

# **WORKING PAPER**

## **CHANCES OR CHOICES? HOW WE THINK PARENTHOOD SHAPES OUR OWN AND OTHERS' CAREERS**

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# Chances or choices? How we think parenthood shapes our own and others' careers\*

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## Abstract

This letter contributes to the literature on gender disparities in professional life by exploring how men and women perceive the impact of parenthood on career outcomes. It does so through the lens of perceived employer-given opportunities ('chances') and perceived own career-related behaviour ('choices'). We focus on how employees perceive this impact not only on their own careers but also on those of other parents. To this end, we survey a probability sample of 1,060 employees in Belgium. We find that fathers perceive a less negative impact of parenthood on their own careers than mothers do, in terms of both chances and choices. Additionally, mothers perceive greater career penalties for other mothers than they report for themselves. These insights are valuable in understanding how self-fulfilling prophecies may shape parents' careers.

**Keywords:** Motherhood, Fatherhood, Discrimination, Career, Survey.

**JEL Classification:** C83; J13; J17; J71.

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# 1. Introduction

Parenthood remains a key contributor to persistent gender inequalities in the labour market (Goldin, 2014, 2021). Working mothers often experience a motherhood penalty, characterised by diminished career outcomes after having children (El Haj et al., 2024, 2025). Conversely, fathers may even benefit from a fatherhood bonus, seeing improvements in career outcomes following parenthood (El Haj et al., 2024). These divergent impacts of parenthood have been documented across multiple career stages, including hiring and promotion (El Haj et al., 2024, 2025).

Prior research largely attributes this significant impact of parenthood on career outcomes to employer discrimination (El Haj et al., 2024). However, understanding how employees themselves perceive these dynamics offers a crucial complement to this literature (Nautet & Piton, 2021). These perceptions matter, as they may shape employees' behaviour through self-fulfilling prophecies: when parents expect their career to suffer after having children, they may adjust their behaviour in ways that ultimately contribute to the disadvantages they anticipated, even if actual employer discrimination is limited or absent (Brüggemann, 2023; Wynn, 2017). To better understand employees' perceptions, it is essential to directly ask parents how they experience the impact of parenthood at work; however, as McIntosh et al. (2012) note, this is too often not done. This concern is echoed in recent reviews by Torres et al. (2024) and Gauci et al. (2022), who call for more attention on motherhood and career progression and on the impact of parenthood on both women and men, respectively.

In response, we surveyed a probability sample of Belgian employees. We distinguish between two mechanisms through which parenthood might influence careers: the opportunities available to them ('chances') and the specific paths they end up pursuing ('choices') (Brüggemann, 2023). We explore not only how employees perceive the impact of parenthood on their own careers (RQ1) but also how they view its impact on the careers of other women (RQ2) and men (RQ3).

## 2. Methods

We conducted an online survey in May 2024 targeting employees in Flanders, Belgium. The sample consisted of 1,060 employees aged 18–64, working in both the private and public sectors. To ensure external validity, participants were selected through a probability sampling approach, carried out in collaboration with the research agency Bilendi (McEwan, 2020). Appendix Table A1 summarises the descriptive statistics of the participants.

The first part of the survey addressed RQ1, asking participants to evaluate how their career had changed since becoming a parent. We presented a series of statements covering four key labour market outcomes — hiring, promotion, remuneration, and dismissal — based on previous work by El Haj et al. (2024) and Veenman (2010). For each outcome, we asked about perceived changes in both employer-given opportunities ('chances') and participants' own career-related behaviour ('choices') (Brüggemann, 2023). This distinction allowed us to capture not only whether parents perceived a change in their career trajectory but also to whom they attributed that change.

In the second part of the survey, which addressed RQ2 and RQ3, participants assessed how they believed that parenthood affects the careers of other women and men. The statements mirrored those in the first part and were phrased to capture perceived penalties for women and perceived bonuses for men, in line with prior evidence on the motherhood penalty and fatherhood bonus (El Haj et al., 2024).

