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Men's – more than Women's – Parenthood Identity is Contingent on Work, Harming Well-Being during Unemployment

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Men's – more than Women's – Parenthood Identity is Contingent on Work, Harming Well-Being during Unemployment

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Doctor of Philosophy

Organization & Management

Emory University

Advisor: Melissa J. Williams, PhD

An abstract of

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This research examined whether men, more than women, construe their parenthood identity as contingent on work, resulting in worse well-being for men experiencing unemployment. In Study 1, I used a longitudinal dataset of unemployed workers and found that parenthood is more positively associated with life satisfaction for women than men. Follow-up studies revealed that fathers (vs. mothers) construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on work (Studies 2 - 3b). In an experiment, fathers experienced lower well-being than mothers when they were thinking about being unemployed (but not otherwise), and this was explained by their higher identity contingency. However, in a correlational design measuring participants' unemployment threat, I did not replicate this effect. I attribute my null results to a strong economy. Together, this research suggests that mothers – but not fathers – may benefit from their less contingent parenthood identity during unemployment. This work contributes to scholarship on identity, gender, and unemployment.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

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Men's – more than Women's – Parenthood Identity is Contingent on Work, Harming Well-Being during Unemployment

Existing scholarship and popular accounts suggest that, in heterosexual partnerships, working mothers, more than working fathers, are disadvantaged by being pulled between the demands of work and caregiving. In this dissertation, I complicate this traditional notion. I introduce the idea of identity contingency – the degree to which success or fulfillment in one identity is contingent on or interdependent with success or fulfillment in the other identity – in exploring the vulnerability inherent to men's parental role.

Both fathers and mothers care deeply about, and are invested in, their identities as parents and also their identities as working professionals. However, I suggest that the relationship between these identities differs for men and women. For working fathers, success in their parenthood role is contingent on success in their work role. That is, fathers can be successful parents by being successful at work. This is because traditional gender norms dictate that men provide financially for their families. Meanwhile, for working mothers, success in their parenthood role is traditionally less dependent on success in their work role. In other words, work and parenting require different behaviors and obligations of mothers – competence and professional success at work, nurturing and intensive caregiving at home. Even though the majority of mothers work, mothers are expected to prioritize caregiving in their parenthood identity. For women, then, success as a parent hinges less on workplace success.

Under normal circumstances, this creates challenges for working mothers (relative to working fathers), in terms of the cognitive and time demands of managing more – and different – obligations of their less-contingent identities. However, there is one context in which the relative advantage may be flipped – involuntary unemployment. Involuntary unemployment represents a

devastating threat to one's identity as a professional. I argue that it is particularly psychologically costly for fathers in light of their greater identity contingency – job loss challenges both men's professional identity and, simultaneously, their parental identity as breadwinners. While unemployed mothers also lose their professional identity, they likely retain their more-differentiated parental identity as caregivers, which may help blunt the pain of job loss. Thus, mothers might better cope with employment loss by retaining their less contingent parenthood identity.

To be sure, I am not suggesting that working mothers enjoy losing their jobs or that they are more satisfied being stay-at-home mothers than they are working. Unemployment is a negative experience that exacts a large psychological toll on everyone (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004). Rather, women's more distinct parent and work identities may blunt the well-being costs of unemployment.

In sum, I hypothesize that among involuntarily unemployed people, parenthood (vs. having no children) will be associated with positive well-being effects for women, but not men. I hypothesize that this is because achieving success as a parent is contingent on employment for fathers, more than mothers. I further hypothesize that unemployment has a lesser negative impact on mothers (vs. fathers) life satisfaction, and that this is in part because men's, more than women's, parenthood identity is contingent on employment. Finally, I hypothesize that the gender difference in life satisfaction (via identity contingency) will be stronger in the face of a threat to one's work identity than when such a threat is not present.

Indeed, if it is the case that women's more distinct parent and work identities may blunt the well-being costs of unemployment, I can expect to see this in two ways: First, among unemployed people, having a parenthood identity (vs. not) may help women – but not men –

because mothers (compared to fathers) construe their parenthood identity as more separate from their employment identity. Second, unemployment will have worse effects on fathers than mothers in terms of well-being, because fathers do not have a separate (non-contingent) parenthood identity to lean on during unemployment.

I tested my hypotheses across four studies. Study 1 is a longitudinal survey of adults who report their life satisfaction levels during a period of involuntary unemployment. This foundational study examined whether parenthood impacted how men and women experience unemployment and provides the basis for my subsequent studies by showing that parenthood has positive effects on life satisfaction for women – compared with men – during unemployment. Study 2 is a survey examining whether working fathers (vs. working mothers) construe their parenthood identity as contingent on their work identity. If it is the case that fathers – compared with mothers – construe their parenthood identity as contingent on employment, then this might explain why mothers (compared with fathers) experience more well-being during unemployment. Studies 3a and 3b used complementary methods to explore whether the reason that fathers experience worse life satisfaction than mothers is that fathers' (more than mothers') parenthood identity is contingent on their work identity, and whether this relationship emerges more strongly when the threat of potential employment loss is salient (vs. not salient). Study 3a is an experimental manipulation of hypothetical employment threat and Study 3b directly measures real employment threat. Together these studies allow me to test my full model by showing that among parents, the effect of gender on life satisfaction (Study 1) is explained by father's greater identity contingency (Study 2) among people experiencing employment threat (vs. not).

My dissertation makes five important theoretical contributions to literature on identity,

unemployment, and gender. First, I introduce the construct of identity contingency, defined as the degree to which performance in one identity hinges on performance in another identity. Given the interdependent nature of contingent identities, behaviors in one identity can lead to success – or failure – in another identity. This idea is novel to scholarship on self and identity. Second, I demonstrate that men, more than women, construe their parenthood identity as contingent on their work identity, showing that identities can have different meanings and cognitive representations depending on who occupies them. Third, I show that holding distinct identities outside of work may help people weather unemployment. This highlights the importance of identity complexity – beyond professional identities alone – in understanding how people experience and cope with job loss. Fourth, I demonstrate that because men, more than women, construe their parenthood identity as contingent on work, they are not buffered from the threat to their work identity that arises from involuntary unemployment, because they cannot retain a more-distinct parenthood identity. This highlights that although under most circumstances working mothers are more disadvantaged than working fathers in terms of managing cognitive strain and greater time demands, working fathers (vs. working mothers) may be disadvantaged when faced with unemployment. This is because unemployment threatens men's ability to provide and consequently their efficacy as a parent. Taken together, having non-contingent (albeit more demanding) identities may help people weather identity threat. Finally, I highlight a context in which gender role expectations exact costs for men as well as women. I posit that although asymmetric social changes that have opened professional opportunities for women create added strain for working mothers, the presence of a distinct parenthood identity may provide a psychological safety net during a period of job loss. Conversely, because fathers continue to enact their parenthood identity largely through their work roles, fathers remain

especially vulnerable to the devastation of career setbacks.

Identity

Scholars define identity as the traits, attitudes, relationships, demographics, and physical characteristics that people incorporate into their sense of self (Linville, 1985; Markus & Nurius, 1986; McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976; Turner, 1978). People form their identities through the social groups they belong to and the roles they occupy (for a literature review, see Ramarajan, 2014; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Social roles are particularly important in the formation of identity. Seminal work on identity posits that people want to perform well in their roles, especially if their roles are central to their sense of self (Stryker, 1968). This is because performing well in a valued role results in improved self-esteem (Brenner, Serpe, & Stryker, 2018; Stets & Burke, 2014; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Work, parenthood, gender, and marital status represent some of the most widely held and central social roles (Burke & Tully, 1977; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Thoits, 1983, 1986).

