Single Fathers and Employment Discrimination: Penalized or Protected?

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA BY

Aimzhan Iztayeva

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Advisor: Ann Meier

May 2023

© Aimzhan Iztayeva 2023
All rights reserved.

To my parents,
Aliya and Yergali

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank my advisor, Ann Meier, for her infinite support, kindness, and mentorship that made this dissertation possible. Thank you, Ann, for teaching me how to write, publish, critique, mentor, and most importantly, see value in my research at times when it felt like there was none.

It has also been a true pleasure to work with and learn from the members of my dissertation committee: Chris Uggen, Kathy Hull, and Carrie Oelberger. Thank you, Chris, for inspiring me to design an experiment and for offering thoughtful advice and enthusiastic guidance in dealing with the nuances and complexities of this research method. Kathy, I want to thank you for creating space in your research methods class that allowed me to put together the first draft of this dissertation's research proposal and for always asking tough questions. Thank you, Carrie, for your mentorship and insightful feedback on my work during my GRPP summer at *Gender Policy Report*, I am truly grateful you made it possible.

This dissertation came to its fruition with generous financial support from the University of Minnesota Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (DDF), American Association of University Women (AAUW) International Doctoral Degree Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts Graduate Fellowship and DDF, Life Course Fellowship, CLA-RIGS Gender Policy Report Graduate Research Partnership Program (GRPP) Fellowship, and Sociology GRPP Fellowship.

Throughout my PhD program, I have been lucky to work with many supportive mentors. I would like to especially thank Rachel Schurman for her amazing interview class, Claire Kamp Dush for uplifting the writing of my first ever publication, Joe Gerteis for his wonderful support as the DGS, Yanjie Bian for allowing me to grow as an instructor, Jack DeWaard for showing me

how to organize work with teaching assistants, and Tom VanHeuvelen for helping me clean up my messy dataset.

I was also very lucky to have embarked on my PhD journey with my amazing cohort: Snigdha Kumar, Caity Curry, Brieanna Watters, Michael Soto, Edgar Campos, Brooke Chambers, Amber Hamilton, Aras Köksal, Nir Rotem, and Gunercindo Espinoza. The classes and seminars would not have been the same without them. I especially want to thank Snigdha and Caity for generous friendship, encouragement, and fun memories.

Finally, I want to thank my wonderful family for their love and support that transcended thousands of miles and helped me continue with my academic endeavors.

Abstract

This research examines employment discrimination against custodial single fathers in the United States. Fatherhood is associated with breadwinning, and employers expect full work commitment. Yet, caregiving constrains breadwinning because family demands are time-consuming and labor-intensive. This raises the following questions: In what ways, if at all, do employers discriminate against single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility? How do custodial single fathers experience their roles as primary breadwinners and primary caregivers? My dissertation offers answers to these questions by considering how gender, breadwinning, and caregiving roles operate in employers' hiring preferences and single fathers' efforts to meet work and caregiving demands.

Table of Content:

List of Tables vi
List of Figures vii
INTRODUCTION 1
CHAPTER I: Does Primary Caregiving Status Jeopardize Single Fathers' Employability? Evidence from a Survey Experiment 10
1. Introduction 11
2. Theoretical Background. Single Fatherhood as a Status Characteristic: Penalized or Protected? 13
3. Data and Methods 20
4. Results 27
5. Discussion and Conclusion 36
CHAPTER II: Single Fathers and Work-Family Conflict in White- and Blue-Collar Jobs 43
1. Introduction 43
2. Literature Review 45
3. Data and Methods 49
4. Results 53
5. Discussion 61
CHAPTER III: A Different Kind of Penalty? Single Fathers, the Fathers' Rights Movement, and Implications for Gender Equality 67
1. Introduction 67
2. Literature Review 70
3. Data and Methods 74
4. Results 78
5. Discussion and Conclusion 86
CONCLUSION 93
References 99
Appendices 109
APPENDIX A: Supplementary Materials 109
APPENDIX B: Full Demographic Profiles of Respondents (in alphabetical order) 116

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants, n = 979 22

Table 2. Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures 30

Table 3. Ordered Logistic Regression Estimates of Experimental Conditions on Job Application Rating Measures 32

Table 4. Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures 33

Table 5. Summary of Respondents' Most Common Explanations for Hiring Recommendations (n, %) 34

Table 6. Descriptive Summary of Demographic Profiles, by Job Type 50

Table 7. Full Demographic Profiles of Interviewees (in alphabetical order) 75

Table 8. Regression Estimates of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures with Full Sample 114

Table 9. Regression Estimates of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures with Full Sample, Single Father as Reference 115

List of Figures

Figure 1. Percentage of Applicants Recommended for Hire by Experimental Condition........... 28

Figure 2. Standardized Evaluation Measures by Experimental Condition 29

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation arises from questions surrounding the persistent nature of gender inequality. The term "gender revolution" is commonly invoked to describe progress made towards gender equality since the 1960s. Some examples of this progress include increases in women's labor force participation and educational attainment (Blau & Kahn 2017), wide availability of birth control (Goldin & Katz 2002), and anti-discrimination measures in employment and education (Hirsh 2009). "Women's move into the economy [was] the basic social revolution of our time" (Hochschild & Machung 1989, 235).

However, despite these positive changes, gender inequality persists, which marked the conversation about gender revolution as stalled and unfinished (England 2010; Gerson 2011). Scholars attribute this stall to the fact that women have entered public sphere at a much faster rate than men increased their household labor participation (England 2010; Sullivan 2018). As a result, women's lives changed much more than men's and the "second shift" – the unpaid domestic and care work – remains performed mostly by women (Hochschild & Machung 1989).

It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that at least a partial answer to advancing the stalled gender revolution lies in men's involvement in household labor and caregiving. Such reasoning motivated this dissertation that examines the effect of primary caregiving status on men's experiences in the labor market. To put it differently, the study sought to understand what happens when men "become like most women are now – that is, people who do primary care work" (Fraser 1994, 611).

My personal experience with employment discrimination was another inspiration for this dissertation. In 2013, I returned to Kazakhstan with a Master's diploma in gender studies and was

looking for a job. My educational background was appealing to secure a job interview, however, the combination of my gender, age, and marital status did not portray me as an ideal job candidate. “Are you married? Do you have any children?”, employers would ask to estimate the probability of losing a new hire to maternity. While outrageous, such concern is understandable given the three-year parental leave, acute shortage of childcare facilities, and traditional patriarchal culture of Kazakh society – factors that orient mothers to postpone their employment or remain unemployed altogether. And as I was trying to convince employers of my complete and utter dedication to the ideal worker norm, I began to wonder if single fathers caring for a small child would be treated the same way as mothers and women of reproductive age.

I turned to the existing literature to try to understand how single fatherhood might be interpreted by employers. Unfortunately, the literature is not entirely clear whether single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility will be penalized or protected in the labor market. These men can be seen as embodying two distinct roles – caregiver and breadwinner – that come with certain gendered expectations. An ideal caregiver is expected to satisfy a particular standard of extensive and time-consuming childcare, a so-called “intensive mothering ideology” (Hays 1996). This ideology identifies norms of appropriate childrearing to be “child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive” (Hays 1996, 8), a description consistent with the parenting approach that Lareau (2003) calls concerted cultivation.

More recent research points to the emergence of gender-egalitarian parenting norms and the rise of the “new fatherhood ideal:” the expectation that men should be highly involved in parenting and domestic labor and develop a nurturing and emotional bond with a child (Marsiglio & Roy 2012). Research suggests that men adhere to “new father” norms, and the support for

concerted cultivation is widely shared by mothers and fathers across social classes (Ishizuka 2019). The emerging parenting expectations of men appear to match the intensive motherhood ideology signaling the overall intensification of parenting.

At the same time, the grip of traditional norms of masculinity that envision men as providers and breadwinners remains strong (Thébaud & Pedulla 2016). Traditional heterosexual fatherhood emphasizes provision as the main form of caregiving (Townsend 2002). And even though men adhere to "new father" norms by increasing their childcare time, they do so at the expense of leisure time rather than work hours (McGill 2014).

Single fathers with residential custody are caught between these competing expectations attached to breadwinning and caregiving. In public perception, single fathers take on the roles of both parents, and single fathers "have to be mothers" (Maier & McGeorge 2014, 178). Examining single fatherhood from a microstructural perspective that posits that primary caregiving responsibility minimizes gender differences, Risman (1986) concluded that residential custodial single fathers feel competent and confident to perform "mothering behavior."

Parenting expectations of single fathers also vary due to the social perception of single fatherhood as a choice. On the one hand, this idea elevates single fathers because their choice to parent is seen as dedication (Maier & McGeorge 2014). Never-married custodial single fathers are viewed more positively than never-married custodial single mothers in terms of personal characteristics (like reputability and responsibility) and parenting abilities (DeJean, McGeorge & Carlson 2012). Divorced fathers who co-reside with their children tend to be stereotyped more positively (for instance, as a breadwinner, provider, good parent, etc.) compared to stepfathers and divorced or never-married non-residential fathers (Troilo & Coleman 2008). On the other hand,

the choice rhetoric can stigmatize men as "deadbeat" uninvolved fathers or question men's ability to parent (Coles 2009; Haire & McGeorge 2012). Participants in Haire and McGeorge's study (2012) believed that single fathers struggled with household labor, lacked nurturing qualities, and were unable to meet daughters' gender specific needs.

These perceptions can manifest differently in single fathers' experiences of reconciling breadwinning and caregiving responsibilities. Doubts surrounding men's ability to parent can lead employers to expect an even more acute work-family conflict for single fathers, which can result in job penalties. On the other hand, if employers perceive single fathers as "heroic," they are more likely to take extra steps to accommodate men's primary caregiving responsibility.

Sociological research that examines the effects of caregiving and breadwinning statuses on working parents further obfuscates the nature of employment discrimination against single fathers. A mature body of research has long documented the persistent nature of a wage penalty for mothers when compared to childless women and all men (Budig & England 2001; Correll et al. 2007; Budig, Misra & Boeckmann 2016; England et al. 2016; Yu & Kuo 2017; Ishizuka 2021). Recent estimates by Yu and Kuo (2017) find a motherhood wage penalty of 11 percent with each additional child. Scholars agree that the motherhood penalty cannot be explained by variations in human capital or job characteristics alone, with scholars calling out employment discrimination as a legitimate explanation for the penalty (Blau & Kahn 2017). Both a laboratory experiment and an audit study of employers conducted by Correll et al. (2007) found that work penalties arise from employer discrimination rooted in the view of motherhood as a role of devotion to family (Blair-Loy 2003) and hence, less commitment to paid work.

Marital fatherhood, on the other hand, signals maturity, stability, and commitment, thereby enhancing married fathers' employability (Correll et al. 2007). Research shows observable wage increases for married, educated fathers compared to childless men (Hodges & Budig 2010; Killewald 2013). Married residential fathers have a statistically significant wage premium of nearly 4 percent compared to married childless men (Killewald 2013; Yu & Hara 2021). Moreover, experimental research has suggested that men who request flexible work to care for a child are viewed more positively compared to men who make such requests for other reasons (Munsch, 2016). On the other hand, married fathers who request parental leaves or flexible work may face a flexibility stigma (Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl 2013) or experience such penalties as a loss of promotion opportunities (Reid 2015) and wages (Coltrane et al. 2013).

Building on this existing research, my dissertation asks: In what ways, if at all, do employers discriminate against single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility? How do custodial single fathers experience their roles as primary breadwinners and primary caregivers?

The number of custodial single fathers in the U.S. population has increased from 300,000 in 1960 to 2.4 million in 2018 (Livingston 2013; Allred 2019). More than three million children live in father-only households (Allred 2019). However, because the number of single fathers is still relatively small, researchers frequently overlook their experiences in the labor market. My dissertation fills this gap and addresses single fathers' puzzling position at the intersection of competing gendered expectations to behave both like mothers and like men. I consider this puzzle from two vantage points: 1) the employers' perspective by measuring their hiring preferences; and 2) single fathers' perspective by studying their experiences of reconciling work and caregiving demands.

It should be noted that a portion of my initial methodological approach envisioned conducting an experimental audit study of the Twin Cities labor market. I designed three fictitious job applications that signaled different gender and marital statuses – single father, single mother, and married father – that were randomly paired and submitted in response to actual job advertisements. These job advertisements were scraped weekly from indeed.com website using a Python script. Together with two research assistants, I began submitting job applications in January 2020, and planned to finalize data collection once the sample size reached around 1,000 job openings, which was the average number of jobs used in previous audit studies that yielded an approximately nine percent callback rate (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Correll et al. 2007; Gaddis 2015; Pedulla 2016; Quadlin 2018).

This work, however, came to an abrupt halt in March 2020 with the onset of COVID-19. During the early stages of the pandemic, the unemployment rate more than quintupled to 19.2 percent compared to around 3.5 percent before the pandemic (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). The U.S. entered the sharpest contraction in economic activity since the Great Depression (Alon et al. 2020). This economic uncertainty meant there were no new job advertisements, and by May 2020 it had become clear that the audit study was no longer feasible.

To move forward with data collection and ensure timely completion of this dissertation project, I pivoted from the audit study to a survey experiment administered on the Prolific platform. Prolific is an online data collection service with an extensive prescreening system that allows researchers to target a specific pool of respondents. For my survey experiment, respondents were required to have hiring experience and were asked to evaluate job applications that were already designed for the audit study. Thus, while this method lacks generalizability of an audit study set

within the real-world context (Pager 2007; Pager & Western 2012), it was still capable of measuring hiring preferences of individuals who make actual hiring decisions. Additionally, the survey experiment allowed me to reveal the mechanisms of discrimination like perceived commitment, capability, reliability, and deservingness. This was not possible with the originally planned audit study. With my advisor's help, I was able to secure funding for this survey that was launched in August 2020 and finalized five months later.

Findings from this survey experiment are presented in the dissertation's first empirical chapter, which examines three main questions: (1) Does single fatherhood status affect employers' hiring preferences? (2) How do single fathers rank compared to married fathers and single mothers on employers' hiring preferences? (3) If single fathers are less preferred than others, what mechanisms account for their relative disadvantage in employers' preferences? Answers to these questions are situated within the theoretical framework of status characteristic theory (Berger et al. 1977; Correll & Ridgeway 2003) and gendered logic of work organizations (Kanter 1977; Acker 1990, 2011). The chapter analyzes the effect male gender, single marital status, and primary caregiving responsibility on single fathers' employability in comparison to married fathers and single mothers.

The second empirical chapter draws on thirty in-depth interviews with a sample of working single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility in the Midwestern United States and examines their experiences of work-family conflict in white- and blue-collar jobs. This chapter's key research questions are: (1) How do single fathers perceive and experience their roles as primary caregivers and primary breadwinners? (2) What strategies do single fathers use to reconcile work-family conflict? (3) How do these perceptions, experiences, and strategies vary by

social class? By answering these questions, the chapter reveals the source of work-family conflict for single fathers and examines men's strategies for resolving this conflict.

The third and final empirical chapter of this dissertation shifts gears and follows a path that had not been envisioned nor expected prior to the interview data collection: the Fathers' Rights Movement and single fathers' perceptions of being penalized in family courts. Single fathers I recruited through the Fathers' Rights Movement (FRM) Facebook page – a movement I had little prior knowledge of or interest in – were most persistent in emphasizing their negative experience with divorce and custody hearings without any probes or questions from me. This chapter wrestles with these narratives by situating them within the broader discourse of the FRM and gender structure to suggest ways to advocate for gender equality that include single fathers but avoid the harmful antifeminist rhetoric propagated by the FRM.

It is also worth noting that the timing of this dissertation project allowed getting an insight into how COVID-19 has affected primary caregivers' employability and work-family reconciliation. The closure of childcare facilities and schools during the early stages of the pandemic intensified the amount of caregiving that parents had to provide at home. For many, working remotely has become a new reality during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the chapters included in this dissertation do not explicitly focus on the impact of COVID-19, I published an article in 2021 in *Social Sciences* using interview data that compares single fathers' work and care experiences before and during the early pandemic.

The survey experiment examined the effect of pandemic-induced work arrangements upon hiring preferences in two ways. First, the survey experiment explicitly asked participants whether their evaluations of job candidates were affected by COVID-19. Second, the survey implicitly

measured the COVID-19 effect by asking respondents to indicate whether they believed a job candidate's work productivity may decrease if working remotely. I plan to produce a paper that analyzes the effect of COVID-19 on employers' perceptions about remote work and primary caregivers' employability to contribute to the growing literature field on the family effects of COVID-19.

Overall, this dissertation makes several important theoretical and empirical contributions to the literatures on work, family, and gender. The first chapter highlights the conditional nature of status characteristics – gender, marital and parental statuses – and demonstrates the complexity of how these characteristics can interact and affect parents' employability. The first and second chapters together reveal how men suffer from the devalued status of care work as "women's work" and call for family-friendly policies that create a sustainable and supportive context for American parents. The last chapter recognizes penalties single fathers may experience beyond employment discrimination and suggests ways to incorporate these experiences into conversations about gender equality that navigate clear of the Fathers' Rights Movement discourse. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of overarching implications for this project and further research directions.

CHAPTER I: Does Primary Caregiving Status Jeopardize Single Fathers' Employability? Evidence from a Survey Experiment

Abstract

Existing research has carefully documented how primary caregiving negatively affects married mothers' labor market outcomes. On the other hand, primary breadwinning is found to produce a hiring preference and a wage bonus for married, educated fathers. The effect of primary caregiving and breadwinning statuses on single fathers' employability remains unknown. Drawing on an original survey experiment conducted with 1,000 U.S.-based hiring managers, I examine three questions: (1) Does single fatherhood status affect employers' hiring preferences? (2) How do single fathers rank compared to married fathers and single mothers on employers' hiring preferences? (3) If single fathers are less preferred than others, what mechanisms account for their relative disadvantage in employers' preferences? The survey experiment shows that primary caregiving status jeopardizes single fathers' employability. The job application of the single father was consistently ranked as the least preferred option out of the three candidates. These results demonstrate how primary caregiving responsibility creates negative consequences in the labor market for a growing, yet understudied population of single fathers in the U.S. The experiment also reveals a hiring preference for single mothers. Together, these findings shed light on how the caregiver status operates within the gendered logic of work organizations and indicate that the motherhood penalty and fatherhood bonus are better understood as a caregiver penalty and a breadwinner bonus that are available to individuals depending on their family status but irrespective of their gender.

1. Introduction

Single fathers are uniquely positioned at the intersection of competing gendered expectations assigned to fathers and mothers. Traditional heterosexual fatherhood emphasizes provision as the main form of caregiving (Townsend 2002). Associating men with breadwinning constrains direct caregiving as men are expected to fulfill the ideal worker norm with little time for family commitment (Acker 1990; Williams 2001). For single fathers who have assumed primary caregiving responsibility, fulfilling the ideal worker norm becomes difficult to achieve.

On the other hand, single fathers are held to the "new fatherhood ideal:" the expectation that men should be highly involved in parenting and domestic labor and develop a nurturing and emotional bond with a child (Gerson 2011; McGill 2014). Men who adhere to this new ideal are known to drastically change their careers, jobs, and schedules to be "better dads" (Kaufman 2013, 171). Moreover, being a single father holds men accountable to a particular standard of care set by the ideology of intensive mothering (Hays 1996). This ideology emphasizes extensive and more time-consuming childcare and exists alongside the intensification of childrearing. Successful and good parenting now requires significant time-intensive investments into the "concerted cultivation" of children (Laureau 2003). Using data from a vignette survey experiment, Ishizuka (2019) finds a consistent preference for concerted cultivation among parents across different social classes.

The extent to which single fathers' position at the intersection of these competing gendered expectations affects their employability remains unknown. The present study de-couples the close associations of male gender with breadwinning and female gender with caregiving. Such an

approach affords the assessment of the advantages or disadvantages brought by caregiver status separate from gender.

The increasing number of single fathers in the U.S. population highlights the importance and timeliness of this study. The number of single father households has increased tenfold since 1960, from less than 300,000 to more than 2.6 million in 2011 (Livingston 2013). By 2017, three million children were reported living in father-only households (Allred 2019). Fathers have become more likely to be custodial parents over the past two decades increasing from 16 percent of all custodial parents in 1994 to 20 percent in 2016 (Grall 2020). Single fathers are typically younger, poorer, less educated and they are more likely to be Black than married fathers (Allred 2019; Livingston 2013). The median adjusted annual income for a single father household was estimated around $40,000, which is significantly lower than the $70,000 median among households headed by married fathers (Livingston 2013).

The nature of the relationship between single parenthood and single fathers' disadvantaged economic position is unclear. Such disadvantage can be a consequence of selection, that is poorer men are more likely to become single fathers. On the other hand, single fatherhood could have a causal effect on single fathers' lower income in comparison to married fathers. One way to gain leverage on this puzzle is through examining single fathers' employability. To do so, this chapter raises the following questions. First, does single fatherhood status affect employers' hiring preferences? Second, how do single fathers rank compared to married fathers and single mothers with regard to employers' hiring preferences? Third, if single fathers are less preferred than another group, what mechanisms account for their relative disadvantage in employers' preferences?

This chapter answers these questions by analyzing original data from a survey experiment conducted with hiring decision-makers based in the U.S. This experiment allowed testing employers' perceptions of single fathers as job candidates. Survey participants were exposed to job applications from fictitious candidates – all parents – that signaled different gender and marital statuses. These application materials were rated on dimensions that measured respondents' performance expectations and hiring preferences. The findings from this experiment demonstrate that assuming primary caregiving responsibility jeopardizes single fathers' employability. The job application of the single father was consistently ranked as the least preferred option out of the three candidates.

2. Theoretical Background. Single Fatherhood as a Status Characteristic: Penalized or Protected?

When it comes to explaining employment discrimination, scholars often invoke statistical discrimination theory (Phelps 1972; Becker 1985). This theory assumes that discrimination does not arise from bias or prejudice. Instead, rational and profit-maximizing employers base their decisions upon workers' productivity. Given the limited information about the actual productivity of individual workers, employers rely on group statistics to evaluate workers and develop preferences for more productive groups. Thus, discrimination occurs as an optimal and logical solution to an information problem (Correll & Benard 2006).

However, statistical discrimination theory is difficult to test empirically because there is no standard measure of individual productivity (Correll & Benard 2006). As a result, it is always possible that productivity cannot fully explain discrimination in, for example, the wage gap because some productivity differences are left unmeasured. Moreover, statistical discrimination

theory does not merely explain employer behavior. It also offers a powerful frame that helps decision-makers rationalize and justify discriminatory decisions (Tilcsick 2021). The emphasis on rationality can further influence employers' behavior "by providing moral authorization to rely on social stereotypes and engage in discrimination" (Tilcsick 2021, 94).

Recognizing these deficiencies of statistical discrimination theory, the present experiment was motivated by and developed as a test of status characteristic theory. The primary goal of this study is to examine whether single fatherhood is a status characteristic that results in employment discrimination. This examination builds upon seminal studies by Correll et al. (2007) and Correll and Ridgeway (2004) that conceptualized motherhood as a status characteristic that results in biased evaluations of mothers at work.

