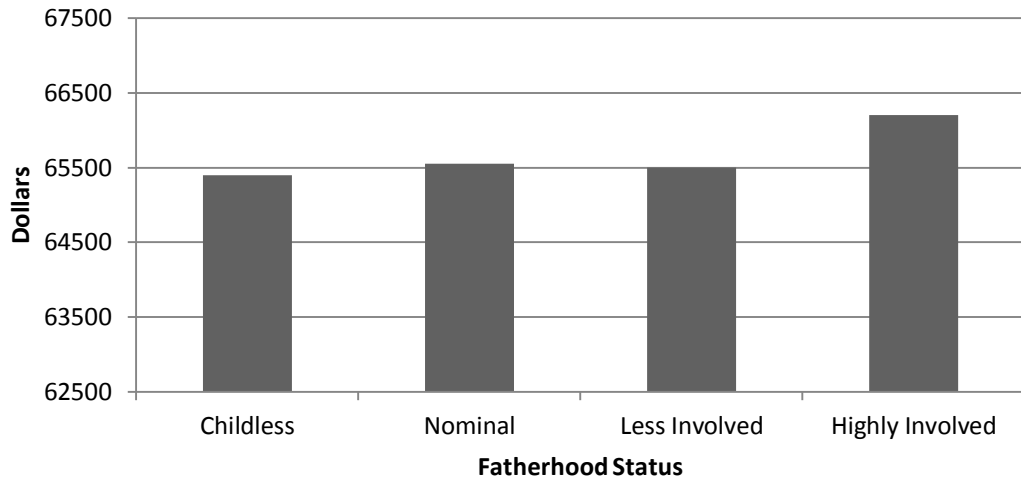
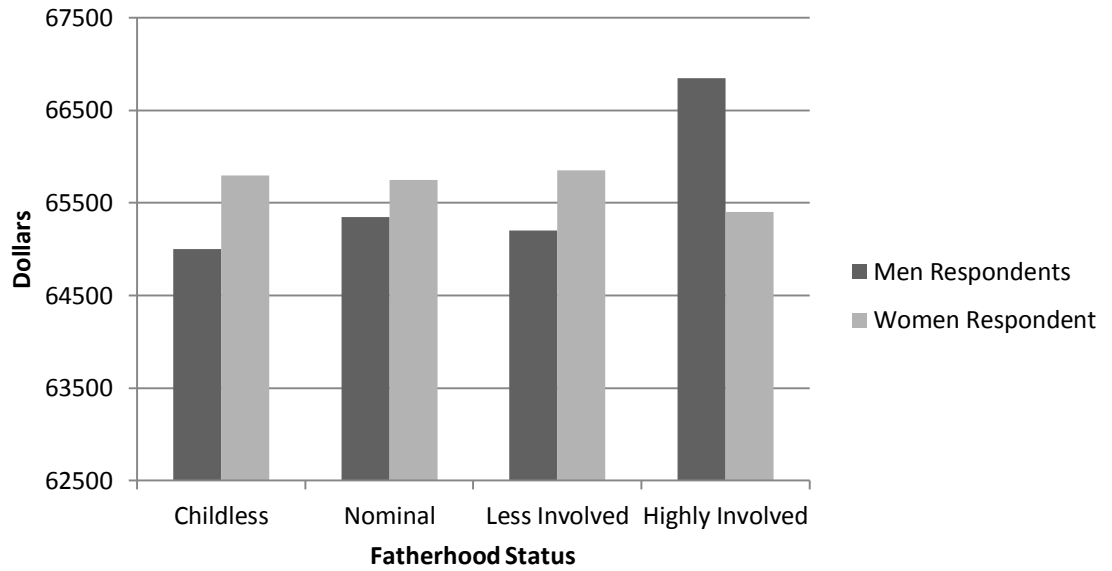


Figure 3.2 Predicted Salary Offer for Men Applicants by Fatherhood Status and Respondent Gender



CHAPTER FOUR

Workplace Evaluations of Parents by Race: Unraveling Perceptual Penalties and Premiums

ABSTRACT

Mothers suffer a “perceptual penalty” in the professional workplace. In addition to their well-documented earnings penalty, research shows that mothers are perceived as less competent and less committed than their male and non-mother counterparts. With most research on parents in the workplace focused on whites, we know little about how perceptual penalties are distributed *among* mothers and fathers by race/ethnicity. The current study uses data from two parallel vignette experiments based on nationally representative samples of employed adults to examine how the performance and reward expectations of a job applicant vary by her/his race (African-American, Latino, Asian, and white) and parenthood status, including level of involvement with children. Performance and reward expectations were fairly comparable for men across parenthood categories by race with some evidence of a “childless premium” for African-American men applicants. Greater variation existed in expectations of women by motherhood status and race. Highly involved Asian mothers were privileged relative to other mothers in both performance and reward expectations, whereas highly involved white mothers were penalized in both domains. This “white motherhood penalty” was further moderated by respondent race, with minority respondents expecting white mothers to be less hardworking and white respondents offering them lower salaries.

INTRODUCTION

Are mothers and fathers perceived differently by race in the professional workplace? Given the array of culturally pervasive race-based parenting stereotypes – from the Deadbeat Dad to the Tiger Mother – we might expect that perceptions of parents in the workplace are filtered through the intersection of their gender and racial/ethnic statuses. The current study examines the perceptual penalties and premiums – the evaluative counterparts to mothers’ and fathers’ well-documented earnings penalties and premiums – associated with parents in the workplace based on their race/ethnicity.

Perceptual penalties and premiums are critical to elucidate because they may explain, at least in part, the dogged earnings inequality among parents extensively documented by survey researchers (Budig and England 2001; Hodges and Budig 2010; Kalist 2008; Killewald 2013; Loughran and Zissimopoulos 2007; Lundberg and Rose 2000; Zhang 2009). In other words, comparatively negative or unfavorable perceptions – a perceptual penalty – are likely associated with comparatively lower rewards – an earnings penalty. According to Expectation States Theory, how people are rewarded largely depends on how they and their actions are perceived, perceptions which are greatly influenced by salient status characteristics, such as race, gender, and parental status (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972; Correll and Ridgeway 2003; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Wagner and Berger 2002).²¹ Thus, to better understand why people are differentially rewarded in the workplace, we must assess how they are perceived and the expectations held for them based on potentially consequential social status indicators.

²¹ Correll and Ridgeway (2003) define a status characteristic as an “attribute on which people differ (e.g., gender, computer expertise) and for which there are widely held beliefs in the culture associating greater social worthiness and competence with one category of the attribute (men, computer expert) than another (women, computer novice)” (p. 32).

Gender, race, and parental status are, on their own, largely acknowledged as key social statuses in the workplace affecting both perceptions and rewards. Gaps remain, however, in our knowledge about how these three statuses *intersect* to affect workplace outcomes, especially in terms of perceptions and evaluations.

Research on parenthood, race, and work runs on parallel tracks. On one track, there is sophisticated work on how the interaction between gender and race affects individuals' workplace outcomes, especially wages (McCall 2001). This empirical research, based largely on the foundation of intersectionality theory (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991), posits and indeed confirms that people are subject to multiple and simultaneous dis/advantages at work based on their gender and race (Cotter et al. 1999; Misra and Browne 2003). Although this theoretically informed literature tells us a good deal about the interaction between race and gender in the workplace, it does not shed much light on the third dimension of potential dis/advantage, parental status, nor how this tri-status intersection is likely to affect perceptions at work.

The motherhood wage penalty and fatherhood wage premium literatures focus on how parents are differentially rewarded based on gender but with less attention to how these penalties and premiums, especially perceptual penalties and premiums, vary by race/ethnicity. Overall, research shows that fathers earn higher salaries and are more favorably regarded in the professional workplace than childless men and all women (Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010; Keizer et al. 2010), whereas mothers, conversely, earn less than (Benard and Correll 2010; Benard et al. 2008; Budig and England 2001; Zhang 2009) and are considered, among other things, less competent and committed than, childless women and all men (Correll et al. 2007; Etaugh and Folger

1998; Fuegen et al. 2004). With a few notable exceptions (Correll et al. 2007), however, this literature does not examine variation in how mothers and fathers are differentially regarded by race.

The current study will draw from these highly related yet disconnected literatures on parenthood, race, and the workplace through two nationally representative vignette experiments assessing evaluations of men and women applicants by parental status and race in the context of the professional workplace. Moreover, the study further contributes to these literatures by expanding beyond the customary binary comparisons of parent versus nonparent and white versus Black to examine how *four* categories of parents – non-parents, nominal parents (identified as parents in name only), less involved parents, and highly involved parents – from *four* racial/ethnic categories – African-American, Latino, Asian, and white – are evaluated in terms of work and reward expectations. Finally, the size and nationally representative nature of the study samples allow for a unique analysis of the role of *respondent race* in the evaluation of parents in the workplace.

BACKGROUND

Race and Gender in the Workplace: Interactive Dis/advantages

Feminist and social psychological theories are focused on how race and gender intersect to affect people's experiences and outcomes, particularly in the context of the workplace, given its centrality for people's social and economic well-being. The feminist theoretical paradigm of intersectionality asserts that social statuses, such as race, ethnicity, and gender, cannot be adequately interpreted apart from each other because the intersection among them produces something uniquely different from the sum of the parts

(Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991; Wingfield 2012). Instead, statuses are “simultaneous and linked,” especially in terms of their consequences for important material outcomes like wages and job prospects (Browne and Misra 2003: 488).

Relatedly, researchers have drawn on the social psychological language of Expectation States Theory (EST), and its constituent status characteristics and reward expectation theories, to understand how gender and race, as status characteristics, combine to affect others’ expectations of competence and deservingness. EST is designed to explain how dominance patterns are formed within task-oriented groups, such as those within the workplace, based on people’s constellation of social status characteristics (Correll and Ridgeway 2003; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Wagner and Berger 2002). The theory, in this way much like intersectionality, maintains that multiple status characteristics of an actor come together in others’ minds to form both aggregate performance (Ridgeway and Correll 2004) and reward expectations (Wagner and Berger 2002).²² Discrepant expectations lead to discrepant opportunities to display competence, and, in a self-fulfilling cycle, yield discrepant rewards in the form of promotions and wages. In other words, using the vocabulary of the current study, perceptual penalties – comparatively unfavorable perceptions -- and earnings penalties -- comparatively low earnings -- are mutually reinforcing.

Empirical earnings research based on these theories shows that minority women, specifically African-American women, are the lowest wage earners (Browne and Misra

²² According to Wagner and Berger (2002), reward expectations theory “deals with the formation of reward expectations in status situations in which differential rewards are to be allocated” (p. 54). As with performance expectations, actors rely on commonly held cultural beliefs about how certain statuses are typically differentially rewarded (Wagner and Berger 2002). Reward and performance expectation processes work jointly in that when a high status individual has been rewarded, both the individual and others attribute the reward to high task competence. The cycle between perceived competence and actual performance thus perpetuates itself.

2003; Cotter et al. 1999; England, Christopher, and Reid 1999; Padavic and Reskin 2002). England and colleagues' (1999) analysis using the 1993 wave of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) found that white men (28-35 years old) reported the highest average hourly earnings, followed by Latino men, white women, African-American men, Latina women, and finally African-American women.²³ Greenman and Xie (2008) clarify, however, that *relative* to their same-race male counterparts, white women suffer the greatest wage penalty. Using data from the Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS) from the 2000 Census, the authors examined the gender earnings gap across 19 mutually exclusive racial-ethnic categories and found the widest gender earnings gap between non-Hispanic whites; that is, white women had a greater earnings penalty relative to their white male counterparts than women from any other racial-ethnic group.

Wage analyses are a critical lens through which to survey inequality in workplace outcomes based on the gender-race intersection. They tell us who earns more than whom and, to some extent, why. These studies do an excellent job of identifying how much of the variability in earnings can be attributed to factors, such as educational attainment or occupational sector, that are at once crucial for earnings potential and unequally distributed by race (in the case of educational attainment) and gender (in the case of occupational sector). Outside of a statistical residual, however, wage analyses cannot provide much insight in to what extent the workplace inequality we observe is attributable to workplace cultures and conscious or unconscious discriminatory employer practices, of which discrepant status-based perceptions are part.

²³ The authors note that the greater average earnings of white women than Black men is somewhat anomalous compared to earlier periods where all women earned less than all men, regardless of race.

There are some very revealing studies within the race-gender intersection literature that aim to do just that, largely through experiments and interviews with employers. Experimental research, for example, has consistently shown evidence of racial prejudice against African-Americans in studies of hiring preferences (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Pager 2003; Pager and Quillian 2005). In their field experiment assessing rates of employer callbacks to fictitious resumes that varied on race and gender, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found that white men and women were more likely than their African-American counterparts to receive callbacks for sales job openings in two major metropolitan cities. Similarly, Pager (2003) found that white men, even those with a criminal record, were more likely to receive an employment callback than African-American men without a criminal record in her experimental audit study.²⁴

Qualitative research also finds evidence of prejudicial and discriminatory behavior in the workplace at the intersection of race and gender. Kirschenman and Neckerman (1992) interviewed employers in a representative sample of firms from non-professional industries in Chicago and found negative stereotypes of inner-city African-American men that affected screening and hiring processes. Through her interviews with employers about their perceptions of African-American and white women in the workplace, Kennelly (1999) found that employers typified women with the image of an undependable, weakly committed mother, even though the interview schedule did not include any questions on motherhood or parenthood explicitly. White employers, specifically, relied on the stereotypical image of the Black single mother to describe

²⁴ Although the difference was sizable, it was not statistically significant. The main effects of race and criminal record were significant but not the interaction between the two.

African-American women workers even when the women's motherhood status was not mentioned or known.

Although not originally incorporated into her study design, it is clear from Kennelly's (1999) results that parental status is a theoretically relevant and salient social status to employers in the workplace. Surprisingly, although parenthood is recognized as a salient status characteristic in the workplace (Ridgeway and Correll 2004), little research in this area theorizes on or empirically examines the tri-status intersection among gender, race/ethnicity, and parental status. Indeed, in their recommendations for future research, Greenman and Xie (2008) identify this as a fruitful avenue, remarking that "the intersection of family and labor market outcomes may well hold the key to understanding the intersection of race and gender" (p. 1238). In the next section, I review a burgeoning literature that assesses how motherhood and fatherhood are interpreted in the workplace but that pays little attention to the moderating role of race.

Parenthood in the Workplace: Motherhood Penalties and Fatherhood Premiums

Research shows that mothers are disadvantaged relative to non-mothers (Budig and England 2001; Correll et al. 2007; Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2004; Waldfogel 1997) and that fathers are advantaged relative to non-fathers in the professional workplace (Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010; Killewald 2013; Lundberg and Rose 2000). Referred to as the fatherhood wage premium and motherhood wage penalty phenomena, most research finds wages of fathers between four and nine percent higher than non-fathers controlling for a range of human capital factors and the wages of mothers between five and seven percent lower than non-mothers controlling for a similar range of factors.

Scholars account for this well-established pattern of paternal advantage and maternal disadvantage through several explanations, including: a) that fathers are more productive (e.g., work longer hours) than their workmates and that mothers are less productive, b) that the same men who become fathers are just better workers and the same women who become mothers are just poorer workers (selection bias), and c) employers consciously or unconsciously perceive fathers more favorably and perceive mothers less favorably, evaluating the former more positively, promoting them more readily, and offering them higher wages. Two additional explanations are common within the motherhood penalty literature to account for mothers' wage disadvantage – d) that mothers are more likely to work in occupational sectors that are less lucrative but more hospitable to seasonal and part-time work, and e) that mothers have amassed less education and work experience than their workmates because they have been bearing and caring for children. Overall, explanations a, b, d, and e account for a significant proportion – though not all -- of the observed wage penalties and premiums among mothers and fathers, respectively. Researchers contend, and indeed have found evidence to support, that biased employer perceptions (explanation c) are an important link helping to explain wage inequality by parental status.

Experimental research assessing evaluations of mothers' and fathers' workplace deservingness and performance finds evidence of bias toward fathers and against mothers, what I have been referring to as the perceptual penalties and premiums for mothers and fathers, respectively. Results from these experiments, largely based on samples of undergraduate students, show that mothers are seen as less competent and committed than childless women and all men (Correll et al. 2007; Cuddy, Fiske and Glick

2004), whereas the opposite is the case for perceptions of fathers (Etaugh and Folger 1998; Fuegen et al. 2004). For example, Cuddy and colleagues (2004) had a sample of undergraduates read short biographical sketches of fictitious consultants that varied on the sex of the consultant and her/his parental status. They found that the mother consultant was rated as less hireable and less promotable than the father and childless consultants; further, they found that the mother consultant was considered warm but not competent whereas the father consultant was considered both warm and competent.

Yet, there is little attention paid to race in the parenthood-workplace literature. In-depth interview studies on mothers' workplace experiences, such as Stone's (2007) research on high-status women's forced choice to exit the labor force or Blair-Loy's (2003) work on mothers' sense of competing work and family devotions, while rich and revealing, focus on the experiences and perspectives of white women. Damaske's (2012) more recent interview study on mothers' explanations of their work trajectories drew from a more diverse sample of women (of her 84 participants, two-thirds were white and the remaining one third were equally divided among African-Americans, Latinas, and Asians). Despite the differences in workforce trajectories, largely by class, Damaske found surprising uniformity in how the women explained their work/family choices mostly in "for the family" terms.