Just as people can incorporate an important role into their identities, so too can they lose that valued role, as is the case when an identity is threatened. People may feel that their identity is threatened when they anticipate future harm to their ability to perform their identity (Petriglieri, 2011). This has consequences for well-being. For example, preparing to get divorced results in worsened life satisfaction (for a meta-analysis, see Luhmann, Hofmann, Eid, & Lucas, 2012). People who experience job insecurity are also prone to worsened mental and physical health (for a meta-analysis, see Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002).

Holding Multiple Identities

People tend to have multiple identities that coexist and inform their sense of self (Thoits, 1986). Because multiple identities may call for different behaviors, people must choose how to

act across situations. People tend to resolve this dilemma by performing the identity that is most aligned with the situation they are in, particularly when the role requirements conflict (Stryker, 1968). For example, working mothers (more than fathers) may hide or minimize their parenthood identity in professional settings because parenthood puts women at risk of being perceived negatively at work (Little, Major, Hinojosa, & Nelson, 2014).

An individual's multiple identities can vary in terms of the degree to which they overlap with each other (Linville, 1985; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Identities can be said to overlap when similar attributes, values, and norms are present across identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Likewise, identities are more distinct when attributes and knowledge required of one identity are not required of another identity (Ebrahimi, Kouchaki, & Patrick, 2020; Linville, 1985, 1987). As an example, working fathers (vs. working mothers) may construe their work and parenthood identities as less distinct since what it means to be a good father (e.g., breadwinning) is similar to what it means to be a good worker (e.g., prioritize work). Together, identity distinction results when multiple identities require different behaviors, values, attributes, and knowledge (Ebrahimi et al., 2020; Jones & Hynie, 2017; Linville, 1985, 1987; Stryker, 1968).

Negative Consequences of Holding Multiple Identities

Holding multiple identities can be damaging if the number or demands of unique identities are extreme, as is the case when someone highly values more than five important identities or when there is not enough time to succeed in the identities (for a literature review, see Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Thoits, 1986). Multiple identities can also cause added strain when the behavioral demands of different identities conflict (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985; Jones & Hynie, 2017; Stryker, 1968), requiring divergent behaviors or traits (Baumeister et al., 1985; Jones & Hynie, 2017; Linville, 1985, 1987; Stryker, 1968).

Several studies find that holding multiple important, yet conflicting, identities results in worsened well-being (Brook, Garcia, & Fleming, 2008; Settles, 2004; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002). Behaving differently across multiple identities also results in cognitive depletion and feelings of inauthenticity (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Ebrahimi et al., 2020; Hodges & Park, 2013). This is because people must regularly shift their behaviors, goals, and values across situations (Ebrahimi et al., 2020).

In the case of traditional gender roles, women, more than men, may experience their demands as extreme since the demands of parenthood and work are more distinct (and more numerous) for women. Indeed, working mothers report experiencing more guilt, stress, and depression than fathers (Borelli, Nelson, River, Birken, & Moss-Racusin, 2017; Caporale, Georgellis, Tsitsianis, & Yin, 2009; Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1996; Glavin, Schieman, & Reid, 2011; Simon, 1995; Twenge, Campbell, & Foster, 2003). Working mothers also experience more work-family conflict and less satisfaction with their families, marriages, and lives, compared to working fathers (Hill, 2005). These findings support the idea that holding multiple identities has more negative consequences for working mothers (compared with working fathers), since they have to make more adjustments to their behaviors, values, and goals across their parenthood and work identities.

Positive Consequences of Holding Multiple Identities

Other evidence, however, suggests that the benefits of multiple distinct identities outweigh the negative effects (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Thoits, 1983). Indeed, having multiple distinct identities is linked to self-esteem, life satisfaction, and mental health (Cruwys et al., 2016; Jetten et al., 2015), which scholars have suggested is because multiple identities provide people with a sense of purpose (Sachs-Ericsson & Ciarlo, 2000; Thoits, 1983, 1986).

Additionally, gaining a new identity is associated with reduced depression and increased self-esteem, because gaining an identity fulfills people's need to belong and, again, gives them a sense of purpose (Greenaway, Cruwys, Haslam, & Jetten, 2016).

Multiple identities are particularly advantageous when one is facing a threat to or loss of an important identity. While balancing multiple identities can cause distress, as is the case with working motherhood, dual identities may also act as a psychological buffer against failure in one identity (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Dixon & Baumeister, 1991; Hodges & Park, 2013; Linville, 1987; Settles et al., 2002). Indeed, multiple identities offer a sense of security because people can be successful in one identity to compensate for failure in another identity (Sieber, 1974). As an example, when women – but not men – are rejected by their college peers, they become more attracted to caregiving roles (Aydin, Graupmann, Fischer, Frey, & Fischer, 2011). These findings suggest that multiple – distinct – identities may help people cope with identity threat.

Identity Contingency

I further propose that identities can be explored in terms of the degree to which they are *contingent* on each other. The idea that a person's multiple identities can be contingent was suggested by Padavic et al. (2020) but has never been formally theorized nor empirically tested. I define identity contingency as *the degree to which performance in one identity depends on performance in another identity*. Identities are more contingent on each other when the behaviors and obligations of one identity fulfill the behaviors and obligations required of a different identity.

As an example, consider a family that highly values academic achievement. For the son in this family, performing well at school also helps fulfill his identity as a son. Put another way, being a good son hinges on his behaving in ways that result in academic achievement (e.g.,

studying hard, taking advanced courses). Thus, his son identity is contingent on his academic identity. If, however, this same child misses a soccer goal leading to a major loss, this threat to his identity as an athlete will not affect his identity as a son since his family places less value on athletic achievement. His performance as a son, then, is not contingent on his athlete identity.

A central aspect of contingent identities as I theorize them is that they can be behaviorally efficient, in that one behavior can help fulfill goals in multiple identities. However, they are also more precarious, compared to non-contingent identities. Building on the example above, if the child fails a class, he may feel a threat not only to his identity as a student but also to his identity as a good son, because his identity as a son is contingent on the fulfillment of his student identity. Conversely, the son may miss every soccer shot he takes and still retain his identity as a good son; his identity as a son is not contingent on his identity as an athlete. In sum, identities are contingent on each other when performance in one identity is dependent on performance in another identity. For more contingent identities, failure in one identity threatens success in the other identity.

Work and Parenthood Identities among Men and Women

Parenthood and work are important identities for both men and women (Padavic et al., 2020; Reitzes & Mutran, 2002). Supporting this, most people (90%) report wanting children, and most people (74%) become parents during their lifetimes (Gallup, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2011, 2018). Meanwhile, most people – including 72% of women with children under 18 – are employed outside the home (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). These numbers indicate that being a parent and being a professional are roles that men and women in the current era occupy in very large numbers, and are likely among their most valued identities.

However, there are some gender differences in how people construe their work and

parenthood identities. Evidence suggests that women tend to be more committed than men to their parenthood identity, whereas men tend to be more committed than women to their spouse and work identities (Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993). Among parents, men hold their work identity (vs. parenthood identity) as more central and important to their sense of self, whereas the reverse is true for women (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Gaunt & Scott, 2017). This is not to say, however, that fathers are unconcerned about their responsibilities as parents. One study finds that men and women report equally prioritizing family, but men demonstrate dedication to their families by providing, while women demonstrate dedication to their families by spending time with their families (Lubinski, Benbow, & Kell, 2014).