2.1 Status Characteristic Theory

Status characteristic theory posits that socially meaningful categorical distinctions such as gender or race can become status characteristics that carry different levels of social worthiness and presumed competence (Berger et al. 1977; Correll & Ridgeway 2003). The same categorical distinction can be valued differently depending on context. A specific task or a setting that stimulates actors to differentiate among each other activates the status characteristic thereby making it salient. The status characteristic is then implicitly used to guide actors' behaviors, expectations, and evaluations.

A workplace setting creates a particular context for activating certain status characteristics. Because coworkers share a collective task and a common goal, they evaluate each other in terms of potential contributions each actor can bring to the task. This evaluation produces "performance expectations." For example, if the task requires computer literacy, programming skills become a

specific status characteristic with a high value. Characteristics such as gender and race are diffuse status characteristics because they carry general expectations for competence, not expectations for a particular measurable skill. For instance, given commonly shared gender stereotypes, women are perceived as more nurturing and hence less capable of performing work-related tasks that require assertiveness.

Status characteristics can also impact performance expectations through the double standards used for judging one's ability (Foschi 2000). When actors assigned a lower status perform well at a task, their performance is evaluated more strictly because such a performance is inconsistent with the general expectation. In a work setting, the performance of high-status workers such as male managers is scrutinized less and judged according to a more lenient standard (Correll & Ridgeway 2003). Women, on the other hand, often need to perform better than their male colleagues to be judged as equally competent (Foschi 2000).

Single fatherhood consists of three diffuse or general status characteristics that affect performance expectations: male, father, and caregiver. Below is a theoretical assessment of each of these characteristics in terms of their potential implications for hiring preferences.

2.2 Potential Benefits of Gender and Fatherhood Statuses

The foundational work of status characteristic theory conceptualized gender as a master status characteristic that is likely to be salient in most situations (Wagner & Berger 1997). While there is a debate regarding the universal application of gender's master status, it is generally agreed that when gender is salient, its role in determining behavior is dominant (Wagner & Berger 1997). In a work setting, male gender is traditionally assigned a higher status because the logic of

organizational work was built around masculine traits assumed to be necessary for effective management: rational, tough-minded, analytic, and unemotional (Kanter 1977).

The higher status of male gender builds upon the ideal worker norm interwoven with the structure of work organizations. A seemingly abstract, disembodied and genderless figure, the ideal worker role is shaped by a gendered organization of work (Acker 1990).

> *'He'* is expected to be at work at set times, focused only on the tasks at hand, responsive only to demands of supervisors, available for long working hours, and unhampered by other responsibilities, such as for children and housework. This is the *ideal, unencumbered worker* (Acker 2011, 67, emphasis added).

Thus, the gendered logic of work organizations and the ideal worker norm produce a so-called "patriarchal dividend" (Connell 1987). Yet, capturing this dividend varies by men's other status characteristics and may be fully available only to those who satisfy the organizationally valued masculine traits: heterosexuality as signified through marriage and fatherhood, authoritative leadership based on occupational status, and technical competence: job skills and educational attainment (Hodges & Budig 2010).

The scholarly debate on the causal effect of marriage on wage gains for men is ongoing. However, multiple studies report that marriage alone cannot explain men's wage premiums (Killewald & Gough 2013; Cheng 2016; Killewald & Lundberg 2017). These studies offer support for the selection hypothesis – the idea that men enter the marriage market with already higher earnings. Divorce does not lead to wage reductions, rather, wage declines predate the divorce (Killewald & Lundberg 2017).

On the other hand, wage premiums for married fathers are not simply a result of positive selection into fatherhood (Cooke & Fuller 2018, Hodges & Budig 2010). In fact, men with less favorable characteristics, like lower levels of education, are more likely to become fathers (Hodges

& Budig 2010). All in all, married fathers appear to enjoy a wage premium of almost four percent compared to married childless men (Killewald 2013). In their laboratory experiment, Correll and colleagues (2007) found marital fatherhood to signal maturity, stability, and commitment, thereby enhancing married fathers' employability. It is posited that this hiring preference is one of the mechanisms driving the fatherhood wage premium.

Is marriage, then, a necessary condition for generating this hiring preference? The challenge to studying this question is that male gender is so tightly bound with breadwinning and female gender is so tightly bound with caregiving that studies without explicit de-coupling of these gendered expectations are unable to assess the individual sources of advantage or disadvantage brought by gender versus those brought by breadwinner/caregiver status. Examining single fathers' employability addresses this challenge by de-coupling gendered expectations. It is entirely possible that the advantages produced by male gender and breadwinner status are diminished in the presence of primary caregiving responsibility.

2.3 Potential Penalties of Caregiver Status

So far, the negative effect of caregiving status upon hiring preferences has been primarily addressed in relation to working married mothers (Correll & Ridgweway 2003; Ridgeway & Correll 2004; Correll et al. 2007). Motherhood as a status characteristic is framed by the cultural expectations of what it means to be a good mother and a good worker. Cultural perceptions of mothers are rooted in biological essentialism and "intensive motherhood" that describe marriage and motherhood as women's primary vocation (Hays 1996, Blair-Loy 2003). The "family devotion" cultural schema "promises women meaning, creativity, intimacy, and financial stability in caring for a husband and precious children" (Blair-Loy 2003, 2).

Women's increased labor market participation has not challenged the culturally acceptable model of mothering behavior. If anything, cultural expectations about motherhood have increased, not decreased, since women moved into the workforce (Gerstel 2000). And the substantial increase in time mothers devote to childcare indicates the extent to which many women have accepted the norms of intensive mothering (Bianchi et al. 2012).

At the same time, the ideal worker norm and the general perception of work in American society create a no-win situation for working mothers. As one of Damaske's interview participants explained: "people look down on you if you do work; people look down upon you if you don't work" (Damaske 2011, 145). Caught between competing ideals, working mothers are perceived as less competent and committed to paid work. This leads to employment discrimination against mothers (Correll et al. 2007).

In their theorization of motherhood as a status characteristic, Ridgeway and Correll (2004) posit that working fathers who assume primary caregiving responsibility will also face reduced expectations regarding their competence and commitment. This chapter empirically tests this theoretical prediction.

More broadly, the potential penalty of the single fatherhood status characteristic is shaped by the devalued status of care work. Historically, caregiving has been thought of as a private matter that family members should take care of their own (Levitsky 2014). Family responsibility emerges from kin relations and takes the shape of personal responsibility and moral obligation (Collins 2019). Additionally, the division between public and private spheres of life has been conditioned on gender difference where women's responsibility for the household supports men's breadwinning for the family. Such perception devalues the status of unpaid care work that takes

place at home. This devalued status is most clearly exemplified through the absence of adequate support for caregivers as the American welfare state fails to adequately support families' care needs (Levitsky 2014).

2.4 Theoretical Predictions

The theoretical and empirical perspectives described above yield several theoretical predictions for the present study. Because of the public/private divide and the cultural meanings attached to caregiving and breadwinning, both marriage and parenthood produce labor market advantages for men and penalties for women. It is unclear, however, whether marriage is a necessary condition that triggers gendered performance expectations. It is also unclear whether caregiving carries the same penalties for men as it does for mothers given the carefully documented nature of the motherhood penalty (Budig & England 2001; Correll et al. 2007; Budig, Misra & Boeckmann 2016; England et al. 2016; Yu & Kuo 2017; Ishizuka 2021). In light of the abundance of research on the negative effect of motherhood on married women's employability and wages, the survey experiment omits married mothers and instead measures employability of both single fathers and single mothers, hypothesized as less than ideal or "poor" workers, and a married father, hypothesized as an ideal worker. By doing so, I test the effect of gender and marital status on hiring bias against single fathers. Taken together, the study identifies where single fathers stand on the scale of hiring preferences that go from single mothers, hypothesized as the least preferred, to married fathers, hypothesized as the most preferred. If single fathers' primary caregiving status is perceived the same way as mothers', it will likely generate a hiring bias. On the other hand, the gender coding of caregiving and breadwinning may still produce a hiring preference for single fathers if employers cannot imagine single fathers as caregivers.

3. Data and Methods

To test these predictions, I conducted an online survey experiment to examine how gender and marital status shaped employers' evaluations of parents in the labor market. The survey design builds upon the research design of a laboratory experiment by Correll and colleagues (2007). Their study asked 192 undergraduate volunteers to evaluate pairs of equally qualified fictitious job applicants that differed on gender, race, and parent status (all were presented as married). In contrast, the present experiment surveys nearly 1,000 hiring professionals about three sets of fictitious job applicants differing by gender and marital status (all were presented as parents) for a marketing director position. This is the same position designated by Correll and colleagues (2007) in their study.

The present survey experiment uses three fictious job candidates: 1) a single father, 2) a single mother, and 3) a married father. In addition, the experiment advances the research methodology by surveying individuals who make hiring decisions. Survey participants were recruited from an online survey platform and thus were not a random probability sample. Nonetheless, the experimental design allows for a strong causal test of the effects of parental gender and marital status on hiring preferences by a sample of individuals with actual hiring experience. The survey was conducted from August to December 2020.

3.1 Respondents

The online survey experiment was administered via the Prolific platform to 1,000 U.S.-based respondents[1] who make hiring decisions. The Prolific platform is considered a highly reputable online data collection service with a large pool of participants in comparison to other online research platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk (Palan & Schitter 2018; Peer et al. 2017).

Specifically, Prolific respondents are found to score higher on measures of attention, honesty, reliability, and reproducibility in comparison to respondents on other online survey platforms (Peer et al. 2021). Moreover, Prolific respondents are found to have less familiarity – and hence, higher naivety – with common experimental research tasks (Peer et al. 2017).

Prolific's prescreening system is another advantage of this survey platform. Using screening questions in the survey itself can be problematic as respondents may be dishonest in answering such questions (Tilcsik 2021). Prolific avoids this issue by requiring individuals to complete an extensive survey of prescreening criteria including demographic and socioeconomic information to complete their registration on the platform. Researchers can then use these criteria to target a specific pool of respondents. For the survey used in this study, respondents were required to have hiring experience.[2]

Table 1 presents descriptive information about the respondents in the survey experiment. Almost half (49 percent) of the respondents are female, 80 percent are White, and almost 65 percent have at least a college degree. More respondents are married (48 percent) than divorced, separated, widowed, or never married, and a majority have at least one child (52.7 percent). On average, respondents are between 30 and 39 years old, and the mean income category is $60,000-$69,000. These characteristics of survey participants are somewhat comparable to the overall population of human resources managers in the U.S. According to the American Community Survey for 2019, 62 percent of HR managers were female, 80.7 percent were White, and 59.8 percent had a college degree or higher. Sixty-six percent of the ACS respondents were married, and 44.7 percent had at least one child. The average age was 47.6 years, and the average income was $87,000.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants, n = 979

	Percentage or Median
Gender (percentage)	
Female	49.13
Male	50.15
Other	0.72
Race/Ethnicity (percentage)	
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.72
Asian	5.62
Black/African American	6.54
Hispanic/Latinx	6.74
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.10
White/Caucasian	80.29
Education (percentage)	
High School or Equivalent (e.g., GED)	5.01
Some College	17.77
Associate Degree	12.77
Bachelor's degree	40.55
Graduate Degree	23.90
Marital Status (percentage)	
Married	48.21
Widowed	1.53
Divorced	11.24
Separated	1.12
Never Married	37.90
Parental Status (percentage)	
Have children	52.71
Age Category (median)	30-39
Income Category (median)	$60,000 - $69,000

3.2 Materials

For the experiment, I prepared three packets with application materials that included a one-page résumé and a one-page cover letter.[3] Following Correll et al. (2007), survey participants were told they were reviewing applications for a new marketing director at a midwestern communications and marketing company. Work experience and educational qualifications reported in these materials were similar to ensure that all job candidates were equally qualified to apply for this job.

While designing materials, I took steps to minimize social desirability bias. Since respondents knew they were participating in a study, I was concerned that seeing two similar job applications from a single mother and a single father side-by-side would raise suspicion and lead survey participants to realize the actual purpose of the survey: to study employment discrimination. If so, these hiring professionals could have consciously changed their evaluations thereby prohibiting the measurement of implicit biases. To avoid this, I introduced another job candidate, a Black married father. The addition of the Black married father candidate introduced a second deception in addition to the cover story:[4] if respondents indeed suspected the study measured discrimination, they may have surmised that it was measuring racial discrimination, thereby leaving the effect of the core experimental conditions (gender and marital statuses) intact.

These experimental conditions were signaled both in the résumé and the cover letter. Gender and race were signaled through the applicants' names that were selected drawing on experimental and audit studies by Correll et al. (2007), Weisshaar (2018), and Gaddis's (2015, 2017) research on social perceptions of names used in audit studies. The selected names were: Brad Berk, Matthew Boyle, Emily Harris (non-Hispanic White names), and Jalen Jackson (non-Hispanic Black name). In addition, the Black applicant's race was signaled in the résumé as "Chair of the Social Committee of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association" during their university years.

All the job candidates were parents. In a married parent condition, the résumé stated the applicant was a volunteer with a parent teacher association of an elementary school. The cover letter indicated the applicant was relocating to a new city with their family, hence, they were looking for a job. To signal single parenthood, the résumé contained volunteer experience in a

single parent support group. Like the married parent condition, the cover letter stated the applicant was relocating to a new city with their son. It is worth noting that existing research highlights how volunteering experience listed in résumés has a statistically significant effect on triggering hiring managers' gender stereotypes and biases (Van Borm & Baert, 2022).

All applicants were college educated. All résumés indicated three to four jobs since college graduation and a total of about 9 years of work experience. College graduation dates signaled the applicants were approximately 30-32 years old, the average age for parents of young children in the U.S. (Schweizer & Guzzo 2020).

Application materials were pretested at the development stage. This was achieved by seeking feedback from staff of a graduate business career center and hiring managers at marketing firms to make sure that education credentials and work experience were interpreted similarly. Once developed, both materials and survey questions were piloted with five individuals with managerial and/or hiring experience to check for any issues with treatment signals and question wording. Examples of the job application materials and experimental treatments used in the survey are available in online supplementary materials.

3.3 Procedures

The job application materials were grouped together into the following blocks of triplets:

(1) Single father – Married father – Black married father;
(2) Single mother – Married father – Black married father;
(3) Single father – Single mother – Black married father.

Asking respondents who make hiring decisions to review three job applications is similar to real-world evaluation experiences where hiring managers frequently sift through multiple applications in one sitting.

The administration procedure ensured randomization at three separate occasions. First, the assignment of treatments (names and marital statuses) to application materials was random. Second, each survey respondent was randomly assigned to each block of applications. Finally, the order in which application materials were presented to each respondent was randomized.

The survey was structured as follows. Respondents were first presented with a company profile and job description of the marketing director position. This description included an outline of major duties and responsibilities, required qualifications, and information on pay, benefits, and work schedule. Survey participants were informed that the successful candidate's salary was likely to be in range of $90,000-$135,000.[5]

Next, each job application was presented separately, and survey participants were asked to evaluate the candidate on several dimensions. The first four questions – commitment, capability, reliability, and job deservingness – were adopted from the survey experiment designed by Weisshaar (2018). For example, respondents were asked: "How reliable do you consider [Name of the applicant] to be?" Response options ranged from 1 (not at all reliable) to 7 (extremely reliable). Drawing on the laboratory experiment by Correll et al. (2007), respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood of promotability, recommended salary in U.S. dollars, and how many times per month a job candidate would be allowed to arrive late or leave early. The likelihood of promotability was measured on a scale from 1 (most certainly will not be promoted) to 4 (most certainly will be promoted). Finally, respondents were asked if they believed the candidate's productivity might decrease, increase, or remain the same if working remotely.

Once individual evaluations were completed, survey participants reviewed summary information (key bullet points on education, work experience, and volunteer experience) about all

three candidates together. This was done to reiterate the treatment conditions signaled through names and volunteer experience. Respondents were then asked to rank the job candidates from 1 (recommend for hire) to 3 (do not recommend for hire) and invited to elaborate on their decision. Although elaboration was optional, 96.5 percent or 943 respondents provided some additional explanation.

The survey concluded by collecting respondents' key demographic information. No identifiable or contact information was collected. Once all 1,000 responses were recorded, survey participants were debriefed via Prolific's messaging system. The message disclosed the true purpose of the study, explained its importance, and invited respondents to contact the research team if they had any concerns regarding their participation.[6]

3.4 Analyses Plan

Linear mixed-effects regression models were used for continuous dependent variables: recommended salary in U.S. dollars, and days allowed late. Dependent variables such as commitment, capability, reliability, and job deservingness that were measured based on a scale from 1 to 7 and remote productivity that was measured on a scale from 1 to 3 were analyzed using mixed-effects ordered logistic regression models. Mixed-effects logistic regression models were estimated for the binary evaluation variables: recommend for hire (reverse recoded as hiring bias) and promotability recoded as 1 = likely to be promoted and 0 = otherwise.

All models include random effects at the block level and controls for the format of the résumé. Results remain consistent in models that also include random effects for respondent ID and in models that control for respondents' demographic characteristics. Since the Black married father condition was added as a second deception, it was excluded from the final analysis.

However, in an analysis to test the robustness of results to this decision, the inclusion of the Black married father condition does not disrupt the main comparisons between White married fathers used as a reference category and White single fathers and single mothers (see Table A1 in supplementary materials).

Additional models were fitted to the data as a robustness check to ensure results remain consistent: (1) logistic regression models with fixed effects for each block of the data separately; (2) logistic regression models with fixed effects for pooled data; (3) logistic regression models for pooled data while controlling for the block variable. The results are available upon request.

Open-ended survey questions that asked respondents to elaborate on their hiring recommendation were analyzed using NVivo. The conceptual framework for coding was informed by three main sensitizing concepts (Glaser 1978; Bowen 2006) rooted in the study's theoretical framework: ideal worker norm, gender, and marital status. This framework informed the creation of the first set of codes that was then expanded through inductive coding as responses were read multiple times to identify other emerging themes such as references to educational qualifications or quality of application materials.

4. Results

Figure 1 depicts proportions of applicants recommended for hire by experimental conditions. The single father profile is more likely to be selected as the third or last choice: 40.3

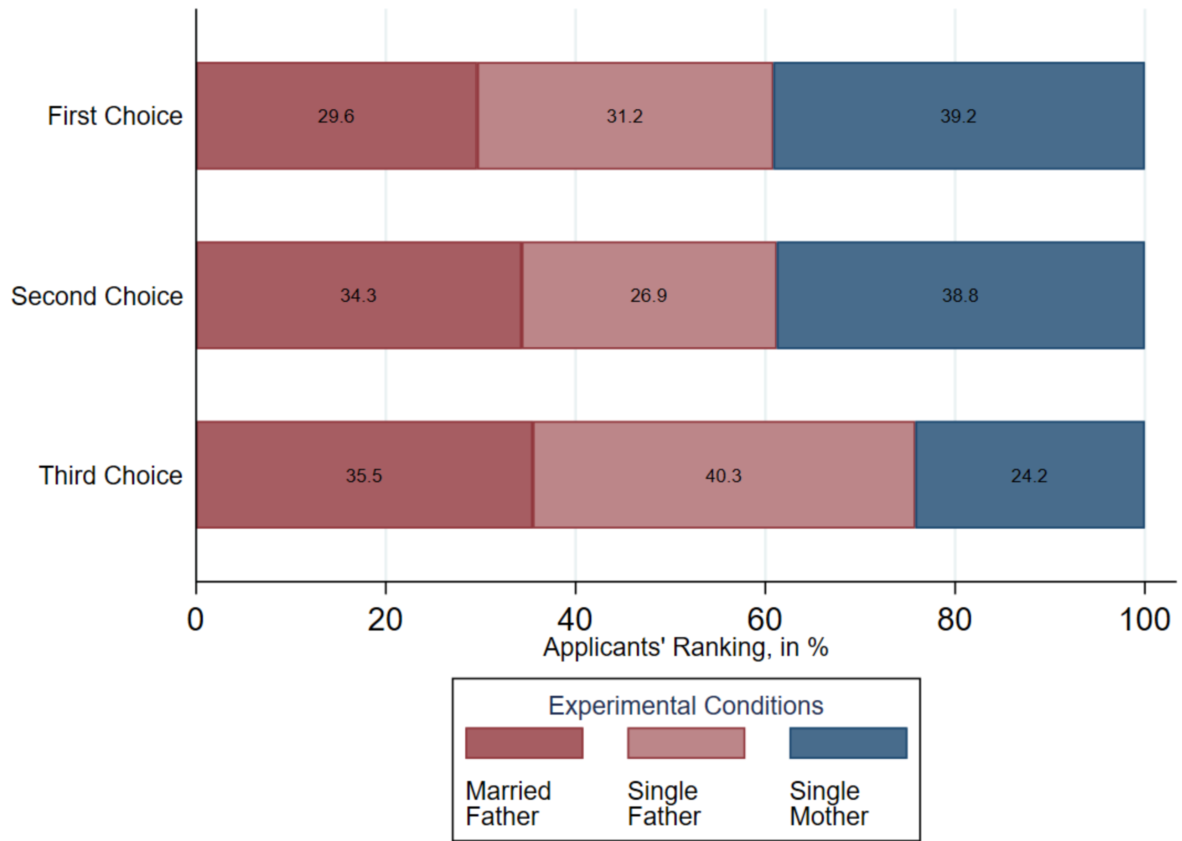

Figure 1. Percentage of Applicants Recommended for Hire by Experimental Condition

percent of respondents selected this candidate last. In contrast, the single mother's application is more likely to be selected as the first choice: 39.2 percent of respondents did so.

Figure 2 displays mean values of each standardized rating measure by experimental condition. The single father's application was consistently perceived negatively across almost every evaluation measure except for monthly days allowed late. The single mother's application was evaluated more favorably compared to both the married father's and single father's application, and the single mother was perceived as the most committed job candidate. Importantly, the married father was rated favorably with regard to his perceived promotability and remote productivity compared to both single parents.

