

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

All Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

5-2022

'I Try To Take the Whole Family Thing Out of the Picture': How Professionals Navigate Motherhood Bias at Work

Rachael Gulbrandsen
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gulbrandsen, Rachael, "I Try To Take the Whole Family Thing Out of the Picture': How Professionals Navigate Motherhood Bias at Work" (2022). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 8442.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/8442>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



'I TRY TO TAKE THE WHOLE FAMILY THING OUT OF THE PICTURE': HOW
PROFESSIONALS NAVIGATE MOTHERHOOD BIAS AT WORK.

by

Rachael Gulbrandsen

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Sociology

Approved:

Christy Glass, Ph.D.
Major Professor

Marisela Martinez-Cola, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Guadalupe Marquez-Velarde, Ph.D.
Committee Member

D. Richard Cutler, Ph.D.
Interim Vice Provost
of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2022

Copyright © Rachael Gulbrandsen 2022

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

'I Try to Take the Whole Family Things Out of the Picture': How Professionals Navigate

Motherhood Bias at Work

by

Rachael Gulbrandsen

Utah State University, 2022

Major Professor: Dr. Christy Glass
Program: Sociology

The current study seeks to explore the formal and informal strategies professional women use to navigate motherhood bias at work. Previous research finds that mothers confront significant bias in the workplace that results in lower wages, fewer opportunities and blocked mobility. While these barriers lead some women to leave the labor force, mothers' labor force participation rates continue to climb. Our analysis relies on forty-seven in-depth interviews with currently employed women lawyers and judges in Utah. Interviews focused on women's workplace experiences before and after having children, the challenges they faced as mothers and the ways they structured their work and family lives to sustain their professional careers over time. We find strategies fall into two broad categories: downplaying motherhood status so as to evade negative career consequences or downshifting careers in order to maximize career flexibility. We find that both downplaying and downshifting lead to tradeoffs in terms of career advancement, career rewards and well-being for professional mothers. We conclude by considering the implications of our findings for equitable workplace policies and practices.

(55 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

'I Try to Take the Whole Family Things Out of the Picture': How
Professionals Navigate Motherhood Bias at Work

Rachael Gulbrandsen

This research aims to improve our understanding of professional mothers and the strategies they develop to navigate bias and sustain their careers. Previous research has shown that women with children face a motherhood bias that results in negative career outcomes such as reduced wages, fewer high-quality assignments, and decreased chances for promotion and leadership opportunities. This research investigates how professional mothers respond to that bias by analyzing interviews with forty-seven women in the field of law about their professional experiences: their experiences before and after having children; the challenges they face navigating their careers and families; and the strategies they've developed to maintain their careers and home lives. We find that the strategies mothers develop fit into two categories. Category one involves downplaying their status as mothers in hopes of reducing negative career consequences. Category two involves downshifting their careers in order to maximize flexibility in their work and at home. Each strategy relies on specific resources and results in tradeoffs of career advancement, career rewards, and well-being. The findings help us understand how workplace policies and practices can best support professional mothers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who supported me during my graduate school experience. My outstanding mentor, Christy Glass, whose contribution to my education, love of research and Sociology, and approach to work and life cannot be overstated. Thank you for taking a chance on an 18-year-old who wanted to get involved in research and giving me guidance every step of the way since then. Thank you to Marisela Martinez-Cola and Guadalupe Marquez-Velarde for your valuable mentorship, support, time, and feedback throughout this process. This thesis would not exist without your encouragement, advice, and insights. Thank you to the amazing team of women who tackled this project together and supported each other throughout the process: Christy Glass, Marisela Martinez-Cola, Rana Abulbasal, and Brook Hutchinson.

Thank you to Utah State University and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for all of the opportunities that helped me develop my research skills and supported me throughout my education. I'd also like to thank all the women we interviewed for this research. We would not have this study without your time and willingness to share your experiences with us. Additionally, thank you to the Women Lawyers of Utah who funded data collection related to this project.

Lastly, I would also like to give special thanks to my family and friends who supported me throughout graduate school. You are my favorite people in the world, and I wouldn't be here without you all. Thank you to my brothers and sisters in law for being there to give advice and cheer me on throughout this process. Most importantly, thank you to my amazing parents who instilled in me the importance of education, and spent hours on hours giving me encouragement, support, and love.

Rachael Gulbrandsen

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
Summary of Patterns	1
Gap in Literature	1
Current Study	2
LITERATURE REVIEW	3
Motherhood Bias	3
Impacts of Motherhood Bias	4
Navigating Motherhood Bias: Opting Out, Avoiding Stigma and Concealing	5
Opting Out?	5
Flexibility Stigma	7
Concealing	8
Cultural Context	9
METHODS	11
FINDINGS	14
Perceptions of Motherhood Bias	14
Strategy #1: Downplaying Motherhood Status to Evade Negative Career Consequences	15
Resources	21
Tradeoffs	23

Strategy #2: Downshifting Careers to Maximize Flexibility	25
Resources	28
Tradeoffs	29
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION	31
Implications for Policy and Practice	35
Limitations and Next Steps	36
REFERENCES	37
APPENDICES	46

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Respondent Demographics and Social Characteristics.....	45

INTRODUCTION

Summary of Patterns

Women have made significant advances in earning professional degrees in recent years, yet women remain underrepresented in many professional careers (Turco, 2010). In law, despite women graduating at equal rates as men, it is estimated that the profession will not achieve gender parity until 2181 (Sterling & Chanow, 2021). Recent research from The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) reports that women represent 47.5% of associates, 36.8% of counsel, and 25.1% of partners (NALP, 2021). Research finds that mothers face significant disadvantages navigating paid work, particularly in highly skilled professional jobs (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Kmec et al., 2014). England et al. (2016) find that among white women, those that have high skill and high wages experience the most motherhood penalties at a 10% loss of income per child.

Gap in Literature

Mothers face unique disadvantages navigating paid work, particularly in highly skilled professional jobs (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Kmec et al., 2014). These disadvantages include discrimination at the point of hire, wage penalties, a lack of workplace support and limitations on their ability to advance to senior positions (Budig & England, 2001; England et al., 2016; Kmec et al., 2014). These disadvantages grow out

of biased assumptions that mothers are less competent and less committed to their careers (Budig & England, 2001; England et al., 2016; Kmec et al., 2014).

While a great deal of research has analyzed the impact of motherhood bias on women's careers in the short and long term, less research has engaged professional mothers themselves. The current study explores the formal and informal strategies mothers in highly skilled professions use to navigate bias and sustain careers over time.

Previous research foci: disadvantages in terms of earnings, promotion (e.g., Budig and all the folks who study earnings penalties). The key for this study is to understand the "hidden costs" of motherhood in terms of how women navigate careers – the limitations, constraints and daily challenges they face that shape their careers over time.

There is evidence that mothers face significant bias, yet less is known about specific strategies professional mothers use to navigate bias and sustain careers over time.

Current Study

To answer our research question, we rely on a qualitative research design that included in-depth semi-structured interviews with forty-seven women lawyers and judges in Utah. Our interview respondents represent mothers who have sustained legal careers over time across a range of job types. Analysis of interview transcripts focuses on perceptions of motherhood-related bias, career trajectories and strategies intended to minimize the effect of bias, resources mothers rely on to support their career and family pathways and the long-term tradeoffs of various career strategies.

The current study builds up and advances our understanding of the challenges mothers face sustaining paid work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motherhood Bias

Motherhood bias refers to the range of negative judgements, stigmas and stereotypes women with children confront in the workplace (Benard & Correll, 2010). This bias stems from the conflict between cultural ideals of the “ideal worker” and “good mother” (Williams, 2001). While the “ideal worker” is one who has an undivided focus and commitment to paid work, “good mothers” are those whose primary devotion is to children and family. There is evidence that motherhood bias may be more pervasive in highly-skilled professional and male-dominated jobs—including law—where ideal worker norms are most salient (Byron & Roscigno, 2014). In these jobs, women with children are less likely to be viewed by employers as competent, capable and committed (Cuddy et al., 2004; Halpert et al., 1993).

Cultural expectations and experiences of work and motherhood differ for women of color and white women (Kumar, 2020). Traditional cultural expectations situate white middle-class mothers as the primary caretakers of children, while women of color, irrespective of social class, are often assumed or expected to be breadwinners. These stereotypes contribute to racialized expectations regarding employment. White mothers are often viewed as secondary earners less committed to their careers, whereas women of color are often expected to sustain employment irrespective of their parental status.

Indeed, Kennelly (1999) found that employers are more likely to assume that Black mothers are single parents and thus more reliable and hard working. Similarly, in their study of cultural perceptions of motherhood and work, Cuddy and Wolf (2013) found that while white mothers who worked outside the home were viewed as lazy, Black non-employed mothers were viewed as less hardworking. For Black professional women, therefore, staying home to care for children is viewed as less culturally valuable or acceptable than for white women (Dow, 2015).