The exact wording of all statements can be found in Table 1. Responses were recorded on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree').

< Table 1 about here >

## 3. Results

First, in Subsection 3.1, we present the perceived effect of parenthood on employees' own careers, addressing RQ1. Subsection 3.2 then addresses RQ2 by examining how participants perceive the effect of motherhood on the careers of other women. Finally, Subsection 3.3

turns to the perceived effect of fatherhood on the careers of other men, in line with RQ3. In what follows, we focus on the main patterns that can be seen in the figures; detailed statistical differences can be found in the Appendix tables, which are referenced throughout each subsection.

### **3.1. Perceived effect of parenthood on employees' own careers**

Figure 1 shows the perceived effect of parenthood on participants' own careers, separated by gender (RQ1). First, mothers report a more negative impact of having children on their careers than fathers do. This gap appears across all labour market outcomes and is visible in both perceived chances and choices (see Appendix Table A2 for details).

Second, parents – both mothers and fathers – who sense a career impact tend to attribute it more to choices they made themselves than to chances withheld by employers, especially in terms of hiring and promotion (Appendix Table A3). This pattern suggests that, to the extent parenthood affects their careers, working parents largely view it as a consequence of their own reprioritisation or constraints rather than direct workplace discrimination. This perspective is consistent with research showing that parents often adjust their career behaviour after having children (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2019).

< Figure 1 about here >

### **3.2. Perceived effect of motherhood on the careers of other women**

Figure 2 displays the perceptions of how motherhood affects the careers of other women (RQ2). First, there is broad agreement that there is a motherhood penalty in the workplace, but the strength of this belief varies by participant gender. Female participants are much more likely than male participants to affirm that working mothers encounter fewer chances, as shown in Appendix Table A4.

Second, participants generally attribute the motherhood penalty more to employer-driven chances than to mothers' own choices. In other words, most believe that the setbacks mothers experience are caused by reduced chances rather than by mothers choosing to scale back their careers. This tendency to blame external factors is particularly pronounced

among non-mothers, whereas it is barely observable among non-fathers. Additional detail is available in Appendix Table A5.

Third and last, a striking discrepancy emerges when comparing mothers' perceptions of others (Figure 2) to their perceptions of themselves (Figure 1). The same women who do not strongly feel that their own careers have suffered due to motherhood nevertheless believe that other mothers face substantial penalties, particularly in terms of chances (see Appendix Table A6). This pattern suggests that individuals tend to see discrimination as affecting others more than themselves. However, this could also be related to social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010). Mothers might downplay the challenges they personally faced to appear resilient or because they consider their own experience relatively fortunate.

< Figure 2 about here >

### **3.3. Perceived effect of fatherhood on the careers of other men**

Figure 3 presents the perceptions of how fatherhood affects the careers of other men (RQ3). First, participants generally do not perceive a strong fatherhood bonus for men. On average, neither women nor men in our sample are convinced that fathers enjoy systematically better labour market outcomes than childless men. Fathers themselves are particularly sceptical: they are the least likely to agree that other fathers receive more chances from employers. These results can be found in Appendix Table A7.

Second, any perceived advantages of fatherhood are seen as resulting from fathers' own choices rather than chances granted by employers (see Appendix Table A8).

Third and last, many participants – especially mothers – believe that fathers are less likely than non-fathers to choose to leave their jobs, indicating a perceived greater job commitment among fathers. This perception, too, is reflected in Appendix Table A7. These results align with traditional breadwinner role expectations stating that fatherhood often reinforces men's attachment to paid work (Eagly, 1987; El Haj et al., 2024).