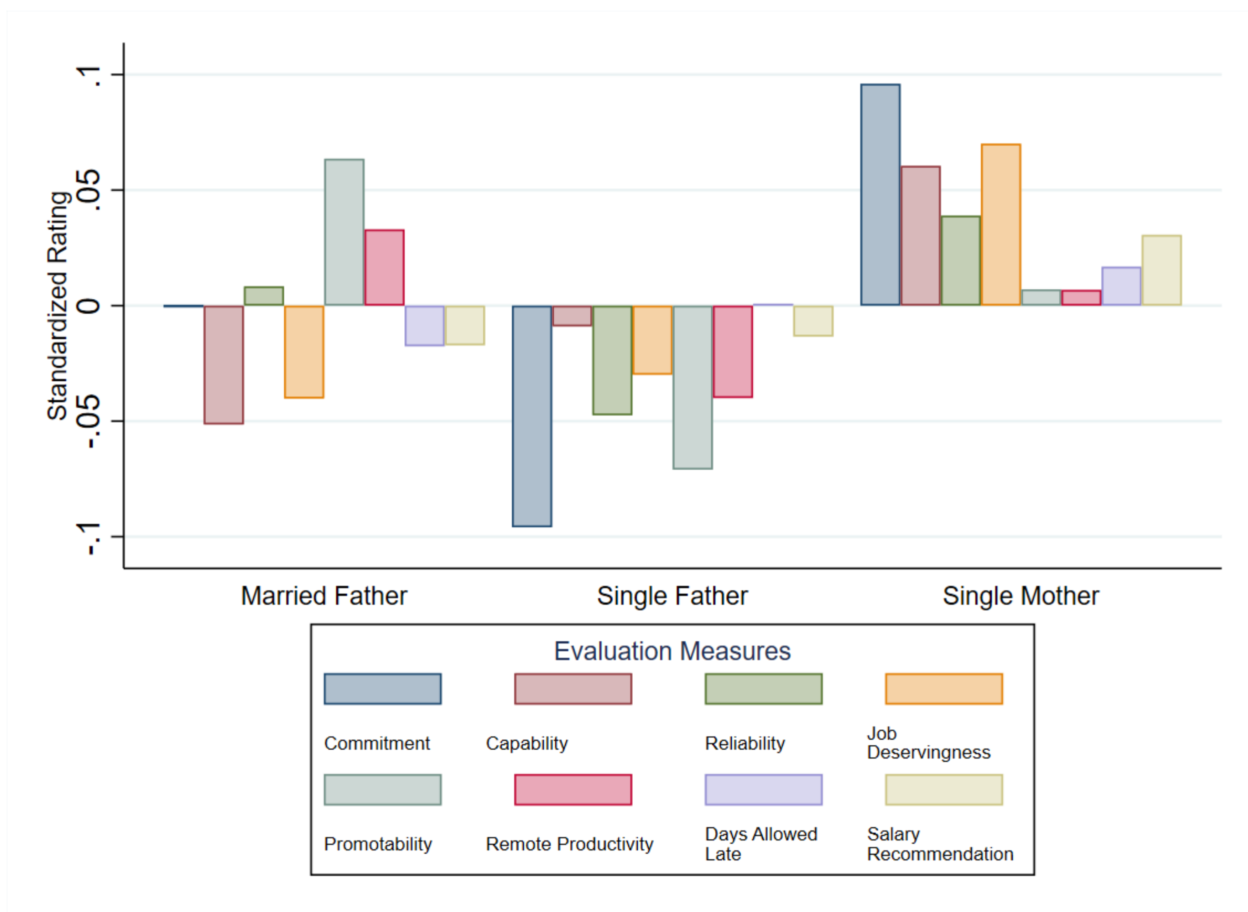

Figure 2. Standardized Evaluation Measures by Experimental Condition

Table 2 displays estimated regression coefficients for the effect of gender and parental statuses on hiring bias, recommended salary, days allowed late, promotion likelihood, and perceived productivity if working remotely. Compared to the married father, the single father is more likely to experience hiring bias. Stated as odds ratio, the single father has almost 35 percent higher odds of being selected as the least preferred candidate ($p < .05$). The single mother, on the other hand, has almost 49 percent lower odds of being the last choice for hire ($p < .001$). The linear estimates of recommended salary are not statistically significant, although the direction of the coefficients suggests that the single father may be recommended a lower salary. On the other hand, he is allowed slightly more days to arrive late to work compared to the married father ($p < .01$).

Table 2. Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures

	Hiring Bias (Binary Logistic Estimates)	Recommended Salary in Dollars (Linear Estimates)	Monthly Days Allowed Late (Linear Estimates)	Promotability (Binary Logistic Estimates)	Remote Productivity (Ordered Logistic Estimates)
Married Father (Reference)					
Single Father	0.297*	-374.1	0.127**	-0.506**	-0.197**
	(0.132)	(1003.0)	(0.0455)	(0.165)	(0.0697)
Single Mother	-0.668***	14.26	0.235**	-0.352*	-0.131**
	(0.148)	(620.3)	(0.0806)	(0.179)	(0.0446)
Intercept	-1.942***	98102.8***	3.981***	2.015***	…[a]
	(0.587)	(301.5)	(0.0971)	(0.157)	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All models include controls for the format of the résumé and random effects at the block level. N = 1,958
[a] Intercepts for ordered logistic regression models are omitted.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests).

Interestingly, both single parents are perceived as lacking promotability in comparison to the married father even though the single mother's application is favored over the married father's application. Converting regression coefficients for promotability to odds ratio, the married father has almost 40 percent higher odds of being perceived likely to be promoted compared to the single father ($p < .01$) and almost 29 percent higher odds compared to the single mother ($p < .05$). This finding suggests that primary caregiving responsibility is interpreted by employers as constraining the necessary time and effort required to receive a promotion.

Moreover, the married father has higher odds than both single parents of being perceived as productive if working from home. The lowered remote productivity of single parents is perceived similarly irrespective of gender as both the single father ($b = -0.197$, $p < .01$) and the single mother ($b = -0.131$, $p < .01$) are less likely to be productive if working remotely. These results demonstrate employers' awareness of the primary caregivers' "second shift" at home (Hochshild 1989) given the absence of a second parent.

Table 3 presents findings from ordered logistic regressions for the ratings of commitment, capability, reliability, and job deservingness. The single father is perceived as less committed compared to the married father ($b = -0.227$, $p < .001$). The regression coefficients suggest that he may also evaluated as less capable, reliable and deserving of a job than the married father, although the results are not statistically significant. The single mother slightly outperforms the married father across the evaluation measures, but the results are not statistically significant.

Table 3. Ordered Logistic Regression Estimates of Experimental Conditions on Job Application Rating Measures

	Commitment	Capability	Reliability	Job Deservingness
Married Father (Reference)				
Single Father	-0.227***	-0.00699	-0.110	-0.0376
	(0.0655)	(0.0234)	(0.0838)	(0.0723)
Single Mother	0.0871	0.0733	0.0287	0.0745
	(0.0746)	(0.0426)	(0.0939)	(0.0624)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All models include controls for the format of the résumé and random effects at the block level. N = 1,958
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests).

The results presented so far analyze the employability of single parents in reference to the married father. This allows us to gain insight into the effect of marital status on fathers' employability. To assess the effect of gender on primary caregivers' (i.e., single parents) employability, I ran separate analyses that only included evaluation measures for the single mother's and single father's job applications. Results in Table 4 show that the single father is rated lower than the single mother on all measures. Stated as odds ratio, the single father has approximately 54 percent higher odds ($p < .001$) of being selected as the least preferred candidate compared to the single mother. The single mother is also more likely to be perceived as committed to the job ($b = 0.305$, $p < .05$) and deserving of a job ($b = 0.125$, $p < .05$) compared to the single father.

Table 4. Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures

	(1) Hiring Bias (Binary Logistic Estimates)	(2) Commitment (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	(3) Capability (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	(4) Reliability (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	(5) Job Deservingness (Ordered Logistic Estimates)
Single Father (Reference)					
Single Mother	-0.772^{***}	0.305^{*}	0.0513	0.139	0.125^{*}
	(0.1235)	(0.130)	(0.0853)	(0.107)	(0.0531)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All models include controls for the format of the résumé and random effects at the block level. N = 1,304
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests).

Together, these findings suggest that by assuming primary caregiving responsibility, single fathers violate the gendered ideal worker norm that envisions men's undivided attention to work. Single fathers also violate the gender norm that attaches men to breadwinning. These violations portray single fathers as less career motivated and less worthy of a job compared to other candidates.

4.1 Qualitative Responses

Seeking additional insight into how bias operates in hiring decisions, I explored qualitative answers that explain respondents' hiring recommendations. Out of 979 respondents, 943 provided some elaboration on their choices. Among these, 157 participants explained why they preferred the married father, 165 participants explained why they preferred the single father, and 215 participants explained why they preferred the single mother. Table 5 presents a summary of respondents' most common explanations for their hiring recommendations.

Table 5. Summary of Respondents' Most Common Explanations for Hiring Recommendations (n, %)

	Married Father (*n* = 157)	Single Father (*n* = 165)	Single Mother (*n* = 215)
Work Experience and/or Education	115 (73%)	120 (73%)	164 (76%)
Ideal Worker Qualities			
Dedicated and/or Committed	12 (8%)	10 (6%)	6 (6%)
Capable	3 (2%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)
Motivated and/or Driven	7 (4%)	10 (6%)	12 (6%)
Stable	8 (5%)	4 (2%)	15 (7%)
Marital Status	8 (5%)	8 (5%)	9 (4%)
Gender	0	1 (0.6%)	5 (2%)
Application Materials			
Résumé	13 (8%)	9 (5%)	12 (7%)
Cover Letter	13 (8%)	10 (6%)	14 (7%)
Overall Best and/or Best Fit	10 (6%)	11 (7%)	7 (3%)

Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, if a respondent mentioned both work experience and dedication to explain their hiring recommendation, the answer was coded twice in relevant categories.

Understandably, referring to the job candidate's work experience and/or educational qualifications was the most common explanation across all three experimental conditions. These explanations referencing applicants' human capital were frequently offered by respondents, despite the fact that the study design ensured that all applicants had similar levels of education and work experience. The surveyed hiring managers also relied upon characteristics of an ideal worker to explain their hiring recommendation. Qualities such as dedicated, committed, capable, motivated, driven, and stable were used most frequently. With lesser frequency, and thus not reported in Table 5, respondents also mentioned other qualities like "energetic," "hardworking," "productive," "reliable," "confident," and "leader." Overall, using ideal worker qualities was the second most common reason for a hiring recommendation with 30 responses in total in the married

father condition, 28 responses in the single father condition, and 43 responses in the single mother condition.

Interestingly, some participants explicitly referred to the candidate's marital status and/or gender to explain their hiring decision. In the married father condition, eight respondents highlighted the fact this candidate was not a single parent which is why they were recommending him for hire. One respondent openly stated that they found the single father to be a less reliable employee than the married father: "I thought Brad [married father] would be the better hire over Matt [single father] because it sounded to me that Matt is a single father and would be less reliable than Brad." Those who recommended the single father for hiring interpreted his family status as a sign of potential commitment, motivation, and ability to multitask.

In the single mother condition, both gender and marital status were frequent reasons for a greater hiring preference for this candidate. For example, one respondent said: "I went with the woman, because I want to support women." Other participants indicated that "single mothers deserve a break," could use help to get ahead, and were generally impressed with the quality of the single mother's résumé given her status. One respondent combined gender and marital status to explain their hiring recommendation: "I have a lot of sympathy for single mothers. I know several of them. And as the candidates are close in qualifications, I'd likely pick her. In general, I think women need a leg up in hiring."

Lastly, there were survey participants who referred to the job candidates' résumés and cover letters to explain their hiring recommendation or simply stated they found the candidate to be the best overall without further elaboration. Those who referred to résumés and cover letters mentioned presentation, formatting, clarity, and their overall positive impression from reading

application materials. Again, respondents offered these explanations despite the fact that resumes and cover letters were designed with minimal differences in formatting and presentation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Today's labor market differs tremendously from the world of work that gave rise to the ideal worker norm. The traditional employment contract where full-time jobs culminated in economic and retirement security no longer exists (Moen 2016). Neither does the traditional breadwinner/caregiver model that generated uninterrupted work availability (Moen & Roehling 2005). Instead, workers struggle to deal with increasing job precarity and a "gig economy," and most families nowadays need both parents to be employed to maintain a living wage (Kalleberg 2011; Miller 2017). Yet, the ideal worker norm persists and demands long work hours, constant availability, and dedication to work. For individuals with family responsibilities, fulfilling this norm becomes a challenge. Existing scholarship has carefully documented the persistence of the motherhood penalty despite various social, economic, demographic, and institutional changes (Budig & England 2001; Correll et al. 2007; Budig et al. 2016; England et al. 2016; Yu & Kuo 2017). Irrespective of gender, parents who violate the ideal worker norm by opting out of the labor market to attend to their caregiving responsibilities are also penalized and struggle to re-enter the labor market (Weisshaar 2018). Marital fatherhood with uninterrupted employment, on the other hand, signals maturity, stability, and commitment, thereby enhancing married fathers' employability (Correll et al. 2007, Weisshaar 2018). What had remained unknown is whether single fathers are seen as violating the ideal worker norm and are discriminated against like working married mothers.

To address this gap, I conducted a survey experiment that asked individuals who make hiring decisions to evaluate a job application of a single father in comparison to a married father and a single mother. The survey results demonstrate that primary caregiving status jeopardizes single fathers' employability. In the absence of a mother who is traditionally expected to be the primary caregiver, employers can no longer assume men's uninterrupted work availability. The fact that there are various options that can substitute for parental care like babysitters, childcare facilities, or extended family does not seem to have sufficiently influenced respondents' perceptions to overcome their concerns about single fathers' availability for work. Thus, by assuming primary caregiving responsibility, single fathers violate the ideal worker norm and are no longer perceived as committed, reliable and, hence, desirable job candidates.

The study reveals that marital status produces different outcomes through the interaction with gender and parental statuses. Importantly and somewhat unexpectedly, this interaction appears to erase the motherhood penalty for single mothers in this study. In fact, single mothers are evaluated more favorably on all measures compared to single fathers. Thus, the effect of the combination of breadwinner and caregiver statuses varies by gender: it creates an advantage for women and penalizes men.

It can be inferred, then, that single fathers violate not only the ideal worker norm but the gendered logic of work organizations. "To say that an organization [...] is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Acker, 1990, 146). It is also possible that employers expect an even more acute work-family conflict for single fathers than single mothers because men are perceived as less capable of

parenting while women are viewed as naturally suited to it (Biblarz & Stacey 2010). Because childcare is traditionally perceived as "women's work," single fathers violate cultural expectations more than single mothers.

Finding evidence of hiring preference for single mothers is in line with previous research that identifies employers' increased willingness to hire single mothers in light of welfare reforms that promoted work incentives (Corcoran et al. 2000; Holzer & Stoll 2001). The finding also echoes previous research on employment discrimination against women who do not fit into a typical image of a heterosexual married mother. For example, motherhood does not diminish perceptions of lesbians' competence and work orientation compared to heterosexual mothers (Peplau & Fingerhut 2004). The presence of a male breadwinner presents heterosexual mothers as less career oriented. In contrast, lesbian mothers are perceived as family providers *and* competent workers (Peplau & Fingerhut 2004). Similarly, Bear and Glick (2017) find a bonus for female candidates who present themselves as primary breadwinners. In their experiment, a breadwinning mother was offered a higher salary and was more likely to be offered leadership training compared to mothers presented as caregivers and breadwinning fathers (Bear & Glick 2017). Marital status was not tested in Bear and Glick's experiment.

The positive effect of breadwinner status on mothers' employability and its comparison to the employability of breadwinning married fathers requires further examination. The present survey experiment was set against the backdrop of a high-skill, high-level job. It is possible that the job's high status produces some of the hiring preference for single mothers. Seeing a single mother who is equally qualified compared to her male counterparts appears to diminish traditional gendered expectations and present her as highly committed to her job. This conclusion is supported

by the qualitative elaborations provided by survey respondents. Whether single mothers would experience the same amount of preference in lower-status jobs remains unknown.

On the other hand, an interview study examining the experiences of working custodial single fathers has found evidence of employment discrimination in low-wage or blue-collar jobs (Author 2021). Men in such jobs struggle to find employment opportunities that accommodate their family responsibilities and experience acute work-family conflict as employers continue to expect an uninterrupted work commitment. Thus, subsequent research may examine the effect of parenthood status in the low-wage labor market to measure employment discrimination against single parents.

Such examination would particularly benefit from an audit study research design. While the present survey experiment advances the research methodology that frequently uses undergraduate or graduate students (e.g., Correll et al. 2007; Steffens et al. 2019) by surveying individuals who make actual hiring decisions, it is still limited in its generalizability. Audit studies, in contrast, place the experimental method within the real-world context, which allows for greater generalizability of findings (Pager 2007; Pager and Western 2012). On the other hand, audit studies, themselves, cannot reveal the mechanisms of discrimination like perceived commitment, capability, reliability, and deservingness that this survey experiment was able to.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this chapter makes important theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature on work, family, and gender. The foundational work of status characteristic theory conceptualized gender as a master status characteristic that carried a stable and universal effect across different social situations and contexts (Wagner and Berger 1997). In a work setting, male gender is traditionally assigned a higher status. The present study questions

this stability and invites scholars to study the effect of gender on employment discrimination in relation to other status characteristics. I provide evidence that employment discrimination changes at the intersection of male gender, single marital status, and primary caregiving responsibility, which creates a labor market disadvantage for single fathers similar to the motherhood penalty found in others' work.

I also find evidence of a strong hiring preference for a single mother and some preference for a married father (primarily in terms of his promotability), both presented as primary breadwinners. In light of this evidence and in echoing Bear and Glick (2017), it seems reasonable to suggest that the motherhood penalty and fatherhood bonus are better described as a caregiver penalty and a breadwinner bonus that are available to individuals depending on their family status but irrespective of their gender. This suggestion is further supported by Weisshaar's (2018) conclusion that anyone – mothers or fathers – who opts out of work for caregiving responsibilities, violates the ideal worker norm and struggles to re-enter the labor market.

De-gendering the language used to describe these penalties and bonuses is particularly important considering gender-specific terminology that emphasizes mothering. Such terminology includes the motherhood penalty or the conceptualization of motherhood as a status characteristic that negatively affects caregivers' labor market outcomes (Correll & Ridgweway 2003; Ridgeway & Correll 2004; Correll et al. 2007). Continuing to use such language is problematic because it reinforces the idea of mothers' essential capacity and responsibility for caregiving. If this idea persists, the caregiver status will remain devalued as "women's work" and gender equality will not be attained (England 2005; Fraser 1994; Folbre 2018). On the other hand, recognizing that men

also suffer from the caregiver penalty further supports the urgency of family-friendly policies that create a sustainable and supportive context for American parents.

Caregiver penalties and breadwinner bonuses seem to matter less in countries with strong policy support for working mothers. For instance, Sweden has implemented a number of family-friendly policies aimed at replacing the male breadwinner model with a dual-earner model (Bygren & Gähler 2021). As a result, both women and men appear to benefit from a parenthood wage premium in Sweden (Bygren & Gähler 2021). Moreover, employers do not display a strong hiring preference for married fathers, and applicants' gender or parental status does not seem to matter in hiring decisions (Bygren, Erlandsson, & Gähler 2017).

In the absence of family-friendly policies, the gender coding of breadwinning and caregiving creates a seemingly irreconcilable tension between the two roles that underlies primary caregivers' precarious position in the labor market. This chapter reveals that this tension affects working single fathers, too. While designing the survey, my primary goal was to identify where single fathers stood on the scale of hiring preferences that went from the single mother, hypothesized as the least preferred candidate, to the married father, hypothesized as the most preferred candidate. I now conclude that single fathers are positioned at the bottom of this scale. These research findings deepen current knowledge about how primary caregiving responsibility creates negative consequences in the labor market for the growing, yet understudied population of single fathers in the U.S.

NOTES

1. Out of the 1,000 respondents, I excluded 21 from the analysis because they spent less than a minute reading each job application.

2. For this screening criteria, Prolific asks respondents the following question: Do you have any experience in making hiring decisions (i.e. have you been responsible for hiring job candidates)?

3. Two of the job application templates were directly modelled after the materials in the Correll et al. (2007) study generously shared by Dr. Shelley Correll.

4. The cover story told the respondents they were taking part in a joint project of a team of researchers at a research institution and a large communications company, and that this team was interested in learning how companies in the communications industry made hiring decisions.

5. This was the actual salary range for the marketing director position shown at indeed.com at the time when the survey materials were developed.

6. The debriefing message was sent on January 2, 2021. No respondent contacted the researchers.

CHAPTER II: Single Fathers and Work-Family Conflict in White- and Blue-Collar Jobs

Note: A version of this chapter was published in *Community, Work & Family* in 2022.

Abstract

Existing research points towards an overall intensification of parenting expectations including newer expectations for fathers' involvement in caregiving. At the same time, the ideal worker norm persists, and employers continue to expect men's full and uninterrupted work commitment. This chapter explores what these competing expectations attached to work and parenting mean for single fathers. To do so, the chapter draws on thirty in-depth interviews with a sample of working single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility in the United States and differentiates between those with white- and blue-collar jobs. The study finds that both white- and blue-collar single fathers prioritize caregiving and resist the ideal worker norm and, as a result, experience work-family conflict. Resolving this conflict becomes single fathers' individual responsibility, and the resources to resolve it are primarily available to white-collar men in the form of understanding supervisors and access to workplace flexibility. Blue-collar single fathers need to be more creative and resourceful in reconciling their caregiving and breadwinning roles. Inability to resolve work-family conflict can lead to job penalties such as reduced income and/or a job loss, which are found across different job types.

1. Introduction

The idea that many working parents struggle to reconcile their work and caregiving obligations is not new. In many ways, this struggle emerges from employers' expectations of workers' uninterrupted availability and commitment to paid work – the ideal worker norm (Acker

1990; Williams 2001). On the other hand, parenting demands have intensified in the past few decades. Caregiving and "good" parenting nowadays require significant time-intensive investments into the "concerted cultivation" of children, and the support for concerted cultivation is widely shared by mothers and fathers across social classes (Hays 1996; Ishizuka 2019; Lareau 2003). Researchers also highlight a shift towards gender-egalitarian ideals of shared parenting and involved fatherhood that emphasizes presence and nurturance (Edin & Nelson 2013; Marsiglio & Roy 2012; Randles 2020). The meaning of these competing expectations for working single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility remains unclear.

The number of single fathers with residential custody has increased from 300,000 in 1960 to more than 2.6 million in 2016 in the U.S. (Grall 2020; Livingston 2013). However, there is very little literature that addresses single fathers' perceptions of parenting or their work-family reconciliation strategies. To fill this gap, the present study set out to answer three main research questions using in-depth interviews. First, how do single fathers perceive and experience their roles as primary caregivers and primary breadwinners? Second, what strategies do single fathers use to reconcile work-family conflict? Third, how do these perceptions, experiences, and strategies vary by social class? In answering these questions, the chapter's scope focuses on child-related caregiving.