Earnings studies have been somewhat more attentive to variations in wage penalties and premiums by race/ethnicity. In studies of racial variation in mothers' wage penalty (Glauber 2007; Korenman and Neumark 1992; Waldfogel 1997) and fathers' wage premium (Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010), white mothers were shown to incur the greatest penalty and white fathers were shown to enjoy the greatest premium

compared to African-Americans and Latinos. Killewald (2013), however, found no racial variation in wage premiums for fathers, a discrepancy which she attributed to including residential status and biological relationship in her models.

Existing research on how perceptions of mothers and fathers vary by race/ethnicity is extremely limited. Most experimental studies in this literature do not explicitly specify the race of the fictitious individual, but the people's names often imply that she/he is white (e.g., Ann Davis and Scott Myers). Correll and colleagues' (2007) seminal laboratory experiment/audit study is an important exception. In the experimental component of their study, the authors had a sample of undergraduate students evaluate application materials for a position at a marketing firm from a woman applicant who varied on race (African-American and white) and parental status (their man applicant did not vary on race). They found that both white and African-American mother applicants were evaluated less favorably, in terms of promotion and management potential, likelihood of hire, and recommended salary, relative to their childless counterparts. Between white and Black women, they found that African-American mothers were significantly less likely to be hired than white mothers.

Although a critical contribution to the field, the study did not address several important questions about how perceptions of parents in the workplace may vary by race. First, given its focus on the motherhood penalty, the Correll study did not manipulate the race of the men applicants, leaving us with questions about how fathers are differently perceived by race in the workplace. Second, as is often the case, race was limited to a Black-white comparison, providing little insight into how mothers and fathers of other racial-ethnic backgrounds, including Latinos and Asian Americans, are viewed in the

context of the workplace. Third, the authors did not take the race component of their experimental study into the field with their nearly identical audit study on employers, leaving us with valuable although somewhat limited conclusions about how a sample of undergraduate students evaluated mothers by race. The limited attention paid to racial variation in experimental studies, in general, is likely due to similar types of methodological limitations. The current study, based on two large samples of employed adults that are representative of the racial composition of the country, is not inhibited by sample size or composition.

Perceptions of Parenthood by Race in the Workplace: The Current Study

The current study, based on data from two nationally representative experimental vignette studies, accomplishes three things: 1) it elucidates how perceptions of mothers and fathers vary by race in the context of the professional workplace, a tri-status interaction that has been largely left unexplored in how it affects workplace perceptions; 2) rather than relying on the standard binary comparisons typically used in research on parents in the workplace, this study compares how *four* categories of parents – non parents, nominal parents, less involved parents, and highly involved parents – from *four* racial/ethnic categories – African-American, Latino, Asian (specifically, of Chinese descent), and white – are evaluated in the context of the professional workplace, and 3) the size and nature of the study's samples allow for an examination of how the race of the respondent affects such evaluations.

The Role of Respondent Race

The size and nature of the study's samples allow for a rare examination of how respondent race affects interpretations of applicants based on the applicant's race and parental status. Qualitative research on employer perceptions of employees by race indicates that the race of the employer is an important consideration (Kennelly 1999; Moss and Tilly 2001). As previously mentioned, Kennelly's (1999) interview study found that "[a]lmost a quarter of the white respondents (24 percent) explicitly used the single-mother image when referring to Black women" (Kennelly 1999: 179). Elvira and Town's (2001) quantitative analysis of personnel data from a large U.S. corporation supports Kennelly's finding. They found that employers were more favorable toward employees of the same race. Looking only at African-American and white superior-subordinate pairs, they found that white superiors scored their white subordinates higher on performance and productivity ratings whereas African-American superiors scored their African-American subordinates higher on these measures. Given results from this research which suggests that employer race is consequential for their perceptions and evaluations, I examine here how respondents' race is related to their evaluations, if at all.

Research Questions

The current study asks two major research questions:

- 1) How does applicant race moderate the relationship between parenthood status and evaluations of work success for mothers and fathers?
- 2) How does respondent race further moderate these relationships?

I present results addressing both questions following a description of the study's methodological approach and analytical plan.

METHOD

Vignette Design

Data come from two parallel experimental vignette studies wherein nationally representative samples of employed adults rated a fictitious job applicant, one male and one female, who varied on race and parenthood status. Respondents acted as hiring managers of a marketing firm who received a memo drafted by the hiring company's human resources ("HR") department summarizing an interview with the fictitious applicant. Respondents received a short set of instructions, a description of the fictitious job, and the HR memo detailing the applicant's professional and personal history. The memo, with conditions in brackets, is shown in Appendix I.

The experiments were run separately by gender. One sample of respondents (n = 2,046) received the instrument with the women applicants (henceforth, the "mother sample") and one sample of respondents (n = 2,250) received the instrument with the men applicant (henceforth, the "father sample").

For the race manipulation, I followed precedent (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Kleykamp 2009) and signaled applicants' race using "ethnically identifiable names" (Pager 2007: 609). The white applicant's name was "Greg/Allison Baker," the African-American applicant's name was "Jamal/Keisha Washington," the Latino applicant's name was "Victor/Victoria Rodriguez," and the Asian applicant's name was "Samuel/Susan Wong."

The experiment included four parental status indicators: childless, nominal parent (no involvement information specified), less involved parent, highly involved parent. Involvement information was communicated in the HR memo (see Appendix I) as a

parenthetical statement intended to be interpreted as an HR interviewer note to the employer as if the candidate had discussed her/his home life during the interview and the interviewer is conveying an impression of that discussion.

The vignette was situated in the context of the professional workplace, a marketing firm, because the majority of experimental research on the topic of parents and workplace discrimination has taken place in the white-collar work sector. In order to engage with and expand upon existing research, I remained consistent and located the vignette in the context of the professional workplace. Further, wage analyses indicate that parental wage inequality may be greatest in the professional context. Research shows that the effects of gender discrimination are more severe at higher income levels (Cotter et al. 1999; Padavic and Reskin 2002), and indeed is where scholars have found the greatest fatherhood premiums (Hodges and Budig 2010).

All applicants were identified as married and living with their children because research shows that the fatherhood wage premium only exists among married co-residential fathers (Glauber 2008; Hodges and Budig 2010; Killewald 2013; Lundberg and Rose 2000; Percheski and Wildeman 2008) and that motherhood penalties are most severe for married women (Budig and England 2001).

Samples

The vignette experiments were administered each to a separate nationally representative sample of employed U.S. adults between the ages of 18 and 65 through two separate TESS (Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences) grants. TESS contracts with GfK, a government and academic research company, to field TESS studies

online. GfK administers TESS studies to a representative sample of U.S. households (the “KnowledgePanel”). Households are recruited into the sample randomly through address-based sampling (ABS). Households selected into the sample without Internet access are provided both Internet access and the necessary computer equipment in order to participate in the Panel. The sample selection process employed by GfK results in a representative sample of the U.S. population, including representation of “difficult-to-survey” populations, such as racial minorities and cell phone-only households (GfK 2014). The mother and father samples are described in greater detail in Table 4.1.

Measures

Respondents completed an evaluation of the applicant based on their reading of the HR memo. All items were modeled after previous experimental studies in the parenthood-workplace literature (Correll et al. 2007; Fuegen et al. 2004; Gungor and Biernat 2009). I used a subset of these evaluation items for this analysis.

Dependent Variables: Performance and Reward Expectations

According to Status Characteristics Theory (SCT) and Reward Expectation Theory (RET), both sub-dimensions of Expectation States Theory (EST), people form performance expectations and reward expectations of others based on salient status characteristics. Therefore, I examined how respondents’ performance and reward expectations differed for applicants based on the intersection of their gender, race/ethnicity, and parenthood status. To assess performance expectations, I analyzed evaluations of how hardworking the applicant was expected to be and how often she/he

was expected to be late to work per month. The hardworking item asked: “How hardworking do you expect [candidate name] to be, relative to other employees in similar positions at the company?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “not at all hardworking” and 5 was “extremely hardworking.” The late item asked: “How many times per month would you expect [candidate name] to arrive late or leave early?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “9+ times” and 5 was “0 times.”²⁵

To assess reward expectations, I analyzed evaluations of the likelihood that the applicant would be hired and a starting salary offer. The likelihood of hire item asked: “How likely are you to hire [candidate name] for this position?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “Not at all likely” and 5 was “Extremely likely.” The salary offer item asked: “In the event you end up hiring [candidate name], what would you offer her/him as a starting salary?” Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “\$60,000-\$65,000” and 5 was “\$80,000-\$85,000.”

When considered jointly, I refer to performance expectations and salary expectations together as “work expectations.”

Control Variables

In addition to answering the evaluation items, respondents also answered a battery of demographic profile items. These included their own: race/ethnicity, the presence of children under 18 in the household (proxy for parental status), sex, age, education, household income, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region.

²⁵ This item was reverse coded for analysis.

Respondent race/ethnicity was measured with a series of four dummy variables, including white, African-American, Latino, and Other. The white group serves as the reference category in the regression analysis. The parental status proxy was measured as a dummy variable for the presence of children in the household under the age of 18 (1 = yes, 0 = no). Respondent's sex was coded as a dummy variable (1 = female; 0 = male). Respondent's age was included as a linear variable and ranges from 18 to 65. Respondent educational attainment was a series of dummy variables indicating the highest level of education completed: some high school, high school diploma, some college, and college degree (reference category). Marital status was measured using a series of dummy variables, including married (reference category), divorced or separated, never married, widowed, and cohabiting.

The models also controlled for respondents' work-related statuses (recall all respondents were employed in the labor force), including their occupational sector and self-employment status. Occupational sector was a series of three dummy variables indicating whether the respondent works in the white-collar sector (reference category), blue-collar sector, or other sector. Self-employment status was included as a single item (1 = yes, 0 = no).

Finally, to control for any regional differences, the models include a series of four dummy variables to measure geographic location: whether the respondent lived in the Northwest (reference category), Midwest, South, or West region of the United States.

Analytic Approach

To address the study's two research questions, I conducted a two-part analysis. In the first part, I used ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression to analyze how work expectations for nominal, less involved, and highly involved parents compared to expectations of childless applicants by applicant race. I did so using two-way interaction models to isolate whether and how applicant race moderated the relationship between parenthood status and performance and reward expectations.²⁶ Asian applicants serve as the reference category for applicant race, and childless applicants serve as the reference category for applicant parenthood status in the two-way interaction analyses.²⁷

In the second part, I used OLS to examine three-way interactions among applicant race, applicant parenthood status, and respondent race to assess whether and how respondent race further moderated the relationship between applicant race, parenthood status and work expectations. For the purposes of the three-way interaction models, I grouped respondents into white and nonwhite (African-American, Latino, and Other) categories. In the three-way models, white respondents serve as the reference category for respondent race, and Asian and childless applicants continue to serve as referents for applicant race and parenthood status, respectively.

²⁶ Table A.2 in Appendix VI shows these relationships as stratified models rather than as interaction effects (i.e., the relationship between parenthood status and likelihood of hire if white==1, rather than the relationship between parenthood status \times white and likelihood of hire). Both approaches address the research question similarly, but examining the relationships through interaction effects allows me to statistically isolate the moderating role of applicant race apart from the control variables.

²⁷ I selected Asians as the reference category in both the men's and women's analysis because they are a privileged group in both samples. Table A.2 shows that highly involved Asian mothers were considered more hardworking ($p < .01$) than their childless counterparts; this was the *only* association wherein any category of mother (nominal, less involved, or highly involved) was evaluated *more* favorably than her childless counterpart. The highly involved Asian father was also privileged as he was offered a significantly higher salary than his childless counterpart (Table A.2, $p < .01$).

I conducted and present the two- and three-way interaction analyses separately by gender (first for men applicants, then for women applicants), following a univariate description of the study variables.

RESULTS

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive results by sample. Overall, respondents from both samples rated the men and women applicants similarly, with the exception of anticipated late days; respondents from the mother sample expected the women applicants to be late to work more often than respondents from the father sample expected from the men applicants.²⁸ The demographic composition of the samples was very similar. The majority of respondents from both the mother and father samples were white and middle-aged with at least some college experience. In both samples, over half of the respondents were married and 40 percent had children living at home. The only statistically significant demographic difference between samples was occupational sector: the father sample had proportionately fewer respondents from the white- and blue-collar work sectors than the mother sample.

[Table 4.1 about here]

Men Applicants, Part I: Moderating Role of Applicant Race

Table 4.2 shows results from the OLS two-way interaction analysis designed to examine whether and how applicant race moderates the relationship between parenthood status (here, fatherhood status) and a) performance expectations (hardworking and late) and b) reward expectations (likelihood of hire and salary offer) for men applicants.

²⁸ This finding acts as a convincing “manipulation check” (Perdue and Summers 1986). In other words, this finding increases confidence that the involvement manipulation is salient to participants because the results are in the direction we expect.

[Table 4.2 about here]

Overall, there is little statistically significant variation in performance and reward expectations of men applicants. This is the case regardless of the reference category, meaning that men's parenthood status was evaluated similarly across race.²⁹ In terms of direction, evaluations of men followed a similar pattern – highly involved fathers were perceived more favorably than less involved fathers and, often, than childless men. In terms of magnitude, expectations favored Asian and white fathers somewhat more than Latino and African-American fathers, whereas Latino and especially African-American childless men were evaluated more favorably than their white and Asian counterparts. Figure 4.1 shows the predicted salary offer for all four racial categories of men by fatherhood status as a representative picture of the overall patterns by race.³⁰

[Figure 4.1 about here]

The two significant interaction effects shown in Table 4.2 deal with the relatively favorable performance and reward expectations for African-American childless men. Figure 4.2 clarifies what I refer to as a possible “childless premium” for Black men. The figure shows predicted hardworking ratings for the African-American and Asian men applicants by fatherhood status. Given that the significant interaction ($b = -0.30, p < .05$) is for Black nominal fatherhood status, I show only the comparison between childlessness and nominal fatherhood for Black men and Asian men as the referent. Relative to Asians, the difference in hardworking ratings for childless and nominal fathers is significant for Black men. I interpret this as a childless premium rather than as a fatherhood penalty

²⁹ The one statistical distinction based on reference category was men's salary offer, discussed further below.

³⁰ When African-Americans are the reference category, the difference between salary offer for childless and less involved white fathers is statistically significant ($b = -0.46, p < .05$) (data not shown). This is the only disparity in significant effects when the reference category is not Asians.

because Asian and Black nominal fathers were expected to be similarly hardworking, but childless Black men were expected to be significantly more hardworking than their father counterparts ($p < .05$).³¹ Results for the hiring expectation item are similar; relative to Asians, the Black childless applicant was rated as more hireable compared to the Black highly involved father applicant ($b = -0.36, p < .05$, Table 4.2).

[Figure 4.2 about here]

Men Applicants, Part II: Moderating Role of Respondent Race

To examine how respondent race may have further moderated the relationships among fatherhood status, race, and expectations, I conducted three-way interaction analyses. Table 4.3 shows the results of these three-way interactions from OLS regressions for men applicants. Overall, applicants' fatherhood status had less bearing on how white respondents evaluated the men applicants than it did on how minority respondents evaluated them.

Looking further at the “childless premium” for African-American men, Figure 4.3 shows that this premium was driven largely by minority respondents. Although white and minority respondents rated the nominal Black father similarly in terms of a hardworking performance expectation, minority respondents, relative to white respondents, saw the childless Black applicant as significantly more hardworking than the nominal father ($p < .001$, Table 4.3). Respondent race moderated the hirability relationship shown in Table 4.3 in much the same way – with fatherhood status negligibly affecting white

³¹ Although statistically this difference is small, the notion of a “childless premium” for Black men was supported by the interview results. Appendix V briefly describes how over half of the employers in the sample discussed this premium, noting that fatherhood conferred status to all men *except* African-Americans for whom fatherhood was more conspicuous.

respondents' reward expectations of Black men but with childlessness being favorably evaluated relative to Black fatherhood ($p < .05$) by minority respondents.

[Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 about here]

Women Applicants, Part I: The Moderating Role of Applicant Race

I next present results from the two- and three-way interaction analyses for women applicants. Table 4.4 shows results from the OLS interaction analysis designed to examine whether and how applicant race moderated the relationship between motherhood status and performance and reward expectations for women applicants.

There is more statistically significant variation in how motherhood status was evaluated across applicant race for women applicants compared to men applicants (Table 4.2). The interaction analysis presented in Table 4.4 yields two notable findings about differences in performance and reward expectations of women based on their race and motherhood status. First, highly involved white mothers were penalized in both performance and reward expectations.³² Second, highly involved Asian mothers were privileged in both of these domains.