Impacts of Motherhood Bias

Motherhood bias results in a range of negative career outcomes, including wage penalties, lost job opportunities and curtailed advancement (Benard & Correll, 2010; Correll et al., 2007). Mothers are often screened out at the recruitment and hiring stage and given fewer high-quality assignments and promotion opportunities (Glass & Fodor, 2011; King, 2008). Mothers also face a pay gap in comparison to non-mothers (Budig & England, 2001; Anderson et al., 2003). Benard et al. (2007) document this pay gap at 5% less earning per child after controlling for education, work experience, race, full time or part time, and other variables. Indeed, net of experience, education, and job characteristics, mothers earn less, and experience lower wage growth compared to non-mothers (Kmec, 2011; Abendroth et al., 2014; Cooke, 2014; Jee et al., 2018). For example, Jee et al. (2018) find that from 2006 to 2014, childless women earned an average of \$3.22 more/hour than women with children.

Racial and ethnic differences in stereotypes of mothers lead to significant variation in the impacts of motherhood on women's careers. For instance, white women tend to face career penalties due to the association of whiteness and middle-class status

with intensive mothering, whereas Black women are expected to act as both providers and caregivers (Hays, 1996; Roberts, 1997; Luhr, 2020). There is evidence, for instance, that white mothers face greater wage penalties than Black, Latina and Asian mothers (Glauber, 2007; Waldfogel, 1997; Budig & England 2001; Torres Stone et al., 2006; England et al., 2016). For example, England et al. (2016) find that total motherhood penalties are lower for Black mothers than white mothers across skill groups and wages. Glauber (2007) finds that married white mothers with one or two children pay a wage penalty of 2% and 8%, respectively, while Hispanic mothers of any number of children (married or unmarried) and married Black mothers with one or two children do not pay wage penalties.

This isn't to say women of color don't experience other forms of bias and discrimination in their professional lives – we know that BIPOC women experience bias, discrimination, and oppression that is “unique to their social identity” and often have to navigate career barriers that white women do not face (Melaku, 2019). Because of their racialized and gendered identities, women of color have a different experience navigating white institutional spaces and an intersectional approach is needed to understand that experience (Melaku, 2019). It cannot be assumed that women of color experience the motherhood penalty in the same way as white women.

Navigating Motherhood Bias: Opting Out, Avoiding Stigma and Concealing

Opting Out?

While a growing body of research identifies the professional penalties associated with motherhood, less work has focused on the strategies mothers use to navigate bias

and sustain careers. Motherhood tends to be associated with work interruptions and reduced labor force participation among high status professional women (Killewald & Zhou, 2019; Misra et al., 2011). While some scholars suggest that high status women self-select out of paid work to focus on caretaking (Hakim, 2007), Stone's (2007) seminal study finds that women who leave careers tend to do so due to a lack of career support at work and home. According to Stone (2007), professional women who "opt out" do so in response to a workplace culture characterized by extreme work hours and a lack of flexible scheduling and supportive supervisors.

There is evidence, however, that reducing labor force participation – including limiting paid work and/or reducing work hours – is a strategy less available to BIPOC mothers as compared to white mothers. Indeed, while motherhood is associated with lower employment rates among white women, the effect is much smaller for Black, Hispanic, and Asian women (Florian, 2017; Greenman, 2011). For example, Florian (2017) finds that for white mothers, full-time employment rates do not recover to prebirth rates until ten years after becoming mothers. For Hispanic mothers, full-time employment rates return to prebirth rates four years after becoming mothers, and then surpass those rates six years post birth. For Black mothers, full-time employment rates recover after just two years following birth and eventually surpass white mothers' full-time employment rates. Scholarship on labor force patterns suggests this may be due to racial and ethnic differences in cultural pressures facing mothers as well as differences in access to economic resources and supports. Compared to white women, Black women are more likely to have grown up in homes where their mothers were employed and are more likely to benefit from support for their employment and economic self-sufficiency from partners, family and community (Dow, 2016; Higginbotham & Weber, 1992; Parrott, 2014). Thus, for some women of color, sustaining full time work may be more culturally normative and supported. By contrast, socioeconomic privileges mean

that professional white women are more likely than other women to be married to high earning men; for these women, reducing work hours is more accessible even when it results in a loss of household income (Schwartz, 2010). Thus, for married white women with high wage-earning partners, reducing work hours or shifting to part-time or casual work may be more accessible as a strategy for sustaining careers over time.

Flexibility Stigma

Short of existing paid work, most mothers seek to accommodate care responsibilities with paid work. To do so, they often require access to flexible work arrangements, including home-based work, flexible schedules and/or part-time work schedules. Some negative career outcomes related to motherhood are associated with what scholars call the “flexibility stigma” (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Williams et al., 2013), which refers to biases against workers who require flexible work arrangements. Workers seeking flexible arrangements are often viewed as lacking commitment, competence and leadership qualities. The flexibility stigma interacts with motherhood biases in ways that harm women’s careers. For instance, employers assume that mothers needing flexible work arrangements are less engaged with their work and less committed to their jobs long term (Salihu et al., 2012). Motherhood penalties occur when mothers are assumed to require flexible arrangements and assumptions that those who need flexibility are less productive and committed to their jobs. Thus, avoiding the flexibility stigma for mothers may lead to strategies of avoiding any arrangements, policies or practices related to flexibility.

Concealing

Finally, there is evidence that women may seek to conceal their status as mothers. Efforts to avoid bias may enhance the need to conceal an identity that is associated with stigma (see Follmer et al., 2020 for a review). These efforts may be especially relevant for Black mothers who are trying to counteract stereotypes of them being unreliable workers due to childcare responsibilities (Luhr, 2020). Research on pregnancy finds women's decisions to disclose or conceal their pregnancy is a function of the degree to which they anticipate bias and discrimination resulting from the disclosure (Jones, 2017). Mothers who work in organizations with strong family-relevant policies and supportive work-family environment are more likely to disclose pregnancies compared to women in hostile or unsupportive organizations (Jones et al., 2016). Luhr (2020) found that in comparison with fathers, mothers were less likely to signal their parenthood status and employed several strategies to show their commitment to employers including open availability, using breaks strategically, and concealing childcare responsibilities. Related to concealment, covering refers to the tendency to downplay or understate aspects of one's identity that is known to be devalued or undervalued in the workplace. Yoshino (2007) defines covering as acts which downplay aspects of one's identity in order to achieve assimilation and reduce bias. Whereas concealing involves actively avoiding disclosure, covering refers to a range of behaviors that de-emphasize certain aspects of one's identity. Aranda and Glick (2014) find that in nearly identical job applications, mothers who highlight their devotion to work over their family experienced less hiring discrimination. Previous research on pregnancy disclosures finds that covering or concealing can be risky; failure to disclose can result in backlash, distrust and reduced workplace support and discrimination (Chen et al., 2008; Conway et al., 2011). Research also finds that concealing is associated with reduced

well-being, including higher rates of anxiety and depression and may not be successful in reducing motherhood penalties (Jones, 2017; Luhr, 2020). For example, Luhr (2020) finds that mothers who employed concealment strategies often missed out of family obligations, needed breaks, and experienced mental and physical taxation. Despite these risks, covering and concealing motherhood may serve as strategies mothers pursue to limit the impact of motherhood bias on careers.

Cultural Context

Navigating gender bias generally and motherhood bias specifically is likely to be particularly salient for professional women in conservative cultural contexts. Research on wage penalties show that mothers in highly skilled professions may pay a greater cost overall since their jobs are more likely to be based on “ideal worker” norms including full time work, 24/7 availability, and wages rely heavily on experience, so any time away results in high costs (England et al., 2016; Byron & Roscigno, 2014). Lower wage jobs – especially “pink collar” jobs in fields dominated by women – are more likely to be part time and employers are more likely to see workers as interchangeable. Thus, taking maternal leave does not come at as high of a cost (England et al., 2016). Comparative research underscores the importance of cultural context in shaping women’s (especially mothers’) career trajectories. In contexts where mothers’ employment is supported culturally, paid leave and childcare facilitate women’s career advancement. By contrast, in contexts where mothers are expected to devote themselves to childcare, these supports have a negative effect on women’s earnings (Boeckman et al., 2015).

Research on gender roles in religiously conservative contexts further elaborate on the role of cultural context in shaping women's employment. Conservative religious beliefs tend to be strongly correlated with familial and gender attitudes (Struening, 2009). Conservative gender attitudes tend to support a family structure based on a traditional gendered division of labor in which the men are expected to support the family financially and women are expected to support the family in terms of unpaid care. Strong familial beliefs tend to be negatively correlated with egalitarian beliefs about gender roles and tend to support beliefs in mother's unique role in the home and family (Douglas & Michaels, 2004).