By paying attention to social class differences operationalized using white- and blue-collar job distinctions, this chapter contributes to the rich literatures on gender, work, and family in several ways. First, it uncovers the source of work-family conflict for single fathers. Findings from in-depth interviews with 30 single fathers in the Midwestern United States demonstrate that both white- and blue-collar single fathers prioritize caregiving and embrace the idea of nurturing and

present dads. Second, juxtaposing the experiences of single fathers in white- and blue-collar highlights how the expectations set by the ideal worker norm remain consistent across different workplace settings. At the same time, single fathers in white-collar jobs with understanding supervisors and workplace flexibility are better positioned to navigate the work-family conflict compared to blue-collar single fathers and other white-collar single fathers who do not have access to such resources. Inability to resolve this conflict leads to work precarity such as job insecurity and diminished earnings that are evident among both white- and blue-collar jobs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Parenting Expectations and Single Fathers

Literature on parenting norms and expectations presents mixed findings. Earlier research highlights the gendered coding of caregiving and breadwinning evident in separation of "good" mothering as a child-centered intensive mothering ideology (Hays 1996) from "good" fathering that emphasizes breadwinning (Townsend 2002). Here, fatherhood is part of a "package deal" that consists of four interconnected elements: marriage, parenthood, employment, and home ownership (Townsend 2002, 2). More recent research points to the emergence of gender-egalitarian parenting norms and the rise of the "new fatherhood ideal:" the expectation that men should be highly involved in parenting and domestic labor and develop a nurturing and emotional bond with a child (Marsiglio & Roy 2012). However, the evolvement of the "new fatherhood" ideal has been largely informed by centering marriage and stigmatizing fathers that do not fit into the image of successful, married residential fathers who are financially and emotionally involved with their children (Marsiglio & Roy 2012; Randles 2018). Moreover, the new fathering expectations can be vague in contrast to concerted cultivation that expects parents to engage children in formal extracurricular

and informal activities, elicit children's thoughts and feelings, and encourage children's sense of importance among other facets (Lareau 2003; Ishizuka 2019).

Studies on parenting expectations by social class reveal that poor and working-class parents share attitudes about good parenting with middle-class parents although the latter are more likely to engage in intensive parenting behaviors (Hays 1996; Ishizuka 2019). Qualitative research on low-income unwed fathers also highlights how these men embrace middle-class ideals of "new fatherhood" that emphasizes emotional aspects of parenting (Edin & Nelson 2013; Randles 2018). These fathers are also found to reject the package deal in which men's emotional closeness with children is mediated through marriage and a wife (Townsend 2002) and emphasize that fathers' relationships with children ought not to depend on their relationship with children's mother (Edin, Nelson, & Reed 2011).

At the same time, the grip of traditional norms of masculinity that envision men as providers and breadwinners remains strong (Thébaud & Pedulla 2016). The inability to provide affects stay-at-home fathers' perception of their social acceptability as parents because they "feel judged for not earning" (Doucet 2018, 207). Married, educated fathers who adhere to "new father" norms are found to increase their childcare time at the expense of leisure time rather than work hours (McGill 2014). Yet, research finds that mothers still spend more time on childcare in different-sex marriages compared to fathers (Chesley & Flood 2017). Even among couples with primary and equal carer fathers, mothers remain responsible for bulk of emotional care, everyday care planning, and organizing social events with other children and their parents (Hodkinson & Brooks 2020).

In the case of single fathers, parenting expectations may vary due to the social perception of single fatherhood as a choice. On the one hand, this idea elevates single fathers because their choice to parent is seen as dedication (Maier & McGeorge 2014). On the other hand, the choice rhetoric can stigmatize men as "deadbeat" uninvolved fathers – a term that is frequently used in reference to low-income fathers (Coles 2009a) – or question men's ability to parent. Compared to single mothers, single fathers are seen as capable of taking care of child's basic needs but lacking the capacity to emotionally support their children (Quadlin et al. 2022). Moreover, in public perception, single fathers take on the roles of both parents, and single fathers "have to be mothers" but single mothers do not need to be fathers (Maier & McGeorge 2014, 178).

2.2 Work Expectations and Work-Family Conflict in White- and Blue-Collar Jobs

Work expectations remain largely influenced by the ideal worker norm. The norm dictates that securing stable and well-paying jobs – both in white- and blue-collar work – requires uninterrupted availability, commitment, and devotion to paid work (Acker 1990; Blair-Loy 2003; Williams 2001). For example, the ideal worker can be expected to travel on short notice in white-collar jobs or work swing shifts in blue-collar jobs (Munn & Greer 2014).

The ideal worker norm is more easily attainable by married, highly educated men (Budig 2014), who have a traditional gender division of labor with their wives (Hodges & Budig 2010), which facilitates breadwinner's full-time employment (Moen & Roehling 2005). However, increases in women's employment and the rising number of dual-earner households have led to the weakening of the male-breadwinner model (Daiger von Gleichen & Seelib-Kaiser 2018). At the same time, work organizations continue to assume that men are primarily work-oriented, which creates conflict for workers with caregiving responsibilities (Gatrell, Ladge, & Powell 2021). Both

blue- and white-collar fathers are still expected to live up to the traditional standards of the ideal worker norm (Haas & Hwang 2019).

Studies show that time strain and lack of resources at work are key contributors to work-family conflict (Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel 2020). Compared to white-collar professionals, low-wage workers are less likely to have access to paid leaves, job flexibility, or control over work schedules that facilitate work-family reconciliation (Gerstel & Clawson 2018). And often, it is lack of predictable and stable work hours that contribute more to the work-family conflict than low wages (Schneider & Harknett 2019).

Fathers report levels of work-family conflict that are comparable to mothers (Aumann, Galinsky & Matos 2011; Young & Schieman 2018), but research on men's work-family conflict by work setting reveals mixed findings. In white-collar job settings, men who seek work flexibility to mitigate this conflict are judged harsher than women as they are seen as less masculine, and putting in long hours at work continues to signal the elite status of hard-working men (Williams 2010; Vandello et al. 2013). White-collar fathers anticipate or have already experienced losing career opportunities when asking for formal accommodations such as parental leave (Haas & Hwang 2019; Reid 2015). On the other hand, experimental research has suggested that men who request flexible work to care for a child are viewed more positively compared to men who make such requests for other reasons (Munsch 2016).

In the blue-collar sector, fathers are also concerned about job security if asking for parental leave (Haas & Hwang 2019). Sometimes working-class men choose to get fired for insubordination instead of admitting they need time off for childcare (Williams et al. 2013). Other studies, however, found that fathers in the low-wage service sector who disclosed their caregiving

responsibilities to employers described their managers as "especially understanding" if they needed to miss work for childcare reasons (Luhr 2020, 276).

3. Data and Methods

3.1 Recruitment and Sample Characteristics

This study relies on 30 in-depth interviews with custodial single fathers in the Midwestern United States. To recruit participants, I designed a flyer that invited single fathers to reach out for an in-person interview in exchange for a $30 Visa rewards card. The flyers were advertised on social media, at meetup and support groups for single fathers, and in local gyms and grocery stores. Existing participants were also asked to forward the study's details to other single fathers they knew.

The flyer specified only two screening criteria: having full-time caregiving responsibility and having a full-time job. This was done purposefully to allow participants the necessary freedom to self-select without imposing a strict definition of single fatherhood. Some studies on single fatherhood exclude men who cohabit or live with extended family implying that such men are not "*truly* single fathers, as if they were cheating some idealized type of single fatherhood" (Coles 2015, 146, emphasis in the original). I sought to avoid such preconceived assumptions in order to gain a better understanding of the joys and challenges of custodial single fatherhood. It is also worth noting that a similar recruiting approach that allowed fathers to self-identify as primary caregivers was used in Doucet's (2018) study, which resulted in recruiting 25 single fathers with full custody and 12 with shared custody.

This study's recruitment strategy yielded 18 fathers who lived only with their children, five fathers who resided with parent(s), and two fathers who were engaged and cohabited with their

fiancées (see Table 6 for summary information on participants' demographic characteristics by job type and Appendix B for a full demographic profile). In the latter two cases where other adults are present in the home, primary caregiving was defined as providing the bulk of care for a child in comparison to other adult(s) in the household. As one engaged participant explained, his fiancée was minimally involved in parenting his biological children: "I discipline my kids. She disciplines her child. […] I don't think she takes a mom role and I think the kids know that she's not mom." Five men were remarried at the time of the interview but had sole custody previously and reflected upon their experience of single fatherhood retroactively. In the case of remarriage, participants still spoke of caregiving as their responsibility. For instance, one remarried participant felt that "if the kids got in trouble, that would be my fault as opposed to [current spouse's]."

Table 6. Descriptive Summary of Demographic Profiles, by Job Type

	White-Collar Jobs	Blue-Collar Jobs
N	19	11
Age		
Mean	42	41
Range	31–56	30–62
Race		
White	14	5
Black	1	4
Asian	3	1
Other	1	1
Education		
High school/GED	1	3
Some college	2	3
Bachelor's degree	13	3
Professional degree		1
Master's degree or higher	3	1
Annual household income (USD)		
Mean	113,000	44,000
Range	30,000–250,000	20,000–70,000
Type of single father		
Never married	2	5

Divorced/separated	15	4
Widowed	1	2
Adoptive	1	
Type of custody		
Full	8	7
Shared	11	4
Living arrangements		
Child(ren) only	11	7
With partner	5	2
With parent(s)	3	2

3.2 Data collection

Data collection took place between October 2018 and May 2020. The final sample size was guided by the principle of data saturation gauged by repeatedly returning to the main research question to ask what each new interview adds to the emerging insights (Gerson & Damaske 2021; Roy et al. 2015). In the beginning, interviews took place in person at locations convenient for the participant, usually a coffee shop, although on two occasions interviews were conducted at a person's home. With the onset of COVID-19, interviews were conducted via Zoom. I always had my camera on during the interview and one participant chose to have their camera off, which may have influenced rapport. The interview duration ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours and lasted one hour on average. The interviews were semi-structured and covered the following themes: transition to single fatherhood, work history, work-life interaction, perceptions of parenthood and single fatherhood.

The interview questions were continuously reviewed and revisited as the study progressed to ensure the interview protocol adequately captured the broad range of custodial single fathers' work and family experiences. Findings from earlier interviews were corroborated at later stages of data collection to maintain credibility and clarify initial codes and categories emerging in the data analysis. Some of the added changes were also informed by my positionality and how it affected

the flow of the interview. For example, as a woman of color born and raised outside of the U.S., I did not expect to witness any class divide between me and study participants. In my mind, being an outsider in American society negated anything that could be considered as privileged in my home country. Yet, early interviews with less educated single fathers would often suggest perceived status differences as these men frequently sought my validation of their answers as "making sense" and "sounding right." To mitigate this, I revised the wording of some of the interview questions and added more probes to ensure participants further elaborated on their responses even if they initially felt they did not sound "right."

Interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission and transcribed by the author. Zoom interviews were also video recorded. The videos were deleted once audio files had been downloaded. Real names were replaced with pseudonyms and all identifying information was removed to protect participants' anonymity. Interview data were coded using NVivo 12 software.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis and coding followed LaRossa's (2005) discussion of qualitative methods in family research and began with open coding by breaking down the interview data into discrete categories or codes. The conceptual framework for the study included three main sensitizing concepts informed by literature review on work-family conflict: ideal worker norms (i.e., work demands), intensive parenting (i.e., care demands), and reconciliation (i.e., how do single fathers reconcile work and care demands?). This framework informed the creation of the first set of codes, which was then substantially expanded through inductive coding as transcripts were carefully read and re-read while utilizing the method of constant comparison (Glaser 1978). This allowed me to identify emerging themes that were shared or contrasted among participants. Axial coding

involved identifying relationships between emerging codes (LaRossa 2005) and adding subcodes to initial broad categories to ensure that each concept was developed to an adequate level of theoretical saturation (Roy et al. 2015). For example, a broad category on participants' perceptions of what it means to be a good father also tapped into codes that captured interviewees' narratives about their childhood and particularly their relationship with fathers, changing societal roles with regard to parenting as well as how participants experienced changes in their role as a father since becoming a single parent. Finally, I used selective coding to focus on the conflict between breadwinning and caregiving, relationship with supervisors and colleagues, work trajectories, men's perceptions of parenthood, their performance of caregiving, and childcare arrangements. During this stage, the focal point of the analysis was social class operationalized using white- and blue-collar job distinctions, which laid emphasis on how work-family conflict varied in relation to interviewees' jobs.

4. Results

4.1 Source of Work-Family Conflict

Single fathers in the sample shared an understanding that they were, above all, parents, and they prioritized their caregiving responsibility before work. The idea that "kids come first" was prevalent both among men with shared and full custody.

Interestingly, participants' reported work histories prior to becoming parents typified features of the "ideal worker." As Chris, who worked in marketing and had full custody, explains:

> One of the bigger things, I have a hard stop and I have to leave at the end of the day now, I can't stay because I have to pick [children] up by 6. And so, before, when it was just me,

it was like, well, I don't know, I can just go home and have dinner whenever I want. Now I'm like, no, I have to leave at 5:15, I have to go pick up the kids.

Similarly, David, a salesman, reconsidered his role as a parent after divorce. Before, he and his wife relied on a traditional male breadwinner/female caregiver model where David spent long hours at a corporate job in exchange for substantial pay: "At that time in my life, job was more important than family. And since the divorce, I've come to the realization that my kids are number one, not job." David thus embarked on a path of finding a new job with more work flexibility, a task that was still ongoing at the time of our interview.

By prioritizing caregiving, single fathers in this study also shared the extent to which they embraced the idea of nurturing and present fatherhood. Their descriptions of what it means to be a father went beyond the typical "fathering" responsibilities of financial provision or disciplining the child (Petts, Shafer & Essig 2018). Instead, participants spoke of the importance of creating a "safe, nurturing environment," "being there emotionally," "being a good listener," and teaching children a variety of things from household chores to making good decisions and not being afraid to "show emotions." In answering questions on perceptions of the roles of fathers and mothers, the interviewed single fathers believed that being a "good" father was not substantially different from being a "good" mother. Both parents, in their opinion, were there to do the same job: care for their child(ren).

Participants, however, were aware of people's doubts about single fathers' ability to provide childcare. Interviewees spoke of how they were seen as "heroes" for doing this "great" and "noble" job of raising a child alone – a perception that was not welcomed. Single fathers in this study felt this image of a hero was premised upon the low expectations of men's capability for

caregiving. As Michael, a warehouse worker with full custody, puts it: "I think a lot of people when they find out that I'm a single dad, they're always surprised. And it frustrates me because there are very low expectations of single dads to be able to raise kids. Cause they're not expected to nurture, right? […] I think it's kinda a slap in the face, right?"

Participants' reflections that highlight men's involvement in caregiving are also seen in how they talked about children's extracurricular activities – such as ice-skating, hockey, karate, baseball, dance lessons – as well as their difficulties accommodating these activities into their work schedules. For example, Eric, an IT specialist with full custody, lamented the fact he could not get his children into extracurricular activities as often as he would like because of his work schedule. Another interviewee, Scott, also an IT specialist but with shared custody, noted how his time-use accommodated caregiving leaving little space for free time:

> 99% of my time I'm in the ice rink, I'm at the cheerleading gym […] and then on my downtime, like Wednesdays and Thursdays I'm traveling [for work]. On Saturday and Sunday, I either catch up on work I need to do or write reports for the next two weeks, so I can spend more time with her there. I don't have any freezers, like my own time.

Importantly, while single fathers' narratives did not fully embrace the definition of "concerted cultivation" of children, they were still marked by child-centeredness.

4.2 Single Fathers in White-Collar Jobs

Overall, 19 single fathers in this sample had a white-collar job. Fifteen of these 19 participants described their employers as "understanding" and "supportive" during and after this transition. Yet, there is variation among these men in terms of strategies that were successful in managing the conflict between work and caregiving. More successful strategies often involved a

combination of highly flexible work and an understanding supervisor. For example, I interviewed Jonathan, who worked in IT, as he was going through the divorce process and custody hearings. For Jonathan, this was a difficult period that required juggling multiple responsibilities and a hectic schedule in addition to the emotional stress of coping with separation and limited access to his children: Jonathan had 25 percent of custody. However, his employer was very accommodating and even converted Jonathan's position into a "full-time telecommuter" meaning that he could work flexibly, from home at all times. Similarly, Kyle, who worked in banking and had full custody, gained greater flexibility after his divorce: "Before the divorce, I'd be in the office almost every day. And after that, I just was able to talk to my manager and say, hey, there's stuff going on, I need more flexibility." After this conversation, Kyle was able to work from home almost full-time with occasional trips to work once or twice per week depending on the work project.

It is important to note, however, that even though ten white-collar single fathers in this subsample described having highly flexible jobs, working from home did not translate into less work effort. Getting work done remained important for these men, and particularly so for Daniel and Jonathan, who had less than 50 percent custody. As Daniel, who worked in architecture, explains: "I'm willing to put in super crazy hours at night and during the week to free up my time with her [his daughter]."

Having a supportive supervisor but little to no work flexibility was less successful in resolving work-family conflict because participants needed to maintain work availability during certain hours, which limited their care time. Living with extended family became a solution for three single fathers with full custody. For Charles and Steven, who both worked in the same shipping company, extended family living was a source of childcare help in addition to daycare

facilities and schools. Steven’s stepfather, for example, would take his children to school and back, while also preparing their meals in exchange for moderate pay. For Eric, who worked in IT, living with his mother meant he could work late on Wednesday and Friday nights to make up for the hours he missed due to caregiving.

For three men in this subsample, transitioning to single fatherhood produced a work-family conflict that could only be solved by finding a new job. Doug and David both lost their jobs because their work performance no longer satisfied their employers. Interestingly, both had shared custody, which was sufficient for the employer to negatively perceive their work productivity. As David, a salesman, explains:

> The loan officer job that I had, it was in my opinion that being physically present in the office was not important to loan origination. It was the employer’s opinion that it was. […] I think I was sending signals that I wasn’t committed a 100% to the job. So, he made a decision to let me go.

In another case, Scott, who had a job in IT and shared custody, was experiencing significant difficulties managing work-life conflict during divorce and custody proceedings. Scott did not receive much employer support in this process: “My management was very, very mad because they’re like look, we understand everyone has personal life, but it’s affecting your work, it is affecting your job. […] They got very upset.” As a result, Scott had to look for a job that accommodated his new single father status and was able to find one that provided the necessary control over his schedule to mitigate work-family conflict. In all three cases, single fathers experienced job instability as they had to look for new, flexible jobs, and suffered a subsequent loss of earnings. As Doug, a salesman, explains it, “To get that flexibility, you’re basically buying

it because you're taking a job that doesn't pay as much, doesn't have as much responsibility."

4.3 Single Fathers in Blue-Collar Jobs

In contrast to the majority of single fathers in white-collar jobs, the 11 men in this sample working in blue-collar jobs experienced fewer accommodations from their employers when it came to caregiving. The range of these men's jobs included electrical and machinery technicians, nursing, farming, truck driving, warehouse work, restaurant service, call center work, and gig work like Uber and delivering groceries. Almost everyone in this subsample was forthcoming about family responsibilities with their managers except for one warehouse worker. For him, managing schedules and requesting time off occurred through a phone app and he rarely had any contact with his direct supervisor.

Some participants in this subsample described their employers as "understanding" of their family situation. Yet, only Joseph who worked at a call center and had full custody, appeared to have had a genuinely understanding supervisor insofar as he could take time off work for childcare whenever needed. However, this understanding was driven by the fact there were other single parents in this job: "They [employers] have a bunch of other single parents there so they know... stuff happens."

For other participants, employers' understanding often came as a result of different strategies they had to use to relieve some of the work-family conflict. For instance, Brian, a busboy with shared custody, made sure he worked as many weekends as possible because "the [service] industry likes that," which in turn allowed him to request time off in case of a childcare emergency. To avoid any conflict with the management, Richard, a warehouse worker with full custody, consolidated his working hours into two back-to-back shifts. This way, he only had to arrange

childcare for his twins for two days out of the week. Similarly, both John, a nurse with full custody, and Greg, a technician with shared custody, felt they were "fortunate" with the jobs they had, but both had to come up with creative solutions when they had to cover night shifts instead of asking for time off. John would rent a motel room next to the hospital where he worked, and Greg would bring his daughter with him to work at night when she was younger.

Other fathers had to be firm with their managers in order to be able to attend to childcare emergencies or maintain some form of a work-family balance. This firmness, however, was generally not welcomed at work. As Jeremy, a technician with shared custody, explains:

> So I'm leaving work at 7 o'clock at night and I'm picking up my kids at 7:01. And very often, there's been mandatory overtime into our meetings. […] Different things where I've had to say: I can't. You're gonna have to make accommodations for me. I have my kids. And generally, they have. Reluctantly a lot of times […] Because they don't want to have to make accommodations for one person.

By emphasizing his caregiving responsibility, Jeremy's behavior signals to his employer that he is not an ideal worker, which in turn can create tension in their work relationship. For Andrew who worked in agriculture, the fact he had less than 50 percent of custody heightened the need to be firm with his supervisor: "I've told them several times that I don't milk Friday nights and I don't milk Sunday nights. Because those are the nights I have to pick up or return the boys to their mom […] I just told them, it's not happening."

For some single fathers in blue-collar jobs resolving work-family conflict required finding less demanding jobs that came with less pay. John, for example, had to eventually switch from the hospital to a clinic position that came with a better schedule but less pay. Todd, a truck driver with

full custody, ended up having to rent out his truck instead of driving it because he could not arrange stable, long-term childcare for his four children. Inability to resolve work-family conflict, for example, through the lack of a stable childcare arrangement, led to a loss of employment for Michael, a warehouse worker with full custody.

Two interviewees in this subsample also lived with extended family. Michael moved in with his parents to help with housing costs and childcare, which had become especially pertinent when he enrolled in a community college. John's father moved in to help with childcare but was later diagnosed with cancer thereby adding to John's caregiving responsibilities. John described this period as "difficult" not least because John's father and son did not have a good relationship: "They got into a lot of... um, heated battles. I'd come home from work and there'd be... tension."

Four participants were aware of their precarious work situation and shared the idea of gaining new skills in an effort to mitigate job instability and move up to skilled occupations with higher pay and greater work flexibility. As Kevin, a warehouse worker, puts it:

> I'm still looking for a job now because I can't let $14 an hour be the ceiling. It just doesn't work that way. It shouldn't. [chuckles] That isn't gonna make for a very great life for the babies anyway so I figure I gotta try to better myself at some point.
>
> Interviewer: So what sort of jobs have you been applying to?
>
> Kevin: Uh, see, uh, outside of that, I'm a felon as well. So, that's another barrier in itself. I've done just about everything there is to do... customer service, warehouse, telemarketing, call centers... right now, I'm in the process of trying to get out of using my brawn [chuckles]. I need to get a job where I use my brain.

As Kevin was figuring out ways to break through the barriers created by his criminal

record, lack of education, single fatherhood, and, very possibly, the fact that he is Black, other men were able to take measures to move towards higher-skilled jobs. For example, Brian, a busboy, had an aspiration of becoming a teacher and was enrolled in an undergraduate program at the time of the interview. Both Michael, who worked at a warehouse, and Ethan who made money doing gig work, took steps towards eventually completing graduate degree programs.

5. Discussion

Single fathers in this study leaned into their role as a caregiver. Their vision of parenting went beyond the expectations of a traditional father – the provider and the breadwinner – and encompassed emotional availability and physical presence in children's lives. Such vision signals that single fathers are like married fathers in terms of embracing the broader cultural changes that emphasize nurturance and greater father involvement (Marsiglio & Roy 2012).