< Figure 3 about here >

## **4. Conclusion**

To summarise, we surveyed 1,060 employees in Belgium to better understand how they perceived the impact of parenthood on their own and others' careers. This was needed because the literature emphasises different ways in which parenthood directly affects women's and men's careers, while the role of employees' subjective perceptions remains understudied. However, capturing these perceptions is valuable, as they may also indirectly shape or change behaviour through self-fulfilling prophecies. We find little evidence of a perceived fatherhood bonus. In contrast, mothers perceive parenthood as having a more negative impact on their own careers than fathers do, in terms of both chances and choices. Mothers also perceive greater penalties for other mothers than they do for themselves, again in terms of both chances and choices, revealing a noteworthy gap between personal experiences and general perceptions of discrimination. These results may indeed point to a self-fulfilling prophecy, as it is possible that the perceived reduction in chances leads women to stop pursuing them, which is detrimental to gender equality. Future research is needed to causally disentangle whether this reduced pursuit stems from a genuine shift in preferences after becoming a parent or whether it reflects a response to anticipated lower chances in the workplace.

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## **Declarations**

### **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

Participants were informed about the general aim of the study. Consent to use the participants' data for research purposes was obtained prior to the start of the survey.

### **Data and code availability**

Data and code will be made available on request.

### **Declaration of competing interest**

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial competing interests.

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### **CRediT authorship contribution statement**

**Morien El Haj:** Conceptualisation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Project administration. **Axana Dalle:** Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – review & editing. **Elsy Verhofstadt:** Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing. **Luc Van Ootegem:** Writing – review & editing. **Stijn Baert:** Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Figures

Figure 1. Perceived effect of parenthood on employees’ own careers



Note. The figure displays mean ratings with 95% confidence intervals. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 1 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 (‘completely disagree’) to 10 (‘completely agree’). For details on statistical differences, we refer to Appendix Tables A2 and A3.

**Figure 2.** Perceived effect of motherhood on the careers of other women



*Note.* The figure displays mean ratings with 95% confidence intervals. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 2 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). For details on statistical differences, we refer to Appendix Tables A4 and A5.

**Figure 3.** Perceived effect of fatherhood on the careers of other men



*Note.* The figure displays mean ratings with confidence intervals. All variables reflect career bonuses, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 3 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). For details on statistical differences, we refer to Appendix Tables A7 and A8.

# Tables

**Table 1.** Variable specification

Variable	Statement
<b>1. Perceived effect of parenthood on employees' own careers</b>	
<i>A. Perceived career chances</i>	
Hiring chances	Since having children, I feel I have received fewer hiring chances.
Promotion chances	Since having children, I feel I have received fewer promotion chances.
Pay raises	Since having children, I feel I have received fewer pay raises.
Dismissal risk	Since having children, I feel I am more likely to be dismissed.
<i>B. Perceived career choices</i>	
Job search activity	Since having children, I am less active in seeking a job.
Promotion pursuit	Since having children, I pursue fewer promotion chances.
Pay raise pursuit	Since having children, I pursue fewer pay raises.
Resignation intention	Since having children, I resign more often.
<b>2. Perceived effect of motherhood on the careers of other women</b>	
<i>A. Perceived career chances</i>	
Hiring chances	Mothers receive fewer hiring chances than women without children.
Promotion chances	Mothers receive fewer promotion chances than women without children.
Pay raises	Mothers receive fewer pay raises than women without children.
Dismissal risk	Mothers are more likely to be dismissed than women without children.
<i>B. Perceived career choices</i>	
Job search activity	Mothers are less active in seeking a job than women without children.
Promotion pursuit	Mothers pursue fewer promotion chances than women without children.
Pay raise pursuit	Mothers pursue fewer pay raises than women without children.
Resignation intention	Mothers resign more often than women without children.
<b>3. Perceived effect of fatherhood on the careers of other men</b>	
<i>A. Perceived career chances</i>	
Hiring chances	Fathers receive more hiring chances than men without children.
Promotion chances	Fathers receive more promotion chances than men without children.
Pay raises	Fathers receive more pay raises than men without children.
Dismissal risk	Fathers are less likely to be dismissed than men without children.
<i>B. Perceived career choices</i>	
Job search activity	Fathers are more active in seeking a job than men without children.
Promotion pursuit	Fathers pursue more promotion chances than men without children.
Pay raise pursuit	Fathers pursue more pay raises than men without children.
Resignation intention	Fathers resign less often than men without children.