In addition to cultural pressures facing professional mothers generally, women of color are significantly underrepresented in many conservative cultural contexts, including Utah. Underrepresentation can lead to token pressures, including heightened visibility, performance pressures, scrutiny and negative stereotypes (Kanter, 1977; Turco, 2010; Wingfield, 2014). Thus, for women of color in particular, navigating motherhood bias and paid work is fraught with challenges. Sustaining careers requires intentional and sustained strategies to minimize stigma and scrutiny and achieve workplace recognition and respect (Glass & Cook, 2020). Melaku finds that women of color in predominately white institutions perform the invisible labor of negotiating their existence and advancement "in spaces created, controlled, and reproduced by elite white men," (Melaku, 2019, p. 17). They also face additional barriers to their advancement such as difficulty finding mentors or sponsors, pressure to conform to white aesthetics, being mistaken for support staff, and other gendered and racialized hurdles (Melaku, 2019; Glass et al., 2020).

Utah is continually ranked last in the nation for women's equality and has one of the largest gender wage gaps (McCann, 2021). In Utah, cultural attitudes favor having multiple children and raising large families. These cultural attitudes create a condition

where family-friendly policies may be supported in theory but likely have gendered impacts. This creates a phenomenon where motherhood bias is experienced frequently in a state where motherhood is valued. Research on family-friendly policies in Utah's "Best Places to Work" highlight a variety of policies currently available and what companies hope to offer in the future. While many companies offer policies that support new parents, very few offer part-time roles for higher level positions, and even fewer offer any type of childcare support (Scribner et al., 2020). Findings from the current study (Glass et al., 2020) highlight how family-friendly policies are supported in Utah but use of these policies have gendered outcomes. Women lawyers in Utah are less concerned with how taking family leave would negatively impact their careers when compared with national statistics but, instead, are more concerned with a negative impact on their careers than men (Glass et al., 2020). Additionally, the current study (Glass et al. 2020) finds 21% of White women and 14% women of color reported that having children negatively impacted their colleagues' perception of their career commitment and competence, while only 5% of their male colleagues reported the same perception.

METHODS

To explore the strategies women rely on to navigate motherhood bias and sustain careers, we conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with forty-seven women current working as lawyers or judges. Multiple recruitment strategies, including the use of key informant and snowball sampling techniques, were used to identify interview participants. Key informants included individuals in the authors' personal and

professional networks as well as members and leaders of professional groups and associations. Key informants were asked to identify individuals in their networks who may be interested in and willing to participate in an interview. We also relied on purposive sampling methods to ensure interview respondents represented a diverse group of lawyers by race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geographic location, practice area and political and religious affiliation.

The ages of the women who participated in interviews ranged from 29 to 65 years old. Thirty-four participants identified as white, and thirteen (28%) identified as BIPOC (Asian, Latina, Black or multiracial). (See Table 1 for demographic and social characteristics of interviewees). Of the forty-seven respondents, thirty-six identified as mothers and our analysis relies on analysis of the career and family experiences of these individuals. To keep confidentiality with our respondents we have generalized some key information as providing too specific of information could make them identifiable.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face and over the phone at a time of respondents' choosing. Due to the geographic dispersion of respondents, most interviews were conducted by phone. Telephone interviews are appropriate for studies that require access to geographically dispersed subjects (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004), and research finds that telephone interviews are similar to in-person interviews in terms of reliability and validity (Cachia & Millward, 2011). With participants' consent, the REV app was used to record and transcribe interviews and in other cases interviews were transcribed contemporaneously.

Interviews typically lasted approximately 60-75 minutes. Each interview began with a review confidentiality protocols. Interviews then explored topics including respondents' work and family history, career trajectory and challenges respondents experienced before and after having children. Questions were crafted to solicit both

positive and negative career experiences, including opportunities that facilitated or supported the career as well as challenges associated with gender or racial bias and discrimination.

To identify key themes, the first two authors independently reviewed transcripts to identify key themes related to barriers or obstacles related to family status, including career experiences before and after transitioning to motherhood, and deliberate and intentional efforts respondents made to adapt to or address those challenges. The authors then compared respective themes and, in an iterative process, refined themes and re-analyzed transcripts to identify patterns. A high degree of inter-rater agreement exists between the two first authors, thereby increasing the reliability of our analytical approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

While interviews did not include questions about motherhood bias specifically, respondents discussed this topic in the context of their career experiences. The organic emergence of these themes in the context of interviews affirms the objectivity of the interview process (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Though our qualitative findings are not generalizable, our analysis provides insight into complex social processes related to the experience of mothers in professional careers.

As a research team, our positionality has implications for our interview process and analysis. To the best of our ability, we tried to split interviews based on perceived shared life experiences. We found that this allowed participants to open up more about their experiences because they could find commonality with the researcher based on knowledge of religious terminology, understanding of cultural expectations, experience being non-white in a predominately white space, knowledge of industry-specific terms, etc. As first author, I was able to use my knowledge of cultural and religious expectations regarding motherhood as I have lived in Utah for the last 11 years and was raised in the

predominant religion. As a researcher, I have maintained interest in how Utah women experience motherhood penalties and how this impacts their professional and personal lives – being an insider to the majority culture and religion, I was privy to conversations about work and motherhood from a young age. Those experiences and interest inspired this paper.

FINDINGS

Perceptions of Motherhood Bias

Our respondents represented a range of career paths. Eighteen respondents worked in small, medium sized or large law firms, ten worked as solo practitioners, six worked in government jobs, six served as judges and four worked in non-profit positions. All interview participants expressed awareness of motherhood bias and described experiences consistent with this pattern of bias. For instance, several respondents highlighted assumptions expressed by colleagues and superiors regarding their commitment to their jobs, while others described experiencing a lack of support from their work organizations following their transition to motherhood. In this section, we highlight the ways respondents described motherhood bias in order to emphasize the salience of bias in shaping their career strategies.

Several respondents confronted assumptions from colleagues that they would opt out of or downgrade careers following their transition to motherhood. One respondent, Frances, a 48-year-old Hispanic mother of two, explained the shift in view point her bosses expressed after she had children:

[They thought I] wouldn't come back. Wouldn't come back or [would be] not as dedicated. 'Oh, now she has a kid?' you know what I mean? Like, 'There goes my cutthroat lawyer that'll call me back at 3 o'clock in the morning. Cause now you know she's changed.' Right? I mean that's the viewpoint.

Melissa, a 40-year-old white mother of seven, described how once she was pregnant her firm started assuming she was not committed to her work anymore:

I had my first annual review when I was 6 months pregnant, and I'd never had an annual review even though I'd been there for three years. My performance was that I wasn't committed. And so even though the year before the head partner had complimented my work, another partner said they were always talking about my work at the partner meetings, [they had] asked me to staff their cases. [In my] first performance review... they were questioning my commitment.

Other women emphasized the conservative cultural climate and its role in shaping assumptions about them as mothers and workers. Olivia, a 57-year-old white woman with two kids, describes this cultural attitude saying:

I think here in Utah it's even harder if you are a mom. You get even more scrutiny. Like 'why are you even working?' As well as 'well you're so busy you can't always be thinking about work so therefore, you're not committed.' ...There were assistants at the law firm that were LDS, and it was basically as soon as these assistants would get married, the partners would say 'Okay they are going to leave, and they won't come back after they have kids.' They'd write them off. [They would think] we don't need to give them a raise or train them, they don't deserve a raise. That attitude is so pervasive here, even in younger people.

Our respondents consistently described experiencing attitudes and actions that challenged their status as professionals following their transition to motherhood. Now we analyze the ways in which women in our study responded to these biases, highlighting the ways women navigated their home and work lives to accommodate these strategies, the resources they relied on to pursue these strategies and the tradeoffs resulting from these career paths.

Strategy #1: Downplaying Motherhood Status to Evade Negative Career Consequences

One dominant strategy respondents used to navigate bias and sustain careers is a range of efforts intended to downplay their status as mothers in order to emphasize their commitment to their careers. For these women, pursuing behaviors counter-stereotypical to motherhood, including overwork and 24-7 availability, was a central means of signaling their commitment to work. Downplaying their status as mothers included a range of behaviors from withholding information about their parental status to limiting reliance on flexible work arrangements.

For women who sought to minimize or downplay their status as mothers, engaging in overwork was a primary strategy for overcoming any potential bias associated with motherhood. Engaging in overwork was viewed by respondents as a way to emphasize work commitment and downplay any impression that their devotion to work was divided or impeded by family responsibilities (Aranda & Glick, 2014).

For these women, overwork meant striving for perfection and proving their professionalism and commitment again and again. Several women described intense work hours and 24-7 availability as a prerequisite for a successful career. Rachel, a 29-year-old white woman without children, describes the typical work life for her friends and colleagues following the birth of a child.

Their working hours are from midnight to like 4:00 am, right. And then they sleep for a little bit and then they wake up with their kids and they do the whole day and like working here and there. I just, we just put a lot of stuff on ourselves in the legal field.