Previous research, however, found class differences in fathering among married men (Clawson & Gerstel 2014; Shows & Gerstel 2009). Those with class advantage interpret the importance of "being there" through presence at children's public events like soccer games or trick-or-treating for Halloween (Shows & Gerstel 2009). Men at a class disadvantage are found to have greater engagement in routine caregiving and resisting demands of inflexible jobs (Clawson & Gerstel 2014; Shows & Gerstel 2009). For single fathers in this study, it appears that the absence of second parent binds men in their commitment to being a parent in all of this role's manifestations.

In this regard, single fathers in this sample – in both white- and blue-collar jobs – were similar to the low-income unwed fathers described by Edin and colleagues (2011) who reject the package deal that centers marriage as a pathway to maintain emotional closeness with children.

Study participants took “repackaging” the package deal a step further by embracing gender neutrality of parenthood. In contrast to the literature on men and fatherhood that frequently asks if men can “mother” (e.g., Risman 1986; Doucet 2018), single fathers in this study did not perceive themselves as “mothers” and did not see much difference between “mothering” and “fathering.” They perceived themselves as parents and comparing their parenting skills to those of mothers suggested their incompetence in raising children.

Single fathers’ construction of parenting was further framed by positive and negative cultural stereotypes about single fathers. Interviewees were aware of the extent to which single fathers are viewed more positively in terms of personal characteristics and receive more appreciation as a single parent compared to single mothers (Maier & McGeorge 2014), but were resistant to this appreciation. These men did not want to be seen as “heroes” for raising children alone. They also did not want to be seen as “deadbeat dads” and emphasized the importance of being involved in their children’s lives, which instead suggests stability and commitment (Coles 2009a).

Prioritizing the caregiver role compromises the extent to which single fathers can satisfy the expectations set by the ideal worker norm. Importantly, single fathers’ emphasis on caregiving did not vary across participants depending on their custody share. Having less than 50 percent custody heightened the importance of being an involved father for men in this study. They were willing to work long hours or confront their supervisors to protect the time they got to spend with their children.

This idea of protecting the care time that is subjugated to children’s needs and is in conflict with “clock time” that regulates work (Daly 2001) reverberates throughout single fathers’

narratives. And while these narratives do not frame caregiving in terms of investments into children's upbringing, they are still marked by child-centeredness. Single fathers in this study recognized how parenting time requires flexibility (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2013), and they sought this flexibility at work.

Work settings, however, vary in how they respond to men's primary caregiver role. Juxtaposing the experiences of single fathers in white- and blue-collar jobs highlights how the demands set by the ideal worker norm are similar across different workplace settings. But in the absence of universal policies that support working caregivers, reconciling the ideal worker norm with childcare becomes single fathers' individual responsibility.

In the context of a white-collar job, single fathers with supportive workplace environments and access to flexible policies were better positioned to resolve work-family conflict. It appears that these men were viewed positively by their employers. This finding is in line with previous research that has described how professional men's requests for flexible work due to childcare reasons are welcomed more compared to men who ask for such flexibility for other reasons (Munsch 2016). In this case, employers were willing to provide accommodations that allowed single fathers to attend to caregiving first and fulfill work duties afterwards. White-collar single fathers who did not have access to unlimited workplace flexibility and had to maintain physical presence in the office relied on extended family to substitute for childcare. This strategy allowed men to "pass" as ideal workers (Goffman 1963; Reid 2015) and alleviate work-family conflict.

Four men in white-collar jobs were not viewed positively by their previous employers and felt they had to "buy" workplace flexibility in exchange for potential career and income growth. Importantly, three of them had shared custody. It is possible that in some employers' perceptions

only full custody warrants flexibility that accommodates men's caregiving role. In the absence of full custody, employers can assume mothers' primary responsibility for caregiving and expect single fathers with shared custody to fulfill expectations set by the ideal worker norm.

Single fathers in blue-collar jobs experienced a more rigid work-family conflict given the little control they had over their schedules. Married couples in similar jobs typically choose to do tag-team parenting (Gerstel & Clawson 2018), but such an option is not available to single fathers. Even though most employers in these jobs did not seem to perceive men's primary caregiving role negatively, the nature of blue-collar work is often unresponsive to family demands (Shows & Gerstel 2009). One factor that facilitated the ease with which single fathers could request time off for childcare was employer's familiarity with single parenthood and its demands. In other cases, blue-collar single fathers had to be more creative and resourceful to resolve the work-family conflict.

A closer examination of such creativity and resourcefulness demonstrates a dual push/pull effect of caregiving on blue-collar men's approach to work-family conflict. It appears that caregiving responsibility can pull men away from work by limiting their availability. This is evident in single fathers' resistance to certain schedules and switching to less demanding jobs that come with lower pay but better hours. In other cases, the caregiving role can push men to come up with work-family solutions that do not violate work expectations as in the case of single fathers who kept children nearby during night shifts or worked the most demanding shifts to gain some flexibility later. This push effect is also found to transcend current job situations and motivate single fathers to re-tool for occupations that require different skills and come with higher pay and better job flexibility. For four blue-collar fathers in this sample who were essential workers, the

importance of job flexibility became particularly salient during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic as they had to arrange childcare at a time when daycare centers and schools were shut down.

This finding is in line with recent research that showed blue-collar workers' response to the changes brought by COVID-19 to the labor market. The pandemic accelerated some of the processes that had already been reshaping the future of work such as the use of automation and artificial intelligence in blue-collar jobs and the growth of remote working in white-collar jobs (Vyas 2022). In response to these changes, many blue-collar workers, motivated by potential pay increases and greater flexibility, used the pandemic to learn new skills and find better jobs (Oliver Wyman Forum 2022). However, relying on job transitions as a solution to work-family conflict carries dangerous implications for inequality as it widens the divide between those who can make a transition to "good" jobs, with high earnings, worker autonomy, and job security, and those who are stuck in "bad" jobs that are more vulnerable to precarious work and job insecurity (Kalleberg 2011).

Ultimately, single fathers' experiences presented in this study shed new light onto an old problem: how caregiving lacks compatibility with paid work and how working caregivers are left to come up with their own solutions to work-family conflict in the absence of family-friendly policies. The outcomes of these solutions vary within and across white- and blue-collar jobs, showing how single fathers are not a uniform category and how their experiences are influenced by social class. Instead of individualizing responsibility for reconciling work and care responsibilities that can facilitate blue-collar single fathers' greater job precarity, the solution to work-family conflict demands broader social, cultural, and institutional changes that elevate the

status of caregiving and a new policy approach that universally supports all working caregivers, irrespective of gender or job type.

CHAPTER III: A Different Kind of Penalty? Single Fathers, the Fathers' Rights Movement, and Implications for Gender Equality

Abstract

The Fathers' Rights Movement (FRM) has long been criticized for its antifeminist sentiment that depicts men and fathers as victims of a biased and unequal system of laws and practices that favors children's mothers. Drawing on ten in-depth interviews with single fathers recruited through the FRM, this paper first demonstrates how the movement's discourse is echoed in these interviews: that men are penalized in family courts because states are biased against men while existing laws privilege mothers. These findings are then contrasted with narratives of sixteen single fathers that were not FRM members. Such a comparison reveals that men's frustration with the existing system and practices in family courts is not strictly limited to the members of FRM. It also reveals men' experiences of unfair treatment when it comes to accessing public assistance programs as single fathers – an idea that escapes the FRM's sole focus on equal custody rights. Lastly, an alternative perception of joining the FRM as single fathers' help-seeking behavior is considered to demonstrate how the transition to single fatherhood carries significant well-being penalties for both FRM and non-FRM interview participants. Drawing on these findings, the paper concludes by discussing policy implications important for promoting gender equality while navigating clear of the FRM discourse.

1. Introduction

Gender scholars have theorized that gender equality can be achieved by encouraging men to undertake a larger share of primary caregiving or, as Nancy Fraser (1994, 611) puts it, "to induce men to become more like most women are now – that is, people who do primary care work."

Custodial single fathers, whose numbers have been increasing steadily since the 1960s, already participate significantly in caregiving. Custodial parents have become more likely to be fathers over the past 24 years increasing from 16 percent in 1994 to 20.1 percent in 2018 (Grall 2020). By 2017, three million children were reported to be living in father-only households (Allred 2019).

Such theoretical backdrop and demographic trends motivated this dissertation project that drew on a survey experiment with 1,000 U.S.-based hiring managers and in-depth interviews with 30 custodial single fathers to examine male primary caregivers' labor market experiences and outcomes. To put it differently, the study sought to understand what happens in their work and family lives when men embody what Fraser envisioned and "become more like most women are now" by engaging in a larger share of caregiving. As previous chapters demonstrate, study findings provide evidence of employment discrimination against single fathers. Primary caregiving responsibility jeopardizes men's employability, while lack of family-friendly policies individualizes single fathers' responsibility to mitigate the caregiver penalty and seek work-family reconciliation.

Interview data collection, however, revealed that some single fathers believed they experienced a different kind of penalty evident in their struggles to obtain child custody in family courts. This belief was particularly strong among single fathers I recruited through the Fathers' Rights Movement (FRM) Facebook page. Although the study's goal – to understand male primary caregivers' experiences in the labor market – was signaled in my recruitment materials and reiterated at the beginning of each interview, some divorced single fathers would steer the conversation towards custody law. "We live in a mother state," they would say, suggesting that

local family courts favor mothers. They asked how my research would support their push for equal custody law.

The FRM began to grow rapidly in the United States during the 1980s (Crowley 2009). At that time, the movement's advocates objected to the fact that sole child custody was almost universally granted to the mother. Fathers' involvement in childcare post-divorce was primarily financial. Resisting this pattern, the movement calls for 50/50 equally shared parenting reform.

This seemingly gender-neutral claim underlies the defensive posture the FRM assumes towards the feminist movement. According to the FRM activists, the system – the law, the courts, and professionals involved in assessing, mediating, and facilitating child custody arrangements – is governed by a feminist agenda and promotes the interests of women at the expense of men (Alschech & Saini 2019). The FRM groups typically portray men and fathers as victims, while children's mothers are often depicted as vindictive, dishonest, and willing to do anything to have full custody while receiving as much child support as possible (Alschech and Saini 2019).

Admittedly, I had little prior knowledge of or interest in the FRM prior to this study and posted my flyer in the FRM Facebook group to recruit participants without giving it much thought. While interviewing these men, I was taken aback not only by how comfortably they appropriated principles of formal gender equality to support their demands for equal custody, but also their desire to see my research broadcast these demands. I also morally struggled to reconcile single fathers' experiences of employment discrimination – that shed light on the devalued status of caregiving and carry important implications for promoting better policy support for working parents – with the antifeminist sentiment propagated by the FRM. Thus, I address these narratives

because I want to honor my interviewees' requests but do so on my own terms and in conversation with sociological research.

This chapter's unique contribution lies in answering three main research questions. First, why do the FRM single fathers believe they are being penalized while trying to secure a presence in their children's lives? Second, do FRM single fathers' beliefs reflect those of single fathers in general? Third, is there a way to advocate for single fathers' needs while bypassing the FRM rhetoric? In answering these questions, this paper offers an examination of single fathers' experiences that go beyond the FRM outlook and suggest policy implications important for promoting gender equality while navigating clear of the FRM discourse.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Fathers' Rights Movement and Gender Inequality

As a "discursive phenomenon" (Alschech & Saini 2019, 368), the FRM offers arguments and ideas on issues of social justice and the well-being of family members following separation. Above all, the FRM adopts principles of gender equality and gender neutrality (Crowley 2006) to criticize the existing law and policy system for discriminating against men and favoring women. The FRM discourse also criticizes the existing laws, policies, and practices for undermining fathers' parenting competency and depicting men as abusive and privileged (Collier 2014; Crowley 2008). As a result, according to the FRM, men become victims of a system that privileges mothers' rights and robs men of their right to be a father (Crowley 2006, 2008).

Members of the FRM further echo this rhetoric of discrimination and victimization. In his interviews with men from a fathers' rights activist organization, Bridges (2021) reveals how his study participants discursively frame men, and particularly White men, as stigmatized. These men

tend to understand White men as suffering from systematic discrimination: "stigmatized and injured by what they frame as a misperception that White men are a collectively privileged group" (Bridges 2021, 679). By doing so, these fathers' rights activists distance themselves from gender or racial privileges claiming instead that gender inequality benefits women and not men (Bridges 2021).

Throughout its history, the FRM significantly overlapped with the larger men's rights movement in terms of its antifeminist rhetoric (Flood 2012) and its composition of predominantly White, middle-class men (Crowley 2009; Kimmel 2013). Both the FRM and the men's rights movement sought to restore the crumbling image of a male breadwinner and family provider as a result of rising divorce rates (Dinner 2016). During the early stages of the movements' development in the 1960s, activists opposed welfare assistance for divorced mothers arguing that such support substituted for fathers and encouraged divorce (Dinner 2016, 95). Instead, they pushed for child support in exchange for greater protection of the father-child relationship upon divorce thereby privatizing responsibility for dependent children (Dinner 2016, 82). By negating public support, such strategy reinforced men's breadwinning role as well as mothers' dependency on ex-husbands.

At the same time, scholars who study the FRM also highlight more recent societal changes in the meaning and practice of fatherhood as well as family structures as additional underlying factors contributing to the major FRM discourse (Crowley 2009; Jordan 2014; Kimmel 2013). As Kimmel (2013, 168) describes:

> Men's anger that the amounts of love, care, and support (financial and emotional) they put into the family are unrecognized if the family dissolves is both real and true. The deck is

stacked – not because of some feminist-inspired judicial conspiracy […] – but because the courts have failed to take into account the enormous changes in men's lives as parents.

Indeed, while gender gaps in housework and childcare still exist (Pailhé, Solaz & Stanfors 2021; Sullivan 2018), contemporary fathers are arguably more involved in domestic unpaid labor compared to previous generations (Pew Research Center 2015; Carlson, Petts, & Pepin 2021). By joining the FRM, these fathers reject the father's role as a primarily financial one and insist on a gender-neutral conception of parenthood that equally distributes and values monetary and caregiving responsibilities (Alschech & Saini 2019). Thus, in a way, the FRM represents both a subversion of gender roles that expands fatherhood to include caregiving in addition to breadwinning and a conservative backlash against feminism (Dinner 2016).

2.2 An Alternative Perspective on the Fathers' Rights Movement

Scholars who study the FRM (e.g., Collier 2009, Crowley 2008, Flood 2012, Kimmel 2013) suggest moving beyond an adversarial perception of the movement and recognizing that many men join such groups in search of help. Separation and divorce represent highly traumatic experiences, and men often feel acute distress, guilt, and depression (Flood 2012; Kamp Dush 2013). However, conformity to traditional masculine gender norms often negatively affects men's access to mental health care and treatment uptake (Courtenay 2000; Seidler et al. 2016). Only a small percentage of male caregivers in general seek help that includes support groups, respite care, training, or information (Lopez-Anuarbe & Kohli 2019).

Instead, the painful experiences of divorce and separation as well as challenges with navigating family law and the court system produce a steady stream of men who can be recruited into fathers' rights groups (Flood 2012). Crowley (2008) finds that 49 percent of the fathers they

interviewed joined the fathers' rights groups to access support and resources for managing their divorce and custody cases. Another 17 percent of interviewees mentioned emotional support as the reason for joining such groups. The FRM is shown as both an advocacy group with an antifeminist agenda and a community-based network of peers providing support that is otherwise unavailable (Crowley 2008).

Another way of looking at the FRM is to consider what is missing in the movement's sole focus on equal custody shares. In its fixation on reforming custody laws, the FRM fails to consider and advocate for single fathers who were able to obtain custody and now require assistance to take care of their children. Research highlights single fathers' negative experiences with accessing social and public assistance services such as requiring single fathers to deal with more bureaucratic issues and verifications compared to women (Shorey & Pereira 2022). Social workers are also more likely to view single mothers as deserving more support than single fathers and often fail to understand single fathers' needs (Haworth 2019; Kulleberg 2005). Lastly, single fathers are often at risk of falling through the gaps in public safety nets since they typically have higher incomes than single mothers (Livingston 2013) but still urgently need help (Shorey & Pereira 2022). All in all, single mothers are more likely to participate in at least one public assistance program than single fathers: 48.5 percent compared to 30.5 percent, respectively (Grall 2020).

Some scholars name norms of masculinity that emphasize autonomy and attempts to avoid social stigma attached to using social services as reasons for single fathers' lack of access to public assistance programs (Coles 2009). At the same time, single fathers are found to claim they are willing to do anything to provide for their children, which includes turning to public assistance, but their knowledge of such programs is often limited (Esbensen 2014). Moreover, using public

assistance is correlated with reducing the daily life stressors of facing single parenthood alone (Maupin et al. 2010). Such evidence – that escapes the FRM rhetoric – highlights the importance of spreading awareness and encouraging uptake of public assistance programs among the single father population while at the same time tackling invisibility and marginalization of single fathers in social work.

3. Data and Methods

This chapter offers insight into other kinds of penalties single fathers experience in addition to employment discrimination using in-depth interviews conducted with 30 custodial single fathers. To recruit participants, I designed a flyer that invited single fathers to reach out for an in-person interview in exchange for a $30 Visa rewards card. The flyers were advertised on social media (including the FRM Facebook group among others like Divorced Men's Network and The Grief Project for widowed parents), meetup and support groups for single fathers, and local gyms and grocery stores. Existing participants were also asked to forward the study's details to other single fathers they knew. Of 30 total interviewees, 15 men had full custody of their child(ren). Three men had more than 50 percent custody and three men had less. The remaining nine men in the sample equally split custody with their child's mother. Nineteen men, including ten participants recruited through the FRM, arrived at single fatherhood through divorce or separation. Seven participants were never married, three were widowed, and one participant adopted his children. Most interviewees were White (20 men), but the sample included five Black participants, four Asian Americans, and one Native American man. The average participant age was 42 and the mean number of children was two. The average age of the youngest child was nine. Table 7 presents a full demographic profile of interview participants and a star (*) denotes participants

recruited through the FRM Facebook page. The final sample size was guided by the principle of data saturation (Roy et al. 2015).

Table 7. Full Demographic Profiles of Interviewees (in alphabetical order)

Name	*Race*	*Age*	*Number of Children*	*Type of Residential Custody*	*Type of Single Fatherhood*	*Annual Household Income*
Andrew*	White	37	3	< 50%	Divorced	$65,000
Ben*	White	35	2	50%	Separated	$73,000
Brandon	White	37	3	Full	Separated	$150,000
Brian	White	41	2	50%	Never married	$20,000
Charles	White	37	3	Full	Divorced	$37,000
Chris	White	32	2	Full	Adoptive	$95,000
Daniel	White	38	1	< 50%	Never married	$80,000
David*	White	44	3	50%	Divorced	$250,000
Doug*	White	56	3	> 50%	Divorced	$89,000
Ed	White	56	2	Full	Divorced	$80,000
Eric	Asian	43	2	Full	Divorced	$60,000
Ethan	Black	30	2	Full	Never married	$65,000
Gary	White	56	1	Full	Divorced	$180,000
Greg*	White	44	1	> 50%	Divorced	$70,000
James	Asian	45	1	50%	Divorced	$200,000
Jeffrey*	White	44	3	50%	Divorced	$175,000
Jeremy*	White	44	2	50%	Divorced	$52,000
John	Native American	62	2	Full	Widowed	$65,000
Jonathan*	White	38	2	< 50%	Separated	$80,000
Joseph*	White	36	1	Full	Divorced	$40,000
Kevin	Black	34	4	Full	Never married	$30,000
Kyle	Asian	31	2	Full	Divorced	$60,000
Michael	Black	33	1	Full	Divorced	$20,000
Nick	White	39	1	Full	Widowed	$56,000
Richard	Black	44	2	Full	Never married	$20,000
Scott*	White	49	1	50%	Divorced	$115,000
Sean	Black	44	3	50%	Divorced	$30,000
Steven	White	34	2	Full	Never married	$52,000
Todd	Asian	50	4	Full	Widowed	$36,000
Tom	White	45	1	50%	Divorced	$180,000

* denotes participants recruited through the FRM Facebook page. Interviews were conducted from October 2018 until May 2020.

Data collection took place between October 2018 and May 2020. In the beginning, interviews took place in person at locations convenient for the participant, usually a coffee shop, although on two occasions I conducted interviews at a person's home. With the onset of COVID-

19, interviews were conducted via Zoom. I always had my camera on during the interview and one participant chose to have their camera off, which may have influenced rapport. The interview duration ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours and lasted one hour on average. Interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission and transcribed by the author. Zoom interviews were also video recorded. The videos were deleted once audio files had been downloaded. Real names were replaced with pseudonyms and all identifying information was removed to protect participants' anonymity. Interview data were coded using NVivo 12 software.

The interviews were semi-structured and covered the following themes: transition to single fatherhood, work history, work-life interaction, perceptions of parenthood and single fatherhood. Without any prompts or questions on my end, interviews with the FRM single fathers also focused on participants' experiences in family courts and their opinions on custody law.

These participants' willingness to discuss issues related to the FRM is peculiar given my gender identity. On one hand, it is very possible the opinions disclosed were tamed to avoid offending me or to appeal to my role as a researcher. On the other hand, participants chose to discuss their experience of divorce and custody battles and took time to explain their perspective without assuming my knowledge of this issue. On a personal level, I struggled emotionally and mentally to listen to lengthy ranting commentaries on the unfairness of custody law, the amount or scale of child support, and the lack of accountability over how the money was spent by the ex-partner. Having conducted ten, almost back-to-back interviews that conveyed similar messages, I deliberately stopped scheduling meetings with the FRM single fathers and sought to collect interview data that were more focused on single fathers' work and family experiences as this was the intended focus of my project.

I returned to these interviews during data analysis and coding. This stage followed LaRossa's (2005) discussion of qualitative methods and began with open inductive coding using repeated readings and breaking down the interview data into distinct codes. Here, the goal was to capture the FRM single fathers' experiences, emotions, and perceptions of divorce and custody, their attitudes towards child support, and the nature of their relationships with the child(ren)'s mothers. Axial coding involved identifying relationships between emerging codes (LaRossa 2005), for example, examining whether having a difficult coparenting relationship with an ex-spouse was a factor that contributes to feelings of discrimination in family courts.

The next stage of analysis focused on single fathers recruited outside of the FRM Facebook group by posting flyers in different social media groups and asking for referrals through my personal network. Four participants who were widowed or adopted their children were excluded from the data analysis for the purposes of this chapter since they did not go through divorce or separation from children's mothers. Instead, this subsample includes single fathers who are divorced, separated, or never married and whose situation most closely resembles the FRM single fathers. During this stage the goal was to identify how the narratives shared by non-FRM single fathers compared to the FRM single fathers with regard to custody, child support, and child(ren)'s mothers. Given that the interview protocol did not include questions pertaining to these themes, not every interview contained relevant data as non-FRM single fathers were less likely to talk about custody without any prompts by me. Nonetheless, these interviews were carefully read and re-read to identify participants' feelings of being penalized due to their gender and/or single father status that did not readily fall into existing codes related to custody or child support.