[Table 4.4 about here]

³² I focus on the perceptual penalties for white mothers because they received comparatively lower evaluations than their childless counterparts in *both* performance and reward expectation domains. Table 4.4 shows several statistically significant interaction effects for Latina mothers, but the results are mixed and even conflicting for Latinas. In terms of performance expectations, Table 4.4 shows a significant interaction for all three categories of Latina mothers relative to their childless counterpart. This, however, is not because Latina mothers were rated so poorly but because childless Latina applicants were rated so favorably relative to Asians (data not shown). In terms of reward expectations, highly involved Latina mothers were expected to be least hireable compared to the other highly involved applicants, but they were also offered the highest salaries of *all* women applicants across race and motherhood status (data not shown). Thus, although highly involved Latina mothers appear to be at a hiring disadvantage, they experience an earnings premium and were considered more hardworking than highly involved white mothers. For their part, African-American women fell in the middle of performance and reward expectations compared to the other racial groups; they were neither the most privileged nor the most penalized on any evaluative dimension. Therefore, I focus on white and Asian mothers because the former were penalized in both performance and reward domains and were never more positively evaluated than the childless white applicant, whereas the latter were privileged in both domains and evaluated more favorably than the childless Asian applicant on several items.

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 demonstrate these patterns graphically. Figure 4.4 shows the predicted hardworking ratings for white and Asian women by motherhood status. High maternal involvement was associated with being more hardworking than childlessness for Asian mothers whereas the opposite was the case for white mothers (Table 4.4, $b = -0.64$, $p < .001$). Interesting in Figure 4.4 is that low involvement was associated with the same predicted hardworking expectation for both white and Asian women, but it is the difference between childlessness and high involvement that is significantly different between white and Asian women. The same pattern can be found in terms of reward expectations, as well. Figure 4.5 shows that the relationship between motherhood status and salary offer was reversed for Asian and white women, with the difference in salary offer for highly involved versus childless women being significant for these two groups ($b = -0.46$, $p < .05$, Table 4.4).

[Figures 4.4 and 4.5 about here]

Women Applicants, Part II: Moderating Role of Respondent Race

To examine how respondent race may have further moderated the relationships among motherhood status, race, and expectations, I conducted three-way interaction analyses. Table 4.5 shows the results of these three-way interactions from OLS regressions for women applicants. Findings are particularly useful in clarifying who propagates the perceptual penalty for white mothers identified in the results above.

[Table 4.5 about here]

In terms of performance expectations, Table 4.5 shows a significant interaction effect between respondent race and the hardworking expectations for highly involved white mothers ($b = -0.91$, $p < .05$). This effect is translated graphically in Figure 4.6,

showing that minority respondents expected highly involved white mothers to be less hardworking than white respondents expected them to be; minority respondents also expected highly involved white mothers to be least hardworking compared to all other categories of women (data not shown).

[Figure 4.6 about here]

Highly involved white mothers were penalized by white respondents in terms of reward expectations. Figure 4.7 shows how salary offers to white mothers differed by respondent race.³³ Relative to minority respondents, white respondents offered the highly involved white mother a significantly lower salary than they offered the childless white woman. Meanwhile, in results not shown, there was greater consensus between white and minority respondents on expectations for Asian mothers; both groups held higher expectations for the highly involved Asian mother than they did for either the less involved Asian mother or the Asian non-mother.

[Figure 4.7 about here]

Summary of Results

In all, results from each of the two-part analyses yield three primary findings. First, there was greater variation in how applicant race moderates the relationship between parenthood status and work expectations for women applicants than for men applicants. Expectations of men applicants tended to follow a similar pattern, varying more in magnitude than in direction, with childless Black men receiving comparatively more favorable evaluations than other childless men, and white and Asian fathers

³³ The two-way interaction between motherhood status and race was significant for white women and salary (see Table 4.4). Although this relationship was not significant as a three-way interaction when Asian women are the reference category (as shown in Table 4.5), it *is* significant when Latina women are the reference category ($b = 1.18, p < .05$, data not shown).

receiving comparatively more favorable evaluations than other fathers. (See Figure 4.1 for a graphical summary). Positive expectations for the African-American childless applicant stood out as statistically significant in Table 4.2, leading me to suggest the existence of a potential “childless premium” for Black men driven predominantly by minority respondents (Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3).

Greater variation existed in how applicant race moderated the relationships between motherhood status and work expectations. Such variation can be categorized largely into two phenomena: a white motherhood penalty and Asian motherhood premium. Results presented in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, along with Figures 4.4 through 4.7, show that highly involved white mothers were expected to be less hardworking and were offered lower salaries compared to their childless counterparts, relative to Asian women. Further, white mothers were penalized by both white and nonwhite respondents. Asian mothers, by contrast, were comparatively favorably viewed, being seen as significantly *more* hardworking than their childless counterparts (Figure 4.4). I discuss the implications of these phenomena below.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to expand our understanding of the distribution of perceptual penalties in the professional workplace by examining how parental involvement was perceived and evaluated differently by race. Research outside of the work-family literature shows that race is an important status characteristic moderating both employees’ earnings (Greenman and Xie 2008) and perceptions of them in the workplace (Kennelly 1999; Pager 2003; Pager and Quillian 2005). Although, based on this body of

literature, we would expect expectations and perceptions of *parents* to vary by race/ethnicity in the context of the workplace, existing research has disregarded race, focusing predominantly on perceptions of white mothers and fathers (Cuddy et al. 2004; Etaugh and Folger 1998; Kmec, Huffman, and Penner 2014).

The current study filled this void by examining performance and reward expectations for men and women job applicants based on four categories of race/ethnicity (white, African-American, Latino, Asian) and four categories of parenthood status (childless, nominal parent, less involved parent, highly involved parent). According to EST, people's status characteristics, such as their race, gender, and parental status, consequentially inform others' expectations of and for them, including both how they are expected to perform and how they should be rewarded. Outside of the experimental setting, expectations about behaviors and rewards established, in part, by status characteristics then influence actual opportunities for people to behave in ways that are in accordance with the expectations established. In a self-fulfilling cycle, the theory effectively posits that higher expectations yield better performance and ultimately better rewards whereas lower expectations yield the opposite. For this reason, it is critical to study not only people's outcomes, including their wages, but to assess how perceptions and expectations of people vary by central status characteristics in an effort to understand how the two may be linked.

Expectations documented here suggest three perceptual phenomena that privilege some groups of parents over others in terms of how well they are expected to perform and be rewarded: a perceptual premium for childless Black men and Asian mothers and a perceptual penalty for highly involved white mothers.

For African-American men, the observed perceptual premium for the childless applicant may derive from enduring cultural stereotypes about the “deadbeat dad” (Furstenberg 1988; Tamis-Lemonda and McFadden 2010); this image of an irresponsible minority father who shirks paternal obligations is common in popular culture (Douglas 2003), despite social scientific evidence to the contrary (Jones and Mosher 2013; Wingfield 2012). The engrained image of the irresponsible, nonresident Black father may have pervaded respondents’, and especially minority respondents’ (see Figure 4.3), thinking and affected their expectations accordingly.³⁴

The explanation may be somewhat more complex, however, in that it was not that expectations of Black fathers were necessarily that different from expectations of fathers of other races; but instead that Black childless men were especially well-regarded. In this way, respondents may still have drawn on the deadbeat dad stereotype when evaluating the childless man, effectively rewarding the Black childless applicant for *not* being a father. In other words, respondents may have interpreted the married childless Black men as atypical; unlike the other men, Black men have been seen as responsible for “avoiding” the “inevitability” of deadbeat dadhood. It is somewhat unclear why minority respondents would be more inclined to reward childlessness among the African-American candidates (Table 4.3 and Figures 4.3). It could be that minority respondents, specifically Black respondents, are more familiar with and frequently exposed to such

³⁴ Recent research casts doubt on the stereotype that African-American fathers are less involved with their children than fathers from other racial groups (Jones and Mosher 2013). The study from the National Center for Health Statistics using 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth data found that non-Hispanic Black fathers, in fact, spent *more* time in certain activities with their children than men of other races, including feeding them, dressing them, transporting them, and helping them with homework, regardless of residential status.

stereotypes, rendering them more salient and likely to be drawn on in evaluative settings like this.

For women, the analysis of the moderating role of applicant race showed greater variation. Indeed, just as Glenn (1994: 7) argues that “mothering is not just gendered, but also racialized,” I find that motherhood penalties may also be racialized. Results present evidence of a white motherhood penalty and an Asian motherhood premium. The former is in many ways a confirmation of existing knowledge; the latter is a newer and compelling insight into perceptions of parents by race in the workplace.

Given that most existing experimental research documenting a perceptual penalty for mothers has used ostensibly white women’s names in their instruments (e.g., “Ann Davis” in Etaugh and Folger 1998 or “Kate” in Cuddy et al. 2004), it is perhaps not surprising that we observe a similar penalty in the current study.³⁵ The knowledge gained from the current study about this penalty, however, is that the perceptual motherhood penalty appears to be *strongest* for white women. In other words, without much evidence from racial comparison groups in existing studies, it was unknown whether the motherhood penalty observed in those studies was a function of the women’s motherhood status, racial status, or the intersection of the two. Results from the current study find that white mothers are faced with a ubiquitous perceptual penalty in the context of the professional workplace – both in terms of how they are perceived (lower performance *and* reward expectations) and by whom (white *and* minority respondents).

How do we account for white mothers’ perceptual penalty? We can speculate with at least two possible discrimination explanations. First, a statistical discrimination

³⁵ This observed perceptual penalty is also in keeping with existing motherhood wage penalty research which finds that white mothers suffer the greatest earnings penalty compared to African-American and Latina mothers (Glauber 2007).

explanation would suggest that respondents evaluated the white mother applicant based on patterns observed of that group as a whole, using her group membership as a proxy for her expected individual behavior (Bielby and Baron 1986; Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991). To the extent that respondents have observed white mothers as less hardworking, they may have based their performance and reward expectations on the assumption that the individual applicant's behavior would be consistent with the group behavior. In this case, that would mean that white mothers are more likely to leave the professional workforce than mothers of other races. There is some indirect evidence to support this claim in that college-educated white women between the ages of 25 and 34 are less likely than African-American women and more likely than Latina women of the same age and educational background to be in the workforce (Alon and Haberfeld 2007). Although these data do not compare mothers specifically, given the age range, it does indirectly suggest that highly educated white women of childbearing age are less likely to be employed than some but not all categories of women in their age and educational brackets. Nevertheless, to the extent that sample respondents are aware of this information and/or have observed a similar pattern in their own workplace, they may have based their ratings of commitment and work ethic on the statistical likelihood that the individual applicant's behavior would be consistent with the group's (white mothers') average behavior and eventually pull back from the workforce.³⁶

³⁶ However in supplemental mediation analyses (data not shown), I did not find that expectations of mothers' behavior – in this case, lateness – mediated the relationship between high involvement and hardworking ratings for white women. (Notably, white nominal and highly involved mothers were expected to be late most often compared to their other-race counterparts, although the differences were not statistically significant). If respondents were engaging in statistical discrimination to make their comparatively poorer judgments of highly involved white mothers, we would expect that expectations about white mothers' lateness would partially or fully explain why they were seen as less hardworking and/or offered lower salaries. Although other work behaviors besides lateness, such as absenteeism or reducing work hours, could explain comparatively poor judgments of white mothers based on a statistical

Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, a normative discrimination explanation suggests that respondents rated highly involved white mothers less favorably based on beliefs about “appropriate” behavior for these women (Benard and Correll 2010). Based on this perspective, the thinking is that highly involved white mothers – i.e., good white mothers – should be at home with their children, not employed in the labor force. Content analyses of media products, such as magazines and advertisements, provide evidence of the devoted white mother as a pervasive cultural image. These studies find white women are both more likely to be portrayed in the domestic sphere than in the public sphere and are more likely to be portrayed as mothers than minority women (Johnston and Swanson 2003; Smith 2001). For example, Smith (2001) examined how white and minority women were portrayed in mass-market magazines. She found that white women were portrayed as workers and mothers but predominantly as mothers, whereas minority women were exclusively portrayed as workers. These studies reveal the omnipresent cultural image of the white mother whose suitable place is in the home, an image which may have penetrated respondents’ thinking and influenced their evaluations.

The pervasive cultural image of the “good” white mother, although arguably oppressive to white women’s advancement in the workforce, originated from a position of social privilege. Intersectional and feminist theorists of color point out that only white mothers are beholden to a homemaker image because there has historically only ever been a cultural interest in and imperative to “protect” white families (Dill 1988; Glenn 1994). Because, as Glenn (1994) argues, people of color were “incorporated into the United States largely to take advantage of their labor, there was little interest in

discrimination approach, it is surprising that lateness does very little to explain the relationship if respondents were engaging in statistical discrimination alone to make their evaluations.

preserving [their] family life” (p. 5). In contrast to white middle-class mothers, there was no cultural imperative to emphasize or exalt the mothering work of women of color because their family life was considered secondary to their work (for white families) in the public sector. Therefore, although the white motherhood penalty observed here is not itself a privileging phenomenon, it is important to recognize that the perceived incompatibility for white mothers between being a good mother and a good worker derives from their privileged social status.

In contrast to white mothers, Asian mothers experienced a perceptual premium and were, in many ways, evaluated more similarly to the men applicants than to the other women applicants. As illustration, Figure 4.8 shows the predicted salary offers for white men and women applicants and Asian men and women applicants. High involvement was associated with a salary offer increase for everyone but white women, for whom motherhood – highly involved or not – was associated with a decreased salary offer.

[Figure 4.8 about here]

The real life implications of these patterns are especially interesting given the high degree of racial marriage homogamy in the U.S. (Blackwell and Lichter 2004; Kalmijn 1998). First, the gender disparity in salary offers for whites is consistent with existing wage research which finds the greatest gender earnings gaps among whites out of 19 racial/ethnic categories (Greenman and Xie, 2008). White mothers are being pushed out of the labor force while white fathers are being rewarded. In a highly problematic cycle, white women suffer from poorer performance and reward expectations, and indeed poorer objective rewards (i.e., wage penalties), some ultimately forced out of the labor force into being full-time at-home mothers and wives (Stone 2007) to the white fathers

who are rewarded for being involved with their children. This cycle perpetuates the cultural image of the “good mother” as the white housewife. All mothers – regardless of race or income level – feel the effects of inhospitable workplaces that do very little to accommodate the needs of their family lives; yet, it is professional white women most likely to be married to professional white men and, thus, most able to quote-unquote “opt out” of the workforce (Stone 2007). Thus, the rewarding of white men for being fathers and the penalizing of white women for being mothers further feeds the narrative that “good” white mothers stay at home and out of the labor force.

Much less work has been done in the work-family literature on the experiences and perceptions of Asians, men or women. Asian women stand out in this study for being seen as more hardworking and deserving of greater rewards, consistent in many ways with the also pervasive “model minority” stereotypes.³⁷ Again, given the high degree of racial homogamy in marriage in the U.S., the relatively high performance and reward expectations held for Asian men and women may have interesting implications for the status of Asian-Americans in the professional sector. If Asian mothers, in particular, are seen simultaneously as good mothers *and* good workers, or that one begets the other, they could one day be the women leading the charge to the upper echelons of the corporate structure where women continue to be disproportionately outnumbered (Reskin and Padavic 2002; Stone 2007).³⁸

³⁷ Wage analyses of Asian-American women point to conflicting conclusions. Greenman (2011) found that Asian women are advantaged in the U.S. labor force relative to white women, whereas Kim and Zhao (2014) argue that previous studies were inadequately specified and find no relative advantage for Asian women once field of study, college type, and region of residence are taken into consideration.

³⁸ Cohen and Huffman (2007) find that greater representation of women in high-status managerial positions is related to a narrowed gender wage gap.

The perceptual penalties and premiums observed in this study support sociologists and feminist theorists who caution against conceiving of statuses, and their attendant dis/advantages, in purely additive terms (McCall 2001; Greenman and Xie 2008). As Wingfield (2012) notes in her interview study of Black professional men, it is vital to theorize and empirically examine multi-status interactions, and be especially sensitive to the effects of social context (here, the professional workplace), rather than rely on assumptions about relative disadvantage based on an additive status approach given that “the subtle machinations of power, domination, and subordination work in complex ways for various groups” (p. 3).