*Note.* As explained in Section 2, we measured perceived effects of parenthood on career outcomes, both for participants themselves (Panel 1) and for other women (Panel 2) and men (Panel 3). Each item reflects either perceived employer-given opportunities ('chances') or perceived own career-related behaviour ('choices') across four labour market outcomes: hiring, promotion, remuneration, and dismissal. The statements were phrased to capture perceived penalties for women and perceived bonuses for men, in line with prior evidence on the motherhood penalty and fatherhood bonus (El Haj et al., 2024). Participants were asked to evaluate these statements on 11-point scales ranging from 0 to 10 (where 0 represents 'completely disagree' and 10 represents 'completely agree').

## Appendix

**Table A1.** Means and standard deviations of participant characteristics (N=1,060)

Male	0.423 (–)
Age (c.)	45.345 (11.684)
Educational degree	
Secondary education	0.435 (–)
Lower tertiary education	0.368 (–)
Higher tertiary education	0.197 (–)
Parental status	
Mother	0.359 (–)
Non-mother	0.218 (–)
Father	0.278 (–)
Non-father	0.144 (–)
Number of children (c.)	1.225 (1.148)
Marital status	
Married	0.457 (–)
Cohabiting	0.203 (–)
Unmarried	0.220 (–)
Divorced	0.108 (–)
Widow	0.013 (–)
Sector	
Private	0.634 (–)
Public	0.366 (–)
Work hours (c.)	36.866 (8.671)

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable). Means are reported for all variables, with standard deviations appearing in parentheses for continuous variables.

**Table A2.** Means and standard deviations by statement between mothers and fathers for perceived effect of parenthood on employees' own careers

	Mean (SD) of mothers (i)	Mean (SD) of fathers (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Perceived career chances</b>			
Hiring chances	3.13 (2.68)	2.05 (2.36)	1.08***
Promotion chances	3.40 (2.81)	1.83 (2.23)	1.56***
Pay raises	3.05 (2.65)	1.79 (2.25)	1.26***
Dismissal risk	2.44 (2.40)	1.53 (2.00)	0.91***
<b>B. Perceived career choices</b>			
Job search activity	4.35 (3.12)	3.64 (3.16)	0.71**
Promotion pursuit	4.54 (2.90)	3.04 (2.83)	1.51***
Pay raise pursuit	2.86 (2.44)	2.10 (2.26)	0.77***
Resignation intention	1.46 (2.16)	1.23 (1.95)	0.23

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: SD (standard deviation). The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 1 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). Independent sample t-tests were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .

**Table A3.** Means and standard deviations by parenthood between chances and choices for perceived effect of parenthood on employees' own careers

	Mean (SD) of chances (i)	Mean (SD) of choices (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Hiring</b>			
Mothers	3.13 (2.68)	4.35 (3.12)	–1.23***
Fathers	2.05 (2.36)	3.64 (3.16)	–1.59***
<b>B. Promotion</b>			
Mothers	3.40 (2.81)	4.54 (2.90)	–1.15***
Fathers	1.83 (2.23)	3.04 (2.83)	–1.20***
<b>C. Remuneration</b>			
Mothers	3.05 (2.65)	2.86 (2.44)	0.19
Fathers	1.79 (2.25)	2.10 (2.26)	–0.31*
<b>D. Dismissal</b>			
Mothers	2.44 (2.40)	1.46 (2.16)	0.98***
Fathers	1.53 (2.00)	1.23 (1.95)	0.31*

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: SD (standard deviation). The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 1 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). Paired t-tests were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .



**Table A4.** Means and standard deviations by statement between different parenthood groups for perceived effect of motherhood on the careers of other women

	Mean (SD) of group (i)	Mean (SD) of group (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Perceived career chances</b>			
<i>A.1. Hiring chances</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	5.34 (2.54)	5.39 (2.61)	–0.05
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.34 (2.54)	4.43 (2.76)	0.91***
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.34 (2.54)	4.84 (2.57)	0.50
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.39 (2.61)	4.43 (2.76)	0.96***
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.39 (2.61)	4.84 (2.57)	0.55
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	4.43 (2.76)	4.84 (2.57)	–0.42
<i>A.2. Promotion chances</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	5.61 (2.46)	5.47 (2.54)	0.14
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.61 (2.46)	4.33 (2.70)	1.28***
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.61 (2.46)	4.86 (2.61)	0.76*
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.47 (2.54)	4.33 (2.70)	1.14***
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.47 (2.54)	4.86 (2.61)	0.61
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	4.33 (2.70)	4.86 (2.61)	–0.53
<i>A.3. Pay raises</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	4.46 (2.46)	4.66 (2.52)	–0.20
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.46 (2.46)	3.47 (2.48)	0.99***
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.46 (2.46)	3.86 (2.56)	0.61†
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.66 (2.52)	3.47 (2.48)	1.19***
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.66 (2.52)	3.86 (2.56)	0.80*
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.47 (2.48)	3.86 (2.56)	–0.39
<i>A.4. Dismissal risk</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	4.22 (2.48)	4.06 (2.44)	0.16
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.22 (2.48)	3.25 (2.56)	0.97***
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.22 (2.48)	3.73 (2.65)	0.49
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.06 (2.44)	3.25 (2.56)	0.81**
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.06 (2.44)	3.73 (2.65)	0.33
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.25 (2.56)	3.73 (2.65)	–0.48
<b>B. Perceived career choices</b>			
<i>B.1. Job search activity</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	5.16 (2.45)	4.83 (2.54)	0.33
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.16 (2.45)	4.76 (2.64)	0.40
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.16 (2.45)	4.43 (2.69)	0.73*
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.83 (2.54)	4.76 (2.64)	0.07
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.83 (2.54)	4.43 (2.69)	0.40
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	4.76 (2.64)	4.43 (2.69)	0.33
<i>B.2. Promotion pursuit</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	5.36 (2.28)	4.63 (2.28)	0.73**
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.36 (2.28)	4.65 (2.55)	0.71**
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.36 (2.28)	4.62 (2.47)	0.74**
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.63 (2.28)	4.65 (2.55)	–0.02
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.63 (2.28)	4.62 (2.47)	0.01
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	4.65 (2.55)	4.62 (2.47)	0.03
<i>B.3. Pay raise pursuit</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.98 (2.25)	3.81 (2.24)	0.17
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.98 (2.25)	3.54 (2.37)	0.45†
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.98 (2.25)	3.75 (2.34)	0.24
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.81 (2.24)	3.54 (2.37)	0.27
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.81 (2.24)	3.75 (2.34)	0.06
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.54 (2.37)	3.75 (2.34)	–0.21
<i>B.4. Resignation intention</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.68 (2.53)	3.52 (2.35)	0.16

Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.68 (2.53)	3.37 (2.55)	0.31
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.68 (2.53)	3.58 (2.53)	0.11
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.52 (2.35)	3.37 (2.55)	0.15
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.52 (2.35)	3.58 (2.53)	−0.06
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.37 (2.55)	3.58 (2.53)	−0.21

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: SD (standard deviation). The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 2 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). One-way ANOVAs with Bonferroni corrections applied were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .

**Table A5.** Means and standard deviations by parenthood between chances and choices for perceived effect of motherhood on the careers of other women