Lastly, literature on men's – particularly divorced men – well-being (Courtenay 2000; Flood 2012; Kamp Dush 2013; Seidler et al. 2016) informed a conceptual framework for a separate round of coding. This stage of analysis was guided by three main sensitizing concepts (Glaser 1978; Bowen 2006): well-being, social support, and social isolation, to explore the impact of transitioning to single parenthood on single fathers' well-being. This framework informed the creation of the first set of codes that was then expanded to identify participants' feelings of loneliness and isolation as a well-being penalty since the transition to single fatherhood.

4. Results

4.1 Why Do the FRM Single Fathers Feel Like They Are Being Penalized?

The findings presented in this subsection come from ten single fathers recruited through the FRM Facebook page. In addition to labor market experiences, these interviews focused on a different kind of penalty they believed they had experienced: unfair custody share determinations and the size of child support awarded to their ex-partners.

One of the core themes I found in the FRM single fathers' narratives is men's unwillingness to be reduced to a financial form of childcare. As Scott, a divorced father with shared custody puts it: "I'm not a money source. I'm not a source of income. I don't want to be any of that stuff. I want to just be a dad." According to these men's experiences, they frequently faced a significant pushback from their former spouses when it came to increasing men's parenting time because it would reduce the amount of child support. For example, in another shared custody situation, when Jonathan's wife got a full-time job and had to figure out a childcare arrangement, she resisted the idea of Jonathan caring for their daughters even though he had a flexible work arrangement and could work from home. When Jonathan turned to the judge for a solution, he was only awarded

one day a week for childcare. Jonathan also questions the lack of accountability over how his ex-wife spent child support: “I have no oversight of how that money is spent. It’s all discretionary. You just do what the court tells you to do, which is just pay the money. And rely on your spouse to do what she’s supposed to do with that money.”

This unwillingness to perform a primarily financial parenting role is accompanied by the FRM single fathers’ difficult relationship with child(ren)’s mothers. Out of ten men in this subsample, only one person – Ben, a separated father with shared custody – describes his relationship with ex-spouse as functioning:

> We don’t have a great relationship I guess, I don’t really understand why she left, so there’s some tension there but we get along okay, we hang out every Sunday. […] Do something all together [with children]. So, we’re able to be together without fighting [chuckles] so that’s good. Definitely helps.

Other participants, however, struggle to create a working relationship with child(ren)’s mothers. In these interviews, former partners are described as “controlling” and “difficult,” while the divorce process is described as “ugly.” One single father bluntly stated, “we hate each other” (Jeffrey, divorced, shared custody).

It is entirely possible these negative feelings feed into the FRM single fathers’ perception of experiencing unfairness and gender bias in the family justice system. According to Andrew, a divorced father with shared custody, “with a ‘mother state’ that we live in, it’s very difficult to beat the court system in this state, even as a good father with no bad track record.” The idea of having to prove themselves to be a “good father” was widely shared across divorced and separated fathers in this study. For these men, signs of a “bad father” included criminal records, drug abuse,

and alcoholism. In the absence of such signs, study participants struggled to understand the legal challenges they had to go through in order to gain equal custody:

> If I didn't show up, if I had felonies or misdemeanors, if I had issues with drugs and I had other things going on. That's a basis for 25%. I've gotten none of that going on. I'm an upstanding member in my society. I go to church. I have a good job. I've shown progress over the last five years of basically quadrupling my income, quadrupling my livelihood. These are all signs that, that I'm doing good in society, that I'm successful quote unquote, right? When you're showing that, should you be reduced to 25%? (Jonathan, separated, shared custody).

One of the explanations put forward by single fathers for unfair treatment by courts is the bad reputation or "bad rap" of "deadbeat dads." As Greg, a never married father with shared custody, describes it, "They are out there, but just like everything else, there's always a few bad apples that ruin the whole bunch." As a result of this bad reputation, single fathers believe they must do more to prove their parenting capabilities. "This is the mother state," Joseph, a divorced father with full custody, says, "We have to jump through more hoops and all that. It's a double standard. Because everybody's like, the kids need moms, but hold on, nobody ever saying when a single woman raises kids, oh, kids need dads." According to men in this study, such a double standard carries negative consequences for children: "kids without fathers are more likely to end up in prison, abuse alcohol and drugs, drop out of high school" (Doug, divorced, shared custody).

Some scholars suggest moving beyond the discourse of the fathers' rights movement and situating single fathers' claims within a broader and more complex renegotiation of gender relations in society and particularly the changing perceptions of the father's role in the family.

These changes in men's lives as parents are often referred to as the "new fatherhood" ideal that emphasizes an expectation that men should be highly involved in parenting and domestic labor and develop a nurturing and emotional bond with a child (Edin & Nelson 2013; Banchefsky & Park 2016). Indeed, the way single fathers in this study – not just the FRM single fathers – perceived parenting embraces the "new fatherhood" ideal. Their descriptions of what it means to be a father went beyond the typical "fathering" responsibilities of financial provision or disciplining the child (Petts, Shafer & Essig 2018). Instead, participants spoke of the importance of creating a "safe, nurturing environment," "being there emotionally," "being a good listener," and teaching children a variety of things from household chores to making good decisions and not being afraid to "show emotions" (Iztayeva 2022).

Thus, it seems that what lies behind men's claim for equal custody is their belief that they are good parents and deserve the right to equally parent their children. At the same time, these men believe they experience unfair penalties in family courts because of gender based discrimination that favors mothers as well as a negative reputation created by "deadbeat dads" that requires men to put in additional effort to prove their parenting capabilities and obtain some form of child custody.

4.2 Are the FRM Single Fathers' Perceptions of Penalties Unique?

The FRM single fathers' narratives presented above highlight three key themes: difficult relationships with children's mothers, experiences of gender-based discrimination in family courts, and unwillingness to be reduced to financial parenting. A question arises, then: how do these themes compare to the interviews with non-FRM single fathers? This subsample includes 16

interview participants who are divorced, separated or never married with an emphasis on five single fathers with shared custody whose situation most closely resembles the FRM single fathers.

What immediately stands out in this comparison is that the majority of non-FRM fathers – 12 out of 17 – describe their relationship with children's mothers as generally positive, although it required time and effort to arrive to this point. For example, Brian, a never married father with shared custody, felt his relationship with his ex-partner became "pretty easy" after separation once they stopped arguing and managed to stay on the same page regarding house rules to maintain consistency for their daughters. Another participant, James, a divorced father with shared custody, experienced his ex-wife's "controlling" behavior but managed it by staying "disciplined" and keeping their communication "very business." He adds, "In the beginning, she would send me emails with rules, but I never responded. If it's nothing to do with something that has to be taken care of, I didn't respond, I kept emotion out of it. Eventually it stopped, she just gave up because it didn't work."

One participant, Sean, a divorced father with shared custody, however, describes his relationship with his children's mother as frustrating:

> We've never been on the same page. I don't think we share the same folder, let alone page. […] I'm pretty much a yes man. Anything that she says goes, pretty much, I'm reduced to just like a big brother type role. I have very little say on how that works. I just have to put up with it and it's frustrating, very frustrating when you get reduced to that.

What helps Sean navigate this frustrating relationship is his experience with a program that assists fathers in supporting their children emotionally and financially by offering career development services and practical parenting skills and support. While the program Sean attended

is available to men at no cost, parenting consultation in general can be expensive. The cost of parenting counseling may range from $100 to $250 per hour (Guarnotta 2022). Health insurance may cover some of the cost if one of the parents is diagnosed with a mental health condition, but if counseling is ordered by a judge, then it cannot be covered by health insurance (Guarnotta 2022).

Like the FRM single fathers, Sean also expresses a negative attitude towards child support that, in his opinion, intends to "replace a father with a paycheck." He further elaborates that doing so signals that "a father is not as important as a mom," a signal that is perpetuated throughout the entire process of custody hearings: "It shows that our role is not as significant as a mom. And that's not true."

According to James, a single father's lack of custody can turn him into a "Disneyland dad" who satisfies his child's every wish "because he has so little time." "And that's not good," he adds, "because it's important to not be a Disneyland dad but rather make sure the kid's best interest. And sometimes you have to do things that don't make you happy and don't make the kid happy, but it's for the good of the kid. Things like discipline, doing chores, and not just everything fun."

Three interviews with non-FRM single fathers with full custody – Kevin, Charles, and Richard – revealed these men's experiences of unfair treatment that went beyond divorce hearings but remained within the boundaries of family support policy system. For example, Kevin spoke of what he had to go through in order to prove his parenting abilities and obtain full custody of his two children: "I had to deal with child protection, I had to go and do parenting classes and anger management issues, treatment, all types of things just to make sure that they knew that I was okay to take care of my own kids."

Charles and Richard both shared their struggles to get support as single fathers, for

example, to qualify for daycare assistance, which requires "jumping through a lot of hoops" as Richard puts it. In Charles's opinion: "I feel like I'm treated differently not by regular people, but I'm treated differently by programs that support single mothers, but you get turned away as a single father because they just immediately assume that the mother is in care of the children."

Thus, in some ways, these narratives overlap with themes from the FRM single fathers' interviews, namely, the importance of having child custody and the way father's role can be presented as insignificant in family courts compared to mother's role in children's lives. These findings also reveal additional sources of unfair treatment that single fathers may experience particularly with regard to obtaining public support that, in interviewees' opinion, are more readily available to single mothers. What further unites the FRM and non-FRM single fathers is the penalties divorce and separation carry for men's well-being. The following subsection elaborates on this idea in more detail.

4.3 Does Transitioning to Single Fatherhood Impact Men's Well-Being?

For many participants, the transition to single fatherhood – particularly through a divorce – presented an emotional shock in and of itself. As Gary, one of the divorced non-FRM interviewees with full custody, puts it:

> What people don't understand about divorce is that it's an identity crisis on steroids. When you think of somebody having an identity crisis at normal age, they still have their support network around them, they still have the marriage, they still have the partner, the kids. They still have the circle of friends around. You still associate yourself as a husband, as a father, as a worker. But when you get divorced, that gets shattered, that goes away. You're no longer a husband. You're no longer, what many people feel is that you're no longer a

> parent. Because parenting used to be that "I live with my kids 100% of the time." Or parenting didn't depend on the piece of paper that told you what you could and couldn't do. The divorced father is in a very perplexing situation that one day I'm considered to be a competent parent, I live with my kids 100% of the time. The next day because of outside influences, I'm considered to be less of a parent and need to have controls around when I see my kids and when I don't. And I think that's very hard for a lot of people.

This powerful narrative depicts how separation and divorce can be traumatic experiences, a finding that is echoed in other interviews. For example, Jonathan, a separated FRM single father with shared custody, describes divorce as "paralyzing" and "numbing," while at the same time requiring enormous effort to maintain a presence in children's lives amidst "legal battles" and navigating a "broken relationship" with an ex-spouse.

Another participant, Ben, also a separated FRM single father with shared custody, talked about feelings of loneliness or isolation because he lost many friendships that were part of the family circle. He also shared the impression that ex-wives were typically more successful in establishing closer friendships:

> Since the separation [I] felt lonely or isolated, because most of my friends were joined family friends… Well, I have professional relationships at work [but] I lost a lot of those friendships as far as people I hang out with. It feels like [ex-wife] has a lot more support from friends and people that she knows. And that she's able to make friendships like closer personal friendships with people she works with whereas myself and I think men in general seem not to feel comfortable getting that close personal relationship to talk about things. At least here, that's the way it feels.

In addition to sharing this feeling of losing social networks that existed before transition to single fatherhood, interview participants also highlighted the importance of creating social networks that included other single fathers. Eric, a divorced non-FRM father with full custody, for instance, expressed his feeling of loneliness because there were not any single fathers in his immediate circle:

> Right now, I don't know how to make friends with other single fathers or even other parents because for me as a single parent, it's awkward spending time with married parents. […] So ever since 2014 [since becoming a single father], I've had trouble finding some kind of a support group or some kind of other group where there are other people in the same situation.

At the same time, participants who managed to create such a network reported sharing a "common bond," not feeling "ostracized," having an outlet to vent and complain, and feeling more supported overall or as Brian, a never married non-FRM single father with shared custody, explains it: "It does help when you can talk to people that can relate to the situation. Especially when the times are difficult. Somebody who can understand or has been through it."

Such narratives underscore the idea that single fathers seek social support and align with the alternative perception of the FRM: a source of help and social support (Collier 2009; Crowley 2008; Flood 2012; Kimmel 2013). In the absence of alternative resources, the FRM and similar groups become the only type of organized community capable of providing such a support.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Gender scholars have long highlighted the importance of including men in gender equality work (Connell 2003; hooks 1984). As Connell (2003, 3) notes, "Men and boys are *unavoidably*

involved in gender issues." Despite the significant progress made towards gender equality since the 1960s, men's lack of participation in household labor and caregiving stalled the gender revolution as the bulk of unpaid domestic and care work remains performed mostly by women in addition to their increased labor market participation (England 2010). It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that at least a partial answer to achieving gender equality lies in men's involvement in household labor and caregiving.

In a way, by pursuing legislative protection for the father-child relationship, the FRM transformed middle-class divorced fathers into caregivers and broadened the range of identities available to them "from authoritarian patriarchs, to loving fathers, to diaper-toting daddies" (Dinner 2016, 86). Indeed, narratives expressed by single fathers in this study highlight how these men embrace their caregiving role and believe they deserve equal custody shares because they are good parents.

Ironically, the idea of involved fatherhood and caregiving responsibilities that come with it are often ignored by men's rights activists (Kimmel 2013). The FRM in the 1980s and beyond continued to debate the extent to which these new constructions of fatherhood should transform masculinity (Dinner 2016). Instead, research describes the fathers' rights movement as emphasizing formal equality in custody, and reestablishing paternal authority and fathers' decision-making power in children's and ex-partners' lives (Alschech & Saini 2019; Flood 2012).

Moreover, the reputation surrounding men's and fathers' rights activists – an organized backlash to feminism (Flood 2012) – makes it increasingly difficult to celebrate men's greater involvement in caregiving. The themes raised by the FRM single fathers in this study echo the discourse propagated by the movement: that men are penalized in family courts because states are

biased against men while existing laws privilege mothers (Crowley 2008; Flood 2012). Such a discourse has resulted in building an "empathy wall" (Hochschild 2016) that obscures single fathers' struggles and has deemed the FRM as an enemy and a threat to the feminist cause (Alschech & Saini 2019).

Interestingly, the idea of privileging mothers alongside the described dangers of reducing men's parenting rights to a monetary obligation in the form of child support and the harms that fatherlessness brings to children (Bertoia & Drakich 1993; Kimmel 2013) was also reflected in the non-FRM single fathers' narratives. This finding highlights that men's frustration with the existing system and practices in family courts is not strictly limited to the members of FRM. It also shows why the FRM can be appealing to single fathers as it vocalizes their concerns and takes steps towards achieving equal custody.

Simply granting equal custody rights, however, overlooks the broader gender structure in which this claim is being made. In Risman's (2018) theorization, the idea of gender as a social structure encompasses individual, interactional, and macro levels of analysis as well as material and cultural processes that occur at each level. And when we look at gender inequality in all its complexity – not just family law – while women had greatly advanced in labor force participation and education, it is evident that women still struggle to access resources, power, and privilege that have long been available to men. For example, recent estimates found a gender pay gap of about 15 percent (Meara, Pastore, & Webster 2020). Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions in the labor market and hold only 15 percent of executive positions and 17 percent of board seats (Wynn & Correll 2018). On a macro level, U.S. family policies reinforce the existing gender structure by continuing to assume a married male breadwinner/female caregiver family

model (Randles 2018). Such an assumption reproduces gender inequality as women's work remains devalued as evident through the persistence of motherhood penalties (Budig, Misra & Boeckmann 2016; England et al. 2016; Ishizuka 2021).

Moving towards formal equality in granting custody obscures this underlying gender inequality. Some feminist scholars contend that because women and men occupy different social locations that lead to gender differences in parenting, these power differences need to be recognized in post-divorce parenting arrangements (Boyd 2012). Formal joint custody may trap women in abusive relationships, forcing them to maintain contact with the child's father after separation (Sheeny & Boyd 2020). By prioritizing formal principles of equality, the fathers' rights movement overlooks involved parenting and the well-being of women and children (Flood 2012).

It seems reasonable to suggest that arriving at formal equal custody can only be productive and beneficial to all parties involved – parents and children – when gender equality is achieved elsewhere, too. Expanding public support for raising children to negate the "dependency myth" – the idea that individuals do not need government or social support to fulfill care responsibilities (Fineman 2004) – promoted by the FRM plays an important part in achieving this equality (Dinner 2016). Among other things, doing so involves providing equal access to childcare facilities, offering adequate parental leaves, and cash transfers to families with children (Shafer 2021).

It is also equally important to promote greater inclusion of single fathers in public assistance programs. Findings from interviews with non-FRM single fathers are consistent with previous studies that show how single fathers struggle to access public services (Shorey & Pereira 2022). This struggle may arise in part from single fathers' emphasis on their autonomous provider role (Coles 2009), but also from social workers' discriminatory attitudes towards single fathers

who are seen as less deserving of help compared to single mothers (Haworth 2019). Research also highlights potential benefits such services carry for single parents such as alleviating daily life stressors of raising children alone (Maupin et al. 2010). It is therefore important to increase awareness and uptake of public assistance programs among single fathers while also providing training for social workers to promote inclusivity of all parents irrespective of gender.

Another theme revealed by the interview findings – single fathers' feelings of isolation and loneliness since the transition to single parenthood – aligns with research that suggests single fathers join fathers' rights groups to seek help (Collier 2009; Crowley 2008; Flood 2012; Kimmel 2013). Study participants, recruited through and outside of the FRM, repeatedly mentioned their feelings of loneliness and isolation, and struggles they experienced in creating social support networks that also included other single fathers. And while it may be difficult to change the tone and discourse of the FRM, it is possible to offer these men alternative forms of support.

Flood (2012) identifies three types of support that separated fathers need: healing from the negative effects of separation and divorce; maintaining relationships with their children; and managing a positive relationship with children's mothers. Interview findings show that the latter can be achieved through programs that facilitate coparenting with the help of parenting consultants and/or family therapy sessions. Such solutions, however, can be expensive and require policy measures that can ensure their affordability, particularly for low-income single parents.

It is important to not only create more sources of support for single fathers, but also ensure men's consistent use of forms of such social support. Public campaigns like "HeadsUpGuys" (Ogrodniczuk, Oliffe, & Beharry 2018) and "Real Men, Real Depression" (Rochlen, Whilde, & Hoyer 2005) have been found to increase male uptake of psychological treatment (Seidler et al.

2018). Designing similar public campaigns that target single fathers can provide alternatives to and potentially reduce recruitment of separated fathers into the fathers' rights movement and its us-versus-them posture (Flood 2012).

The connection of the FRM to a broader picture of gender equality requires further research. So far, most studies have focused on the movement alone or as part of larger men's rights, anti-feminist discourse and activism. The present study is also limited in its focus on heterosexual, cisgender single fathers. Yet, there are other organizations and groups that promote fathers' rights and involved fatherhood among racial and sexual minorities and do so in profeminist ways (Alschech & Saini 2019). An example of such groups is the non-profit "Fathers Incorporated," which advocates for responsible fatherhood among Black fathers (Braswell, Wilbon, & Bouchet 2020). Further research that includes different organizations and demographic subgroups of the single father population will yield a better understanding of single fathers' help-seeking behavior and their needs.

In conclusion, this chapter's main contribution lies in revealing a pathway that steers clear of the FRM rhetoric to promote gender equality. By contrasting the FRM single fathers' perceptions of being penalized in terms of child custody shares with broader patterns of gender inequality, the study highlights the importance of introducing a broad range of family-friendly policies that expand public support for families and de-privatize children's upbringing. The study also demonstrates how single fathers' well-being can deteriorate after transitioning to single parenthood, which may act as a catalyst that propels them to join the FRM. These findings emphasize the urgent necessity of providing single fathers with alternative forms of social support. The suggested efforts allow for the inclusion of single fathers' experiences into conversations

around promoting gender equality in the labor market and beyond while bypassing the harmful rhetoric put forward by the FRM.

CONCLUSION

In many ways, single fathers' experiences with employment discrimination tell a story of how little value society attaches to unpaid care work. Despite the significant progress made towards gender equality, caregiving is still seen as a private family matter as American society centers and values autonomy of individuals and families (Fineman 2004). As a result, the burdens of care work are assigned to families, not public institutions, and more so assigned to women, not men. This in turn creates a "second shift" for working mothers (Hochschild & Machung 1989) and fuels hiring bias against them in the labor market (Correll et al. 2007).

My dissertation project was designed to examine what happens when the bulk of caregiving is assigned to working men. Using a survey experiment and in-depth interviews, the dissertation de-coupled gendered expectations bound with breadwinning and caregiving and focused on single fathers' experiences in the labor market.

The findings from this study reveal how single fathers with primary caregiving responsibility can fall prey to job-related penalties. The results from the survey experiment suggest that single fathers' lower perceived commitment, reliability, job deservingness, and promotability were reasons for hiring managers' lower likelihood of recommending these men for hire. It appears that hiring managers interpret men's primary caregiving responsibility as devotion to family, not work.

This interpretation coincides with single fathers' attitudes about work and family. Throughout their interviews, single fathers maintained that their children came first, and they sought ways to ensure their work accommodated caregiving demands. Some participants in high-skill jobs were able to secure flexible work arrangements in their current jobs. Other single fathers,

and particularly those in low-skill or blue-collar jobs, often had to look for new jobs that came with better schedules. Research suggests that men who request flexible work for childcare related reasons are perceived more positively than women who make similar requests or men whose reasons do not relate to childcare (Munsch 2016). Yet, the interview findings demonstrate that such flexibility can be costly as many participants experienced a loss of income and bleak career prospects.

Together, these main research findings challenge the status characteristic theory, which is frequently invoked in the literature to explain the motherhood penalty and the fatherhood bonus. The theory argues that individual characteristics (e.g., gender, race) become status characteristics that carry different levels of social worthiness (Berger et al. 1977; Correll & Ridgeway 2003). The foundational work of status characteristic theory conceptualized gender as a master status characteristic that carried a stable and universal effect across different social situations and contexts (Wagner & Berger 1997). In a work setting, male gender is traditionally assigned a higher status. My dissertation questions this stability and invites scholars to study the effect of gender on employment discrimination in relation to other status characteristics. I provide evidence that employment discrimination changes at the intersection of gender, marital status, and parental status. The status of a male primary caregiver creates a labor market disadvantage for single fathers similar to a motherhood penalty. Finding evidence of penalties against custodial single fathers in white-collar jobs in the survey experiment and in blue-collar jobs via the in-depth interviews gives enough reason to expect seeing this kind of penalty in a broad range of jobs.