The overall goal of this study was to better understand how parenthood is perceived in the context of the professional workplace by race and ethnicity. Existing research tells us that earnings and perceptions of parents vary – sometimes considerably – by gender but tells us little about how those perceptions vary by race/ethnicity, a social location characteristic whose significance for workplace outcomes cannot be underestimated. Acknowledging that parents may be perceived – and ultimately, rewarded – differently based on their race, gender, *and* parental statuses and then unraveling who enjoys perceptual premiums and who suffers perceptual penalties in the professional workplace provides additional support for the theoretical premise that social statuses interlock in subtle, complex, and context-dependent ways to affect workplace outcomes.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables and Controls, by Applicant Gender

	Men Applicants		Women Applicants			Significant Difference
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	
<u>Dependent Variables</u>						
<i>Performance Expectations</i>						
Hardworking	3.78	0.72	3.78	0.77	1 - 5	
Late Days	1.78	0.84	1.86	0.92	1 - 5	**
<i>Reward Expectations</i>						
Hire	3.71	0.81	3.71	0.85	1 - 5	
Salary	2.12	1.02	2.12	1.06	1 - 5	
<u>Respondent Characteristics</u>						
<i>Race</i>						
White	0.67	0.47	0.67	0.47	0 - 1	
African-American	0.10	0.30	0.11	0.32	0 - 1	
Latino	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.35	0 - 1	
Other	0.08	0.27	0.08	0.27	0 - 1	
Parental Status (1=parent)	0.40	0.49	0.39	0.49	0 - 1	
Gender (1=female)	0.47	0.50	0.47	0.50	0 - 1	
Age	41.52	12.42	41.40	12.59	18 - 65	
<i>Education</i>						
Some High School	0.08	0.27	0.08	0.27	0 - 1	
High School Diploma	0.27	0.44	0.27	0.44	0 - 1	
Some College	0.30	0.46	0.31	0.46	0 - 1	
College Degree	0.35	0.48	0.34	0.48	0 - 1	
<i>Marital Status</i>						
Married	0.58	0.50	0.55	0.50	0 - 1	
Divorced/Separated	0.10	0.30	0.11	0.31	0 - 1	
Never Married	0.21	0.41	0.23	0.42	0 - 1	
Widow	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.12	0 - 1	
Cohabiting	0.11	0.31	0.10	0.29	0 - 1	
<i>Occupational Sector</i>						
White-Collar	0.53	0.50	0.56	0.50	0 - 1	*
Blue-Collar	0.31	0.46	0.36	0.48	0 - 1	***
Other	0.16	0.37	0.08	0.27	0 - 1	***
Self-Employed (1=yes)	0.11	0.31	0.11	0.32	0 - 1	
<i>Region</i>						
Northwest	0.18	0.39	0.18	0.39	0 - 1	
Midwest	0.22	0.42	0.22	0.42	0 - 1	
South	0.37	0.48	0.37	0.48	0 - 1	
West	0.23	0.42	0.23	0.42	0 - 1	
N	2,250		2,046			

Note: Percentages and means are weighted.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 4.2. Performance and Reward Expectation Items Regressed on Interaction between Applicant Race and Parenthood Status with Controls for Men Applicants

	Performance Expectations		Reward Expectations	
	Hardwork	Late	Hire	Salary
<u>Applicant Race x Parenthood Status¹</u>				
White x Nominal	-0.06	0.24	-0.09	-0.13
White x Less Involved	0.04	0.16	0.12	0.18
White x Highly Involved	0.05	-0.07	-0.08	-0.11
Black x Nominal	-0.30 *	0.12	-0.22	-0.09
Black x Less Involved	-0.11	0.36	-0.08	-0.25
Black x Highly Involved	-0.29	0.24	-0.36 *	-0.37
Latino x Nominal	-0.09	0.27	0.07	-0.10
Latino x Less Involved	-0.10	0.32	0.00	-0.22
Latino x Highly Involved	-0.21	0.19	-0.09	-0.37
N	2,236	2,221	2,221	2,218
R-squared	0.07	0.06	0.08	0.06

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Note: Data are weighted. Models control for participant race, parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

¹ Asian and childless serve as the reference categories

Table 4.3 Performance and Reward Expectation Items Regressed on Interaction among Applicant Race, Applicant Parenthood Status, and Respondent Race with Controls for Men Applicants

	Performance Expectations		Reward Expectations	
	Hardwork	Late	Hire	Salary
<u>Applicant Race x Parenthood Status x Respondent Race¹</u>				
White x Nominal x Nonwhite	-0.59	-0.39	-0.50	-0.27
White x Less Involved x Nonwhite	-0.01	-0.35	-0.07	-0.78
White x Highly Involved x Nonwhite	0.13	-0.91 *	-0.36	-0.31
Black x Nominal x Nonwhite	-1.21 ***	-0.40	-0.91 *	0.22
Black x Less Involved x Nonwhite	-0.32	-0.28	-0.75 *	-0.57
Black x Highly Involved x Nonwhite	-0.75 *	-0.05	-0.95 *	0.08
Latino x Nominal x Nonwhite	-0.33	-0.38	0.03	-0.26
Latino x Less Involved x Nonwhite	0.53	-0.07	-0.15	-0.50
Latino x Highly Involved x Nonwhite	-0.21	-0.71	-0.07	-0.12
N	2236	2221	2221	2218
R-squared	0.09	0.07	0.08	0.07

¹ Asian applicant, childless applicant, and white respondent serve as the reference categories

Note: Showing weighted coefficients from models controlling for participant parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 4.4. Performance and Reward Expectation Items Regressed on Interaction between Applicant Race and Parenthood Status with Controls for Women Applicants

	Performance Expectations		Reward Expectations	
	Hardwork	Late	Hire	Salary
<u>Applicant Race x Parenthood Status¹</u>				
White x Nominal	-0.25	0.22	-0.28	-0.35
White x Less Involved	-0.19	-0.09	0.06	-0.31
White x Highly Involved	-0.64 ***	0.33	-0.25	-0.46 *
Black x Nominal	-0.28	0.03	-0.24	-0.39
Black x Less Involved	-0.26	0.21	-0.07	-0.12
Black x Highly Involved	-0.40 *	0.25	-0.19	-0.21
Latina x Nominal	-0.40 *	0.16	-0.43 *	-0.18
Latina x Less Involved	-0.47 *	0.05	-0.26	0.12
Latina x Highly Involved	-0.63 **	0.30	-0.57 **	0.08
N	2,024	2,019	2,019	2,014
R-squared	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.04

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Note: Data are weighted. Models control for participant race, parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

¹ Asian and childless serve as the reference categories

Table 4.5 Performance and Reward Expectation Items Regressed on Interaction among Applicant Race, Applicant Parenthood Status, and Respondent Race with Controls for Women Applicants

	Performance Expectations		Reward Expectations	
	Hardwork	Late	Hire	Salary
<u>Applicant Race x Parenthood Status x Respondent Race¹</u>				
White x Nominal x Nonwhite	0.04	-0.08	-0.26	-0.22
White x Less Involved x Nonwhite	0.33	0.23	0.87	0.54
White x Highly Involved x Nonwhite	-0.91 *	0.97 *	-0.12	0.62
Black x Nominal x Nonwhite	0.24	0.06	0.13	-0.46
Black x Less Involved x Nonwhite	0.10	0.30	0.14	-0.22
Black x Highly Involved x Nonwhite	-0.33	0.12	-0.71	0.03
Latino x Nominal x Nonwhite	-0.30	0.52	-0.60	-0.85
Latino x Less Involved x Nonwhite	-0.17	0.56	-0.09	-0.50
Latino x Highly Involved x Nonwhite	-0.38	1.16 **	-0.43	-0.56
N	2,024	2,019	2,019	2,014
R-squared	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.05

¹ Asian applicant, childless applicant, and white respondent serve as the reference categories

Note: Showing weighted coefficients from models controlling for participant parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure 4.1 Predicted Salary Offer for Men Applicants by Fatherhood Status and Race

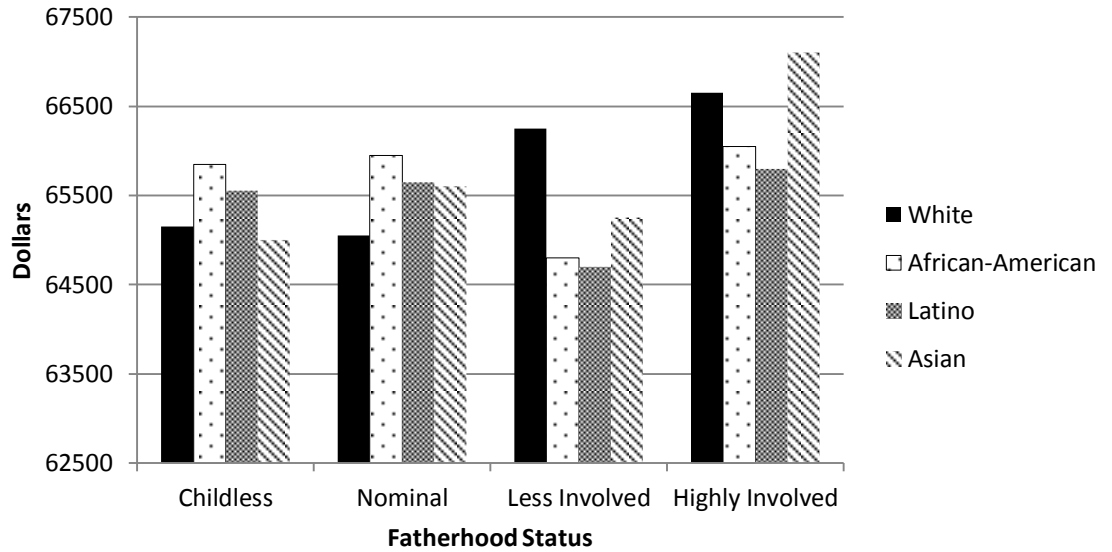


Figure 4.2 Predicted Hardworking Ratings by Fatherhood Status for African-American and Asian Men Applicants

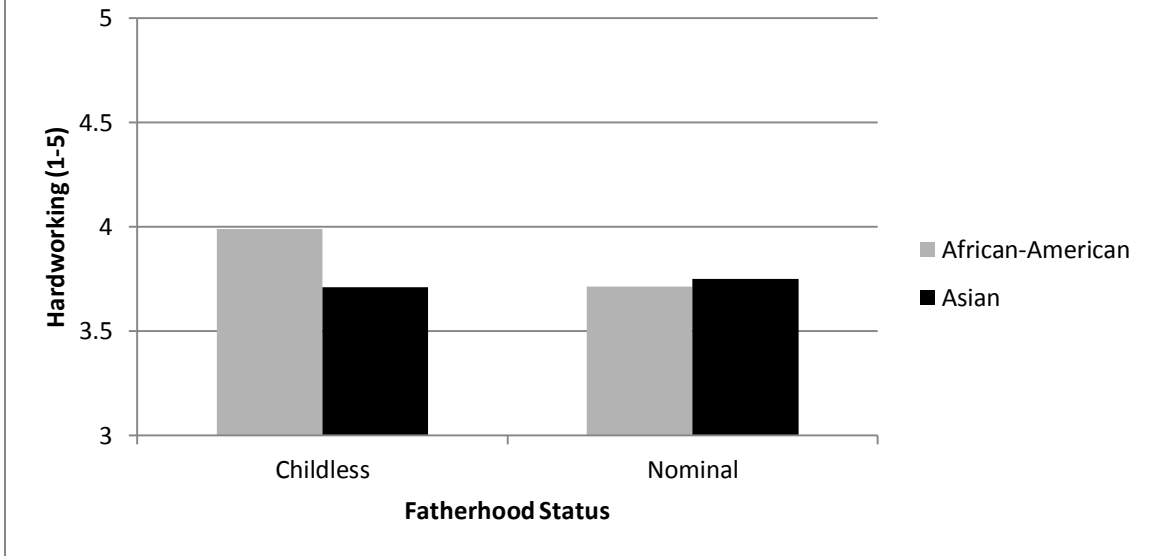


Figure 4.3 Predicted Hardworking Ratings for African-American Men Applicants by Fatherhood Status and Respondent Race

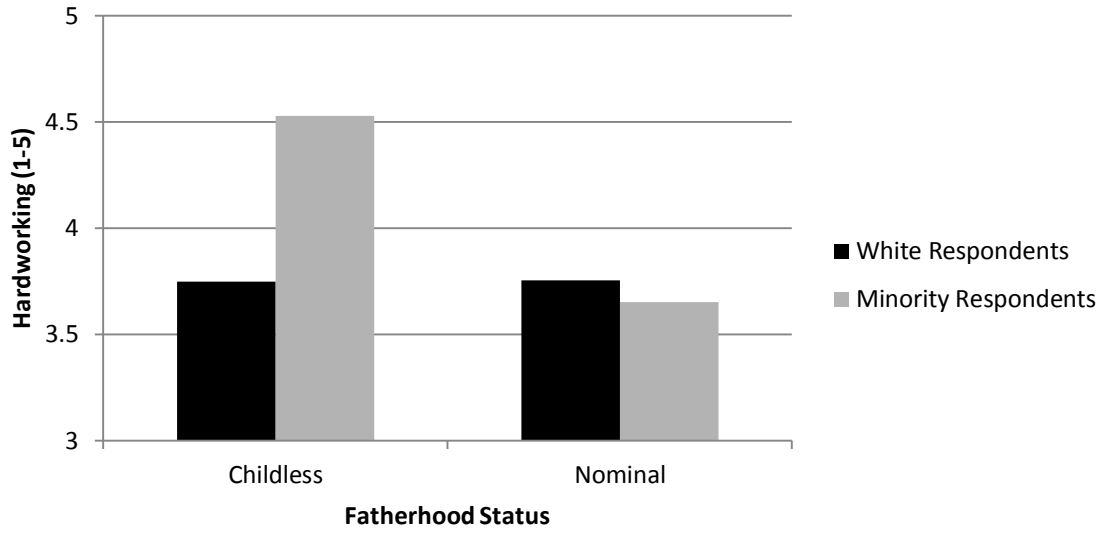


Figure 4.4 Predicted Hardworking Ratings by Motherhood Status for White and Asian Women Applicants

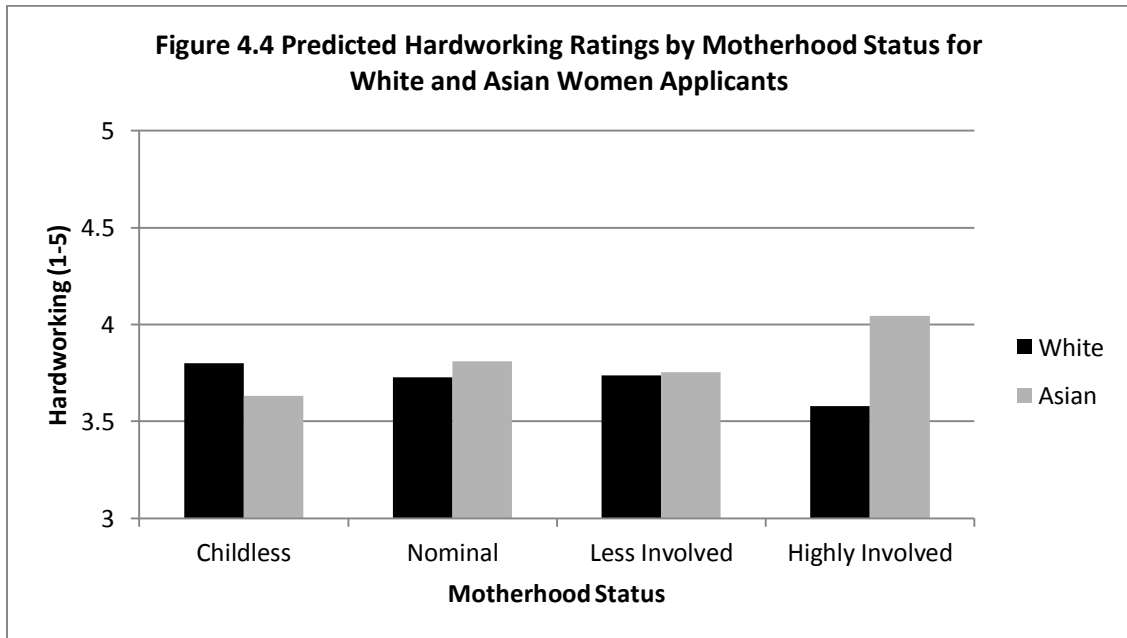
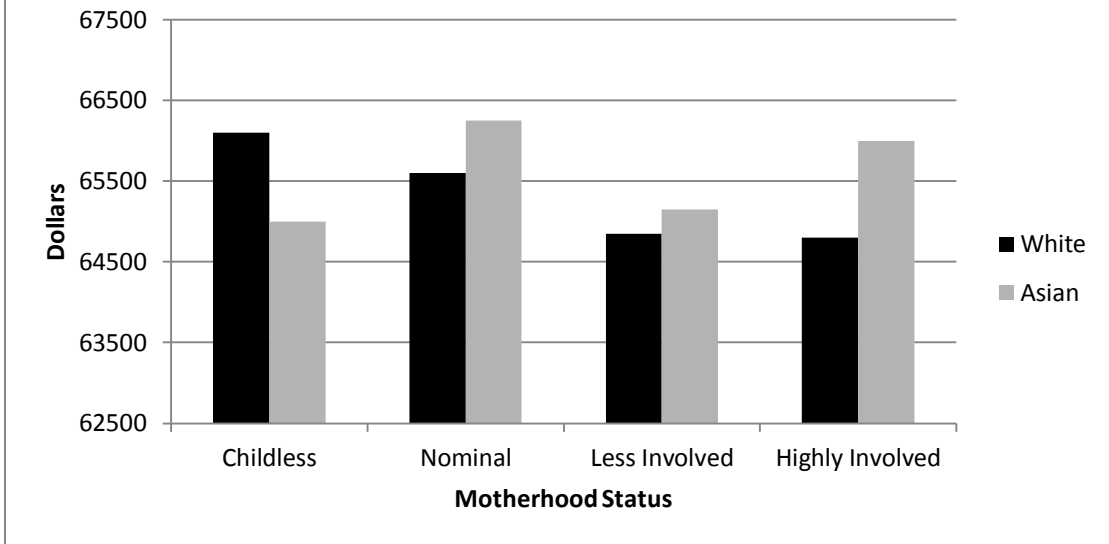
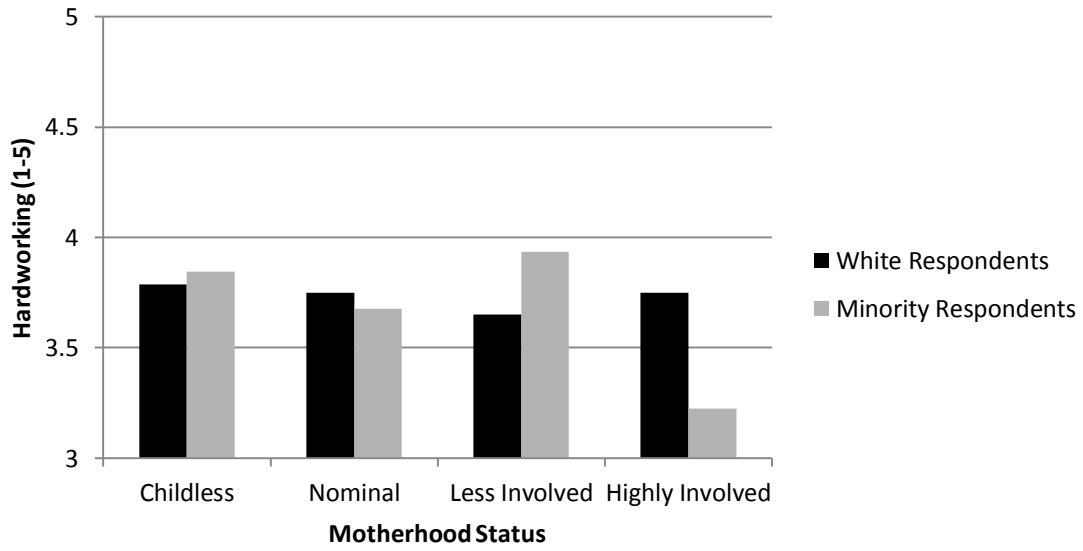