Another way women in our study sought to downplay their status as mothers was by avoiding the stigma associated with reliance on flexible work arrangements (Williams et al., 2013). Several women reported actively avoiding any accommodations that would signal to peers, superiors or co-workers that they needed flexibility to meet their care responsibilities. For some women, concerns *being perceived as needing*

accommodations began during the job interview. In several cases, women described concealing pregnancy or even the presence of children and family. As noted above, scholarship has begun to analyze patterns and consequences of concealing pregnancies in the workplace (Jones, 2017). However, less is known about strategies mothers use to conceal parental status and family arrangements in general. Sadie, a 32-year-old white woman with one child, described how she navigated interviewing for jobs while pregnant:

I was interviewing for jobs while I was pregnant. It was an issue. I spent a lot of time thinking about how I should bring it up or if I should. I was quite pregnant -- 7-8 months. So, some of them I would mention that I was planning on working, I would mention what leave I would take and that I wasn't planning on taking any, seeing if they would let me work from home for a few weeks. Some I wouldn't bring it up. It was more trying to figure out if I should mention that I should make it clear I wouldn't let it impact my work or if I should let the elephant in the room lie. Nobody wants to hire someone who wants to take time off.

In addition to concealing pregnancy in order to get a job, other respondents the potential of losing status as well as work as a result of getting pregnant and taking leave. Frances avoided telling any of her clients or colleagues she was pregnant and sought to conceal the reason for her absence during maternity leave. Frances' lack of trust in her peer and partners led her to actively conceal her family status despite her high-risk pregnancy:

I never told my clients I was pregnant. Ever! Like I never would put on my out of office [message] that I was on maternity leave or anything like that because I felt as if my colleagues would take advantage of the fact that I was gone on maternity leave or that clients would somehow believe that I was either not as dedicated to my practice or that I was going to [leave]...The only person who knew [I was pregnant] was my assistant and I would just say I'm at a client meeting or I'm at court or I'm at a deposition, but I would never openly tell my law partners that I was going to prenatal visits. Isn't that sad...But I mean, I just felt like that was necessary in order to preserve my, my status in the firm and my status that I was dedicated to my job.

The desire to downplay the presence of children doesn't end following pregnancy. Nala, a 43-year-old Black mother of two children, moved to Utah after working as a lawyer in another state. She believed that her ability to land a good legal job depended on masking her motherhood and marital status, even though she had a strong record in law:

When we moved to Utah, in looking for work, I would hide the fact that I had children. I put on my resume that I took time off, I started switching that from my resume. I got the impression from employers that they wouldn't say outright that they disapproved of it, but they were looking for someone straight out of school...I try to take the whole family thing out of the picture. Hide as much of it as I can. View me as a single person.

Even after landing a job, interviewees described ongoing efforts to mask or downplay their motherhood status. Bianca, a 33-year-old mother with one child, noted that every Mother's Day, her office posts a collage of all of the children of lawyers in the office. She deliberately avoids posting a photo of her children so as to avoid disclosing her motherhood status. She said, "Most people don't know a lot about us. And so, they don't know that I'm a mother."

Like Bianca, Zoe, a 65-year-old white woman with five children, avoided discussing her motherhood status with colleagues, clients and superiors. She recalled that in law school, she naively believed that emphasizing her professional and academic success alongside her family status would underscore how committed she was to her career. But she learned over time that disclosing motherhood status could only harm her long-term career goals:

I hid [my family status] as long as I could. And I did not talk about it very much...I wasn't always forthcoming about my family except to close colleagues and friends.

Several respondents discussed the potential risks of taking leave or pursuing flexible arrangements. Zoe expressed the risks facing women who take time off or who say no to an assignment in order to take leave. She described how, upon the request of a partner at her law firm, she flew to Louisiana for a hearing only six weeks after giving birth. She didn't feel like saying no was an option; in fact, she describes the career costs for women who take leave and the tendency for this to motivate women to continue to be available to their firms during leave:

You kind of feel like you have to do that as a woman. You can't say no because you're putting yourself at risk every time you take leave or time off. That you'll

lose ground, that you won't be needed, or you'll be sidelined. I've seen it happen to other women. What happens is women go on leave, but they keep working from home because they are worried about being sidelined.... I don't know any woman that takes leave and shuts off work.

Leticia, a 37-year-old white woman with two kids, expressed skepticism that even using taking the minimum amount of time allowed by her firm's maternity policy would significantly and negatively impact the careers of women on the partnership track.

Our maternity policy says that if you take those three months [of leave] it won't be held against your partnership track. I don't know if that's true at the end of the day. You do miss out on assignments when you're out.... Expectations are so high.

In some instances, avoiding the perception that one needs accommodations was pursued even when it placed the respondent's health at risk. For example, Whitney described her attempts at limiting leave in order to not give anyone a reason to complain about her work and to prove her commitment. Whitney is a 42-year-old white woman with four kids. She explains:

My 4th son was born 4 weeks early. I delivered him on Saturday and had a trial on Monday and on Wednesday. I could've asked for continuance. But people are not caring – they say they are, but they are really not. My kid was in the NICU and I didn't want to deal with it. I took some painkillers and got through it. The judge would have given me a continuance. But sometimes it's not even worth asking for it. I didn't want to have to deal with moving it, everybody complaining about it, blaming me.

Pressures related to flexibility avoidance and overwork may be more intense for women of color, who are significantly underrepresented in Utah's legal profession and face racial as well as gender biases. Among our respondents, very few women of color worked part time and the majority worked in law firms, which require the most intense work commitments. Alexa is a 40-year-old Filipina woman with two children. She emphasizes that her ability to sustain her career over time is due to her commitment to work and limiting of leave saying:

I'm here because I've worked my butt off, and I've worked 15-16-hour days. I go home, I sleep, I shower and come back. People don't see that... I only took two

weeks off [for parental leave]. I had a C-section and was back to work two weeks later.

In Melaku's (2019) work on Black women lawyers, she discusses the invisible labor Black women perform to navigate white institutional spaces including extreme care in expressing emotions, making colleagues feel more comfortable with their presence, emotional labor of combatting stereotypes, and dealing with gendered and racialized microaggressions from colleagues and clients. One participant, Fiona, a 47-year-old Black mother of two, was highly self-aware of the responsibilities she faced as a Black woman in law to make her mostly male white colleagues comfortable with her presence. Though she has received multiple promotions and significant professional recognition across her career, these rewards required intentional strategies to assimilate with her colleagues. From hyper management of her emotional displays ("I spent a lifetime of [working on my tone], just trying to keep things even keeled...I just never had emotional moments") to downplaying her status as a mother, Fiona attributed her approach to her career to lessons learned from women more senior to her:

I noticed women with more senior positions rarely talked about their families and I picked up on that. I think it's also that no one asked. No one asked if you are okay. Nobody asked. Guys can leave and go see a soccer match and say that out loud. Women don't do that. We can't.... I just kind of went with the flow of that.

Downplaying motherhood status requires women to hyper manage their home lives.

After all, respondents are mothers as well as full time lawyers. Thus, to sustain a high intensity career over time requires women to hyper-manage their work and home lives in ways that facilitate long work hours. Frances, a 48-year-old Latina mother of two, described her work-home management strategy in the following way:

You know, this job is demanding so you gotta work all the time. So, um, I take off time and I try to put, I try to take off, you know. But I work every Saturday because it's the only day I have to draft. So, I get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and I work 'til lunchtime. But I try to spend the afternoons with them... But they also are in my car a lot and I do a lot of work in my car as I'm driving. And so, they know the minute I answer the phone, I'm like, 'don't say anything!'. They

know to be totally silent. Does that make any sense? They have been on conference calls when I've been with senior partners and judges.

Like many interviewees, Frances built a fully functioning home office, including servers, printers, copiers and multiple computers, so as to facilitate a seamless blend of work and home life. For many respondents, sustaining a home office allowed the extension of workhours beyond what is feasible in the firm. Frances described how she routinely begins work at home at 5:00 am so she can work for several hours before her children get up and works at night after her children are in bed. This blending of home and work allowed Frances to sustain her career over time; however, she noted that this blending meant she had very little time off. "The weeks don't mean anything to me. Like the days of the week don't matter. Holidays. None of that stuff matters. I just work when I can."

Resources

In addition to blending home and work lives, women who seek to downplay their status as mothers must rely on a range of caretaking supports. Respondents who pursued the overwork strategy discussed how their work lives were enabled and supported by spouses, extended family and outsourced labor. Most emphasized that their careers were entirely reliant on these supports.

Several women had spouses that stayed at home with their children or worked part time in order to take on childcare responsibilities. Respondents with male partners recognized how unique these family arrangements were, particularly in Utah. However, they emphasized the ways in which they and their spouses recognized that sustaining their careers depended on creative arrangements in the home and family. Zoe described the arrangement has with her spouse saying:

My husband is great. We have traded needs... When I started working full time, he quit and worked part time. He's gone back and forth making sacrifices too. But he's made a lot of sacrifices in pulling back from his career because one of us always worked part-time. We had kids that needed taking care of. We shifted back and forth, took on more home duties. I never got anything but support from him. But he's unusual.