Gender Roles and Identities

These differences arise from traditional gender roles that place men and women in different segments of society. According to social role theory, women occupy social roles as caregivers, while men occupy roles as paid workers and financial providers (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Steffen, 1984). As a result of this segregation in roles, women are assumed to have the communal traits that facilitate their success as caregivers, whereas men are assumed to have the agentic traits that facilitate their success as earners (Bear & Glick, 2017; A. Eagly, 1987; Riggs, 1997). These heteronormative gender roles persist despite societal shifts – both women and men expect to enter partnerships in which the husband is the primary breadwinner (Buss & Schmitt, 2019; Tinsley, Howell, & Amanatullah, 2015).

Although gender roles have relaxed as women have entered the workforce, people continue to embrace their gender identities and make choices that are normative for their gender. Evidence suggests that when women become parents they place more emphasis on workplace flexibility and having a manageable schedule, whereas men do not (Ferriman, Lubinski, &

Benbow, 2009). Indeed, most working mothers with full-time jobs (53%) would prefer to either work part-time or not at all (Pew Research Center, 2013), although financial needs may preclude this. These preferences are likely reinforced by lasting beliefs about what women and men should do. Most people believe that children should have one parent stay at home and that fathers should provide for the family (Pew Research Center, 2014a, 2017). Thus, gender norms remain sticky.

Moreover, people face consequences when they deviate from gender role expectations (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, & Phelan, 2012; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). Supporting this, mothers who continue to work after childbirth are often perceived as bad parents by others, especially if they work for personal fulfillment (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2005; Morgenroth & Heilman, 2017; Okimoto & Heilman, 2012). Additionally, women with children are judged as less competent and committed to their jobs than women without children (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007; Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). As a result, working mothers are offered lower starting salaries than women without children (Correll et al., 2007). Mothers – compared with men and women without children – are also more likely to experience hiring bias and are less likely to be promoted (Benard & Correll, 2010; Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). Conversely, men tend to incur penalties for prioritizing family over work. Men who request leave (vs. men who do not) to take care of their families are perceived as poor workers, more feminine, and less masculine (Rudman & Mescher, 2013). They also received fewer recommendations for workplace rewards (Rudman & Mescher, 2013). Additionally, men who left work to care for a child were perceived as worse performers than men who did not; women were not similarly penalized (Butler & Skattebo, 2004).

These penalties may be especially strong for men, who are even less comfortable than

women with gender role deviation. Although norms for women have expanded to include more masculine and work-related characteristics, expectations for men have not similarly expanded to include feminine and caregiving characteristics (Croft, Schmader, & Block, 2015; Diekman & Eagly, 2000). As a result, men are especially concerned about deviating from their roles (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Identity Contingency among Men and Women

I propose that not only do fathers and mothers continue to differ in the relative importance they place on work and parenthood, but also in the relationship they perceive between these two identities. Specifically, I argue that work and parenthood identities are more *contingent* for men than they are for women. This is because, for men, the behaviors they enact to be a good professional involve ambitiousness, confidence, and decisiveness while the behavior they enact to be a good father involves being courageous (Hodges & Park, 2013). Moreover, being a good and gender-normative parent involves being financially successful via his professional role. Thus, for men, fulfilling their identity as a good parent is contingent upon fulfilling their identity as a good worker. Conversely, for women, the behaviors they enact to be a good professional involve being determined and devoted; in contrast, the behaviors that women enact to be a good and gender-normative parent involve being affectionate, considerate, and nurturing (Hodges & Park, 2013). For women, then, the behaviors required at work and home are often very different from each other.

In sum, I theorize that while parenthood and work identities are important to both men and women, how fathers and mothers construe their identities will differ in terms of identity contingency. Because the behaviors, traits, and meanings of being a good professional and parent are more similar for men, men – more than women – will construe their parenthood identity as

contingent on their work identity. Formally stated,

> *Hypothesis 1*: Fathers (more than mothers) will construe their parenthood identity as contingent on their work identity.

Although identity contingencies among men and women have not directly been studied in this way, there is indirect evidence supportive of this idea. When identities are less contingent, more effort and a greater number of behaviors are required to achieve success in both of them. Indeed, employed mothers often experience their multiple identities as overwhelming and feel pulled between competing obligations (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Han & Moen, 1999; Hochschild, 1989; Roehling, Jarvis, & Swope, 2005; Simon, 1995).

This may result in lower well-being from trying to satisfy a larger number of role demands. Supporting this, most research finds that parenthood predicts greater well-being for men, but has null or negative effects for women (Balbo & Arpino, 2016; Nelson, Kushlev, English, Dunn, & Lyubomirsky, 2013; Nelson, Kushlev, & Lyubomirsky, 2014; Nelson-Coffey, Killingsworth, Layous, Cole, & Lyubomirsky, 2019). Additionally, parenthood is associated with greater stress and higher rates of depression for women but not men (Caporale et al., 2009; Galinsky et al., 1996; Twenge et al., 2003). When work interferes with family life, working mothers experience more psychological distress and guilt than fathers (Borelli et al., 2017; Glavin et al., 2011; Simon, 1995). Thus, parenthood tends to negatively impact women's (more than men's) well-being, presumably because mothers are managing more distinct, less contingent identities. However, I also argue that, in some contexts, mother's more distinct identities may actually prove to be a relative advantage.

Unemployment

In this section, I consider a context in which women's (vs. men's) less-contingent work and parenthood identities, normally a source of greater distress for women, might instead provide affective benefits: involuntary unemployment. Unemployment is the lack of paid work – here, I am not referring to people who opt out of the workforce (e.g., stay-at-home parents, retirees, students), but rather to those who seek paid work but do not currently have it, as a result of being fired or laid off.

Extensive research shows that unemployment has substantial and lasting negative consequences for well-being (Clark, Diener, Georgellis, & Lucas, 2008; Lawes, Hetschko, Schöb, Stephan, & Eid, 2022; Lucas et al., 2004; Luhmann et al., 2012; Luhmann, Weiss, Hosoya, & Eid, 2014; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005). Indeed, one study found that the negative effects of unemployment were so severe that people do not return to their previous levels of well-being even after being reemployed (Lucas et al., 2004). Other work suggests that the well-being consequences of unemployment are similar in magnitude to the negative effects of bereavement and divorce (Luhmann et al., 2012). This is likely in part because losing an important identity is a distressing event that undermines self-esteem (Burke, 1991; Cast & Burke, 2002).

Evidence further shows that unemployment is more distressing for men than for women (Artazcoz, Cortès, Escribà-Agüir, Cascant, & Villegas, 2009; Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Clark et al., 2008; Lucas et al., 2004; Paul & Moser, 2009). After losing their jobs, men experience a more precipitous drop in life satisfaction and more negative mental health outcomes than women (Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell, & Cortès, 2004; Clark et al., 2008). This is presumably because unemployed men are more likely than women to feel that they have failed to fulfill their

traditional roles as providers.

Moreover, unemployment is more distressing for parents than for people without children (Luhmann et al., 2014; Menaghan, 1989). Certainly, having to provide for children adds financial strain to the stressful experience of unemployment. Additionally, unemployment harms people's overall self-concept and other important identities (e.g., spouse; Schob, 2013). Together, I theorize that unemployment is particularly threatening to parents because unemployment results in the loss of a work identity as well as the loss of an ability to provide, a role that is central to many parents' identities. Thus, unemployment might threaten both identities since competence as a parent might require employment.