Figure 4.5 Predicted Salary Offer by Motherhood Status for White and Asian Women Applicants



**Figure 4.6 Predicted Hardworking Ratings for White Women Applicants
by Motherhood Status and Respondent Race**



**Figure 4.7 Predicted Salary Offer for White Women Applicants by
Motherhood Status and Respondent Race**

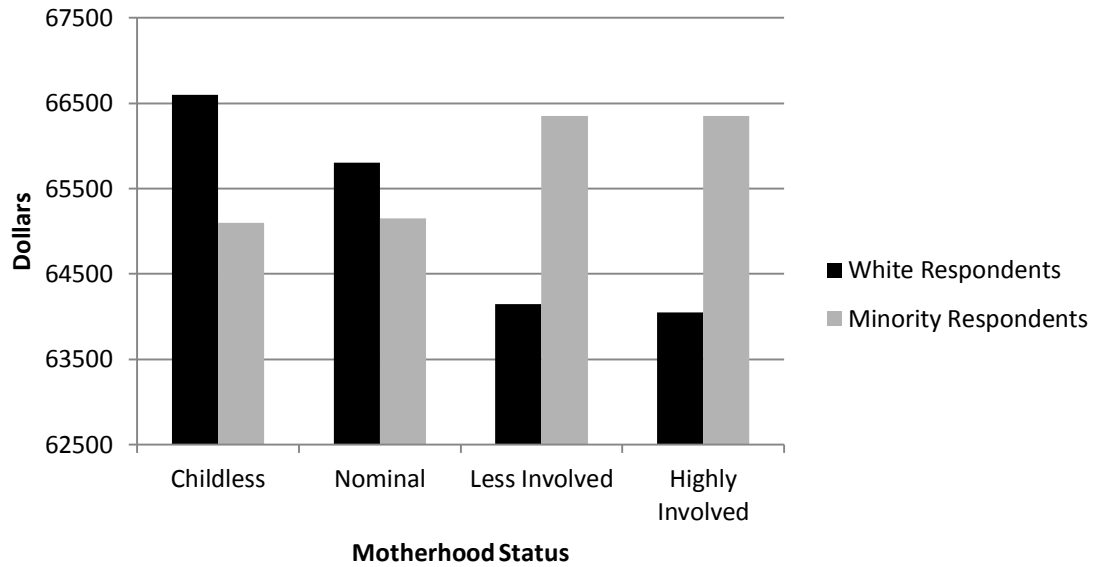
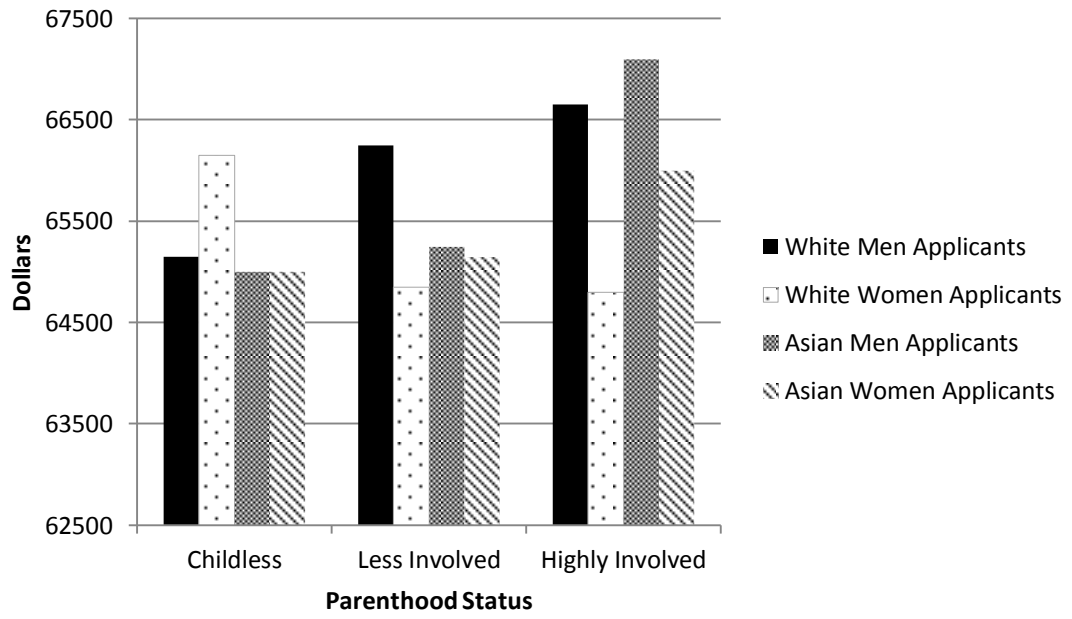


Figure 4.8 Predicted Salary Offer for White Men and Women Applicants and Asian Men and Women Applicants



CHAPTER FIVE

Mothers' Interpersonal Penalty: Incurring Resentment from the Childless

ABSTRACT

News and popular media depict a battleground at work with childless employees pitted against their parent colleagues. Empirical research on the topic is mixed, however. Some studies show evidence of a “family-friendly backlash” among the childless, and other studies find parents report feeling harassed, dumped on, and ignored, although typically by employers (“vertical backlash”) rather than by coworkers (“lateral backlash”). The objective of this exploratory study is to reorient the discourse on parent-childless interactions at work to consider how childless resentment can be conceived of as a further extension of the motherhood penalty. Interviews with 15 employers in a variety of occupations in the professional sector showed evidence of an *interpersonal penalty* for mothers in the workplace. Eight of the 15 employers noted that parents are the targets of resentment on the part of childless employees in their workplaces because parents a) require them to shoulder extra work and b) get a “hall pass” for being parents and are unfairly accommodated. Although most employers spoke about this phenomenon in gender neutral terms, they also revealed that mothers more often display their parenthood at work than do fathers, a pattern that arguably provides greater opportunity for mothers’ interpersonal penalization. This extension of the motherhood penalty is important to recognize not only for the consequences it likely has for mothers’ well-being, but because the interviews suggest that such tensions are keenly perceived by, and thus perhaps influential for, employers and their decision-making.

INTRODUCTION

A recent New York Times op-ed depicted the ongoing, and, the author argued, intensified strife between parents and non-parents, imploring both factions to “Let peace and tolerance prevail!” (Douthat 2014). Nowhere may these battle lines be drawn in such sharp relief as in the workplace. Indeed, media attention on relations between childless and parent employees reaches back at least twenty years (Murray 1996; Williams 1994). Parents feel caught between being good parents and being good workers (Blair-Loy 2003; Correll et al. 2013); the childless feel unduly burdened by the extra work, time, and travel they believe they have to commit to in order to pick up parents’ slack.

Outside of popular media, social scientific research is limited on both sides of this interpersonal “conflict” – childless employees’ feelings of frustration and resentment (Grover 1991; Hegvedt et al. 2002; Rothausen et al. 1998; Young 1999) and how parents feel they are treated at work (Kmec, O’Connor, and Schieman 2014; Berdahl and Moon 2013; Brescoll et al. 2013). Moreover, most research on how parents are perceived or feel they are perceived at work revolves around *vertical* backlash – negative perceptions or feedback from employers. Despite an emerging theoretical emphasis on the importance of interpersonal interactions at work (Wingfield 2012), empirical research is lacking on the nature and consequences of *lateral* backlash – feelings of frustration and mistreatment among coworkers that may or may not have a consequential effect on employers’ perceptions and decisions.

The current study draws on data from 15 semi-structured interviews with employers in the professional sector that shed light on the contours of this interpersonal conflict. Results indicate that employers do indeed notice that their childless employees

are resentful of parents in the workplace. According to the eight employers who recognized this interpersonal strife in their workplaces, the childless feel put upon by their parent colleagues, and they perceive parents as unfairly advantaged and as receiving special treatment from employers.

I argue that we can interpret this state of conflict as a further extension of the multi-faceted motherhood penalty. In addition to the motherhood wage penalty (Budig and England 2001) and the motherhood perceptual penalty (Chapter 4; Correll et al. 2007), mothers may further be subject to an *interpersonal penalty* as they contend with their childless co-workers' feelings of resentment, annoyance, and frustration. This interpersonal penalty likely has social and psychological consequences for mothers, but is also arguably inextricable from the wage and perceptual penalties. Interview results indicate that employers are aware of these feelings of resentment and thus may be influential for their own perceptions and decision-making.

EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

“Family-Friendly Backlash” – Resentment among the Childless

Although family-friendly workplace policies, such as parental leave and flextime, are largely regarded as sorely needed measures aimed at reducing work-life conflict, they are not universally appreciated. One such “countermovement” (Young 1999) is the so-called “work-family backlash” in which childless employees purport to be unfairly disadvantaged by such policies and by employers' friendliness toward parents more generally (Williams 2006; Young 1999; Hegtvedt, Clay-Warner, and Ferrigno 2002; Rothausen 1998; Jenner 1994). According to Young (1999), childless employees' resentment stems from feeling like they: 1) pick up the slack for their parent coworkers,

2) subsidize benefits they do not use or intend to use (i.e., onsite childcare), and 3) may not qualify or would not be considered for flexible work arrangements.

In short, it is not *fair* for parents to receive such extensive benefits and leeway for having children and for these same benefits to not necessarily extend to the childless. Given this central focus on fairness in the “work-family backlash” literature, scholars have approached the topic through organizational justice theory (Young 1999; Hegtvedt et al. 2002). Organizational justice theory is applied to issues of distributive, procedural, and interpersonal justice, meaning scholars examine how people perceive of how decisions are made (procedural justice), how the outcomes of those decisions are allocated (distributive justice), and how people are treated when being informed of the decisions and outcomes (interpersonal justice) (Greenberg 1990). Hegtvedt and colleagues (2002) believe childless resentment is centrally “an issue of distributive justice,” in that “workers who are unable to take advantage of the extra benefits provided by work-family policies and workers who perform extra duties while their coworkers attend to family matters may perceive themselves as under-rewarded” and thus resentful that benefits are unequally distributed (pp. 386 - 387).

In general, this somewhat limited academic research finds that non-parents may indeed hold less favorable perceptions of work-family policies than parents (Grover 1991; Rothausen et al. 1998) but that this resentment may not extend to feeling generally dissatisfied with one’s organization (Rothausen et al. 1998; Hegtvedt et al. 2002). In their study of worker reactions to a very targeted parental benefit, on-site childcare centers, Rothausen and her colleagues found that non-users of the childcare center held negative attitudes about the center itself but that their general attitudes toward and satisfaction

with their organizations were not significantly different from their colleagues who did use the center. They concluded by noting that the family-friendly backlash phenomenon “may be more a media-sensationalized issue than a real one” (p. 701).

By and large, the family-friendly backlash phenomenon has been studied in the management and occupations literatures where the focus has been on understanding best practices for establishing and maintaining efficient, high-functioning, inclusive workplaces (Ryan and Kossek 2008). Given the conclusion that childless resentment may be more media-hyped than a veritable workplace concern, systematic studies on the topic are limited in number and scope. These studies do not, for instance, examine how parents may perceive or interpret the negative attitudes of their childless colleagues.

Parents’ Feelings of Mistreatment at Work: Vertical versus Lateral Backlash

Within sociology, there is an alternative take on the concept of backlash, this time with parents at the fore. This sociological scholarship examines employees’ feelings of dissatisfaction and disadvantage at work based on their parental status, as well as their fears of feeling employer backlash for requesting the use of family-friendly policies. In this literature, the concept of backlash is used to describe the negative repercussions directed at parents when they make use of parental leave and flexible work policies (Williams et al. 2013). There is a wealth of qualitative research which finds workers reluctant to request or indicate interest in their employers’ flexible policies for fear that it may adversely affect their careers (Crittenden 2010; Hochschild 1997; Williams 2001). This research demonstrates parents’ fear of “vertical backlash” – being subject to the

negative actions or perceptions of employers who have the power to make consequential career decisions.

In a recent field study assessing a sample of managers' expectations of backlash, Brescoll and colleagues (2013) found that male managers both expected greater backlash from employers for requesting child-related leave and expected to have their request be denied by their supervisor more often than did the female participants in the sample. These findings are consistent with the theorizing that vertical backlash should be harsher for men requesting family-related leave because, unlike for women, caretaking is antithetical to traditional notions of masculinity and the ideal worker (Williams et al. 2013). Kmec and colleagues (2014) used data from the second wave of the Midlife Development in the United States study to assess whether working anything but full-time for child-related reasons was related to employees' feelings of being "dumped on" (being assigned least desirable tasks), ignored, or micromanaged. They found that women who worked anything but full-time after having a child reported higher rates of unfair treatment compared to women who worked anything but full-time and did not have a child *and* compared to women who continued to work full-time after having had a child. Notably, and inconsistent with existing theorizing, they did not find any significant differences in men's perceptions of unfair treatment regardless of parental status or work schedule.³⁹

³⁹ Kmec and colleagues (2014) explained this finding with several possibilities: a) men did not report greater unfair treatment because they rationalized it as being deserved given their non-normative behavior of reducing work hours for family reasons; b) the men who had received unfair treatment have selected out of the workplace because men are privileged enough to be able to leave jobs in which they feel unfairly penalized; c) men were not unfairly treated because employers assume men will still work full-time even if they are on leave and not in the office; or d) their sample of men working anything but full-time was not big enough to detect a significant difference among men. Each of these explanations assumes that fathers *should* receive greater levels of unfair treatment than were reported. The authors did not consider the

Recent empirical research suggests that parents' use of flexible work options may also lead to the experience of what I term "lateral backlash." Lateral backlash is the experiencing of negative reactions or perceptions of *coworkers*, as compared to the more commonly studied vertical backlash (i.e., reactionary treatment from employer to employee). Lateral backlash can manifest itself in many forms, including feelings of resentment, which I focus on here. Berdahl and Moon (2013) provide some evidence of another manifestation of lateral backlash in the form of intra-office harassment.

Berdahl and Moon (2013) surveyed two "middle class" work contexts – a female-dominated union and a male-dominated public service organization – to gauge employees' experiences with "not man enough" harassment (e.g., made you feel you were not tough enough) and general mistreatment (e.g., being excluded, derogated, or coerced). They found that caregiving fathers, fathers who spent more than the median number of hours with their children, felt the most "not man enough harassment" in the union workplace, compared with all women, childless men, and traditional fathers who spent less than the median amount of time with children. In the union setting, caregiving fathers experienced the greatest lateral backlash in the form of "not man enough" harassment; however, in the public service setting, childless women reported the greatest amount of general mistreatment. Although Berdahl and Moon (2013) do not explicitly indicate that the "not man enough" harassment was being doled out by coworkers, their measure also did not explicitly implicate employers as is the case in the vertical backlash studies (Brescoll et al. 2013; Kmec et al. 2014).

possibility that men were not treated as unfairly as mothers because employers are more supportive of involved fathers than they are of involved mothers as argued in Chapter 3.

These recent studies bring attention to the important issue of interpersonal interaction in the workplace (Wingfield 2012), and especially to how parental status and parenting behavior affect people's interpersonal experiences at work. Although the "family-friendly backlash" literature posits that childless resentment may be more media-hyped than real, results from sociological scholarship on parents' perceptions of workplace mistreatment suggests that parents are feeling harassed by *someone*. Here, I draw on interviews with 15 employers in the professional workplace where childless resentment became an unexpectedly common topic.

Mothers' Interpersonal Penalty: Refocusing the Discourse

In this paper, I seek to reorient the discourse about childless resentment in the workplace to focus on it as a further extension of the motherhood penalty. Within the management literature, this means shifting the perspective from the *resenters* to the *resented* and focusing attention on how parents are affected by their childless colleagues' resentment, should it exist. Within sociology, my call for reorientation requires greater examination of the effects of lateral backlash at work, with a specific interest in how parents perceive of their interpersonal interactions with coworkers rather than just their employers.