	Mean (SD) of chances (i)	Mean (SD) of choices (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Hiring</b>			
Mothers	5.34 (2.54)	5.16 (2.45)	0.18
Non-mothers	5.39 (2.61)	4.83 (2.54)	0.56**
Fathers	4.43 (2.76)	4.76 (2.64)	–0.33*
Non-fathers	4.84 (2.57)	4.43 (2.69)	0.41†
<b>B. Promotion</b>			
Mothers	5.61 (2.46)	5.36 (2.28)	0.25†
Non-mothers	5.47 (2.54)	4.63 (2.28)	0.84***
Fathers	4.33 (2.70)	4.65 (2.55)	–0.32*
Non-fathers	4.86 (2.61)	4.62 (2.47)	0.24
<b>C. Remuneration</b>			
Mothers	4.46 (2.46)	3.98 (2.25)	0.48***
Non-mothers	4.66 (2.52)	3.81 (2.24)	0.85***
Fathers	3.47 (2.48)	3.54 (2.37)	–0.06
Non-fathers	3.86 (2.56)	3.75 (2.34)	0.11
<b>D. Dismissal</b>			
Mothers	4.22 (2.48)	3.68 (2.53)	0.54***
Non-mothers	4.06 (2.44)	3.52 (2.35)	0.55**
Fathers	3.25 (2.56)	3.37 (2.55)	–0.12
Non-fathers	3.73 (2.65)	3.58 (2.53)	0.16

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: SD (standard deviation). The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 2 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). Paired t-tests were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .

**Table A6.** Means and standard deviations of mothers' perceived effect of motherhood on their own and other women's careers

	Mean (SD) of own (i)	Mean (SD) of others (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Perceived career chances</b>			
Hiring chances	3.13 (2.68)	5.34 (2.54)	–2.21***
Promotion chances	3.40 (2.81)	5.61 (2.46)	–2.22***
Pay raises	3.05 (2.65)	4.46 (2.46)	–1.41***
Dismissal risk	2.44 (2.40)	4.22 (2.48)	–1.78***
<b>B. Perceived career choices</b>			
Job search activity	4.35 (3.12)	5.16 (2.45)	–0.81***
Promotion pursuit	4.54 (2.90)	5.36 (2.28)	–0.82***
Pay raise pursuit	2.86 (2.44)	3.98 (2.25)	–1.12***
Resignation intention	1.46 (2.16)	3.68 (2.53)	–2.22***

*Note.* The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career penalties, corresponding to the statements listed in Panels 1 and 2 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). Paired t-tests were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .

**Table A7.** Means and standard deviations by statement between different parenthood groups for perceived effect of fatherhood on the careers of other men

	Mean (SD) of group (i)	Mean (SD) of group (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Perceived career chances</b>			
<i>A.1. Hiring chances</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.19 (2.25)	3.26 (2.22)	–0.08
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.19 (2.25)	2.75 (2.34)	0.44†
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.19 (2.25)	3.22 (2.38)	–0.03
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.26 (2.22)	2.75 (2.34)	0.52†
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.26 (2.22)	3.22 (2.38)	0.05
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	2.75 (2.34)	3.22 (2.38)	–0.47
<i>A.2. Promotion chances</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.04 (2.21)	3.28 (2.31)	–0.24
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.04 (2.21)	2.67 (2.25)	0.37
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.04 (2.21)	3.31 (2.44)	–0.27
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.28 (2.31)	2.67 (2.25)	0.61*
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.28 (2.31)	3.31 (2.44)	–0.03
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	2.67 (2.25)	3.31 (2.44)	–0.64*
<i>A.3. Pay raises</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.25 (2.35)	3.51 (2.27)	–0.25
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.25 (2.35)	2.85 (2.45)	0.40
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.25 (2.35)	3.62 (2.63)	–0.37
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.51 (2.27)	2.85 (2.45)	0.66*
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.51 (2.27)	3.62 (2.63)	–0.11
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	2.85 (2.45)	3.62 (2.63)	–0.77**
<i>A.4. Dismissal risk</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.29 (2.43)	3.79 (2.44)	–0.51†
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.29 (2.43)	2.75 (2.51)	0.53*
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.29 (2.43)	3.92 (2.67)	–0.63†
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.79 (2.44)	2.75 (2.51)	1.04***
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.79 (2.44)	3.92 (2.67)	–0.12
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	2.75 (2.51)	3.92 (2.67)	–1.16***
<b>B. Perceived career choices</b>			
<i>B.1. Job search activity</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	4.59 (2.64)	4.12 (2.48)	0.47
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.59 (2.64)	3.91 (2.71)	0.68**
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.59 (2.64)	3.90 (2.58)	0.70*
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.12 (2.48)	3.91 (2.71)	0.21
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.12 (2.48)	3.90 (2.58)	0.23
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.91 (2.71)	3.90 (2.58)	0.02
<i>B.2. Promotion pursuit</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	3.99 (2.45)	3.71 (2.28)	0.28
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.99 (2.45)	3.50 (2.57)	0.49†
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.99 (2.45)	3.70 (2.45)	0.29
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	3.71 (2.28)	3.50 (2.57)	0.20
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	3.71 (2.28)	3.70 (2.45)	0.01
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.50 (2.57)	3.70 (2.45)	–0.20
<i>B.3. Pay raise pursuit</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	4.57 (2.51)	4.24 (2.40)	0.32
Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.57 (2.51)	3.99 (2.74)	0.58*
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.57 (2.51)	4.29 (2.62)	0.27
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	4.24 (2.40)	3.99 (2.74)	0.25
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	4.24 (2.40)	4.29 (2.62)	–0.05
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	3.99 (2.74)	4.29 (2.62)	–0.30
<i>B.4. Resignation intention</i>			
Mothers (i) versus non-mothers (ii)	6.16 (2.45)	5.58 (2.48)	0.58*

Mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	6.16 (2.45)	5.61 (2.82)	0.55*
Mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	6.16 (2.45)	5.59 (2.68)	0.57
Non-mothers (i) versus fathers (ii)	5.58 (2.48)	5.61 (2.82)	−0.02
Non-mothers (i) versus non-fathers (ii)	5.58 (2.48)	5.59 (2.68)	−0.01
Fathers versus (i) non-fathers (ii)	5.61 (2.82)	5.59 (2.68)	0.01

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: SD (standard deviation). The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career bonuses, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 3 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). One-way ANOVAs with Bonferroni corrections applied were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .

**Table A8.** Means and standard deviations by parenthood between chances and choices for perceived effect of fatherhood on the careers of other men

	Mean (SD) of chances (i)	Mean (SD) of choices (ii)	Difference of (i) – (ii)
<b>A. Hiring</b>			
Mothers	3.19 (2.25)	4.59 (2.64)	–1.40***
Non-mothers	3.26 (2.22)	4.12 (2.48)	–0.86***
Fathers	2.75 (2.34)	3.91 (2.71)	–1.17***
Non-fathers	3.22 (2.38)	3.90 (2.58)	–0.68**
<b>B. Promotion</b>			
Mothers	3.04 (2.21)	3.99 (2.45)	–0.94***
Non-mothers	3.28 (2.31)	3.71 (2.28)	–0.42***
Fathers	2.67 (2.25)	3.50 (2.57)	–0.83***
Non-fathers	3.31 (2.44)	3.70 (2.45)	–0.39*
<b>C. Remuneration</b>			
Mothers	3.25 (2.35)	4.57 (2.51)	–1.31***
Non-mothers	3.51 (2.27)	4.24 (2.40)	–0.74***
Fathers	2.85 (2.45)	3.99 (2.74)	–1.14***
Non-fathers	3.62 (2.63)	4.29 (2.62)	–0.67***
<b>D. Dismissal</b>			
Mothers	3.29 (2.43)	6.16 (2.45)	–2.87***
Non-mothers	3.79 (2.44)	5.58 (2.48)	–1.79***
Fathers	2.75 (2.51)	5.61 (2.82)	–2.85***
Non-fathers	3.92 (2.67)	5.59 (2.68)	–1.68***

*Note.* The following abbreviations are used: SD (standard deviation). The table displays mean ratings with standard deviations provided in parentheses. All variables reflect career bonuses, corresponding to the statements listed in Panel 3 of Table 1, and were rated on 11-point scales ranging from 0 ('completely disagree') to 10 ('completely agree'). Paired t-tests were performed to assess whether the presented differences are significantly different from 0. Significances are indicated as \*\*\* when  $p < .001$ , \*\* when  $p < .01$ , \* when  $p < .05$ , and † when  $p < .10$ .