To date, no scholarship has combined an examination of parenthood and gender in understanding how people cope with unemployment. However, there is good reason to suppose that these variables will interact to affect well-being during unemployment. In an early paper supportive of these ideas, unemployed fathers were found to be more depressed and anxious than unemployed men without children, whereas there was no difference between unemployed women with and without children (Menaghan, 1989). These effects were attributed to men's greater concerns about failing to meet gender norms regarding breadwinning. However, this research used data collected in the 1970s, when only 30% of women were employed (Menaghan, 1989). Gender roles have since become more expansive for women, which merits another look at these ideas.

As theorized above, fathers (more than mothers) may construe their parenthood identity as dependent on their work identity. Moreover, having multiple identities helps people cope when faced with a threat to one identity (Koch & Shepperd, 2004). The anticipated or actual loss of one's job represents one such identity threat, the threat to one's identity as a competent

working professional. I argue therefore that fathers (vs. mothers) may not cope as well with work identity loss because unemployment simultaneously threatens their identity as a good parent, one who successfully meets a family's financial needs. Among those facing unemployment, this will manifest as mothers enjoying more of a well-being benefit from their less-contingent parenthood identity, compared to men. Formally stated,

> *Hypothesis 2*: In the context of involuntary unemployment, the effect of parenthood on well-being will be more positive for women than for men

Note that this hypothesis represents a contrast with existing research (not conducted in the context of unemployment), which typically finds that men benefit *more* than women from being parents (Balbo & Arpino, 2016; Nelson et al., 2013, 2014; Nelson-Coffey et al., 2019).

I suggest further that these effects proposed in Hypothesis 2 should be stronger among people in heterosexual marriages or stable romantic partnerships, compared to single people. First, heterosexual people are more likely, I suggest, to be affected by gender-role expectations and gender differences in identity contingency. Compared to those in the LGBT community, heterosexual people might be more beholden to and in agreement with traditional norms that emphasize male breadwinning and female caregiving. Meanwhile, partnerships allow for a greater division of labor since two people can share the load of providing and caregiving. Given the preference for the male breadwinner-female caregiver model (Tinsley, Howell, & Amanatullah, 2015), it follows that couples (in comparison to single parents) are more likely to – and more able to – split up their duties along gendered lines. Taken together, since partnered fathers have a partner to help with caregiving responsibilities and can thus fulfill their

parenthood identity by being employed, partnered fathers will be likely to construe their parenthood identity as *more* contingent on work, compared to single fathers. In contrast, partnered mothers are likely to construe their work and parenthood identities as less contingent, compared to single mothers, because they are required to be the primary caregiver while also meeting their family's financial demands via paid work.

To be sure, I am not arguing that working mothers enjoy being involuntarily employed. Unemployment is a detrimental experience that negatively impacts people's well-being (Lucas et al., 2004). Instead, I am suggesting that traditional gender roles that emphasize women as caretakers and men as breadwinners may have downstream consequences on how people experience a threat to their work identity. If women's (vs. men's) parenthood identity is less contingent on their work identity, because of lasting gender norms, this may help blunt the well-being costs of unemployment. Furthermore, I acknowledge that while gender norms shape behavior, women and men do not necessarily make an effort to sort themselves into gendered roles. Indeed, many challenge the heteronormativity inherent to traditional gender norms. This is evidenced by the increase of stay-at-home fathers in American households (Pew Research Center, 2014b). Nonetheless, gender norms remain sticky. While the average person might endorse gender equality, traditional gender norms still influence men's and women's attitudes and behavior and may ultimately impact how parents experience unemployment.

Gender, Identity Contingency, and Well-Being in the Context of Unemployment

Notably, my theory holds that women's well-being will exceed men's only in the case of threats to their identity as a professional. In other words, as described above, I predict that fathers and mothers will differ in the degree to which their parenthood identities are contingent on their work identities (Hypothesis 1.) Moreover, during unemployment, I expect more-negative effects

of parenthood among men, as compared with women (Hypothesis 2). However, in everyday situations, absent a threat of unemployment, I do not expect a gender difference in well-being. Pulling these ideas together, I next hypothesize an indirect effect of gender on identity contingency and, in turn, life satisfaction, where the relationship between identity contingency and life satisfaction emerges when threat to employment identity is high (Hypothesis 3). This model is illustrated in Figure 1.

To fully explore these ideas, I empirically explore the role of employment threat to determine its effects on men's and women's well-being, comparing those who are facing higher vs. lower levels of threat. When employment threat is high, such as when a person expects to lose or has lost their job, I expect that men's greater work-parenthood identity contingency will harm their well-being, relative to women. However, when employment threat is low, such as when a person does not have reason to expect imminent job loss, I do not necessarily expect that men's and women's different levels of identity contingency will differentially affect their well-being. Formally stated,

> *Hypothesis 3*: Among parents, there will be an indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction via identity contingency that is moderated by employment threat, such that the relationship between identity contingency and life satisfaction will be stronger when employment threat is higher (vs. lower).

Overview of Studies

Across four studies, I tested my hypotheses using longitudinal, survey, and experimental methods. I take two approaches to show that mothers (vs. fathers) separate identities blunt the negative well-being effects of employment. First, because women experience parenthood as

more separate from work, parenthood may buffer women (vs. men) from the harmful effects of unemployment. Study 1 takes this approach and examines the effect of parenthood on life satisfaction among men and women. Second, since father's – compared with mother's – parenthood identity is more contingent on work, fathers (vs. mothers) cannot lean into a distinct parenthood identity during unemployment which results in worse well-being for fathers experiencing unemployment (vs. not). Studies 2 – 3b take this second theoretical approach.

Study 1 I demonstrated via a large longitudinal dataset of unemployed workers that parenthood benefits women, but not men, experiencing involuntary unemployment, providing support for Hypothesis 2. In Study 2, I surveyed employed parents with children in the home and discovered that fathers (more than mothers) construe their parenthood identity as contingent on their work identity, supporting Hypothesis 1.

Given that fathers construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, I directly examined in Studies 3a and 3b if this is the reason why parenthood benefits fathers less than mothers during unemployment (relative to employment). In Study 3a, I experimentally manipulated employment threat and measured identity contingency and well-being to discover that father's (more than mother's) parenthood identity is contingent on their work identity, leading fathers to experience worse well-being, and that this effect is stronger when participants imagine being fired (compared to a control condition). This study allowed me to randomly assign people to experience a threat to their identity as professionals, thus allowing a causal test of employment threat on well-being. Study 3a demonstrated an indirect effect of gender on well-being, via identity contingency, especially among people experiencing greater employment threat, and supported my moderated-mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 3). Finally, in Study 3b, I measured employment threat among a real-world sample, along with identity

contingency and well-being and replicated my findings that fathers (more than mothers) experience their parenthood identities as more contingent on work. However, I did not replicate my findings from Study 3a that fathers' (vs. mothers') greater identity contingency explains worse life satisfaction when experiencing employment threat. I argue that strong labor market conditions contribute to low employment threat among my sample, thus resulting in null effects.

Together, this dissertation examines whether parenthood buffers men less than women from involuntary unemployment because men's (more than women's) parenthood identity hinges on workplace success. All materials (Studies 2 – 3b), syntax (Studies 1 – 3b), and data (Studies 1 – 3b) can be found at: https://osf.io/wyd5k/?view_only=cea00fbdfa494cd699890ebc333b7d73. I report all sample size calculations, data exclusions, manipulations (Study 3a only), and measures in each study.