Drawing on this conclusion, I make the case for the need to rethink the motherhood penalty and caregiving in general as gender neutral. My dissertation demonstrates that it is both women

and men who suffer from employment discrimination due to their primary caregiving responsibility. Failing to recognize this and continuing to use gender-specific terminology that emphasizes mothering – like "motherhood penalty" – is problematic. Such language reinforces the idea of mothers' essential capacity and responsibility for caregiving. If this idea persists, the caregiver status will remain devalued as "women's work" and gender equality will not be attained. Instead, I suggest we think of the motherhood penalty as a caregiver penalty that applies to anyone who assumes the primary caregiving responsibility.

Ultimately, what single fathers' experiences illustrate is that inducing men to become more like women in terms of caregiving in a policy and labor market context that does not support care work leads them to suffer job penalties that can be detrimental for families' well-being (Folbre 2008). At the same time, it is likely that the rising number of male primary caregivers can bring more attention and visibility to the work-family conflict many parents experience. Single fathers' disadvantaged position in the labor market further underscores the urgent need for family-friendly policies. Providing equal access to childcare facilities, offering adequate parental leaves, and reorganizing working life to eliminate ideal work norms and behaviors will lead to more thoughtful and sustainable work-family reconciliation (Haas and Hwang 2019; Kaufman and Petts 2020). Adequate policy support alongside an increasing number of men resisting intensive work demands have great potential to deconstruct the opposition between breadwinning and caregiving (Fraser 1994), while ensuring a comfortable fit between breadwinning and caregiving is one of the keys to achieving gender equality.

However, recognizing single fathers' struggles in the labor market can be challenging given the reputation surround the Fathers' Rights Movement (FRM). The FRM discourse that victimizes

men and vilifies women overshadows the similar work-family challenges all primary caregivers experience and deems the FRM as an enemy and a threat to the feminist cause (Alschech and Saini 2019).

The final chapter of this dissertation recognizes this tension. In doing so, the chapter shows men's frustration with the existing system and practices in family courts is not strictly limited to the members of FRM. Men's lives as fathers have undergone significant societal and cultural changes that heightened the expectation of men's involvement in emotional caregiving in addition to traditional financial provision (Townsend 2002; Marsiglio & Roy 2012). Studies – including this dissertation – show that even though this expectation often centers the image of a successful, married residential father, single, poor and/or working-class fathers also embrace these middle-class ideals of "new fatherhood" that emphasizes emotional aspects of parenting (Edin & Nelson 2013; Randles 2018). Embracing and investing in emotional closeness with children fuels single fathers' discontent – in and out of the FRM – with the way family courts treat them as second-rate parents (Kimmel 2013).

At the same time, the chapter recognizes that simply replacing the backdrop of the fathers' rights movement with another that proclaims that fathers are good parents overlooks the broader gender structure in which this claim is being made. Moving towards formal equality in granting custody requires achieving gender equality in other spaces, too. The chapter outlines policy paths that promote gender equality including improving public and social support available to single fathers while navigating clear of the harmful FRM rhetoric.

In addition to these important theoretical and empirical contributions, the dissertation reveals paths for further research. One such path leads to focusing more on the low-wage labor

market. As I mentioned in the second empirical chapter, COVID-19 accelerated some of the processes that were already reshaping the future of low-wage work, namely the use of automation and artificial intelligence. Many companies have relied on AI and automation to conduct business during the pandemic. This has been particularly evident in warehouse and restaurant industries. Restaurants are now encouraging customers to order by app and kiosk, and the use of "ghost kitchens," which restaurant chains share to make meals ordered digitally for delivery, rapidly increased during the pandemic. Retailers like Amazon, Walmart, and Target have enlisted industrial robots to pick, sort, and track merchandise in their warehouses to manage the surge in e-commerce demand. Experts predict that nearly all job growth may occur in high-wage jobs, while, for the first time, the share of employment in low-wage jobs may decline (Lund et al. 2021). Given the trends accelerated by COVID-19, it is estimated that low-wage workers in declining occupations may need to re-tool for occupations in higher wage brackets that require different skills. Addressing this topic can benefit from conducting an audit study of the low-wage labor market in the U.S. as well as in-depth interviews with parents currently employed in service and warehouse jobs.

Another avenue for research may offer an in-depth examination of how the caregiver penalty single fathers experience in high-skill jobs changes alongside racial inequality. For example, such a project may consider examining whether the intensity of the caregiver penalty changes for Black single fathers in comparison to White single fathers. It may also focus more on this dissertation's finding of hiring preference for single mothers and explore variations within this preference in interaction with race.

To conclude, this dissertation project, first, has demonstrated how single fathers experience employment discrimination in high-status jobs because they are perceived as less committed, reliable, and capable candidates compared to single mothers and married fathers. Second, it has revealed how single fathers, particularly those with blue-collar jobs, struggle to reconcile their work with caregiving demands and must demonstrate resilience and creativity to find this reconciliation. And third, this dissertation has shown that single fathers experience challenges not only in the labor market, but also in the family law and public support system that often treats them like secondary, less capable, and less important parents. Understanding single fathers' experiences in and out of the labor market opens new pathways to pursue better support for caregivers and allow them to create a more thoughtful and sustainable work-family reconciliation. This, I argue, is key to advancing the stalled gender revolution.

References

Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." *Gender and Society* 4 (2): 139–58.

Acker, Joan. 2011. "Theorizing Gender, Race, and Class in Organizations." In *Handbook of Gender, Work and Organization*, edited by Emma Jeanes and David Knights, 65–80. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley.

Allred, Colette. 2019. "Resident Single Parents: Mothers & Fathers." *Family Profiles*, FP-19-21. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

Alon Titan, Matthias Doepke, Jane Olmstead-Rumsey & Michele Tertilt. 2020. "This Time It's Different: The Role of Women's Employment in a Pandemic Recession." *NBER Working Paper Series*. Working Paper 27660. Accessed September 12, 2020. http://www.nber.org/papers/w27660

Alschech, Jonathan, and Michael Saini. 2019. ""Fathers' Rights" Activism, Discourse, Groups and Impacts: Findings from a Scoping Review of the Literature." *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* 60 (5): 362–88.

Aumann, K., Galinsky, E., & Matos, K. (2011). *The New Male Mystique*. National Study of the Changing Workforce. Families and Work Institute.

Banchefsky, Sarah, and Bernadette Park. 2016. "The 'New Father': Dynamic Stereotypes of Fathers." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 17 (1): 103–7.

Bear, Julia B., and Peter Glick. 2017. "Breadwinner Bonus and Caregiver Penalty in Workplace Rewards for Men and Women." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 8 (7): 780–88.

Becker, Gary S. 1985. "Human Capital, Effort and the Sexual Division of Labor." *Journal of Labor Economics*. 3 (1): S33–58.

Berger, Joseph, M., Hamit Fisek, Robert Z. Norman, and Morris Zelditch, Jr. 1977. *Status Characteristics and Social Interaction: An Expectation-States Approach.* New York: Elsevier.

Bertoia, Carl, and Janice Drakich. 1993. "The Fathers' Rights Movement: Contradictions in Rhetoric and Practice." *Journal of Family Issues* 14(4): 592-615.

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review* 94(4):991-1013

Bianchi, Suzanne M., Liana C. Sayer, Melissa A. Milkie, and John P. Robinson. 2012. "Housework: Who Did, Does or Will Do It, and How Much Does It Matter?" *Social Forces* 91 (1): 55–63.

Biblarz, Timothy J. and Judith Stacey. 2010. "How Does the Gender of Parents Matter?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72 (1): 3-22.

Blair-Loy, Mary. 2003. *Competing Devotions : Career and Family among Women Executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Blau, Francine D., and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2017. "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations." *Journal of Economic Literature* 55 (3): 789–865.

Bowen, Glenn A. 2006. "Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5 (3): 12–23.

Boyd, Susan B. 2012. "Shared Parenting and Challenges for Maternal Autonomy." In *What Do Mothers Need? Motherhood Activists and Scholars Speak Out on Maternal Empowerment for the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Andrea O'Reilly. Toronto: Demeter Press.

Braswell, Kenneth, Matisa Wilbon, and Stacey Bouchet. 2020. "Black Dads Matter. Institute for Family Studies." Accessed August 15, 2022. https://ifstudies.org/blog/black-dads-matter

Bridges, Tristan. 2021. "Antifeminism, Profeminism, and the Myth of White Men's Disadvantage." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 46 (3): 663–88.

Budig, Michelle J. 2014. "The Fatherhood Bonus and the Motherhood Penalty: Parenthood and the Gender Gap in Pay." Third Way: Next Research Report series. Accessed December 4, 2016. http://issuu.com/thirdway/docs/next_-_fatherhood_motherhood/1

Budig, Michelle J. and Paula England. 2001. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." *American Sociological Review* 66 (2): 204–25.

Budig, Michelle J., Joya Misra, and Irene Boeckmann. 2016. "Work–Family Policy Trade-Offs for Mothers? Unpacking the Cross-National Variation in Motherhood Earnings Penalties." *Work and Occupations* 43 (2): 119–77.

Bygren, Magnus, Anni Erlandsson, and Michael Gähler. 2017. "Do Employers Prefer Fathers? Evidence from a Field Experiment Testing the Gender by Parenthood Interaction Effect on Callbacks to Job Applications." *European Sociological Review* 33 (3): 337–48.

Bygren, Magnus, Michael Gähler, and Charlotta Magnusson. 2021. "The Constant Gap: Parenthood Premiums in Sweden 1968–2010." *Social Forces* 100 (1): 137–68.

Carlson, Daniel L., Richard J. Petts, and Joanna R. Pepin. 2021. Changes in US Parents' Domestic Labor During the Early Days of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Sociological Inquiry,* xx(x), 1-28.

Cheng, Siwei. 2016. "The Accumulation of (Dis)Advantage: The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Long-Term Wage Effect of Marriage." *American Sociological Review* 81 (1): 29–56.

Chesley, Noelle, & Sarah Flood 2017. "Signs of Change? At-Home and Breadwinner Parents' Housework and Child-Care Time." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79 (2): 511–534.

Coles, Roberta L. 2009a. *The Best Kept Secret: Single Black Fathers*. Rowman & Littlefield Pub.

Coles, Roberta L. 2009b. Just Doing What They Gotta Do: Single Black Custodial Fathers Coping With the Stresses and Reaping the Rewards of Parenting. *Journal of Family Issues* 30(10): 1311–38.

Coles, Roberta L. 2015. "Single-Father Families: A Review of the Literature: Single-Father Families." *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 7 (2): 144–166.

Collier, Richard. 2009. "Fathers' Rights, Gender and Welfare: Some Questions for Family Law." *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law,* 31 (4): 357–371.

Collier, Richard. 2014. "Men, Gender and Fathers' Rights "After Legal Equality": New Formations of Rights and Responsibility in Family Justice." In *After Legal Equality: Family, Sex, Kinship,* edited by Robert Lec. London, UK: Routledge.

Collins, Caitlyn. 2019. *Making Motherhood Work: How Women Manage Careers and Caregiving.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Coltrane, Scott, Elizabeth C. Miller, Tracy DeHaan, and Lauren Stewart. 2013. "Fathers and the Flexibility Stigma: Fathers and the Flexibility Stigma." *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2): 279–302.

Connell, R.W. 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Connell, R.W. 2003. "The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality." United Nations. Accessed June 1, 2022. https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/Connell-bp.pdf

Cooke, Lynn Prince, and Sylvia Fuller. 2018. "Class Differences in Establishment Pathways to Fatherhood Wage Premiums: Class Differences in Fathers' Premium Pathways." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 80 (3): 737–51.

Corcoran, Mary, Sandra K. Danziger, Ariel Kalil, and Kristin S. Seefeldt. 2000. "How Welfare Reform Is Affecting Women's Work." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 241–69.

Correll, Shelley J. and Cecilia L. Ridgeway. 2003. "Expectation States Theory." In *Handbook of Social Psychology*, edited by John Delamater, 29-51. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Correll, Shelley J., and Stephen Benard. 2006. "Biased Estimators? Comparing Status and Statistical Theories of Gender Discrimination." In *Advances in Group Processes. Vol. 23. Social Psychology of the Workplace*, edited by Shane R. Thye, and Edward J. Lawler, 89–116. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007. "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" *American Journal of Sociology* 112 (5): 1297–1339.

Courtenay, Will H. 2000. "Constructions of Masculinity and Their Influence on Men's Well-Being: A Theory of Gender and Health." *Social Science and Medicine* 50(10): 1385-1401.

Crowley, Jocelyn Elise. 2006. "Adopting 'Equality Tools' from the Toolboxes of their Predecessors: The Fathers' Rights Movement in the United States." In *Fathers' Rights Activism and Law Reform in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Richard Collier and Sally Sheldon. Hart Publishing.

Crowley, Jocelyn Elise. 2008. *Defiant Dads: Fathers' Rights Activists in America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Crowley, Jocelyn Elise. 2009. "Taking Custody of Motherhood: Fathers' Rights Activists and the Politics of Parenting." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 37 (3/4): 223–40.

Daiger von Gleichen, Rosa & Martin Seeleib-Kaiser. 2018. "Family Policies and the Weakening of the Male-Breadwinner Model." In *Handbook on Gender and Social Policy* edited by Sheila Shaver, 153-178. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Daly, Kerry. 2001. "Introduction." In *Minding the Time in Family Experience: Emerging Perspectives and Issues*, edited by Kerry Daly, 1-6. Elsevier Science.

Damaske, Sarah. 2011. *For the Family? How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Davies, Andrea Rees & Brenda D. Frink. 2014. "The Origins of the Ideal Worker: The Separation of Work and Home in the United States from the Market Revolution to 1950." *Work and Occupations*, 41 (1): 18–39.

DeJean, Sarah L., Christi R. McGeorge, and Thomas Stone Carlson. 2012. "Attitudes Toward Never-Married Single Mothers and Fathers: Does Gender Matter?" *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 24 (2): 121–38.

Dinner, Deborah. 2016. "The Divorce Bargain: The Fathers' Rights Movement and Family Inequalities." *Virginia Law Review* 102(1): 79-152.

Doucet, Andrea. 2018. *Do Men Mother? Fathering, Care, and Parental Responsibilities*. 2nd edition. University of Toronto Press.

Edin, Kathryn, and Timothy J. Nelson. 2013. *Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Edin, Kathryn, Timothy J. Nelson, & Joanna Miranda Reed. 2014. "Low-Income Urban Fathers and the "Package Deal" of Family Life." In *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* edited by David B. Grusky and Katherine R. Weisshaar, 339-346. Routledge.

England, Paula, Jonathan Bearak, Michelle J. Budig, and Melissa J. Hodges. 2016. "Do Highly Paid, Highly Skilled Women Experience the Largest Motherhood Penalty?" *American Sociological Review* 81 (6): 1161–89.

England, Paula. 2010. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled." *Gender & Society* 24 (2): 149–66.

Esbensen, Heidi Rosa. 2014. "Illuminating the experiences of single fathers (Publication Number 1565661)" M.S., Portland State University. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Fineman, Martha Albertson. *The Autonomy Myth: A Theory of Dependency.* New York: New Press.

Flood, Michael. 2012. "Separated Fathers and the 'Fathers' Rights' Movement." *Journal of Family Studies* 18 (2–3): 235–45.

Folbre, Nancy. 2018. "The Care Penalty and Gender Inequality." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy*, edited by Susan L. Averett, Laura M. Argys, and Saul D. Hoffman, 749–66. Oxford University Press.

Foschi, Martha. 2000. "Double Standards for Competence: Theory and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 21–42.

Fraser, Nancy. 1994. "After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State." *Political Theory* 22 (4): 591–618.

Gaddis, Michael S. 2015. "Discrimination in the Credential Society: An Audit Study of Race and College Selectivity in the Labor Market." *Social Forces* 93 (4): 1451–79.

Gaddis, Michael S. 2017. "How Black Are Lakisha and Jamal? Racial Perceptions from Names Used in Correspondence Audit Studies." *Sociological Science* 4: 469–89.

Gatrell, Caroline, Jamie J. Ladge, & Gary N. Powell. 2021. "A Review of Fatherhood and Employment: Introducing New Perspectives for Management Research." *Journal of Management Studies, 59*(5), 1198-1226.

Gerson, Kathleen & Sarah Damaske. 2021. *The Science and Art of Interviewing*. Oxford University Press.

Gerson, Kathleen. 2011. *The Unfinished Revolution: Coming of Age in a New Era of Gender, Work, and Family*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gerstel, Naomi, & Daniel Clawson. 2018. "Control over Time: Employers, Workers, and Families Shaping Work Schedules." *Annual Review of Sociology* 44: 77-97.

Gerstel, Naomi. 2000. "The Third Shift: Gender and Care Work Outside the Home." *Qualitative Sociology* 23 (4): 467-483.
Glaser, Barney G. 1978. *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Sociology Press.
Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identities*. Simon & Schuster.
Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence F. Katz. 2002. "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions." *Journal of Political Economy* 110(4): 730-770.
Grall, Timothy. 2020. "Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2015". *Current Population Reports*. Accessed October 4, 2020. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-262.pdf
Guarnotta, Emily. 2022. "Co-Parenting Counseling: How It Helps, Examples, & Cost." *Choosing Therapy*. Accessed January 28, 2023. https://www.choosingtherapy.com/co-parenting-counseling/
Haas, Linda & Philip C. Hwang. 2019. "Policy Is Not Enough – The Influence of The Gendered Workplace on Fathers' Use of Parental Leave in Sweden." *Community, Work & Family* 22(1): 58–76.
Haire, Amanda R., and Christi R. McGeorge. 2012. "Negative Perceptions of Never-Married Custodial Single Mothers and Fathers: Applications of a Gender Analysis for Family Therapists." *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 24 (1): 24–51.
Haworth, Simon. 2019. "A Systematic Review of Research on Social Work Practice with Single Fathers." *Practice: Social Work in Action* 31(5): 329-347.
Hays, Sharon. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. Revised edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Hirsh, C. Elizabeth. 2009. "The Strength of Weak Enforcement: The Impact of Discrimination Charges on Sex and Race Segregation in the Workplace." *American Sociological Review* 74 (2): 245-71.
Hochschild, Arlie R. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: New Press.
Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1989. *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*. New York: Holt Paperbacks.
Hodges, Joya and Michelle J. Budig. 2010. "Who Gets the Daddy Bonus? Organizational Hegemonic Masculinity and the Impact of Fatherhood on Earnings." *Gender & Society* 24 (6): 717-745.
Hodkinson, Paul & Rachel Brooks. 2020. "Interchangeable Parents? The Roles and Identities of Primary and Equal Carer Fathers of Young Children." *Current Sociology* 68(6): 780–797.
Holzer, Harry J. and Michael A. Stoll. 2001. *Employers and Welfare Recipients: The Effects of Welfare Reform in the Workplace.* Public Policy Institute of California.
Ishizuka, Patrick. 2019. "Social Class, Gender, and Contemporary Parenting Standards in the United States: Evidence from a National Survey Experiment." *Social Forces* 98 (1): 31–58.

Ishizuka, Patrick. 2021. “The Motherhood Penalty in Context: Assessing Discrimination in a Polarized Labor Market.” *Demography* 58 (4): 1275–1300.
Iztayeva, Aimzhan. 2022. “Single Fathers and Work-Family Conflict in White- and Blue-Collar Jobs.” *Community, Work & Family*.
Jordan, Ana. 2014. “Every Father Is a Superhero to His Children’: The Gendered Politics of the (Real) Fathers 4 Justice Campaign. *Political Studies* 62 (1): 83–98.
Kalleberg, Arnie L. 2011. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s.* Russel Sage Foundation.
Kamp Dush, Claire M. 2013. “Marital and Cohabitation Dissolution and Parental Depressive Symptoms in Fragile Families.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75 (1): 91–109.
Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1993. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. 2nd ed. New York: Basic Books.
Kaufman, Gayle, and Richard J. Petts. 2020. “Gendered Parental Leave Policies among Fortune 500 Companies.” *Community, Work & Family*, August, 1–21.
Kaufman, Gayle. 2013. *Superdads: How Fathers Balance Work and Family in the 21st Century*. NYU Press.
Killewald, Alexandra and Ian Lundberg. 2017. “New Evidence against a Causal Marriage Wage Premium.” *Demography* 54 (3): 1007–28.
Killewald, Alexandra, and Margaret Gough. 2013. “Does Specialization Explain Marriage Penalties and Premiums?” *American Sociological Review* 78 (3): 477–502.
Killewald, Alexandra. 2013. “A Reconsideration of the Fatherhood Premium: Marriage, Coresidence, Biology, and Fathers’ Wages.” *American Sociological Review* 78 (1): 96–116.
Kimmel, Michael. 2013. *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*. New York, NY: Nation Books.
Kulleberg, Christian. 2005. “Differences in the Seriousness of Problems and Deservingness of Help: Swedish Social Workers’ Assessments of Single Mothers and Fathers.” *The British Journal of Social Work* 25(3): 373-386.
Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
LaRossa, Ralph. 2005. “Grounded Theory Methods and Qualitative Family Research.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67 (4): 837–57.
Levitsky, Sandra R. 2014. *Caring for Our Own: Why There Is No Political Demand for New American Social Welfare Rights*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
Livingston, Gretchen. 2013. “The Rise of Single Fathers. A Ninefold Increase Since 1960.” *Pew Research Center*. Accessed November 15, 2016. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/07/02/the-rise-of-single-fathers/
Lopez–Anuarbe, Monika, and Priya Kohli. 2019. “Understanding Male Caregivers’ Emotional, Financial, and Physical Burden in the United States.” *Healthcare* 7 (2): 72.
Luhr, Sigrid. 2020. ”Signaling Parenthood: Managing the Motherhood Penalty and Fatherhood Premium in the U.S. Service Sector.” *Gender & Society* 34(2): 259–283.
Lund, Sarah, Anu Madgavkar, James Manyika, and Sven Smit. 2020. “What’s Next for Remote Work: An Analysis of 2,000 Tasks, 800 Jobs, and Nine Countries.” *McKinsey Global Institute.* Accessed May 13, 2021

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/05/09/opinion/hybrid-workplace-probably-wont-last/.

Maier, Candice A. & Christi R. McGeorge. 2014. "Positive Attributes of Never-Married Single Mothers and Fathers." *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 26(3): 163–190.

Marsiglio, William, & Kevin Roy. 2012. *Nurturing Dads: Social Initiatives beyond the Wallet.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Maupin, Angela N., Holly E. Brophy-Herb, Rachel F. Schiffman, and Erika L. Bocknek. 2010. "Low-Income Parental Profiles of Coping, Resource Adequacy, and Public Assistance Receipt: Links to Parenting." *Family Relations* 59(2): 180–194.

McGill, Brittany S. 2014. "Navigating New Norms of Involved Fatherhood: Employment, Fathering Attitudes, and Father Involvement." *Journal of Family Issues* 35 (8): 1089–1106.

Meara, Katie, Francesco Pastore, and Allan Webster. 2020. "The Gender Pay Gap in the USA: A Matching Study." *Journal of Population Economics* 33 (1): 271–305.

Miller, Tina. 2017. *Making Sense of Parenthood: Caring, Gender and Family Lives*. Cambridge University Press.