Not only do these types of arrangements remain rare, but as Zoe noted, such arrangements require sacrifices and may lead to negative consequences for male partners. Frances described how her spouse's decision to stay at home was essential for her career but led to negative consequences for him socially:

I didn't have to run home at five o'clock to go get the kids. Dad was always home. But if he worked too, you add that onto working women if they don't have the support that I had. I had an amazing support system with my husband... I was blessed because my husband was a be at home parent. I really attribute a lot of my success to that support that I had... It was very, very difficult for him. Socially. He was chastised for not being a male provider... We made that choice for our family, but it was difficult.

Reliance on a spouse or partner was critical for respondents with full-time high-status careers. Isabel, a 45-year-old white gay woman with two children, described her wife as the "default parent", responsible for day to day and emergency needs of their children. Though her spouse is a professor, Isabel's career takes precedence when it comes to providing for, managing and delegating the needs of their family.

My wife is still the default parent. She is the one that does the carpool. She's the one that picks up the kids, and then when she needs, you know, she has something that conflicts, then she tasks me with doing that. But, but all of those interactions come through her. The dealing with the school, dealing with, you know, medical appointments...

Respondents who did not have a spouse who took on childcare responsibilities often relied on outsourcing care labor to nannies, day care centers, or extended family members. Those who rely on paid care takers were careful to emphasize that their careers enabled them to have the requisite resources to sustain childcare support over time. Marina, a 33-year-old white mother of two children, described her arrangement in the following way:

I have a nanny that comes to my house and watches my daughter. She will come to watch my new baby as well. It has helped not to rush in the morning to get my kid to childcare and rush in the evening to pick them up and I have no concerns about the welfare of my child. I can really focus on work when I'm at work and I get home and focus on my daughter... I've been lucky enough to get into a position at a law firm where I make enough money where I can hire a nanny. And be comfortable leaving my child with the nanny.

Natalia, a 36-year-old white mother of two, described how she relies on her extended family members for childcare and support. While reliance on extended family can be critical for mothers seeking to sustain careers, in Natalia's case it meant she was less competitive for law jobs outside of her rural community:

I have a very supportive husband but one of the reasons we're still in a rural area is because of the family support that I needed to run my career with this job. Luckily, we have a village, we have 24 immediate family members within 10 miles.

Tradeoffs

Benefits of this strategy included sustaining an interrupted career, which is associated with greater career mobility, earnings and status (Aisenbrey et al., 2009; Spivey, 2005). However, many respondents described tradeoffs associated with this strategy including health and relational costs. Several women who pursued this strategy reported a significant impact on their stress levels, mental well-being, and physical health. These costs were emphasized by Zoe reiterated the importance of leave policies while emphasizing the lack of access she enjoyed when she had her second child:

I had...my second child I had while I was a law clerk and the federal government had no leave...So by the time I had my son, I had one week of vacation left. I had him on Tuesday, the next Tuesday I was back at work. The next weekend I was in the hospital sick with an infection and had to go back to work on Monday. I feel really strongly about leave policies because women are not, I was sick for six months after that and I'm sure it was because you just can't go back that soon. Your body is not capable of doing that. Women need some flexibility and, you know, and some support.

Natalia, a 36-year-old white mother of two, also discussed how overwork had a damaging impact on her health:

I got to the point where I was [bearing the brunt of the work] so much, I put my personal health at risk. I got so exhausted; my organs started shutting down. I had a fever for 3 months. My doctor told me to take time off, 2 weeks, and I was like what? I can't do that. [My colleagues] weren't super appreciative of that, didn't fully understand how much I was balancing between being a mom, a wife, an attorney and running management aspects of the firm without getting compensated.

Fiona reflected on the physical and emotional labor required to navigate motherhood bias in ways that eased concerns among her colleagues. Though she had some regrets about taking this path, she also attributed much of her career success to minimizing bias and performing at a very high level:

I never made an issue about my kids...In the past, I made it work and I made it easy for people I worked with for me to have children. To my detriment. Suffering from exhaustion, getting sick, doing way more than I was capable of doing for way too long. Just physically. And it wasn't really something that someone would raise, I made it a non-factor. I worked through both leaves, which I could kick myself for now.... [Motherhood] just hasn't played into my career.

Other mothers discussed the costs their career strategy on family relationships. Many respondents had had to resist cultural pressures associated with motherhood, and some expressed regret over the costs in terms of involvement in their children's lives resulting from their career trajectory. Pressure came from various sources, including peers and friends, in-laws, spouses and partners as well as extended family. Alexa described how her family relationships had been negatively impacted by her career:

My mom probably once or twice a month tells me I need to be home more with my kids and tells me that they miss me, and that if I don't start coming home earlier, that I'm going to lose the relationship that I have with my kids, which is hard. Nobody wants to hear that.

Frances described the difficulties associated with overwork with regard to relationships with children, saying:

It's really heartbreaking for me sometimes when I read their little essays in school. Cause it is a lot of, 'Mom's always working. Mom works a lot. Mom works a lot.' I mean I hear that a lot... But then I also get, 'Mom does important stuff

and mom has an important job.’ But they do say to me, ‘You work all the time’ because I do work all the time.

Similarly, Xandra, a white mother of five children, noted the cultural pressures women face to excel professionally and meet the cultural demands associated with intensive mothering. She reflected on her inability to “fit the mold” of the ideal mother:

I don’t do PTA stuff because I’m at work. And I, I try to help out [with my kids] when I can. I’ll help out with class parties sometimes but even then, it’s like, well, I have to like make sure I have that day where I’m not in court or something.

Strategy #2: Downshifting Careers to Maximize Flexibility

Several interviewees opted not to pursue the downplaying path and instead, in the words of one respondent (Victoria) “let their family dictate the work”. For these respondents, the path of overwork and flexibility avoidance was either not preferable or not feasible given their career goals, socioeconomic status and family structure. Alternatively, respondents may have simply been unwilling to face the tradeoffs in health, relationships and well-being in order to sustain a high-powered career characterized by motherhood bias and overwork. Rather than mask their status as mothers in order to pursue an interrupted career trajectory, these women pursued more flexible careers, downshifting or downsizing the career in order accommodate their family responsibilities.

Women pursuing the downshifting strategy placed a strong value on jobs that provided flexibility and support for mothers. Rather than seeking to avoid the flexibility stigma, these women were willing to pay career costs in terms of job type, income, prestige and long-term advancement in exchange for sustaining careers and caring for children. Rather than masking or downplaying their motherhood status, these women

actively sought jobs and employers who were willing to offer flexibility, accommodations and support.

Xandra, a 42-year-old white woman with five children, emphasized the importance of flexibility in sustaining her career in the following way:

The one thing that I do want to make sure that you understand is that it's been so important to have, for me, a flexible work schedule. I think that has been one of the biggest benefits to working where I am now is that they are okay with me having a family and they're okay with me coming in late or leaving early or you know, even sometimes taking work home and doing it at home. So, I think that's, that's been one of the greatest blessings is having somewhere that values me enough to allow flexibility and allow me that kind of dictate what my work schedule is going to look like.

The search for flexibility often required women to scale back careers or change jobs or sectors in order to avoid the overwork inherent in big law firm jobs. Women described switching to part time schedules, seeking out public sector jobs, or establishing their own solo practice in order to gain more flexibility in their schedules. For many women who pursued this strategy, avoiding or leaving jobs in large law firms was viewed as a pivotal step in sustaining their careers over time following their transition to motherhood.

Whitney, a 42-year-old white woman with four children, described how large firms are inhospitable for women with children saying, "You can't do a large firm and really juggle the mommy thing. You just can't. They say you can, you just can't." For Whitney, government work was the ideal place to practice for women with children because of the 8-5 schedule, generous benefits and paid leave.

Patricia, a 39-year-old Latina woman with two kids, echoed this sentiment as she describes a judge encouraging her to apply for a government position saying:

A judge was just like 'with someone with small kids, the federal government pays decent. Your work life balance would be great while your kids are small.' He's like, 'and the experience you would gain at this office will just be an insurmountable so you should apply.'

Other women found themselves in solo practice or starting their own firms, often home based, that would encourage flexible schedules purposefully created for mothers.

Xandra, a 42-year-old white mother of five, contrasted the flexibility of being in a small firm compared to a large law firm. When interviewing at a large law firm, she said that she knew she wouldn't get the offer based on their reactions to her disclosing that she had children. But moving into a small firm provided her with the support and flexibility to sustain her career over time:

It's been so important to have, for me, a flexible work schedule. I think that has been one of the biggest benefits to working where I am now is that they are okay with me having a family and they're okay with me coming in late or leaving early or, you know, even sometimes taking work home and doing it at home. So, I think that's been one of the greatest blessings is having somewhere that values me enough to allow flexibility and allow me to kind of dictate what my work schedule is going to look like.

Other women anticipated downshifting as early as law school. Victoria, a 34-year-old white woman with four kids, had already started her family in law school, and she knew that balancing family care and her career would require careful planning. Early on, she aspired to start her own firm and so was able to prepare professionally for specialties that would support her aspirations.

[I decided] I should do practice areas and work for myself, set up an LLC and that I should do areas that I could do on my own without a lot of staff. I purposely took in law school family law. I looked for internships in that and estate planning. You can do it on your own, it's always needed. You don't need to be part of a firm to do it.... you can do it without a whole lot of support and resources.