Study 1

In Study 1, I tested Hypothesis 2 by using a large, longitudinal dataset of New Jersey residents who received unemployment benefits during the Great Recession (N = 4,816) to determine whether women, more than men, experience benefits from their parenthood identity when faced with career threat. I also assessed whether partnership strengthens my hypothesized effects, given that women in partnerships (vs. single women) are likely to construe their parenthood identity as less contingent on their work identity, and men in partnerships (vs. single men) are more likely to construe their parenthood identity as contingent on their work identity. Because sexual orientation was not captured, I was unable to examine whether the effects of parenthood on life satisfaction are stronger among heterosexual partners (compared to LGBT partnerships). Given my theorizing that heterosexual people – in comparison to members of the LGBT community – are more likely to be influenced by gender-role expectations and it is

probable that a small portion of my sample identifies as a member of the LGBT community, this should add noise to my tests. An initial survey gathered demographic information, including parenthood status. Subsequently, respondents completed weekly surveys, which included a measure of life satisfaction. Respondents were invited to participate in the study for up to 24 weeks. This well-powered study is high in ecological validity and complements the follow-up tests of mechanism (Studies 2-3b).

Method

Participants

The initial sample, recruited by the Princeton Survey Research Center, consisted of 6,025 people who were receiving unemployment benefits in New Jersey between October 2009 and April 2010 (Krueger, Mueller, Davis, & Şahin, 2011). Participants were recruited via e-mail, mail, and telephone. An initial survey asked respondents about their well-being, job history, job search activities, home ownership, spouse work status, and demographics. Each week for up to 24 weeks, respondents were asked about their well-being, job search activities, career goals, and household finances that week.

The current study retained all respondents who had valid data for all independent, dependent, and control variables. This yielded a final sample of 4,816 participants. Within this sample, the majority of respondents were female (52%) and had children (69%). The sample was largely White (82%) with a mean age of 48 years (*SD* = 12). Slightly more than half of the sample held a college degree (55%) and were either married or had a live-in partner (59%). Of those with partners, most had partners who were employed (74%). Before unemployment, the average household income was $62,380 (*SD* = $26,612).[1] On average, participants had spent 6.2 years (*SD* = 7.4) at their jobs before becoming unemployed. The average length of

unemployment prior to the start of the study was 61.8 weeks (*SD* = 45.3).[2]

Measures

Independent Variables. Parenthood was captured from the item asking participants how many children they had. This variable was coded as 1 (children) or 0 (no children).[3] Gender was coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male).

Dependent Variable. Life satisfaction was measured weekly using the following item: "Taking all things together, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Are you: very satisfied, satisfied, not satisfied, not at all satisfied?" Responses were recoded such that higher scores reflected greater life satisfaction. While single-item measures generally have reliability limitations, single-item measures of life satisfaction have been shown to be similarly predictive of other attitudes and behaviors as multi-item scales (Cheung & Lucas, 2014; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). As a result, single-item measures are commonly used in the well-being literature (e.g., Luhmann et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2013; Nelson-Coffey et al., 2019). Furthermore, the longitudinal nature of the data bolsters the reliability of this measure since it was assessed multiple times.

Control Variables. In all models, I controlled for age, age squared, income, race, partnership status, and education given their established relationships with parenthood, gender, and well-being (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004, 2008; Deaton, 2008; Horley & Lavery, 1995; Martinez, Daniels, & Chandra, 2012; Salinas-Jiménez, Artés, & Salinas-Jiménez, 2011; Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002). Finally, I controlled for days unemployed as of that survey week, given that life satisfaction changes throughout unemployment (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Fujita & Diener, 2005; Lucas et al., 2004).

Age was measured using the following categories: 1) 17-19, 2) 20-24, 3) 25-29, 4) 30-34,

5) 35-39, 6) 40-44, 7) 45-49, 8) 50-54, 9) 55-59, 10) 60-64, 11) 65-69, and 12) 70 and over.

Household income before unemployment was measured using the following categories: 1) Less than $10,000, 2) $10,000-$19,999, 3) $20,000-$29,999, 4) $30,000-$39,999, 5) $40,000-$49,999, 6) $50,000-$59,999, 7) $60,000-$69,999, 8) $70,000-$79,999, 9) $80,000-$89,000, 10) $90,000-$99,999, 11) $100,000-$149,999, and 12) $150,000 and over. I logged income to account for the skewed nature of the variable.

Race was measured using the following categories: White, Black, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. Because of the small number of respondents identifying as Asian, American Indian, or Pacific Islander, I categorized participants as White, Black, or Other Race and created two dummy variables: Black (1 = Black, 0 = not Black) and Other Race (1 = Asian, American Indian, or Pacific Islander, 0 = not one of these groups).

Partnership status was measured using the following categories: Single, Married, Separated, Divorced, Widowed, Domestic Partnership (living together but not married). I categorized participants as Partnered (1) if they selected Married or Domestic Partnership or Single (0) if they selected Single, Separated, Divorced, or Widowed.

Education was coded as 1 if the respondent had a college diploma and 0 if not.

Finally, days unemployed was calculated as the difference between the date the participant reported last working and the date of that particular weekly survey. As such, this control variable varied over the survey's 24-week progression.

Analytic Strategy

Most participants had multiple life satisfaction responses (M = 6.71 responses) collected weekly over the study period. Given the nested nature of the data, I first computed the intraclass correlation using a null model. The intraclass correlation for life satisfaction ratings was .65,

indicating moderate variance at within-person levels. I, therefore, used hierarchical models to account for multiple observations within individuals, with weekly responses at level 1 and respondents at level 2, and analyzed all data using STATA SE/16.0.

Some participants (n = 383) remained in the survey after they became reemployed. Because my theory only applies to people experiencing job loss, surveys that were completed after re-employment were excluded from analysis.

Results

Mean, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables are shown in Table 1. As seen in Table 1, women reported greater life satisfaction than men and parents reported greater life satisfaction than people without children. Further, life satisfaction decreased as the duration of unemployment increased.

Table 2 presents results of the multilevel models. Model 1 includes only the control variables. In Model 2, I added the variables for gender and parenthood, as well as an interaction term for parenthood and gender to test whether parenthood was differentially associated with life satisfaction for women and men. Consistent with my hypothesis, this interaction was significant, b = .125, SE = .04, z = 3.02, p =.003, *95% CI* = .04, .21 (Table 2, Model 2).

To better understand the nature of this interaction, I used simple slope analyses to examine the effects of parenthood separately for men and women. Results showed that parenthood was associated with greater life satisfaction for women, b = .09, SE = .03, z = 2.86, p = .004, *95% CI* = .03, .15 (see Table 2, Model 3), but was not related to life satisfaction for men, b = -.05, SE = .04, z = - 1.50, p = .134, *95% CI* = -.12, .02 (see Table 2, Model 4). This pattern is displayed graphically in Figure 2.

Partnership Status

I next analyzed this effect in greater detail to determine whether partnership status moderates the gender by parenthood interaction. As previously noted, my theory suggests that if my observed effects are driven by the tendency for men (vs. women) to construe their parenthood identity as contingent on work, they should emerge among people in partnerships more than among single participants. Again, this is because women in partnerships are likely to construe their identities more differently than single women, such that single women (vs. partnered women) might construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity because they need to fulfill both breadwinner and caregiver responsibilities. Thus, partnership status should further moderate the interaction between gender and parenthood on life satisfaction.

I tested this with a three-way interaction between parenthood, gender, and partnership status (partnered vs. single), in this case removing partnership status as a control variable. This interaction was significant, $b = .096$, $SE = .04$, $z = 2.33$, $p = .020$, *95% CI* = .02, .18 (see Table 3, Model 1), supporting my hypothesis. To unpack this interaction, I next examined the effect of gender and parenthood on life satisfaction separately for participants in romantic partnerships and single participants.