Data from interviews with 15 employers in the professional workplace suggest that this is a worthwhile objective. Although I was speaking with employers, and thus expecting to engage in discussions of vertical discrimination, I heard a surprising amount about their employees' interpersonal interactions. Specifically, I heard a very similar account of lateral backlash from over half of the employers in the sample: childless

employees resent parent employees for burdening them with extra work and for being able to enjoy a level of flexibility seemingly inaccessible to the childless.

Although most employers spoke in gender neutral terms when describing this backlash, they also nearly all agreed that mothers display their parenthood more readily in the workplace than men. Given that mothers are more likely to display their parental involvement at work, I argue that they will also be more frequently subject to an *interpersonal penalty*, namely being the targets of childless employees' resentment, in addition to suffering well-documented wage and perceptual penalties.

METHOD

Data come from a larger study about perceptions of parents in the workplace. Data presented here come from the interview segment of the study consisting of 15 semi-structured interviews with employers in the professional workforce. The interviews were conducted in three parts. In Part I, participants were asked general questions about their definition of a good employee and how being a parent affects someone's ability to be a good employee. In Part II, participants were asked to reflect on objective research findings, such as fathers' wage premium relative to mothers (Budig and England 2001) and childless men (Killewald 2013). Biases or perceptions that often exist at the unconscious level were expected to be drawn out as respondents tried to explain these observed research patterns (Moss and Tilly 2001). In Part III, participants were asked about their experiences in their specific workplaces. The full interview schedule is included as Appendix II.

To be eligible for participation, participants had to identify as an “employer,” which I defined as someone involved in the hiring, firing, and promoting of employees within the professional white-collar work sector. They were employed in a diversity of industries within the professional sector, ranging from the international nonprofit to the telecommunications industries. Interviews lasted between 39 and 71 minutes, with an average length of 52 minutes. The interview sample consisted of 10 women and 5 men. Eleven participants were white, three were African-American, and one was Asian American. The participant roster is shown in Appendix III.

Potential participants were identified through colleagues with contacts in the professional sector and contacted via email to solicit their participation. Additional participants were recruited within organizations through snowball sampling. Accordingly, the sample of 15 participants derived from 11 different organizations. Eleven interviews took place in person at the participant’s place of business, and four interviews were conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Following transcription, I read the transcripts several times and conducted multiple rounds of coding. In the first round, I coded the data using literal coding (Hesse-Biber 2007) to assess patterns in responses to the interview questions themselves. In second and third passes through the data, I engaged in open and axial coding to assess themes, patterns, and interconnections across the data regardless of question (Neuman 2007). Open coding was conducted in NVivo, and axial coding was conducted by hand using hardcopy printouts of the coded excerpts.

RESULTS

In the third section of the interview, I asked employers in what ways their parent employees were different than their childless employees. Six employers, over one-third of the sample, discussed their childless employees' resentment of parents in response to this question. Two employers brought it up elsewhere during their interviews, one of them listing it in our interview wrap-up as an important topic about which I had not asked. In all, just over half - 8 of the 15 employers - discussed childless employees' resentment of parents at work as an important issue in their workplaces. It is noteworthy that the theme arose in eight separate interviews within seven separate workplaces (two participants worked in the same office) despite there being no direct question about childless resentment. The fact that the employers introduced the topic without being directly asked about it speaks to the significance the issue carries for them in their workplace.

Two Flavors of Childless Resentment

Employers identified two types of childless resentment. For some, the issue among their childless employees was feeling like parent coworkers' responsibilities at home resulted in unfairly distributed workloads. In other words, the childless felt like they had to "pick up the slack" for their parent colleagues. The employer quoted below talked about childless resentment in terms of being "leaned on:"

I think people who don't have children sometimes are envious – they feel like they get some of the work because so-and-so had to run out and take their kid to the doctor. That, individuals without children are leaned on sometimes to make up for parenting stuff (male telecommunications executive)

Three employers talked about childless resentment in this way, as non-parent employees feeling unfairly burdened by their parent colleagues. Another take on childless resentment was articulated by the other five participants. For these employers, the interpersonal tension they noticed had to do with their childless employees believing parents get a “hall pass” at work. Their childless employees remark that parents have the “luxury” of coming and going as they please, their activities and schedules subject to less scrutiny from employers. According to the HR manager from an education nonprofit, parents are seen as being granted *greater* flexibility.

I think there is a perception...that being single actually hurts getting flexibility in the office...that you have to be a parent in order to be able to come and go and that there's more understanding and willingness to allow parents to come and go versus what you'd expect of a single person
(female HR manager, educational research firm)

Similarly, a female project manager in a federal agency noted that her childless employees believe “they don't get the same advantages or flexibilities.” Her and others' focus on “flexibility” is ironic given the heavy academic and policy-level focus on flexibility for parents (Gornick and Meyers 2003; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Stone 2007; Williams 2001, 2010). Indeed, workplace inflexibility is a major reason cited by mothers who have “opted out” for their departure from the labor force altogether (Stone 2007). Accordingly, scholars consistently call for greater schedule flexibility for parents to help them balance their home and work lives, but from the perspective of childless employees, according to my interview participants, parents are seen as already well-, even overly, accommodated. Unfortunately, this disconnect may foreshadow even greater resentment on the part of childless employees if policy initiatives granting greater family-related flexibility are enacted. Accordingly, as Williams (2000) and others have laid out

elsewhere, policies aimed at increasing workplace flexibility should be designed for all employees regardless of personal situation (Stone 2007).

Mothers' Interpersonal Penalty

I argue that we should conceive of childless resentment as an interpersonal penalty in the workplace. Parents – specifically mothers, as I argue below – are the subjects of envy, frustration, and resentment at work. In this way, their relationships and interpersonal interactions may be tense, anxious, or uncomfortable. As such, parents are interpersonally penalized at work by their childless colleagues who feel that parents cause them more work and are unfairly accommodated.

Although most respondents did not distinguish between mothers and fathers when referring to parents as the targets of childless resentment, I turn first to one employer who *did* acknowledge that mothers are the more common target of childless resentment. She, a research laboratory manager in the healthcare industry, indicated that she observed harsher interpersonal sanctions against mothers compared to fathers.

I think it's a little bit more volatile because people are very jealous if *women* with children have to take care of their children and don't come to work. You can hear their comments periodically. "Why does she get to do it and I have to do this?" "Why does she get to stay home today because her child is sick, but I have to come to work for her?" Or "Why can't I have time off to go to my kid's baseball game, and she gets time off to go when her daughter is sick?"... They get very jealous and there are comments made that they have to pick up their workload (female research laboratory supervisor, emphasis added)

This employer's articulation of childless resentment is interesting for several reasons. First, she noted that employees are especially resentful of *women's* caretaking

responsibilities. She admitted that it occurred with fathers, as well, but the feelings are more volatile towards mothers.

Further, mothers are resented for doing necessary caretaking work. Note that childless employees frame mothers as *getting* to take time off to care for a sick child, as if it were discretionary vacation time. In this way, mothers are in a bind – by taking care of their sick child, either out of necessity (there is no one else to do it) or out of desire (many mothers likely want to care for their children when they are sick and indeed, it is a hallmark of “good” mothering), they are seen as being unfairly privileged and piling on others’ workloads. Three other participants discussed childless resentment in the context of mothers caring for sick children. Parents (i.e., mothers) *get* to go home when their children are sick, whereas “childless folks...don’t have that luxury” according to a woman HR representative at an educational research agency.

Finally, and interestingly, the employer seems to imply that fathers, too, resent mothers for taking time off to care for sick children. Although it is not clear who she was referring to when she mentioned the employee with the baseball game, it is ostensibly a father given other references throughout her interview about fathers’ – but not mothers’ – involvement in children’s sports. Thus, she might be indicating that mothers are interpersonally penalized across the board for engaging in necessary and nondiscretionary carework, by parents and non-parents alike.

Although this laboratory manager was the only participant to explicitly acknowledge that mothers are subject to greater interpersonal sanctions than fathers, I contend that this is, in fact, a motherhood penalty. First, mothers dedicate more hours to childcare than fathers, regardless of employment status. Although fathers’ hours in

childcare have increased considerably over the last half century, mothers, including full-time employed mothers, still report spending more of their time caring for children than full-time employed fathers (Bianchi et al. 2012; Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). This is especially true on weekdays (Yeung et al. 2001), meaning that mothers are still more likely to leave work to pick up a sick child or take her/him to a doctor's appointment than fathers. Accordingly, even if childless employees are equally resentful of all parents, they have more opportunities to display that resentment toward mothers.

Second, mothers may be the more frequent targets of childless resentment because, according to most employers in the interview sample, women are more likely to display their motherhood in the office than men are to display their fatherhood. Whether it is during informal intra-office conversations or during salary negotiations before being hired, 10 employers, including 6 of those who discussed childless resentment, said that women discuss or reveal their parental status more than men.⁴⁰

Employers' discussions of their employees' parental displays arose throughout the interviews, often in response to a follow-up question on my part. For example, employers would describe the interview and hiring process at their workplaces (see Appendix II for the complete interview schedule) and describe how parental status often comes up during that process (typically through applicants' queries about local schools or schedule flexibility for childcare reasons). I would then follow up by asking whether they noticed if mothers or fathers discussed these types of issues more often during this process, and

⁴⁰ Three participants did not mention noticing any gender differences in displays of parenthood at work, and two participants noted during their interviews that they believed men were more forthcoming with their fatherhood status. A senior researcher at a government research agency noted that he found that men talked about their fatherhood more often but that was because he believed men are more comfortable talking to other men about their fathering than they are talking to other women. The other respondent to indicate that men display their parenthood more frequently, a human resources executive at an international non-profit, said that fathers displayed their parenthood more frequently because they *complained* more often than mothers about the stress traveling put on their families.

the majority of employers agreed that mothers reveal their motherhood status more often during the interview and hiring process than men. Other ways employers noted that their employees display their parenthood in the workplace outside of the hiring process included chatting about their children before and during meetings, invoking their parental status during salary negotiations, and physical displays of parenthood in the form of framed photos and screen saver images.

One employer, an HR representative at an international nonprofit, observed that mothers display their parenthood more often than men, a pattern she interpreted positively as mothers facilitating interpersonal relations at work.

I've seen mothers, even when they do presentations, have that personal touch, like "my seven year old twins said this."...I've seen less fathers talk about their children. But I have seen mothers share stories or crack a joke – "my kids are driving me crazy" – you know, things like that, which kind of makes people open up, makes them comfortable (female HR supervisor).

Alternatively, according to another employer, a telecommunications executive, although both men and women talk about their children in the workplace, women go too far. They do not abide judiciously enough by what she called the "five minute rule:"

Let's say that you're in a meeting. And because women try to connect more socially in a lot of cases, women will chit-chat more about personal things sometimes and not be so focused on like the five-minute rule.

Expounding on the "five-minute rule," she replied:

...a man will come into a meeting and say he was at a soccer tournament and his kids did x, y, and z and then he'll immediately jump to the meeting. Their discussion time is there, but it's very pointed and it's shorter

Therefore, despite the mostly gender neutral language from the interview participants, I suspect that mothers are more likely to be the targets of childless

resentment than fathers given employers' admission that women are more likely to reveal their parenthood status at work, and would thus be subject more frequently to this interpersonal penalty.⁴¹

DISCUSSION

Although scholars have labeled the “family-friendly backlash” phenomenon as over-hyped and “media-sensationalized” (Rothausen 1998), it was a palpable issue for about half of the employers in my interview sample. Despite not being asked about the topic directly, eight employers discussed their childless employees' resentment toward parents. Notably, employers did not admit to harboring such resentment themselves but rather relayed that their childless employees have historically been very forthcoming with their feelings of inequity because of a) the extra work they feel parents cause them and b) the “hall pass” they believe parents get that enables them to come and go without scrutiny. The resentment and frustration targeted at parents, and, I argue particularly at mothers, is consequential for several reasons. First, it likely adversely affects women's social and psychological well-being. To suspect or know that you are resented by others, especially for actions over which you have no control, such as taking time off work to care for a sick child, is potentially very distressing for mothers. Additional research is warranted to fully examine these social and psychological consequences.

Second, mothers' interpersonal penalty likely filters into their perceptual, and eventually, wage penalties. In other words, it is clear from the interviews that employers

⁴¹ Parenthetically, it is worth noting that all 10 women participants revealed their parental status unprompted during the course of the interview (all but one were mothers). One of the five men revealed his father status (two were fathers, one was not a father, and two declined to answer the question on the post-interview demographic questionnaire).

are keenly aware of the resentment that exists towards parents, especially mothers. To the extent that these conversations and messages about mothers' overburdening and taking advantage of others penetrate employers' thought processes and perceptions, it could have a tangible effect on their evaluations and decision making. Take, for instance, the following interview exchange with a male telecommunications executive. In it, he is absolutely sure that women discuss their parental status more often during the hiring process than men, but he has no recent or concrete memories as evidence:

- Interviewer: And have you noticed any patterns in who tends to bring [their parental status] up [during the interview]? Is it more often women? More often men?
- Interviewee: Oh females.
- Interviewer: Really?
- Interviewee: Hands down, yeah.
- Interviewer: Okay and can you kind of walk me through how this tends to come up?
- Interviewee: I don't know how to answer that. I really don't know how to answer that. I haven't done an interview with someone who is a parent in a long time.

Although this employer may not be basing his assumption about women's displays directly on the messages he receives from his disgruntled childless employees (recall his description of being "leaned on" above), he is not basing it on recent firsthand experience. Instead, he could be basing his assumptions in part on others' accounts or descriptions. I offer this exchange as illustration to speculate that employers make assumptions and draw conclusions about their employees based not entirely on firsthand experience; although I can only speculate what those other sources are, it seems possible that they may be especially susceptible to the perhaps forceful messages they hear from disgruntled employees.

If employers are aware of their employees' resentment, which interview results indicate that they are, and if employers incorporate these personnel issues into their own thinking, which I speculate above is a possibility, then mothers' interpersonal penalty can result in furthering mothers' perceptual penalty, or employers' negative perceptions of mothers' competence and commitment. These negative perceptions, in turn, affect how employers interpret mothers' behavior and performance, ultimately negatively affecting their chances at promotions and raises. Mothers' interpersonal penalty can have consequences beyond mothers' psychological well-being; it can filter upward to affect employer perceptions and, ultimately, their workplace success.

My goal in this paper was to reorient the discourse to consider more seriously how childless resentment can be conceived of as a further extension of the motherhood penalty at work. I call for such a reorientation based on insights from employers. However, given the small, non-representative sample from which these interviews are drawn, my conclusions are speculative and require continued research on several fronts.

First, we need more targeted survey questions assessing childless resentment. Existing survey research in the family-friendly backlash literature assesses either employees' feelings about a particular family-friendly program (i.e., onsite childcare) or general organizational satisfaction, neither of which effectively taps into feelings of frustration with coworkers. Understanding the nature and extensiveness of childless resentment is important in its own right. Although the focus of my argument is on mothers, I am not attempting to make the converse argument that the feelings of the childless do not matter. On the contrary, I agree with scholars who call for more inclusive

and broadly defined forms of flexible leave that would entitle everyone to greater flexibility regardless of personal circumstances (Williams 2006).

Second, both through interview and survey analysis, future research should examine the consequences of these interpersonal tensions. I posit that mothers' social and psychological well-being are likely adversely affected by being regarded as a workplace burden and/or as unfairly advantaged. I also suggest that interpersonal tensions directed at mothers (i.e., lateral backlash) can negatively impact how their employers' perceive and reward them as these tensions morph into messages about mothers' reliability and competence and filter upwards. These are empirical questions that can be addressed in future research.

As Wingfield (2012) notes in her recent study on the experiences of African-American men in the professional workplace, there is a "paucity of literature that examines cross-gender, cross-racial interactions among groups in various occupations," noting that "future studies should continue to explore the specific parameters of [those] interactions" (p. 161). Here, I add parental status to the list of characteristics that may importantly shape interpersonal interactions at work. Results from the current study encourage continued investigation into if and how mothers are further penalized at the level of interpersonal interaction in the workplace.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I first offer a summary of the empirical results from the preceding three chapters. I next discuss how reductions in parental status inequality in the workplace are reliant on both policy improvements and cultural shifts. In terms of policy, I discuss advances in and obstacles to more effective policy development. In terms of culture, I argue that the dissertation presents evidence of shifting workplace norms and, accordingly, calls for a reformulation of how we conceive of the “ideal worker.” I conclude by considering the study’s methodological limitations and enumerating avenues for continued research.

Summary of Empirical Results

The dissertation pushes our understanding of how parents are perceived and evaluated in the workplace at the intersection of several key statuses, including their gender, race/ethnicity and level of involvement with their children. It further examined how perceptions varied by statuses of the perceivers, focusing on how their gender, race, and parental status affected views of parents and different types of parents in the workplace. These analyses yielded three major findings.

First, vignette and interview results showed evidence of an “involvement premium” for fathers in the workplace. Highly involved fathers were offered higher salaries compared to their childless counterparts in the vignette, a finding which employers attributed both to the “enabling qualities” of fatherhood and to a positive workplace bias toward men who are involved in family life. Further, the vignette found that men respondents were largely responsible for propagating the earnings premium.