A significant for many women who pursued the downshifting strategy was an easier integration of work and family life. Women described various ways working from home reduced the friction between their care responsibilities and their professional lives.

Jaelyn, a 42-year-old white woman with four children, describes how working in a government position reduced the risk of integrating her work and family lives and exercising needed flexibility:

I could work at home, come and go as I wanted. When I adopted a baby, I would bring the baby to work with me. She sat in her car seat and slept 90% of the time so it's no problem but that doesn't happen in most workplaces.

Resources

Pursuing a flexible career path depended on a range of resources, including supportive employers, generous family friendly policies and, in some cases, financial resources and network connections that enabled the establishment of solo careers. For instance, many women who pursued solo careers drew heavily on their personal and professional networks to solicit work. Professional and personal networks facilitated contract work, referrals and word-of-mouth client base building.

Several respondents relied on the earnings of spouses or partners to support their downshifting pathways. For Xandra, her husband's income gave her the freedom and flexibility to quite a full-time law firm job to move into part-time solo work:

I also quit knowing at the time and for a long time – it was during my first marriage and I didn't need to work full time. And so, I quit and started working solo, but it wasn't, it was not near any semblance of full time because my husband at the time was bringing in enough income that I could still dabble in the law and not have to go anywhere. You know, I didn't have to go into the office.

Reliance on spouse or partners' incomes may be a strategy less available to women of color, LGBTQ+ women and women from low socioeconomic backgrounds. For these women, reliance on high status, high earning men may be more difficult and less appealing. Una, a lesbian a foster parent who immigrated to the U.S. with her parents as a child, reflected on the important role that social class plays in shaping women's careers, from law school onward:

In addition to race and gender is the issue of class...Law school is expensive. Even if you got a full ride to the [local law school], you're not going to get one to Harvard. So that's the problem. And the contribution that a poor family can make is, you have to think of it as zero. They're not going to have money to contribute.... Beyond law school, [class] matters in every regard.

Other respondents relied on family support, including support for law school tuition, that freed them to pursue careers that fit their professional and personal aspirations. For

example, Victoria attributed her career flexibility to her family's financial status, which enabled her to complete law school without debt:

I'm grateful I had the support to be able to have work [and] that I didn't have a bunch of debt over my head. My dad's deal was he'd pay tuition. That allowed me the flexibility to let my work ebb and flow. And I recognize that's privilege not everyone has that they can put things on hold and let their family dictate the work.

Importantly, for many women, pursuing a flexible career path also required a spouse or partner with earnings that enabled women to downshift their own career and earnings potential.

Tradeoffs

As for women who chose to downplay their motherhood status, women who downshift careers also face tradeoffs. For women who shift careers into government or solo practice, tradeoffs may include a loss high incomes, status and mobility inherent in law firm careers. Interviewees were well aware of these tradeoffs and opted to downshift careers in order to resolve the conflicts related to their status as lawyers and mothers.

Victoria summed up these tradeoffs by saying:

You can choose the money, the flexibility, the prestige but you can't choose all three and for me flexibility as my number one. I wanted to have the mom experience in this stage of life, but I also really liked the law, I liked learning, I felt called to go to law school. That was the path for me, I was led there by inspiration, so I prioritized that flexibility when I graduated.

While pursuing careers as solo practitioners appealed to many women in our study, these women also recognized the challenges of forging out on their own. Whitney emphasized that while a solo career was the best choice for her, it was hardly an easy financial choice. According to Whitney, "The problem is that it's hard. It's not consistent income. If you are the sole breadwinner, it's hard and it's lonely."

Daniela, a 36-year-old Latina woman with two kids, looked back on her career trajectory with some regret. She believed that by taking herself off the partnership track and moving to a part-time schedule, she shut off long-term career opportunities. The irony for Daniela was that she was doing similar work to those in law firms but with lower pay and many fewer benefits.

Looking back, I'm not sure [moving to part-time] was the best approach to take because I took myself out, took a pay cut. And I'm doing a lot of what most people are doing for partnership anyways but not getting the credit for it... I'm treated a bit differently. I'm not given assignments that will help me advance... I worry about getting a bit stuck in doing the same work, working with the same clients or working on tasks that are not allowing me to grow professionally.

Several women noted that downshifting their careers ultimately forestalled any potential for obtaining leadership positions, including partnership positions. Indeed, survey data suggest that women remain significantly positions of authority and leadership. Like Daniela, some women noted that moving to part-time schedules simply took them out of consideration for promotions. However, other women, like Maya, a 55-year-old white woman with two kids, noted that her commitment to part-time work led her to turn down several leadership opportunities that limited her career potential.

I've been asked to do several different things [in leadership], and I have declined all of them. Because my part-time status was more important than my leadership. I lead in different ways... I could have been a judge. I chose not to.

Financial dependence on spouses or partners also, in many cases, reinforced a traditional gender division of labor in the home. Despite having law degrees and professional careers, women noted that their decisions to downshift their work lives led to their taking on the majority of the home and care work. Natalia described this pattern well:

I'm not going to lie, I have an excellent, extremely supportive husband, he is amazing. But I would be lying if I said we had an equal division of household responsibilities. We don't. I do the brunt of the mommy work. Part of that is because he's on the road, that's part of it, but the other part of it is it just doesn't come easy to him... [There are] very few men that are willing to support this kind of grind, this kind of work that we do.

Melissa, a 40-year-old white woman with seven kids, also noted that providing and/or arranging for childcare falls completely on her shoulders. While she relies a great deal on her extended family, she does not rely on her husband to provide care even when she needs support. Referring to her own mothers as her “backup”, she noted, “Isn’t it funny I don’t use my husband as a backup? He’s just not part of the picture. Childcare is not one of his priorities. Because he figures I’ll do it.”

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study sought to provide clarity on how women structure their home and work lives to sustain their professional careers in response to the bias they face as mothers. This furthers the research on the motherhood penalty by giving insight into the specific strategies developed in response to bias faced by mothers. Unlike wage penalties or labor force participation rates, these strategies reveal the ways women adapt to bias and thus represent the hidden costs of mothering on the careers of professional women. To analyze these strategies, we conducted in-depth interviews with forty-seven women practicing law in Utah. In the interviews we discussed women’s professional experiences, and the themes on the topic of motherhood bias organically emerged including: the bias professional women face before and after having children; the strategies they develop at home and work; and how those strategies impact their professional development and personal lives. From this analysis we learn that women, and in particular – mothers - are highly aware of the bias they face in the workforce. To combat this bias, they tend to adopt one of two strategies: downplaying their motherhood

status to limit negative career consequences or downshifting their careers to maximize flexibility. The first strategy involves behaviors such as downplaying or concealing motherhood status to emphasize commitment to careers, overwork and 24-7 availability, and limiting use of flexible and/or leave policies. This strategy comes at the cost of health and relationships, as many women who took this path discussed high levels of stress, poor mental and physical health, as well as relationship strain. The second strategy involves behaviors such as seeking out jobs and employers that can offer flexibility and support for mothers, switching to part time or changing jobs to avoid overwork, or establishing their own solo practices to have ownership of their schedules. This strategy often cost them their high incomes and career prestige, the ability to pursue leadership positions, and upward mobility.

A great deal of research on motherhood bias has sought to measure penalties quantitatively, identifying lost wages and lost opportunities as the cost of motherhood for professional women. The current study builds on research seeking to reveal the hidden costs – the unquantifiable costs – to women’s careers that result of parenthood. And our findings show that these costs continue over the course of the career and, indeed, define the direction of the career over time and shape daily interactions.

Our findings echo the findings of previous researchers that show that high achieving professional women with children experience a motherhood bias (Bernard & Correll, 2010; Williams, 2001; Bryon, 2014; Cuddy et al., 2004; Halpert et al., 1993). This bias negatively impacts mothers’ careers in several ways including wage penalties, less opportunities for professional advancement, promotions, and lost leadership opportunities (Bernard & Correll, 2010; Correll et al., 2007; Glass & Fodor, 2011; Budig & England, 2001; Anderson et al., 2003; Bernard & Correll, 2007). The current study adds to the conversation about motherhood bias by demonstrating that mothers are

often aware of the biases they face in their careers, and in response develop strategies to combat these biases and sustain their careers.

In our interviews, many mothers discussed how once they became mothers their competence and commitment to their work was questioned by their employers.

Analyzing our interviews resulted in an emergence of two different strategies employed by mothers to navigate and sustain their careers over time despite the bias they were facing.

For those who downplayed their careers to emphasize their commitment to work, we saw how relying on concealing or covering pregnancy often resulted in reduced wellness in terms of physical and mental health (Jones, 2017). This adds to our knowledge about concealing and covering by giving insight into how some high-status mothers navigate conversations with employers about pregnancies, and/or actively avoid their clients and colleagues finding out about pregnancies or leaves (Luhr, 2020). It also reveals that these attempts to downplay their motherhood status do not end after giving birth, as many deliberately avoid revealing their motherhood and family statuses across all stages of their career.