As shown in Table 3, Model 2, and as illustrated in Figure 3a, the interaction between gender and parenthood among participants in romantic partnerships was significant, $b = .32$, $SE = .06$, $z = 4.85$, $p < .001$, *95% CI* = .19, .44.[4] Simple slope analyses revealed that parenthood was predictive of improved well-being for partnered women, $b = .17$, $SE = .05$, $z = 3.58$, $p < .001$, *95% CI* = .08, .26 (see Table 3, Model 3), and worse well-being for partnered men, $b = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $z = -3.22$, $p = .001$, *95% CI* = -.25, -.06 (see Table 3, Model 4).

In contrast, for single participants, as shown in Table 3, Model 5, and as illustrated in

Figure 3b, the interaction between gender and parenthood was not significant, b = -.06, SE = .06, z = -.97, p = .333, *95% CI* = -.18, .06. Consistent with my prediction, having a romantic partner was associated with a stronger differential effect of parenthood on life satisfaction for women (relative to men).

Exploratory Moderators

I also explored whether my key findings might differ across demographics; these analyses were exploratory as I did not have specific *a priori* predictions about them. Specifically, I tested 6 potential moderators: age, Black race, other race, education, income, amount of time the participant was unemployed at the time the participant took the survey, time participants were unemployed prior to the survey, and being in a traditional partnership before unemployment (1 = women with working spouses and men with non-working spouses, 0 = men with working spouses and women with non-working spouses).

None of these were significant moderators of the gender x parenthood interaction, all ps > 0.065.[5] In other words, the tendency for parenthood to differentially impact women's and men's life satisfaction did not significantly differ as a function of several key social indicators.

Discussion

Existing research holds that working mothers are more disadvantaged by their dual work and parenthood identities than working fathers (Hochschild, 1989; Pew Research Center, 2015). In Study 1, I explore one context in which mothers, more than fathers, may benefit from their less-contingent identities: involuntary unemployment. Among a sample of unemployed individuals, I find that having children (vs. not) is associated with a greater positive impact on life satisfaction among women than among men, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Note that these results contrast with existing literature, which did not explore samples of

unemployed individuals, and tends to find instead that parenthood has more positive benefits for *men* than for women (Balbo & Arpino, 2016; Nelson et al., 2013, 2014; Nelson-Coffey et al., 2019). The current findings, however, are consistent with my theorizing that for men, job loss is likely associated with a loss of identity as both a worker and, for fathers, a parent. As a result, fathers' identity as parents does little to buffer them against job loss, since men's parenthood identity depends on employment. However, for mothers, their less-contingent parenthood identity may provide an affective buffer (relative to women without children) against the loss of their identity as employees.

One limitation of Study 1 is that it does not capture sexual orientation. My theorizing holds that people in heterosexual partnerships (compared to those in LGBT partnerships) are more likely to conform to gender norms that emphasize male breadwinning and female caregiving and are thus more likely to exhibit gender differences in identity contingency. Additionally, children's ages were not captured in Study 1. Given that the caregiving aspect of parenthood is more labor intensive – and mothers (vs. fathers) are more likely to take on this caregiving role – with younger (vs. older) children, I would expect a stronger gender difference in identity contingency among couples with younger (vs. older) children. Custodial arrangements were also not measured, so I was not able to assess gender differences in identity contingency across different living arrangements. However, I suggest that gender differences in identity contingency should be stronger in households with full custody (vs. other living arrangements) because these households are likely to experience greater caregiving demands. While I could not select on or control for these variables, this should add noise to my results since children's older age, LGBT sexual orientation, and reduced custodial arrangements should weaken, rather than strengthen my results.

Furthermore, Study 1 is high in ecological validity, in that it examines a real-world sample of people experiencing unemployment, but it does not directly test the role of identity contingency in impacting men's and women's well-being. Again, I theorize that men (more than women) construe their parenthood identities as contingent on their work identities, making them more vulnerable to the psychological blow of unemployment. That is, the pattern that emerged in Study 1 may be explained in part by gender differences in identity contingency. In Study 2, I test the first step in this model, whether men (vs. women) construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity.

Study 2

In Study 2, I used a survey design and a sample of employed parents in partnerships (N = 851) to directly assess the degree to which participants construe their parenthood identities as contingent on their work identities (Hypothesis 1). This survey design tests the initial step of my proposed model (see Figure 1) and provides the foundation to test the full model in Studies 3a and 3b. As argued above, because fathers (but not mothers) traditionally fulfill expectations for being a good parent using the same behaviors and goals that they use to be a good worker (that is, to be professionally and financially successful), they may think of their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, compared to mothers.

Method

Participants

This study used a 2-cell between-subjects design to determine if fathers construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, as compared with mothers. Using a small effect size, error probability of 0.05, and 80% power, I calculated a required sample size of 788 participants in G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). To allow for

participant exclusion (described below), I aimed to recruit 1,000 participants.

Ultimately, 1,080 people completed the survey on Prolific, exceeding my recruitment goal of 1,000. Prolific collects demographic information from survey participants which a researcher can then select on. This feature allowed me to screen on people who were employed full-time, married, engaged, or in a domestic partnership, living with a biological child full-time, and said that they were heterosexual. Selecting these attributes allowed a cleaner test of my theory that traditional gender role expectations influence the gender difference in identity contingency since this sample is more beholden to traditional gender norms.

I excluded participants whose responses to the demographic questions conflicted with their responses to the demographic information they provided to Prolific. This includes participants who were not in a relationship (n = 16), not employed full-time (n = 18), not heterosexual (n = 7), did not have any children (n = 9). Responses that did not indicate male or female gender were coded as missing (n = 38). I also excluded participants who failed the comprehension check (n = 141). This resulted in a final sample of 851 participants.

Within this sample, slightly over half the respondents were male (51%) and almost half the sample was female (48%). The average number of children was 1.91 (SD = 0.91) and the average age of children was 9.86 years (SD = 6.42). The sample was largely White (89%) with a mean age of 42.17 years (SD = 9.94). Most of the sample held a college degree (62%) and were married (76%). Most of the sample was from the UK (75%). The average personal income was \$59,694 (SD = \$30,997) and the average household income was \$92,751 (SD = \$57,794).[6] I created a breadwinner measure by dividing the participant's personal income by their household income. A breadwinner is classified as someone who contributes over 50% to their household income. Most (74%) of the sample are financial breadwinners. On average, participants had

spent 4.06 years (*SD* = 1.56 years) at their jobs.

Procedure

Study materials for Study 2 are available in Appendix A. Participants first gave their consent to participate in the survey, provided their unique Prolific ID, and answered demographic questions (e.g., employment status) and questions about their family's composition (e.g., custodial arrangements). After answering these items, participants responded to questions about their identity contingency, identity importance, identity separation, and a comprehension check. These scales are outlined in the measures section below. Finally, participants answered another set of demographic questions.

Measures

Independent Variable. Gender was coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male).

Dependent Variable. Participants were asked to complete a measure of identity contingency, the primary dependent variable. Identity contingency was captured using a scale originally designed to measure whether people would think of themselves as less of a man or woman should they be diagnosed with a gender-stereotyped mental illness (Michniewicz, Bosson, Lenes, & Chen, 2016). I adapted the scale to assess whether participants think more or less of themselves as parents given their employment status. In the adapted scale, participants were asked about employment instead of mental illness and parent instead of man or woman. The eight identity contingency items were: (1) "If I did not have a job, I would see myself as less of a parent," (2) "If I was unemployed, I would see myself as a bad parent," (3) "If I wasn't working, I would be able to be a better parent," (4) "If I wasn't employed, I would see myself as a better parent," (5) "Being employed helps me be the kind of parent I want to be," (6) "Having a job makes me a better parent," (7) "Working hurts my ability to be the kind of parent I want to

be," and (8) "Being employed makes me a worse parent." I reverse-coded items one through four so that all identity contingency items reflect the sentiment that working contributes to greater parenting efficacy. The resulting identity contingency variable is the average of all eight items ($\alpha = 0.85$).