Second, adding racial status to the equation further clarified the picture of parental status inequality at work. Vignette results showed evidence of three raced phenomena: a “childless premium” for Black men, a perceptual premium for Asian mothers, and a perceptual penalty for white mothers. Unlike men applicants of other races, African-American childless men were considered *more* hardworking and *more* likely to be hired than their father counterparts (Table 4.2). This pattern of findings – rewarding Black men for being childless, not necessarily penalizing them for being fathers – aligned with interview results which found that two-thirds of the employer sample drew on “deadbeat dad” stereotypes to explain why childlessness, not fatherhood, connotes responsibility for Black men in the workplace.

Evaluations of mothers by race were more varied, positioning white and Asian women at almost opposite ends of the perceptual spectrum and complicating assumptions about a universal motherhood penalty. Highly involved Asian women were considered more hardworking than their childless counterparts, whereas the opposite was the case for highly involved white mothers (Figure 4.4). The same pattern held for salary offer, as well, with high involvement being associated with better salaries for Asian women and lower salaries for white women (Figure 4.5). The perceptual penalty for white mothers is essentially a replication of the perceptual motherhood penalty documented in existing literature given that the names used in existing experimental studies indicate that they (and indeed the women comprising the samples of existing qualitative research) are white. The perceptual premium for Asian mothers is, however, an important new insight worth continued investigation.

Third, and finally, I found preliminary evidence of an “interpersonal penalty” for parents in the workplace which, I argue, is more likely and more frequently targeted at mothers. Employers in the interview study offered a surprisingly similar narrative about childless resentment in their workplaces, surprising because I did not explicitly ask about it. Even without a targeted question, 8 of the 15 employers in 7 workplaces discussed issues they have had, noticed, or were made aware of in terms of their childless employees feeling disadvantaged, disgruntled, and resentful of their parent colleagues. Although employers tended to speak about these interpersonal problems in mostly gender neutral terms – in that childless employees were equally resentful of mothers and fathers – they also largely agreed that mothers display their parenthood more at work. Therefore, I suggest that the interpersonal strife among parents and childless at work is, more specifically, a riff between mothers and others (to borrow a phrase from Crittenden 2010). More research should be conducted on this potential penalty, assessing more directly how childless employees feel, to what extent parents and superiors notice or care, and whether such lateral conflict has more far-reaching consequences.

Reducing Parental Status Inequality: Inputs from Policy and Culture

Policy and culture exist in a dialectical relationship, as both cause and consequence of the other. As such, reducing parental status inequality in the workplace is dependent on changes in both. In the dissertation, I approached the study of parental status inequality through a cultural lens to better understand how parenthood is interpreted at work. However, equally important is the necessary role played by social policy. Below, I draw on existing policy literature to provide a brief summary of policy-

related accomplishments and obstacles in the fight for gender and parental status inequality in the workplace.

Deficient policies and deficient policy enforcement are a major part of the explanation for why mothers and fathers continue to be positioned so differently in the American workforce. More hospitable workplaces, cognizant and respectful of all parents' caregiving responsibilities, would allow women and men to be both better workers *and* better caregivers (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Better policies let women be the good workers and good mothers they have always been capable of being without the "built-headwinds" (Williams 2001, p. 6).

To this end, a number of reasonable and realistic policies have been suggested over the last few decades, including shorter work weeks, federally-mandated paid parental leave, flextime and flexspace policies, as well as policies aimed at improving and subsidizing childcare (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Scholars readily point to concrete examples of workplaces where some or several of these policies have been implemented and working effectively and as anticipated (Stone 2007; Williams 2001).

Yet, parental status inequality persists and these standout workplaces are the exception, not the rule. Why? There are a number of co-existing interlocking reasons submitted in the literature to explain why the workplace continues to be out of step with its workforce, despite having the tools at its disposal to really make a difference. I briefly outline a few of those explanations here, two more practical and two more cultural in nature.

First is the very practical issue of policy enforcement. Many workplaces have flexible policies on the books but policy enforcement is too often at the discretion of the

manager (Stone 2007). Without being institutionalized and supported by the top-tier of the workplace, flexible policies may exist but have uneven and inequitable effects if they are not institutionalized within the workplace and universally accessible.

Another practically-oriented explanation for weak policy development and enforcement is the business argument – cutting back on work hours and offering more generous leave packages, and better remunerating part-time work is all bad for business. According to this argument, individual workplaces and the U.S. economy would not be able to maintain its competitiveness if workers were given too much slack (Gornick and Myers 2003; Williams 2001). Scholars are quick to point out there is very little evidence supporting this concern, however. In fact, most research shows that greater flexibility yields better-accommodated and more satisfied employees, which yields greater, not diminished productivity (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 2001; Stone 2007; Williams 2006).

Third is a cultural obstacle to more effective policy development and implementation. One of the most diffuse and unyielding explanations offered to account for parental status inequality is the foundational American ethos of individualism (Blau, Ferber, and Winkler 2006; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Stone 2007; Williams 2001, 2006, 2010). U.S. culture exalts the individual as important and valuable, which, ironically, ultimately leads to the expectation that individuals should deal privately with (ubiquitous) work-family incompatibilities, saddling individuals with the task of cobbling together their own, sometimes tenuous, strategies to balance the two spheres. Williams (2006) describes the obstacle posed by the ethos of American individualism in this way:

...the United States has a unique, *intensely privatized* vision of childrearing. Childrearing is viewed not as a matter of raising the next generation of citizens as an expression of social solidarity, but as a private

affair (“If you can’t take care of your kids, why did you have them?”) (p. 11, emphasis added)⁴²

In other words, children are private goods and should be handled privately; that means workplaces do not feel obligated to support them. It is, in part, why women are congratulated for deciding to stay at home full-time (Stone 2007) and why childless coworkers are so resentful of picking up the slack for their parent colleagues (Chapter 5). In many parts of the world, childrearing is considered a communal responsibility, one in which all citizens have a stake. Not surprisingly, Western countries with this approach to the world, such as France and Sweden, boast much more family-friendly workplaces with far superior flexibility policies than what’s common in the United States (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Gornick and Meyers 2003).

Finally, gendered norms, both at the individual level and at the organizational level, are further cultural roadblocks to better workplace policies. At the individual level is the belief in gendered separate spheres which holds that mothers *should* be at home and fathers *should* be at work, a perspective discussed in Chapter 4 to explain specifically white mothers’ perceptual penalty at work. Based on this belief, parental status inequality at work is a byproduct of mothers engaging in non-normative gender behavior and therefore cannot be further reduced or eliminated as long as mothers “insist” on being in the labor market. Although there has been considerable change in gender attitudes over the last half century (Brewster and Padavic 2000; Peltola, Milkie, and Presser 2004), more recent scholarship has observed a plateauing of liberalizing gender attitudes in the last years of the 20th century (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011).

⁴² This argument can easily be extrapolated to any non-work consideration: caring for elderly parents, dealing with housing issues, or engaging in hobbies. They are all deemed “off limits” by workplaces as parts of people’s private lives and, thus, outside the jurisdiction of the workplace to try to accommodate those *private* lives with public policies.

Cotter and colleagues (2011) attribute this stall to an emerging cultural frame of “egalitarian essentialism” that “blends aspects of feminist equality and traditional motherhood roles” (p. 259). Although gender attitudes have not necessarily receded, the authors find that they also have not become increasingly egalitarian as many feminist theorists predicted they would. Nonetheless, beliefs about individuals’ appropriate gender behavior, exemplified most recently in this egalitarian essentialist frame, is an enduring cultural and ideological piece of the explanation accounting for protracted parental status inequality in the workplace.

Relatedly, and central to the dissertation, gender operates at the organizational level, as well, to impede policy development. Enduring masculine workplace norms that privilege work devotion over family well-being and require employees to work as if everyone had a homemaker wife are another fundamental part of the problem (Williams 2010). These organizational norms have a nearly gravitational pull that “push men out of caregiver roles [and] push women out of their jobs” (Williams 2010, p. 3). In the next section, I discuss the dissertation’s theoretical contribution to our understanding of masculine workplace norms and the ideal worker standard.

Shifting Workplace Norms and Reconceptualizing the Ideal Worker

At the outset of the dissertation, I suggested that little progress could be made toward achieving gender and parental status equality in the workplace in the absence of shifts to both policy and culture. Despite the obstacles laid out above, progress is being made on the policy front. Scholars identify exemplar workplaces in the private sector, such as Deloitte & Touche and AstraZeneca, making considerable headway in increasing

employees' work-family balance (Stone 2007). The federal government – long the target of criticism from feminists and work-family scholars for failing to meet standards set by other, more policy progressive Western nations – is even showing evidence of progress with a recent 2014 White House Summit on Working Families in which many work-family incompatibility issues were addressed (albeit not solved). Even the highly gendered context of the U.S. military is advancing on the policy front with the institutionalization of paternity leave in all branches (Kapp et al. 2008).

In addition to policy progress, I suggest that we may be in the midst of a cultural shift in the workplace as the barometer for what constitutes an ideal worker begins to budge. Based on results from the dissertation, I submit that we are observing a transition in the way parenthood, namely fatherhood, is interpreted at work. A consequence of such a transition is, I argue, the reformulation of who is thought to embody the “ideal worker.” Prior conceptualizations view the ideal worker as embodied in the work-obsessed man with a homemaker wife and children whose existence rarely, if ever, breach the office walls. He is a father, but definitively *not* an involved one, by any definition (Cooper 2000; Davies and Frink 2014; Williams 2001, 2010).

Although workplaces undoubtedly continue to expect hard work from their employees, the notion that rejecting his family makes a worker more rather than less ideal may be changing.⁴³ Based on results from the dissertation, I suggest that involvement in family life is being reinterpreted for men at work. Being an involved father may no longer connote “wimp” or “wuss,” as scholars have previously argued they do, in many, if not most, corners of the professional sector (Berdahl and Moon 2013; Williams 2001).

⁴³ Indeed, the theme of change arose frequently, and unsolicited, during the interview study. Half of the employers invoked change language unprompted during their interviews, remarking on the changes and transitions they have been observing in their workplaces or believe are occurring culturally.

Instead, men's involvement with children is being reinterpreted as indicative of responsibility, stability, and worthy of reward. Being involved in family life – to a point – may no longer be emasculating for men, but rather, constituting of masculinity, or at least, of a well-rounded worker. As nurturance and involvement have become established parts of the *package deal* of fatherhood (Townsend 2002), I suggest that they are now being incorporated into the package deal of workerhood, as well. The ideal worker is no longer a father who summarily dismisses family life at work. The ideal worker may instead be beginning to parallel the package deal father: one who is simultaneously engaged in and capable at earning and caretaking.

As men become increasingly involved in family life and such involvement becomes the rule rather than the exception (Bianchi et al. 2012), it should probably not be surprising that such a behavioral shift would be reinterpreted in the workplace. As one recent *New York Post* article on the dismal state of workplace lactation rooms noted, if men could breastfeed, “there would be lactation man-caves...with flat-screen TVs, black leather couches, waiters and Buffalo wings” (Dawson 2014). In other words, as men become more involved in family life outside of work, it is in their best interest to reward it at work.⁴⁴ In this way, we can conceive of changes in the workplace, and the ultimate fate of gender and parental status equality therein, as dependent on the *trialectic* among culture, policy, and behavior.

Although I argue that workplace norms are indeed *shifting*, I do not suggest that they have entirely *shifted* nor that parental status equality has been achieved. Workplaces are almost certainly still more flexible to the changing will and behavior of men than of

⁴⁴ This observation, about the dialectical relationship between behavior at home and norms at work, is in keeping with fathering scholars who theorize on the relationship between the culture and conduct of fatherhood (LaRossa 1998; Marsiglio 1993).

women. And other dissertation results, including evidence of both perceptual and interpersonal penalties for mothers, especially white mothers, as well as employers' fairly tailored understandings of father involvement, suggest that cultural beliefs and attitudes about parenthood in the workplace have more evolving to do.

Yet, there is reason to hope. I argue, along with Joan Williams (2010), that a change in the meaning of fatherhood at work necessarily precedes a change in the meaning of motherhood. That is, if we want to change how mothers are treated at work, we have to change how fathers are treated. In Williams' (2010) words, "As long as men continue to feel threatened by the possibility of being perceived as wimps and wusses unless they live up to the norms of conventional masculinity, we can expect little economic progress for women" (p. 79). The dissertation provides evidence that these masculine norms are, indeed, shifting, and that involved fatherhood may begin to be rewarded, not ridiculed, at work. Therefore, assuming changes to interpretations of fatherhood precede changes to interpretations of motherhood, men's involvement premium may foreshadow impending developments in the way motherhood is interpreted at work, as well. As culture and policy proceed ahead in their ever-churning cycle, it is expected that accommodation policies will continue to be enacted and cultural attitudes, especially about the perception of motherhood at work, will continue to evolve.

Limitations

There are limitations to this research and thus to the conclusions that can be drawn. The primary limitation has to do with the vignette instrument itself. The wording of the involvement condition, although the result of two extensive peer-review processes,

is undoubtedly important. Had I defined involvement differently or conveyed it through alternate means, such as Correll and colleagues' (2007) tactic of including "PTA President" on a resume line, the results may be somewhat different. Through the review process, it was decided that a general statement about involvement was preferable because it allowed for more effective variation (i.e., assessing high versus low involvement). Nevertheless, it also provides an opening for potentially widely different interpretations of involvement, especially by gender.⁴⁵ Vignette respondents may have interpreted high involvement differently in the men applicants than they did in the women applicants, and interview results presented in Chapter 3 indicate that this is a likely possibility. Therefore, high involvement may have been regarded more favorably relative to low involvement in fathers than in mothers because high involvement for fathers may have been conceived of as less demanding and time-consuming than high involvement for mothers. That said, even when a specific instantiation of high involvement is used, such as Correll and colleagues' (2007) PTA officer language, fathers are still more favorably regarded than mothers.

Second, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the interviews are limited in that they were focused primarily on fathers. Although discussions of mothers frequently arose, few questions were systematically designed to address them, certainly fewer than had they

⁴⁵ Indeed, a descriptive analysis of the alternate wording of the involvement condition in the mother sample described in Chapter 2 yielded only a few significant differences. Table A.3 in Appendix VI shows the difference in means for the evaluation items between ratings of applicants described using the original involvement condition language and the ratings of applicants described using the alternate condition wording. This alternate wording indicated that the mother applicant had "few childcare responsibilities" (low condition) or "many childcare responsibilities" (high condition) and was run only for white and African-American mother applicants. Table A.3 shows that mothers described as "less involved" were significantly less likable than those described as having "few childcare responsibilities," for both white ($p < .001$) and Black ($p < .01$) mothers. Further, "less involved" white mothers were less likely to be hired than white mothers with "few childcare responsibilities" ($p < .05$), whereas "highly involved" Black mothers were more likely to be hired than Black mothers with "many childcare responsibilities" ($p < .01$). Importantly, there were no significant differences by involvement condition in the mean ratings of highly involved white mothers, on whom I base most of the "white motherhood penalty" argument.

been an a priori component of the design. In future research, the interview schedule will be revised, expanded, and administered to more employers for a more comprehensive picture of perceptions of fathers *and* mothers by involvement and race in the professional workplace.

Moving Forward: Avenues for Continued Research

Several potentially fruitful avenues of continued investigation presented themselves through the course of this research. Two can be pursued by conducting analyses of the existing data and two require additional exploration and data collection.

First, further analysis can be conducted on the current vignette data to compare perceptions of parents across gender in addition to within it. The dissertation assessed how perceptions and evaluations varied *among* fathers and mothers, but a next step would be to compare fathers *to* mothers. Preliminary analysis of means, with no covariates, shows few differences in evaluations of mothers and fathers, however. Table A.3 shows weighted means for the evaluation items by involvement level for both mothers and fathers. Future analysis can fully append the mother and father datasets to compare these data using multivariate techniques.

Second, the existing data also allow for an analysis which interrogates assumptions about parental involvement by race. Understanding the assumptions people make about parenting based on race is important given the deeply engrained racial parenting stereotypes pervasive in U.S. culture. For example, African-American mothers are often stereotyped as single mothers and/or “welfare queens” (Collins 1998; Kennelly 1999), who may be assumed to be not very involved with their children, whereas Amy

Chua's (2011) recent book spotlights the image of the Asian-American mother as the fierce, perfection-demanding "Tiger Mother" who may be assumed to be highly involved with her children. Comparing evaluations of the nominal parents to evaluations of the less involved and highly involved parents by race will provide a better understanding of those assumptions.

Another future branch of research could pursue the compelling finding about a potential involvement premium for Asian mothers. An expanded interview study would need to address perceptions of Asian mothers specifically and assess how views of Asian mothers differ from others, especially white mothers. It may be that the Tiger Mother (see above) and "model minority" stereotypes figure in prominently, though additional research is required, likely through interviews or another vignette experiment. It would also be worth examining what role national origin plays in shaping perceptions of Asian mothers. The Asian woman's in the vignette – Susan Wong – signals that she is ethnically Chinese. How would evaluations differ for Asian Americans of other ethnic identifications, such as a woman who is ethnically Indian or Vietnamese?