We also learn that professional women are often aware of the flexibility stigma and how they may be penalized by making use of flexible or family-friendly work policies, so many of them try to avoid using any accommodations or available policies (Salihu et al., 2012; Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Williams et al., 2013). Many discuss how use of family friendly policies or accommodations such as maternal leave is a risk to their careers and can result in a loss of important projects, or negatively impact their ability to progress to partnership in their firm. At times, respondents put their personal health at risk in order to avoid making use of accommodations or family-friendly policies. This suggests that family-friendly policies still need development and the culture around use of these policies needs to change. It highlights how even with helpful family-friendly policies in

place, policies need to be used by employees of all statuses and gender and checks need to take place to ensure that use of these policies do not result in penalties for mothers' careers.

For women of color, stereotypes surrounding work and motherhood may result in a different experience of motherhood penalties than white women (Hakim, 2007; Florian, 2018). Our findings show that very few women of color worked part-time, and most of them had work situations with very high intensity. This suggests that pressures to downplay motherhood status may be even more intense for women of color and include additional strategies and invisible labor such as hyper management of emotions and assimilation with colleagues. It reveals that more research is needed to fully understand how non-white mothers experience the motherhood penalty. Future research could use an intersectional approach to understand how motherhood, gender, and race operate for professional women looking to sustain and advance their careers.

In order to downplay their motherhood status, we found that mothers often had to hyper-manage their home lives to be able to sustain long working hours. This included building offices at home, working odd hours to maximize time spent with children, and relying on support systems for caretaking. These support systems included spouses/partners, extended family members, and outsourced labor. Respondents highlighted how reliance on these support systems were a necessary part of sustaining their careers, as well as how their careers gave them the ability to afford outsourced labor. We know that lack of affordable childcare is an ever-increasing issue across the nation and this research shows how important access to affordable childcare is for women to sustain their careers.

Our findings also highlight many of the hidden costs of motherhood penalties. Many women in our study described how the strategies they employed to sustain their

careers had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. They also reported how these strategies can have negative impacts on their relationships.

For women whose strategies included downshifting their careers in order to maximize flexibility, we find they also had tradeoffs. These tradeoffs came in the form of income, prestige, and career advance, but allowed them to make use of the flexibility and support offered by their employers. These women often sought out work that would not require them to downplay their motherhood status, and instead offered them the flexibility to manage their home-work conflict in a sustainable way. When unable to find employers that could offer them the flexibility they needed, they started solo-practices and often designed them in a way to support professional mothers. This strategy, of course, relies on a number of resources such as support employers, family friendly policies, and for some, financial and social networks.

Our findings revealed that for the women who downshifted their careers and experienced work flexibility, many relied on spouses or partners incomes to supplement their own, but echoed findings that reliance on spouse or partner's incomes may be employed less by women of color, LGBTQ+, and women from low socioeconomic backgrounds, due to lack of availability or desire. We recommend future research examines how race, sexuality, and socioeconomic upbringing shapes professional women's strategies to combat bias and sustain their careers.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Our research highlights how important flexible and family-friendly work policies are, as well as the importance that they be used by all employees regardless of gender or status, as to reduce the stigma of using accommodations. Neither of the career paths

we uncovered is optimal. All professionals need flexibility in their work. This was echoed by all the women interviewed. Creating more flexible, accommodating and human centered career pathways and organizations will allow mothers and other individuals to have success in both their careers and personal lives without the need to sacrifice health, well-being, and equity. In *Making Motherhood Work*, Collins (2020) makes the argument that we need to move past viewing work-family conflict as anything but a societal issue and should be advocating for “work-family justice”, defined as “a system in which each member of society has the opportunity and power to fully participate in both paid work and family care.” We suggest three policies that would enable women to sustain their careers and reduce the costs and tradeoffs associated with their strategies. These include: 1) Paternity leave to allow all parents to be involved in raising children, 2) Increased flexibility for all workers and the expectation that they use it, 3) Access to affordable childcare.

These policies would allow professional mothers to make use of work from home/remote options, flexible working hours, maternity leave, and childcare resources without the damaging costs to their leadership status, professional mobility, or careers. This will require a de-stigmatization of these policies, and change in culture to encourage all employers, regardless of status, gender, or title to make use of them. It will also require employers to analyze their current practices to ensure that those who make use of these policies are not penalized.

Limitations and Next Steps

In order to further understand the strategies women employ to navigate motherhood biases and the costs and tradeoffs associated with their strategies we suggest several avenues for future research:

1. An analysis of the current data to see if strategies employed by white women are different from strategies employed by women of color. Research on women of color in white institutional spaces, such as law, suggests that women of color face unique challenges (Melaku, 2019). Findings from the current study echo that research and we suggest an intersectional approach to understanding the experience of BIPOC mothers as they navigate their professional advancement as a path for future research.
2. Further research outside of Utah to see how if strategies developed by professional mothers look different in states with lower fertility rates.
3. Further research among low-skilled, low wage workers to see how strategies might change with less access to resources than the women in this study.

REFERENCES

- Abendroth, A. K., Huffman, M. L., & Treas, J. (2014). The parity penalty in life course perspective: Motherhood and occupational status in 13 European countries. *American Sociological Review*, 79(5), 993-1014.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414545986>
- Aisenbrey, S., Evertsson, M., & Grunow, D. (2009). Is there a career penalty for mothers' time out? A comparison of Germany, Sweden and the United States. *Social Forces*, 88(2), 573-605. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0252>
- Anderson, D. J., Binder, M., & Krause, K. (2003). The motherhood wage penalty revisited: Experience, heterogeneity, work effort, and work-schedule

flexibility. *ILR Review*, 56(2), 273-294.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/001979390305600204>

Aranda, B., & Glick, P. (2014). Signaling devotion to work over family undermines the motherhood penalty. *Group processes & intergroup relations*, 17(1), 91-99.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430213485996>

Benard, S., Paik, I., & Correll, S. J. (2007). Cognitive bias and the motherhood penalty. *Hastings Law Journal*, 59(6), 1359–1388.

Benard, S. & Correll, S. (2010) Normative discrimination and the motherhood penalty. *Gender & Society*, 24(5), 616-646. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243210383142>

Boeckmann, I., Misra, J., & Budig, M. J. (2015). Cultural and institutional factors shaping mothers' employment and working hours in postindustrial countries. *Social Forces*, 93(4), 1301-1333. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sou119>

Budig, M. J., & England, P. (2001). The wage penalty for motherhood. *American Sociological Review*, 66(2), 204–225. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657415>

Byron, R. A., & Roscigno, V. J. (2014). Relational power, legitimation, and pregnancy discrimination. *Gender & Society*, 28(3), 435–462.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214523123>

Cachia, M., & Millward, L. (2011). The telephone medium and semi-structured interviews: a complementary fit. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/17465641111188420>

Cech, E. A., & Blair-Loy, M. (2014). Consequences of flexibility stigma among academic scientists and engineers. *Work and Occupations*, 41(1), 86-110.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888413515497>

- Chen, Z. X., Tsui, A. S., & Zhong, L. (2008). Reactions to psychological contract breach: A dual perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(5), 527–548.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.481>
- Chu, A., & Posner, C. (2013). The state of women in America: A 50-state analysis of how women are faring across the nation. *September*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/StateOfWomenReport.pdf> (December 2, 2016).
- Conway, N., Guest, D., & Trenberth, L. (2011). Testing the differential effects of changes in psychological contract breach and fulfillment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(1), 267-276. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.01.003>
- Cooke, L. P. (2014). Gendered parenthood penalties and premiums across the earnings distribution in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. *European Sociological Review*, 30(3), 360-372. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcu044>
- Collins, C. (2020). *Making motherhood work: how women manage careers and caregiving*. Princeton University Press.
- Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297–1339.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/511799>
- Cuddy, A. J., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2004). When professionals become mothers, warmth doesn't cut the ice. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(4), 701-718.
- Cuddy, A. J., & Wolf, E. B. (2013). Prescriptions and punishments for working moms: How race and work status affect judgments of mothers. In R. Ely & A. Cuddy (Eds.), *Gender and work: Challenging conventional wisdom*, 36-43. Harvard Business School.