Exploratory Measures. After completing the identity contingency measure, participants were asked to complete several measures included for exploratory purposes. First is the Identity Role Importance scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), which was originally developed to measure how strongly a person embraces their social group identity. I adapted the scale to assess how strongly participants identify with their work and parenthood identities by replacing the word social group with work and parenthood. An example of an identity importance item is: "In general, being a parent is an important part of my self-image." Individuals' identity importance may be related to their identity contingency. Participants responded to questions about their parenthood identity ($\alpha = 0.85$) separately from their work identity ($\alpha = 0.89$). The order of these measures was randomized.

Next, participants were asked to complete two measures capturing the degree to which they perceive their identities as separate. The Inclusion of Others in the Self scale (Aron et al., 1992) was originally designed to assess closeness between the self and another person. I adapted this one-item scale to assess how people construe the relationship between their work and parenthood identities. In this assessment, participants were presented with seven figures, each with two circles, varying in the degree to which the circles are separate from each other (see Appendix A). The word "Parenthood" was presented in one circle and the word "Work" in the other circle. Participants were asked to consider the responsibilities, obligations, and goals they have for their work and parenthood identities. Participants were then asked: "Please select the

picture below that best describes the relationship between these identities."

The second measure capturing identity separation is an adaptation of the Bicultural Identity Separation – Version 2 scale (Huynh, Benet-Martínez, & Nguyen, 2018). This validated measure examines whether people from bicultural backgrounds construe their two cultural identities as congruent with each other (vs. in conflict with each other) and as blended (vs. separate). My adapted measure instead assesses people's construal of their identities as professional and parent. In this assessment, participants were presented with two subscales: Harmony ($\alpha = 0.93$) and Blendedness ($\alpha = 0.55$). An example item in the Harmony subscale is: "I do not feel trapped between my parenthood and work identities"; an example item in the Blendedness subscale is: "I feel like a parent and a working professional at the same time."

Comprehension Check. Participants also responded to comprehension check to assess their comprehension of the study: "What did you not get asked about during this survey?" They had the option to select Parenthood, Work, or Friendship. Participants were only surveyed on their parenthood and work identities and did not receive any questions about their friendships.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables are shown in Table 4. I conducted a one-way ANOVA to analyze my data and used gender (male vs. female) to predict identity contingency (Hypothesis 1).

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, fathers ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.12$), compared to mothers ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.19$), construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, $F(1, 849) = 44.25$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.49$.

Using an exploratory measure, I also assessed how strongly participants identify with their work and parenthood identities. Fathers ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.66$) and mothers ($M = 4.80$, $SD =$

0.64) equally felt that their parenthood identity was important to them, $F(1, 849) = 0.33$, $p = 0.564$, $d = -0.03$. Conversely, mothers ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.44$) compared to fathers ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.49$), felt that their employment identity was more important to them, $F(1, 849) = 9.98$, $p = 0.002$, $d = -0.26$.[7]

I also examined how people construe the relationship between their work and parenthood identities using an adaptation the Bicultural Identity Separation – Version 2 scale (Huynh et al., 2018). Mothers ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.52$) compared to fathers ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.51$), felt that their parenthood and work identities were less blended, $F(1,849) = 4.78$, $p = 0.029$, $d = -0.11$. Meanwhile, mothers ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.04$) compared with fathers ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 0.88$) felt that their parenthood and work identities were less harmonized, $F(1, 849) = 4.78$, $p = 0.029$, $d = -0.47$. Higher values indicate more incompatibility between the two identities.

Finally, I examined identity separation using an adaptation of the Inclusion of Others in the Self scale (Aron et al., 1992). There were no significant differences between fathers ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.80$) and mothers ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.86$), $F(1, 849) = 0.15$, $p = 0.700$, $d = -0.04$.

Discussion

In Study 2, I demonstrated that fathers (vs. mothers) construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, supporting Hypothesis 1. This is because, I argue, that parents continue to be beholden to gender norms such that a man's identity as a parent is contingent on his identity as a worker – both require him to achieve professional and financial success. Meanwhile, mothers must behave differently in their parent and work identities to satisfy different caregiving and work norms.

Additionally, my findings differ from Greenberger & O'Neil (1993) to show that mothers – compared to fathers – exhibit a stronger work identity. I attribute this difference to women's

significant role expansion into work over the last 30 years, wherein women have increasingly incorporated employment into their identity. Indeed, over the past 30 years, it may have become more socially acceptable for mothers to endorse – and report – professional aspirations. Moreover, I show that mothers, compared with fathers, construe work as a source of personal fulfillment which helps explain mother's (vs. father's) stronger work identity importance. That is, partnered mothers, compared with partnered fathers, might have more choice on whether they enter the labor market. Opting in to the labor market for personal fulfillment (vs. working out of obligation) may lead mothers – more than fathers – to experience their employment as more personal because they *choose* to incorporate employment into their identity. In Studies 3a and 3b, I probe why mothers – compared with fathers – might construe their employment identities as more important by asking about motivations for work (e.g., salary, personal fulfillment, professional status).

Study 2 builds on Study 1 by providing suggestive evidence that the reason that parenthood has more positive effects for women during involuntary unemployment is that mothers (vs. fathers) are able to retain their relatively distinct parenthood identity despite work failure. However, a limitation of Study 2 is that it does not directly test my proposed mechanism, specifically, that gender differences in identity contingency drive greater life satisfaction among unemployed mothers (relative to fathers). To build on Studies 1 and 2, I next directly test my full proposed model in Studies 3a and 3b.

Study 3a

Studies 3a and 3b seek to bring together the findings of Studies 1 and 2 by demonstrating that the reason fathers do not weather unemployment as well as mothers (as shown in Study 1) is that fathers construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity (as

shown in Study 2). Study 1 demonstrated that the effect of parenthood on life satisfaction is more positive for women than for men, but does not test whether identity contingency drives these effects. Study 2 demonstrated that fathers (vs. mothers) construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, but does not directly test whether this accounts for the greater life satisfaction among mothers (vs. fathers) facing unemployment. Studies 3a and 3b address these limitations by testing the full indirect effect of gender on identity contingency and, in turn, life satisfaction.

Studies 3a and 3b also explore the moderating role of unemployment. My theory holds that fathers will show greater identity contingency than mothers and that this will yield lower life satisfaction for fathers than mothers – but only in circumstances when work identity is threatened. See the complete model of moderated mediation in Figure 1.

To test this, it is essential that I investigate the role of threats to work identity. Because I cannot randomly assign individuals to be unemployed vs. not, Studies 3a and 3b instead take two alternative, complementary approaches to this variable. In Study 3a, I experimentally manipulated employment threat by asking some participants to imagine what it would be like to be fired, using an immersive exercise. Their responses were compared to those of a control condition who maintains their current employment. In Study 3b, I measured the degree to which currently employed individuals anticipate being fired in the near future. These two approaches balance the benefits of experimental control (Study 3a) and realism (Study 3b) in testing the moderating role of employment threat on gender differences in life satisfaction, via identity contingency.