Moen, Phyllis. 2016. *Encore Adulthood: Boomers on the Edge of Risk, Renewal, and Purpose.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Moen, Phyllis. and Patricia Roehling. 2005. *The Career Mystique: Cracks in the American Dream.* Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.

Munn Sunny L., & Tomika W. Greer. 2015. "Beyond the "Ideal" Worker: Including Men in Work–Family Discussions." In *Gender and the Work-Family Experience* edited by Maura J. Mills, 21-38. Springer.

Munsch, C.L. (2016). Flexible Work, Flexible Penalties: The Effect of Gender, Childcare, and Type of Request on the Flexibility Bias. *Social Forces, 94*(4), 1567–1591.

Ochs, E. & Kremer-Sadlik, T. (2013). *Fast-Forward Family: Home, Work, and Relationships in Middle-Class America*. University of California Press.

Ogrodniczuk, John, John Oliffe, and Joshua Beharry. 2018. HeadsUpGuys: Canadian Online Resource for Men with Depression. *Canadian Family Physician* 64(2): 93-94.

Oliver Wyman Forum. 2022. "Renaissance 2022: The New People Shaping Our Future." Accessed September 19, 2022. https://www.oliverwymanforum.com/content/dam/oliver-wyman/ow-forum/global-consumer-sentiment/documents/Forum_Renaissance_2022_Exec.pdf

Pager, Devah and Bruce Western. 2012. "Identifying Discrimination at Work: The Use of Field Experiments." *Journal of Social Issues* 68 (2): 221–37.

Pager, Devah. 2007. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Reprint edition. Chicago, IL.: University of Chicago Press.

Pailhé, Ariane, Anne Solaz, and Maria Stanfors. 2021. "The Great Convergence: Gender and Unpaid Work in Europe and the United States." *Population and Development Review* 47 (1): 181–217.

Palan, Stefan, and Christian Schitter. 2018. "Prolific.Ac—A Subject Pool for Online Experiments." *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance* 17: 22-27.

Pedulla, David S. 2016. "Penalized or Protected? Gender and the Consequences of Nonstandard and Mismatched Employment Histories." *American Sociological Review* 81(2):262–89.

Peer, Eyal, David Rothschild, Andrew Gordon, Zak Evernden, and Ekaterina Damer. 2021. "Data Quality of Platforms and Panels for Online Behavioral Research." *Behavior Research Methods* 54 (4): 1643–62.

Peer, Eyal, Laura Brandimarte, Sonam Samat, and Alessandro Acquisti. 2017. "Beyond the Turk: Alternative Platforms for Crowdsourcing Behavioral Research." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 70: 153–63.

Peplau, Letitia Anne, and Adam Fingerhut. 2004. "The Paradox of the Lesbian Worker." *Journal of Social Issues* 60 (4): 719–35.

Perry-Jenkins, Maureen, & Naomi Gerstel. 2020. "Work and Family in the Second Decade of the 21st Century." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82 (1): 420–453.

Petts, Richard J., Kevin M. Shafer, and Lee Essig. 2018. "Does Adherence to Masculine Norms Shape Fathering Behavior?: Masculinity and Father Involvement." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 80 (3): 704–20.

Pew Research Center. 2015. Raising Kids and Running a Household: How Working Parents Share the Load. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/11/04/raising-kids-and-running-a-household-how-working-parents-share-the-load/

Phelps, Edmund S. 1972. "The Statistical Theory of Racism and Sexism." *The American Economic Review*. 62 (4): 659–61.

Quadlin, Natasha, Nanum Jeon, Long Doan, & Brian Powell. 2022. "Untangling Perceptions of Atypical Parents." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 84 (4): 1175–1195.

Quadlin, Natasha. 2018. "The Mark of a Woman's Record: Gender and Academic Performance in Hiring." *American Sociological Review* 83(2):331–60.

Randles, Jennifer. 2018. ""Manning Up" to be a Good Father: Hybrid Fatherhood, Masculinity, and U.S. Responsible Fatherhood Policy." *Gender & Society* 32 (4): 516–539.

Randles, Jennifer. 2020. *Essential Dads: The Inequalities and Politics of Fathering*. University of California Press.

Reid, Erin. 2015. "Embracing, Passing, Revealing, and the Ideal Worker Image: How People Navigate Expected and Experienced Professional Identities." *Organization Science* 26 (4): 997–1017.

Ridgeway, Cecilia L., and Shelley J. Correll. 2004. "Motherhood as a Status Characteristic." *Journal of Social Issues* 60 (4): 683–700.

Risman, Barbara J. 1986. "Can Men "Mother"? Life as a Single Father." *Family Relations* 35 (1): 95.

Risman, Barbara J. 2018. Gender as a Social Structure. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, edited by Barbara. J. Risman, Carissa M. Froyum, and William J. Scarborough. New York: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Rochlen, Aaron B., Margaret R. Whilde, and Wayne D. Hoyer. 2005. "The Real Men. Real Depression Campaign: Overview, Theoretical Implications, and Research Considerations." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 6 (3): 186–94.

Roy, Kevin, Anisa Zvonkovic, Abbie Goldberg, Elizabeth Sharp, and Ralph LaRossa. 2015. Sampling Richness and Qualitative Integrity: Challenges for Research With Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77 (1): 243–60.

Ruggles, Steven, Sarah Flood, Sophia Foster, Ronald Goeken, Jose Pacas, Megan Schouweiler and Matthew Sobek. *IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]*. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2021. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0

Schneider, Daniel, & Kristen Harknett. 2019. "Consequences Of Routine Work-Schedule Instability for Worker Health and Well-Being." *American Sociological Review* 84 (1): 82–114.

Schweizer, Valerie, and Karen Benjamin Guzzo. 2020. "Distributions of age at first birth, 1960-2018." *Family Profiles, FP-20-11*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

Seidler, Zac E., Alexei J. Dawes, Simon M. Rice, John L. Oliffe, and Haryana M. Dhillon. 2016. "The Role of Masculinity in Men's Help-Seeking for Depression: A Systematic Review." *Clinical Psychology Review* 49 (November): 106–18.

Shafer, Kevin. 2021. Why We Need the American Families Plan. Accessed December 20, 2022. https://kevinshafer.medium.com/why-we-need-the-american-families-plan-2d3d62b5be5e

Sheehy, Elizabeth, and Susan B. Boyd. 2020. "Penalizing Women's Fear: Intimate Partner Violence and Parental Alienation in Canadian Child Custody Cases." *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 42 (1): 80–91.

Shorey, Shefaly, and Travis Lanz-Brian Pereira. 2022. "Parenting Experiences of Single Fathers: A Meta-Synthesis." *Family Process* 00: 1-21.

Shows, Carla, & Naomi Gerstel. 2009. "Fathering, Class, And Gender: A Comparison of Physicians and Emergency Medical Technicians." *Gender and Society* 23 (2): 161–187.

Steffens, Melanie C., Sabine Preuß, and Carolin Scheifele. 2019. "Work-Related Impression Formation: Reviewing Parenthood Penalties and Investigating a 'Fatherhood Penalty' for Single Fathers." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 41 (5): 287–304.

Sullivan, Oriel. 2018. The Gendered Division of Household Labor. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, edited by Barbara J. Risman, Carissa M. Froyum, and William J. Scarborough. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Thébaud, Sarah, & David S. Pedulla. 2016. "Masculinity and the Stalled Revolution: How Gender Ideologies and Norms Shape Young Men's Responses to Work–Family Policies." *Gender & Society* 30 (4): 590–617.

Tilcsik, András. 2021. "Statistical Discrimination and the Rationalization of Stereotypes." *American Sociological Review* 86 (1): 93–122.

Townsend, Nicholas. 2002. *Package Deal: Marriage, Work and Fatherhood in Men's Lives*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Troilo, Jessica, and Marilyn Coleman. 2008. "College Student Perceptions of the Content of Father Stereotypes." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70 (1): 218–27.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020. "Frequently Asked Questions: The Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on the Employment Situation for April 2020." Accessed September 30, 2020. https://www.bls.gov/covid19/employment-situation-covid19-faqapril-2020.htm#ques14

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2021. "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey." Accessed May 12, 2021. https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm

Van Borm, Hannah, and Stijn Baert. 2022. "Diving in the Minds of Recruiters: What Triggers Gender Stereotypes in Hiring?" *Institute of Labor Economics.*

Vandello, Joseph A., Vanessa E. Hettinger, Jennifer K. Bosson, & Jasmine Siddiqi. 2013. "When Equal Isn't Really Equal: The Masculine Dilemma of Seeking Work Flexibility." *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2): 303–321.

Vyas, Lina. 2022. ""New Normal" At Work in A Post-COVID World: Work–Life Balance and Labor Markets." *Policy and Society* 41 (1): 155–167.

Wagner, David G., and Joseph Berger. 1997. "Gender and Interpersonal Task Behaviors: Status Expectation Accounts." *Sociological Perspectives* 40 (1): 1-32.

Weisshaar, Katherine. 2018. "From Opt Out to Blocked Out: The Challenges for Labor Market Re-Entry after Family-Related Employment Lapses." *American Sociological Review* 83 (1): 34–60.

Williams, Joan C. 2001. *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do about It*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Joan C. 2010. *Reshaping the Work-Family Debate: Why Men and Class Matter*. Harvard University Press.

Williams, Joan C., Mary Blair-Loy, & Jennifer L. Berdahl. 2013. "Cultural Schemas, Social Class, and the Flexibility Stigma." *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2): 209–234.

Wynn, Alison T., and Shelley J. Correll. 2018. Combating Gender Bias in Modern Workplaces. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, edited by Barbara J. Risman, Carissa M. Froyum, and William J. Scarborough. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Young, Marissa, & Scott Schieman. 2018. "Scaling Back and Finding Flexibility: Gender Differences in Parents' Strategies to Manage Work–Family Conflict." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 80 (1): 99–118.

Yu, Wei-hsin and Janet Chen-Lan Kuo. 2017. "The Motherhood Wage Penalty by Work Conditions: How Do Occupational Characteristics Hinder or Empower Mothers?" *American Sociological Review* 82 (4): 744–69.

Yu, Wei-hsin, and Yuko Hara. 2021. "Motherhood Penalties and Fatherhood Premiums: Effects of Parenthood on Earnings Growth Within and Across Firms." *Demography* 58 (1): 247–72.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Supplementary Materials

Part 1: Example Job Application Materials

Example cover letter:

To whom it may concern:

I write in response to your recent job posting at indeed.com for the Marketing Director at [Company name].

I have been employed in advertising and public relations management roles for the last seven years. My performance during this period manifests troubleshooting skills and an insightful understanding of the clientele, and demonstrates my broad interests and versatility. My contribution to the involvement of the company in community life extends beyond my work hours. You will see from my resume the extent of my work and the results I have delivered. I am currently searching for a new position that exposes me to more challenging responsibilities and a greater exchange of creative ideas concerning contemporary marketing issues and would like to find out more about your organization.

Throughout my career, I have explored a wide variety of responsibilities and catered to a highly diverse clientele. This continuing desire to explore the marketing field and take advantage of new opportunities has led me to apply for this position, and I believe it has helped prepare me to take on the role of Marketing Director at [Company name].

While my work has thus far been based in the Austin metropolitan area, I am currently relocating to [Location] with my [Marital status signal]. I am excited about this opportunity and look forward to continuing my professional development and community involvement in another unique and dynamic urban environment.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this position. Please contact me by email at [email] or by phone at [phone number]. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
[Name]

In the above text, [marital status signal] is replaced by the following, depending on the experimental condition:

- Married parent: with my family.
- Single parent: with my son.

[Company name] is the name of the fictitious company used in the cover story.
[Location] is replaced by the city the applicant is applying to.
[Name] is either Brad Berk, Matt Boyle, Jalen Jackson, or Emily Harris.

<u>Example résumé:</u>

[Name]
[Contact information]

EXPERIENCE

ALLIANT GROUP July 2014-present
Client Strategy Consultant, Austin, TX

- Identify and evaluate new business development opportunities and outlined campaigns for clients. Create strategic communications plans, sales presentations, website content, marketing copy, and press kits. Projected results: 50% improvement in campaign response rates for new campaign in year 1, 100% improvement in year 2, 10% improvement in annual retention rates. $16M in overall marketing benefits in 4 years.
- Build business justification for significant marketing investment to improve marketing and service capabilities. Define and model campaigns. Results: Fifteen high potential initiatives expected to produce $15M in incremental revenue in year 5.
- Develop program strategy for group tasked with creation of cross-sell opportunities across business units. Model earning potential for group's first set of cross-sell programs. Work with individual business units to launch pilot programs. Projected results: Programs expected to gain $2M in incremental EBITDA for company in year 1.
- Develop value-based strategy to align senior management under one customer-focused approach. Implement sales strategies, including differentiated product offerings, unique messaging, and tiered allocation of sales resources.
- Oversee marketing and content group responsible for website content and day-to-day execution of marketing plan.
- *Clients include: Sun Coast Resources, Austin City Rep Theater*

CORNERSTONE INFORMATION SYSTEMS September 2013-June 2014
Intern, Marketing Events Coordinator, Bloomington, IN

- Conducted market research on competitors and overall business climate to determine best targets for agency to meet goals.
- Represented company in collaborations with consultants, strategic partners vendors/professional service providers and clients.
- Created best practices standards for event management procedures.
- Designed, planned and managed events ranging from on-site meetings to cocktail parties.

HOLLINDEN MARKETING SOLUTIONS June 2011-September 2013
Strategy Associate, San Antonio, TX

- Led teams of three in development of launch and brand development strategy for market-defining produce. Results: Achieved leadership market share 1 year post-launch, becoming most successful product launch in client's history. Exceeded revenue targets in year 1 and year 2.
- Created customer-based, small business entry strategy for telecommunications provider.
- Developed 5-year portfolio strategy and investment reallocation with Board of hospitality company.
- Worked with internal marketing group to develop positioning and marketing strategies.
- *Clients included: Winstar, Starwood Worldwide*

O'CONNELL COMPANY June 2010-May
2011
Intern, Austin, TX

- Designed and launched new plan design for theater company.

EDUCATION

KELLEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, INDIANA UNIVERSITY June 2014
Master of Business Administration, Bloomington, IN
Major in Marketing
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN May 2011
Bachelor of Science, Industrial Management, Austin, TX

OTHER

[Married or single parent signal] 2014- 2019
[Race signal] 2009-2014

In the above résumé, [Name] is either Brad Berk, Matt Boyle, Jalen Jackson, or Emily Harris. [Married or single parent signal] is replaced by the following, depending on the experimental condition:

- Married parent: Coordinator, Parent Teacher Association.
- Single parent: Volunteer Coordinator, Parents Without Partners.

[Race signal] is replaced with Chair of Social Committee, Black Graduate and Professional Students Association in the Black married father condition. In other conditions, this line is replaced with additional volunteer experience not related to any experimental conditions.

Part 2: Robustness Checks

To test the robustness of results to the decision of adding Black married father as a second deception to the survey design and excluding this condition from the final sample I estimated mixed-effects ordered logistic regression models for ordered variables (productivity if working remotely, commitment, capability, reliability, and job deservingness), mixed-effects logistic regression models for binary variables (hiring bias and promotability), and mixed-effects linear regression models for continuous variables (recommended salary in U.S. dollars, and days allowed late) with a full sample. Table 6 below displays the results.

The results indicate that adding Black married father condition to the sample does not substantially change the magnitude, direction or significance of coefficients pertaining to the single father condition except for the linear estimates of monthly days allowed late that becomes statistically insignificant. All in all, results continue to highlight single fathers' lack of employability. This pattern is particularly evident in models that use single father condition as a reference category (Table 7). The single father is rated lower than married fathers and the single mother on almost every measure.

The results also indicate that adding Black race as a treatment to the married father's application materials significantly enhances his employability on six out of nine measurements. Because the Black married father condition was added to the experiment with the purpose of second deception, it is likely that this strategy worked, and survey participants focused on the racial difference between job candidates. If this was the case, then the hiring preference of the Black married father may be at least partially due to social desirability bias and perhaps a genuine preference to recruit an applicant of color. On the other hand, as a married father with stable employment history, the Black job candidate challenges the widespread stereotypes about Black men: threatening, violent, criminal, "deadbeat" fathers (Coles 2009a; Collins 2004; Pedulla 2014). This contradiction could have added another boost to the Black married father's employability in this experiment. It is also possible that this preference was a product of civil unrest during the summer of 2020 that brought the issue of racial injustice to the forefront of people's everyday lives. Here, survey respondents might not have realized the purpose of the study but felt that hiring the Black candidate was the right thing to do.

The concept of the "glass escalator" offers another possible explanation (Williams 1992, 2013). This idea suggests that even in traditionally feminized labor market sectors, male gender generates

a workplace advantage by fast-tracking men into leadership positions. However, Black men's access to the glass escalator differs from that of White men. While there is evidence that Black men are more likely to occupy leadership positions in women-dominated workplaces, scholars suggest this has more to do with their token status (Bloch et al. 2021; Wingfield and Wingfield 2014). Women and Blacks comprise 60.7 and 5.5 percent of marketing managers, respectively (BLS 2020). Thus, it is possible that the "rarity" of Black people in the marketing position set against the backdrop of the social context in which the survey experiment took place heightened the token status of the Black married father and fast-tracked his job application to the top of the respondents' hiring preferences.

Table 8. Regression Estimates of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures with Full Sample

	Hiring Bias (Binary Logistic Estimates)	Recommended Salary in Dollars (Linear Estimates)	Monthly Days Allowed Late (Linear Estimates)	Promotability (Binary Logistic Estimates)	Remote Productivity (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Commitment (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Capability (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Reliability (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Job Deservingness (Ordered Logistic Estimates)
Married Father (Reference)									
Black Married Father	-0.787***	2484.1***	0.142	0.00298	0.252**	0.240***	0.330***	0.230***	0.365***
	(0.118)	(197.1)	(0.0742)	(0.168)	(0.0808)	(0.0710)	(0.0484)	(0.0383)	(0.111)
Single Father	0.272*	-288.5	0.0687	-0.512**	-0.200***	-0.197***	0.0149	-0.102	-0.0188
	(0.126)	(872.7)	(0.0479)	(0.164)	(0.0559)	(0.0447)	(0.0187)	(0.0653)	(0.0460)
Single Mother	-0.675***	177.3	0.128***	-0.364*	-0.134	0.142	0.115**	0.0262	0.117***
	(0.139)	(495.8)	(0.0329)	(0.175)	(0.0768)	(0.0731)	(0.0386)	(0.0406)	(0.0283)
Intercept	-2.116***	97813.3***	4.169***	2.035***	… [a]	…	…	…	…
	(0.575)	(75.90)	(0.0354)	(0.145)					

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All models include controls for the format of the résumé, respondents' demographic characteristics, and random effects at the block level. N = 2937.

[a] Intercepts for ordered logistic regression models are omitted.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests).

	Hiring Bias (Binary Logistic Estimates)	Recommended Salary in Dollars (Linear Estimates)	Monthly Days Allowed Late (Linear Estimates)	Promotability (Binary Logistic Estimates)	Remote Productivity (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Commitment (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Capability (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Reliability (Ordered Logistic Estimates)	Job Deservingness (Ordered Logistic Estimates)
Single Father (Reference)									
Black Married Father	-1.059*** (0.128)	2772.6*** (781.7)	0.0738 (0.0413)	0.515** (0.167)	0.452*** (0.133)	0.437*** (0.0290)	0.315*** (0.0430)	0.332*** (0.0285)	0.384* (0.150)
Married Father	-0.272* (0.126)	288.5 (872.7)	-0.0687 (0.0479)	0.512** (0.164)	0.200*** (0.0559)	0.197*** (0.0447)	-0.0149 (0.0187)	0.102 (0.0653)	0.0188 (0.0460)
Single Mother	-0.947*** (0.136)	465.8 (389.0)	0.0592 (0.0346)	0.148 (0.153)	0.0661 (0.127)	0.339** (0.109)	0.100** (0.0380)	0.128 (0.0902)	0.136*** (0.0213)
Intercept	-2.117*** (0.574)	97524.8*** (875.6)	4.237*** (0.0312)	1.523*** (0.130)	… [a]	…	…	…	…

Table 9. Regression Estimates of Experimental Conditions on Evaluation Measures with Full Sample, Single Father as Reference

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All models include controls for the format of the résumé, respondents' demographic characteristics, and random effects at the block level. N = 2937.

[a] Intercepts for ordered logistic regression models are omitted.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests).

APPENDIX B: Full Demographic Profiles of Respondents (in alphabetical order)

Name	*Race*	*Age*	*Number of Children*	*Type of Residential Custody*	*Living Arrangement*	*Education*	*Workplace*	*Annual Household Income*
Andrew	White	37	3	< 50%	With partner	Some college	Agriculture	$65,000
Ben	White	35	2	50%	Children only	Bachelor's	Research	$73,000
Brandon	White	37	3	Full	Children only	Some college	Construction	$150,000
Brian	White	41	2	50%	Children only	Some college	Food service	$20,000
Charles	White	37	3	Full	With parent(s)	GED	Shipping	$37,000
Chris	White	32	2	Full	With partner	Bachelor's	Marketing	$95,000
Daniel	White	38	1	< 50%	Children only	Bachelor's	Architecture	$80,000
David	White	44	3	50%	With partner	Bachelor's	Sales	$250,000
Doug	White	56	3	> 50%	Children only	Bachelor's	Sales	$89,000
Ed	White	56	2	Full	Children only	Bachelor's	IT	$80,000
Eric	Asian	43	2	Full	With parent(s)	Bachelor's	IT	$60,000
Ethan	Black	30	2	Full	Children only	Master's	Gig work	$65,000
Gary	White	56	1	Full	Children only	Master's	Banking	$180,000
Greg	White	44	1	> 50%	Children only	Bachelor's	Technician	$70,000
James	Asian	45	1	50%	With partner	Bachelor's	IT	$200,000
Jeffrey	White	44	3	50%	Children only	Bachelor's	IT	$175,000
Jeremy	White	44	2	50%	Children only	Some college	Technician	$52,000
John	Native American	62	2	Full	With parent(s)	Professional	Nurse	$65,000
Jonathan	White	38	2	< 50%	Children only	Bachelor's	IT	$80,000
Joseph	White	36	1	Full	With partner	High school	Call center	$40,000
Kevin	Black	34	4	Full	Children only	High school	Warehouse	$30,000
Kyle	Asian	31	2	Full	With partner	Bachelor's	Banking	$60,000
Michael	Black	33	1	Full	With parent(s)	Bachelor's	Warehouse	$20,000
Nick	White	39	1	Full	Children only	Bachelor's	Administration	$56,000
Richard	Black	44	2	Full	Children only	High school	Warehouse	$20,000
Scott	White	49	1	50%	Children only	Bachelor's	IT	$115,000
Sean	Black	44	3	50%	Children only	Bachelor's	Daycare	$30,000
Steven	White	34	2	Full	With parent(s)	Some college	Shipping	$52,000
Todd	Asian	50	4	Full	Children only	Bachelor's	Truck driver	$36,000
Tom	White	45	1	50%	Children only	Master's	Banking	$180,000