- Dow, D. M. (2015). Negotiating “the welfare queen” and “the strong Black woman” African American middle-class mothers’ work and family perspectives. *Sociological Perspectives*, 58(1), 36-55.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121414556546>
- Dow, D. M. (2016). Integrated motherhood: Beyond hegemonic ideologies of motherhood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78(1), 180-196.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12264>
- Douglas, S. J., & Michaels, M. W. (2004). *The mommy myth: The idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined all women*. New York: Free Press.
- England, P., Bearak, J., Budig, M. J., & Hodges, M. J. (2016). Do highly paid, highly skilled women experience the largest motherhood penalty? *American Sociological Review*, 81(6), 1161–1189.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416673598>
- Florian, S. M. (2017). Motherhood and employment Among Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks: A life course approach. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 80(1), 134–149.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12448>
- Florian, S. M. (2018). Racial variation in the effect of motherhood on women's employment: Temporary or enduring effect?. *Social Science Research*, 73, 80-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.012>
- Follmer, K. B., Sabat, I. E., & Siuta, R. L. (2020). Disclosure of stigmatized identities at work: An interdisciplinary review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 41(2), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2402>
- Frohlich, T.C., Kent, A. and Hess, A.E.M. (2014). *The 10 worst states for women*. 27/7 Wall Street. <http://247wallst.com/special-report/2014/10/16/the-10-worst-states-for-women-2/2/>

- Gibbert, M., & Ruigrok, W. (2010). The “what” and “how” of case study rigor: Three strategies based on published work. *Organizational research methods*, 13(4), 710-737. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428109351319>
- Glass, C. & Cook, A. (2016) Leading at the top: Understanding women’s challenges above the glass ceiling. *Leadership Quarterly*, 27(1), 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.09.003>
- Glass, C., & Cook, A. (2020). Performative contortions: How White women and people of colour navigate elite leadership roles. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(6), 1232-1252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12463>
- Glass, C., & Fodor, E. (2011). Public maternalism goes to market: Recruitment, hiring, And promotion in postsocialist hungary. *Gender & Society*, 25(1), 5-26. doi:10.1177/0891243210390518.
- Glauber, R. (2007). Marriage and the motherhood wage penalty among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69(4), 951-961. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00423.x>
- Hakim, C. (2007). Preference theory. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosp138>
- Halpert, J. A., Wilson, M. L., & Hickman, J. L. (1993). Pregnancy as a source of bias in performance appraisals. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14(7), 649-663. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030140704>
- Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. Yale University Press.
- Higginbotham, E., & Weber, L. (1992). Moving up with kin and community: Upward social mobility for black and white women. *Gender & Society*, 6(3), 416-440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124392006003005>

- Jee, E., Misra, J., & Murray-Close, M. (2018). Motherhood penalties in the U.S., 1986–2014. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *81*(2), 434–449.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12543>
- Jones, K. P. (2017). To tell or not to tell? Examining the role of discrimination in the pregnancy disclosure process at work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *22*(2), 239. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000030>
- Jones, K. P., King, E. B., Gilrane, V. L., McCausland, T. C., Cortina, J. M., & Grimm, K. J. (2016). The baby bump: Managing a dynamic stigma over time. *Journal of Management*, *42*(6), 1530-1556. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206313503012>
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the Corporation*. Basic Books.
- Kennelly, I. (1999). “That single-mother element” how white employers typify black women. *Gender & Society*, *13*(2), 168-192.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/089124399013002002>
- Killewald, A., & Zhuo, X. (2019). US mothers’ long-term employment patterns. *Demography*, *56*(1), 285-320. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0745-9>
- King, E. B. (2008). The effect of bias on the advancement of working mothers: Disentangling legitimate concerns from inaccurate stereotypes as predictors of advancement in academe. *Human Relations*, *61*(12), 1677–1711.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708098082>
- Kmec, J. A. (2011). Are motherhood penalties and fatherhood bonuses warranted? comparing pro-work behaviors and conditions of mothers, fathers, and non-parents. *Social Science Research*, *40*(2), 444–459.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.11.006>
- Kmec, J. A., O’Connor, L. T., & Schieman, S. (2014). Not ideal: The association between working anything but full time and perceived unfair treatment. *Work and Occupations*, *41*(1), 63–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888413515691>

- Kumar, Shruti, "The motherhood penalty: Not so Black and White" (2020). Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. 7157.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Luhr, S. (2020). Signaling parenthood: Managing the motherhood penalty and fatherhood premium in the U.S. service sector. *Gender & Society*, 34(2), 259–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243220905814>
- McCann, A. (2021). *Best & worst states for women's equality*. WalletHub <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835>.
- Melaku, T. M. (2019). *You don't look like a lawyer black women and systemic gendered racism*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Misra, J., Budig, M., & Boeckmann, I. (2011). Work-family policies and the effects of children on women's employment hours and wages. *Community, Work & Family*, 14(2), 139-157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2011.571396>
- NALP. (2021, February). *2020 report on diversity in U.S. law firms*. NALP Report on Diversity. <https://www.nalp.org/reportondiversity>.
- Parrott, H. M. (2014). Housework, children, and women's wages across racial-ethnic groups. *Social Science Research*, 46, 72–84. <https://doi-org.dist.lib.usu.edu/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2014.02.004>
- Roberts, D. E. (1997). Spiritual and menial housework. *Yale JL & Feminism*, 9, 51.
- Salihu, H. M., Myers, J., & August, E. M. (2012). Pregnancy in the workplace. *Occupational Medicine*, 62(2), 88-97. <https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqr198>
- Schwartz, C. R. (2010). Earnings inequality and the changing association between spouses' earnings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 115(5), 1524–1557. <https://doi-org.dist.lib.usu.edu/10.1086/651373>

- Scribner, R. T., Vargas, M., & Madsen, S. R. (2020). Flexible and family-friendly policies at Utah's "best places to work". <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/briefs/27-flexible-family-friendly-policies-utah-best-places-to-work.pdf>
- Spivey, C. (2005). Time off at what price? The effects of career interruptions on earnings. *ILR Review*, 59(1), 119-140.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/001979390505900107>
- Sterling, J., & Chanow, L. (2021). In their own words: Experienced women explain why they are leaving their firms and the profession. *American Bar Association*.
<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/intheirownwords-f-4-19-21-final.pdf>.
- Stone, P. (2007). *Opting out?*. University of California Press.
- Stone, R. A. T., Purkayastha, B., & Berdahl, T. A. (2006). Beyond Asian American: Examining conditions and mechanisms of earnings inequality for Filipina and Asian Indian women. *Sociological Perspectives*, 49(2), 261-281.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2006.49.2.261>
- Struening, K. (2009). Feminist challenges to the new familialism: Lifestyle experimentation and the freedom of intimate association. *Hypatia*, 11(1), 135-154. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1996.tb00510.x>
- Sturges, J. E., & Hanrahan, K. J. (2004). Comparing telephone and face-to-face qualitative interviewing: a research note. *Qualitative Research*, 4(1), 107-118.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794104041110>
- Turco, C. J. (2010). Cultural foundations of tokenism: Evidence from the leveraged buyout industry. *American Sociological Review*, 75(6), 894–913.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122410388491>
- Inzlicht, M. and Ben-Zeev, T. (2003). Do high-achieving female students underperform in private? The implications of threatening environments on intellectual

processing. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(4), 796-805.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.95.4.796>

Waldfogel, J. (1997). The effect of children on women's wages. *American Sociological Review*, 209-217. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657300>

Wingfield, A. H., & Wingfield, J. H. (2014). When visibility hurts and helps: How intersections of race and gender shape Black professional men's experiences with tokenization. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 20(4), 483–490. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035761>

Williams, J. (2001). *Unbending gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it*. Oxford University Press.

Williams, J. C., Blair-Loy, M., & Berdahl, J. L. (2013). Cultural schemas, social class, and the flexibility stigma. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 209-234.

Yoshino, K. (2007). *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights*. Random House Trade Paperbacks.

APPENDICES

Table 1*Respondent Demographics and Social Characteristics*

Name	Age Range	Race/Ethnicity (self-identified)	# of Kids
Alexa	36-40	Filipina	2
Bianca	31-35	White	1
Camila	36-40	Chicano	2
Daniela	36-40	Hispanic	2
Elizabeth	36-40	Multiracial	3
Frances	46-50	Hispanic	2
Gisele	36-40	White	1
Hannah	46-40	White	0
Isabel**	41-45	White	2
Jaelyn	41-45	White	4
Karena	56-60	White	0
Leticia	36-40	White	2
Mya	51-55	White	2
Natalia	36-40	White	2
Olivia	51-55	White	2
Patricia	36-40	Latina	2
Quinn**	56-60	White, Irish	0
Rachel	26-30	White	0
Samantha	26-30	White	0
Teresa	66-70	White	0
Una**	61-65	Asian	0
Victoria	31-35	White	4
Whitney	41-45	White	5
Xandra	41-45	White	5
Yolanda**	51-55	White	3
Zoe	61-65	White	5
Angela	56-60	White	3
Bethany	51-55	White	1
Carol	41-45	White	3
Donna	46-50	White	2
Eve	26-30	White	3
Fiona	46-50	Black	2
Gwen**	36-40	White	2
Harriet**	46-50	White	5
Irene	46-50	Asian/Hispanic	2
Jackie	46-50	White	2
Katrina	46-50	White	2
Lucy	61-65	Black	3
Cassie	36-40	White	0
Jennifer	36-40	Asian	0

Kara	31-35	White	0
Leah	36-40	White	0
Marina	31-35	Armenian	0
Melissa	36-40	White	7
Nala	41-45	Black	2
Sadie	31-35	White	1
Julia	31-35	White	3

Note. ** Indicates they are part of the LGBTQ+ community