Finally, I join a growing number of scholars calling for greater research on how occupational sector affects perceptions of parents and parents' own experiences in the workplace (Berdahl and Moon 2013; Brescoll et al. 2013; Williams et al. 2013). Earnings research suggests that the motherhood wage penalty varies by income level, with low-wage women suffering the greatest penalty (Budig and Hodges 2010). The limited experimental work that exists on how perceptions of parents vary by work contexts shows mixed results. For example, Berdahl and Moon (2013) found in their field study that caregiving fathers (reporting above-median hours in childcare) experienced

significantly more harassment than traditional fathers (reporting below-median hours) in a union context; however, in their experimental study, Brescoll and colleagues (2013) found *more* leniency toward a low-status father's request for family leave than they did toward his high-status counterpart. These conflicting results call for continued research on the importance of work context to more carefully examine how perceptions of parents vary depending on occupational sector (Williams 2006).

Summary

In sum, this dissertation has attempted to further clarify the cultural terrain of parental status inequality in the professional workplace. It found important differences in perceptions of parents beyond gender differences alone. Although mothers were still found to incur perceptual and potentially interpersonal penalties, the involvement premium observed for fathers is arguably encouraging. If these results are indicative of a larger culture shift in the way parenthood is interpreted at work, such a shift in norms, along with more effective family policy enforcement, may portend better days for both mothers and fathers ahead.

APPENDIX I

Vignette Instrument

Participant Instructions

Imagine you are the hiring manager of Innovative Marketing Solutions, Inc., a mid-size marketing firm. You are in the process of hiring a new employee to increase your staff and increase your chances of acquiring more clients. On the next screen is a brief description of the position along with a memo sent to you by the human resources (“HR”) department summarizing its interview with a recent applicant. Please review the job description and human resources memo and answer the questions on the next few screens.

Job Description

Position title: Business Development Analyst

Role: Analyst, Mid-Level

Hours: Full Time

Starting salary range: \$60,000 - \$85,000

Innovative Marketing Solutions, Inc. is seeking a proven Business Development Analyst.

Key responsibilities will include:

- Analyzing client needs to win new business
- Performing in-depth financial analyses of existing clients and presenting the results to the representative team
- Targeting and contacting potential clients to build relationships in a proactive manner

Human Resources Memo

Text in brackets represents the conditions to be manipulated.

Our department has completed its interview with [Candidate Name] for the position of Business Development Analyst. His/Her relevant professional experience includes three years as assistant director of marketing at SALVO, Inc., a small private marketing firm in Buffalo, New York. Before that he/she worked as an analyst in the marketing and community outreach office for the city of Buffalo. When asked whether he/she preferred working in the public or private sector, he/she mentioned benefits associated with each. He/She received a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from Ithaca College and served on various clubs and committees at school.

The candidate also shared a few personal details during the interview – he/she was born and raised in Albany, and he/she lives with his/her wife/husband and [involvement manipulation].

In all, the interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

HR

APPENDIX II

Interview Schedule

Parents in the Workplace: General & Hypothetical

- First, from your perspective, what makes someone a good employee in your business? Give me your definition of a “good employee.”
- Now think about employees in terms of their parental status. Given your definition, how does being a parent affect someone’s ability to be a “good employee?”
 - Follow-up: In thinking about this question, how does the age of an employee’s children matter? In other words, can you describe how employees with older or grown children differ from employees with younger children?
 - If participant mentions level of parental involvement here, probe on definitions of “involved father” and “involved mother.” If not, ask below.
- Next, I’m going to give you a hypothetical situation. When hiring a new employee, would most employers prefer to hire someone who is a parent or someone who is not a parent? Tell me about your thought process.
 - Follow-up: When you were picturing these two applicants, did you picture them as men or women? Now picture them as {other gender}. Would most employers prefer the parent or the non-parent? Why do you think that is?”

Earnings Patterns

Comparing Fathers and Mothers

- Current research shows us that fathers earn more than mothers in the workplace even when we take into consideration a number of factors, such as how far they went in school and how many hours they work. Why do you think that is?

Comparing Fathers Within Race

- In my own dissertation research, I’m finding that people evaluate fathers and childless men differently in the workplace depending on their ethnicity. I had a sample of people from the general public, not necessarily employers, evaluate workplace profiles of men from four ethnic groups: white, Latino, African-American, and Asian. Before I tell you what the findings are, I’d like you to see if you can predict the results. Using this handout, indicate – either verbally or by marking on the sheet – whether you think fathers or childless men were evaluated more favorably by ethnic group. If you think fathers were evaluated more favorably than childless men, put a + sign. If you think fathers were evaluated less favorably than childless men, put a – sign. Do this for each ethnic group.
 - Upon completion, ask participant to explain the decisions she/he made.
 - Following participant explanation, reveal the actual results
 - Depending on the participant’s ratings and explanations, ask: why do you think we’re finding this pattern?

Comparing Fathers and Non-Fathers

- We also observe from existing research that men who are fathers earn more than men who are not fathers even when we take into consideration a number of factors, such as how far they went in school and how many hours they work. How would you explain that?

Comparing Fathers Across Involvement

- Finally, a recent study shows that men who are highly involved with their kids earn more than men who are not as involved with their kids, even after taking into account their schooling and the number of hours they work. Why do you think that is?
- This study, however, did not do a great job of defining what it meant for a father to be ‘highly involved’ with his kids. In your mind, when I say a father is ‘highly involved’ with his children, what does that mean to you?

Connections to Own Workplace

- First, I want you to think just about the men in your workplace. What differences have you noticed between employees who are fathers and employees who are not?
 - Do they act differently?
 - Are they treated differently by other employees?
 - Can you think of any specific examples?
- Now, among the women, what differences have you noticed between employees who are mothers and employees who are not?
 - Do they act differently?
 - Are they treated differently by other employees?
 - Can you think of any specific examples?
- In terms of earnings specifically, have you ever heard of someone offering an employee more or less money *because* he was a father? Because she was a mother?
- At the beginning of the interview we talked about a hypothetical hiring situation. Now I want you to think about your actual experiences with the hiring process. In your experience, how often does an applicant’s parental status come up during the interview process?
 - Follow-up: Have you noticed that men bring it up more often than women? Or women bring it up more often than men?
 - Can you walk me through how this tends to come up?
- During the hiring process, do people often engage in salary negotiations? If so, have you noticed any differences in how men and women negotiate their salary?
 - If yes, probe on parental status

Wrap up and Disclosure

APPENDIX III

Participant Roster

Participant Roster, Interview Study

Participant Code	Position	Firm	Race	Marital Status	Parental Status	Age
<u>Women</u>						
1F	HR Director	International Non-Profit	White	married	Parent	41-50
2F	HR manager	E-prescription company	Black	single	Non-parent	31-40
3F	HR	Research firm	White	married	Non-parent	18-30
4F	HR	International Non-Profit	Asian	married	Parent	unknown
5F	Program manager	Federal government	White	married	Parent	41-50
6F	Laboratory supervisor	Laboratory, healthcare-related	White	married	Parent	51-60
7F	Area Vice President	Telecommunications Industry	White	married	Parent	51-60
8F	President	Residential Property Management Company	White	married	Parent	41-50
9F	HR Vice President	Residential Property Management Company	Black	married	Parent	51-60
10F	HR Director	Architecture and Construction Firm	White	married	Parent	31-40
<u>Men</u>						
1M	HR Director	International Non-Profit	Black	unknown	declined	31-40
2M	HR	International Non-Profit	White	married	Non-parent	31-40
3M	Program manager	Federal government	White	married	Parent	31-40
4M	Consultant	Telecommunications Industry	White	married	Parent	51-60
5M	Sales Manager	Telecommunications Industry	White	declined	declined	51-60

APPENDIX IV

Open Coding Themes from Interview Study In Alphabetical Order

Caretaking Language
By Gender

Change Language

Childless Employees*
Burdened/Resentful
More Available
Imbalanced

Displays of Parenthood*
By Gender

**Explanations for Fatherhood Wage
Premium***
Demand Side
Culture
Perceptions/Bias
Power Structure
Supply Side
Driven
Responsible
Stable
Strategically Mobile

**Explanations for Motherhood Wage
Penalty**
Work Interruptions

Perceptions of Fathers by Race*
Black
Latino
Asian
White

Gender Performance
Traditional
Non-Traditional

High Involvement Connotations*

High Involvement Definitions*

Ideal Worker Language

Parental Leave Policies

Parents Excel at Work*
Balanced
Identify with one another
Multitaskers
Organized and Planful

Parents Struggle at Work
Time Availability
Travel Restrictions

Participant Reactions
Revelation, Stumped, Surprised

Preferential Language

Role of the Perceiver
By Age
By Gender

Wedding Rings, Employer Awareness of

Work Characteristics*
Deadline driven
Dominated by women
Flexible hours
Telework

Work Sector
Government/Nongovernment
White/Blue

*Themes drawn on in the dissertation

APPENDIX V

Insights from Employer Interviews on the “Childless Premium” for Black Men

During the interview, I had participants predict the results of the father vignette experiment. I asked them to predict whether they expected that the father applicant had been rated more or less favorably than the childless applicant for each of the four racial/ethnic categories (for the purposes of this exercise, I did not have participants distinguish between less involved and highly involved fathers). Twelve employers completed the exercise.⁴⁶ Of those 12 participants, 8 predicted that the African-American childless man was evaluated more favorably than the African American father, compared to 6 participants who expected the Latino childless man was evaluated more favorably than the Latino father, 5 participants made the same prediction for white men, and only 3 predicted it for Asian men.

When asked to explain the rationale for their predictions, participants relied heavily on the notion of responsibility, both to explain why Asian and white fathers were expected to be rated more favorably than their childless counterparts and why Black childless men were expected to be rated more favorably than their father counterparts. For example, an HR manager at an online prescription drug company suspected that the African American and white childless men were rated more favorably than their father counterparts (though she admitted to being unsure about her predictions of the white

⁴⁶ One participant misunderstood the directions and ranked men overall by racial group without reference to parental status. The two other participants, the first two participants to be interviewed, completed the exercise but their responses were biased due to its placement in the interview. I had originally included the exercise *after* asking participants to speculate on the “fatherhood wage premium” phenomenon. Both participants who received the interview in this order predicted that all fathers would be evaluated more favorably than childless men regardless of racial group, citing our discussion from the previous section as evidence. By the third interview, I changed the order of the questions, presenting the participant with the exercise *before* having them speculate on the fatherhood wage premium phenomenon. After the change to the question order, all but one other participant predicted racial variation in evaluations of fathers.

men), whereas she expected the opposite for Latino and Asian men. In the exchange below, she explained her predictions for the Asian, Latino, and African American men.

Interviewer: OK, walk me through the racial/ethnic differences a little more. Why did you think Latino and Asian fathers would be rated more positively than childless men?

Employer: Stability. I think culturally, Asian men, it's just a part of the culture to have children. I don't think it would be...[pauses]; it's not a norm for them not to have children.

Interviewer: And Latino fathers?

Employer: The same.

Interviewer: And then, any differences between the image you have of the white childless man versus the African American childless man?

Employer: I think the perception is that you have more African American children born to single households, so for an African American male to have children without knowing each individual situation, the perception would be that that person is careless...[pauses]...and irresponsible to have children in the first place.

Interviewer: Do you think that perception is true of white fathers?

Employer: No. I don't. I think because, just more from an observational perspective, you don't see as many white fathers with a lot of children by multiple women

This exchange is a well-articulated representation of discussions I had with other employers who expected Black childless men to be rated more positively than Black fathers. Several drew on the rationale that the disproportionate number of Black single mothers implied at least as many Black single fathers, an image of irresponsibility that, they believed, may pervade people's thinking when evaluating Black fathers, regardless of men's marital or residential statuses. Although the statistical evidence of a "childless premium" for African-American men observed in the vignette study is based on relatively small, albeit statistically significant, differences, it is a phenomenon corroborated by employers during their interviews.

APPENDIX VI

Supplemental Tables and Figures

Table A.1 Evaluation Variables Regressed on Applicant Parenthood Status with Controls, by Applicant Gender

Panel A	Men Applicants					
	Hard-working	Likable	Commit- ted	Late Days	Hire	Salary
<u>Parenthood Status</u>¹						
Nominal	-0.07	-0.02	-0.01	0.10	-0.09	0.03
Less Involved	-0.17**	-0.26***	-0.37*	0.16**	-0.35***	-0.03
Highly Involved	0.01	0.13*	0.24	0.13*	0.03	0.20*
R-squared	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.05
N	2236	2223	2218	2221	2221	2218
Panel B	Women Applicants					
	Hard-working	Likable	Commit- ted	Late Days	Hire	Salary
<u>Parenthood Status</u>¹						
Nominal	-0.05	0.04	-0.11	0.20**	-0.10	0.02
Less Involved	-0.10	-0.24***	-0.34	0.18*	-0.23***	-0.03
Highly Involved	0.00	0.12	0.02	0.44***	-0.09	0.05
R-squared	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.03
N	2024	2019	2020	2020	2019	2014

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

¹ Childless category omitted

Note: Showing weighted coefficients from models controlling for participant race, parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

Table A.2 Performance and Reward Expectations Regressed on Applicant Parenthood Status by Race with Controls, by Applicant Gender

	Men Applicants				Women Applicants			
	Hard-working	Late Days	Hire	Salary	Hard-working	Late Days	Hire	Salary
All¹								
White	0.03	-0.02	-0.08	0.01	-0.10	0.13	-0.07	-0.06
African-American	0.10	-0.07	0.02	-0.01	0.00	0.08	-0.09	-0.06
Latino	0.09	-0.05	-0.08	-0.06	-0.01	0.04	-0.06	0.08
All¹								
Nominal	-0.07	0.10	-0.09	0.03	-0.05	0.20**	-0.10	0.02
Less Involved	-0.17**	0.16**	-0.35***	-0.03	-0.10	0.18*	-0.23***	-0.03
Highly Involved	0.01	0.13*	0.03	0.20*	0.00	0.44***	-0.09	0.05
White¹								
Nominal	-0.03	0.17	-0.13	-0.02	-0.07	0.31*	-0.14	-0.10
Less Involved	-0.09	0.13	-0.24*	0.21	-0.05	0.05	-0.11	-0.24
Highly Involved	0.17	-0.03	0.09	0.28	-0.20	0.55***	-0.08	-0.22
African-American¹								
Nominal	-0.26*	0.06	-0.23*	0.02	-0.09	0.10	-0.08	-0.17
Less Involved	-0.23*	0.31*	-0.42***	-0.21	-0.19	0.37*	-0.25*	-0.06
Highly Involved	-0.15	0.27*	-0.17	0.05	0.03	0.43**	0.01	-0.06
Latino¹								
Nominal	-0.05	0.20	0.03	-0.06	-0.25*	0.28*	-0.31**	0.12
Less Involved	-0.23*	0.28*	-0.37**	-0.20	-0.35**	0.20	-0.41**	0.23
Highly Involved	-0.08	0.22*	0.05	-0.02	-0.18	0.49***	-0.38**	0.32
Asian¹								
Nominal	0.05	-0.08	-0.02	0.12	0.18	0.05	0.12	0.22
Less Involved	-0.13	-0.04	-0.35**	0.06	0.12	0.09	-0.16	0.04
Highly Involved	0.11	0.03	0.18	0.42**	0.38**	0.21	0.14	0.24

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Showing weighted coefficients from models controlling for participant race, parental status, gender, age, education, marital status, occupational sector, self-employment status, and region

¹Asian applicants and childless applicants serve as the reference categories

Table A.3 Difference in Means of Evaluation Items for Alternate Involvement Condition Wording (Original Condition - Alternate Condition), Mother Sample

	White Mothers		Black Mothers	
	<i>Low</i> Orig. - Alt.	<i>High</i> Orig. - Alt.	<i>Low</i> Orig. - Alt.	<i>High</i> Orig. - Alt.
Hardwork	-0.07	-0.13	-0.02	0.13
Commit	0.08	-0.12	-0.35	0.26
Likable	-0.32 ***	-0.13	-0.23 **	0.09
Late	0.01	-0.04	0.03	-0.15
Hire	-0.20 *	0.05	-0.15	0.37 **
Salary	0.03	0.09	-0.05	0.05

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table A.4 Mean Evaluation Ratings for Dependent Variables, by Applicant Parenthood Status and Gender

	Men Applicants	Women Applicants	Significant Difference
	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	
<u>Childless</u>			
Hardworking	3.84	3.83	
Likable	3.65	3.64	
Late Days	1.69	1.65	
Committed	6.73	6.79	
Hire	3.81	3.82	
Salary	2.07	2.10	
<u>Nominal</u>			
Hardworking	3.75	3.77	
Likable	3.63	3.68	
Late Days	1.79	1.86	
Committed	6.71	6.73	
Hire	3.72	3.72	
Salary	2.11	2.13	
<u>Less Involved</u>			
Hardworking	3.67	3.71	
Likable	3.39	3.40	
Late Days	1.84	1.85	
Committed	6.35	6.45	
Hire	3.47	3.58	*
Salary	2.05	2.09	
<u>Highly Involved</u>			
Hardworking	3.85	3.82	
Likable	3.78	3.76	
Late Days	1.81	2.10	***
Committed	6.96	6.84	
Hire	3.85	3.73	*
Salary	2.28	2.17	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Means are weighted.

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