This study also probes the curious finding from Study 2 that mothers – compared with fathers – experience their work identities as more important. To assess this, I added two

measures of work motivation, working for personal fulfillment and working for a salary. If mothers, more than fathers, are more motivated by personal fulfillment (vs. salary), they may experience employment as more of a *choice*, which could explain why mothers, more than fathers, indicate a stronger employment identity. Moreover, if mothers (vs. fathers) work more for personal fulfillment while fathers (vs. mothers) work more for a salary, it follows that mothers' parenthood identity is less contingent on work given that personal fulfillment is not directly linked to a parent's ability to care for a child. Meanwhile, fathers' parenthood identity might be more contingent on work because income is tied to a parent's ability to provide for a child. This could support my theory that fathers' (vs. mothers') parenthood identity is contingent on employment because fathers (vs. mothers) work to provide income to their family, thus fulfilling breadwinner norms.

Finally, I examined whether the proportion of personal income to household income (vs. being male) helps explain my hypothesized effects. If it is the case that high personal to household income earners (vs. low personal to household income earners) experience worse life satisfaction, then it is possible that gender may only partially explain why fathers (vs. mothers) suffer more when experiencing unemployment. By examining the impact of earning proportion and gender on well-being during unemployment, I am able to disentangle gender from financial contribution to provide support for my theory that gender indeed drives differences in life satisfaction.

Method

Participants

In this study, I used a 2 (Gender: female, male) x 2 (Employment manipulation: Employment Threat, Control) between-subjects experimental design to test my moderated

mediation model. Using a small effect size, error probability of 0.05, and 80% power, I calculated a required sample size of 1,576 participants in G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). This sample size allows me to test for both the hypothesized Gender x Employment Status and Gender x Identity Contingency interactions (see Figure 1), predicted simple effects within each level, and the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction, mediated by identity contingency and moderated by employment threat.

To allow for participant exclusions and attrition, I aimed to recruit 2,000 participants through Prolific, none of whom participated in Study 2. Ultimately, 2,066 people participated, exceeding my recruitment goal. I excluded participants whose responses to the demographic questions conflicted with their responses to the demographic information they provided to Prolific. This includes participants who were not in a relationship (n = 47), not employed full-time (n = 48), not heterosexual (n = 15), did not have any children (n = 28), and did not have full custody of their children (n =246). Responses that did not indicate male or female gender were coded as missing (n = 41). I also excluded participants who failed the comprehension check (n = 212). This resulted in a final sample of 1,429.

Within this sample, the majority of respondents were male (55%). The average number of children was 1.94 (SD = 0.90) and the average age of children was 9.46 years (SD = 6.20). The sample was largely White (87%) with a mean age of 39.96 years (SD = 8.29). Most of the sample hold a college degree (62%) and are married (77%). Most of the sample is from the UK (77%). The average personal income was $62,393 ($SD$ = $35,566) and the average household income was $101,850 ($SD$ = $79,822). Most (66%) of the sample are financial breadwinners and earned over half their household's income. On average, participants had spent 3.71 years (SD = 1.55 years) at their jobs.

Procedure

Study materials for Study 3a are available in Appendix B. Participants first gave their consent to participate in the survey, provided their unique Prolific ID, and answered demographic questions (e.g., employment status) and questions about their family's composition (e.g., custodial arrangements). Next, they completed the same measure of identity contingency, as in Study 2. The identity contingency measure is the mediator in my analysis. Participants also answered the same exploratory measures about the importance of their parenthood and employment identities as well as motivations for work as was used in Study 2. Participants were then randomly assigned to the control condition or the experimental condition. Next, participants answered a measure of life satisfaction, my dependent variable, and self-esteem. Finally, participants answered the same comprehension check and another set of demographic questions, as in Study 2.

Measures

Independent Variable. Gender was coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male).

Identity Contingency. As in Study 2, participants were asked to complete the same measure of identity contingency ($\alpha = 0.84$).

Identity Importance. As in Study 2, participants were asked to answer the same exploratory measures about the importance of their parenthood ($\alpha = 0.82$) and employment ($\alpha = 0.90$) identities.

Reasons for Working. This included two reasons for working, for personal fulfillment and salary. The two-item measure of working for personal fulfillment ($\alpha = 0.87$) consisted of the following items: "I work because my career is personally fulfilling to me" and "I work because my career is important to my identity." The two-item measure of working for a salary ($\alpha = 0.79$)

consisted of the following items: “I work because my salary is beneficial to my family” and “I work so that my family can maintain an acceptable standard of living.” The items were developed based on Bridges & Orza (1992).

Experimental Manipulation of Employment Threat. After participants completed the identity contingency measure and exploratory measures, I introduced the experimental manipulation. Participants randomly assigned to the employment threat condition read: “Now imagine that you just got fired from your job with no severance pay. It could be a while before you become re-employed. Please spend the next 30 seconds considering what you would think and feel if you lost your job.” This manipulation was adapted from one used in a previous study to induce the threat of unemployment (Michniewicz, Vandello, & Bosson, 2014). Participants were then presented with two follow-up questions with open text boxes to ensure that they took the manipulation seriously. An example of a follow-up item for the experimental condition is: “Imagine that you are still unemployed over the next few months. What kinds of feelings would you be having?” In contrast, participants randomly assigned to the control condition read: “Imagine the next few months at work. What kinds of feelings would you be having?”

Life Satisfaction. Participants were presented with a four-item measure of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985), slightly adapted to reflect the imagined employment threat situation (or control). An example of an adapted life satisfaction item is: “My life would be close to my ideal.” This represents the primary dependent variable ($\alpha = 0.96$).

Self-Esteem. Participants were also presented with an exploratory measure assessing state self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991, $\alpha = 0.96$). I added this measure because holding multiple distinct identities is associated with self-esteem (Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Cast & Burke, 2002; Greenaway et al., 2016; Jetten et al., 2015; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King,

2002). Having a less-contingent parenthood identity might also offer mothers, more than fathers, a distinct source of self-esteem to help them cope with unemployment. An example of a state self-esteem item is: "I feel inferior to others at this moment."

Comprehension Check. To verify that participants comprehended the questions they were asked, they were presented with the same comprehension check as in Study 2.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables are shown in Table 5. Means and standard deviations for life satisfaction as a function of gender and condition are shown in Table 6. I examined identity contingency as a mediator and employment status as a moderator of gender on life satisfaction using Hayes SPSS Process Macro (Model 15, Hayes, 2013).

Hypothesis Tests

Consistent with Hypothesis 1 and replicating Study 2, fathers (M = 4.77, SD =1.13) compared to mothers (M = 4.37, SD =1.15) construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, b = -0.41, SE = 0.06, $t(1,427)$ = -6.73, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = -0.53, -0.29, d = 0.38, see Figure 4. This reflects the *a* path in my model (see Figure 4). Mothers (M = 3.35, SD = 1.61) and fathers (M = 3.28, SD = 1.73) exhibited no difference in life satisfaction, b = 0.07, SE = 0.09, $t(1,423)$ = 0.75, p = 0.43, *95% CI* = -0.11, 0.24, d = -0.05 see Figure 4. This reflects the *c* path in my model (see Figure 4).

I next examined the relationship between identity contingency and life satisfaction and found no effect of identity contingency on life satisfaction, b = 0.05, SE = 0.04, $t(1,427)$ = 1.29, p = 0.196, *95% CI* = -0.03, 0.12, see Figure 4. My prediction that the effect of employment threat on life satisfaction will be more negative for people whose identities are more contingent

was supported, b = -0.43, SE = 0.06, $t(1,423)$ = -7.76, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = -0.54, -0.32, see Figure 4. Among people in the experimental condition, the effect of identity contingency is associated with worse life satisfaction, b = -0.19, SE = 0.04, $t(1,423)$ = - 4.91, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = -0.27, -0.32. Conversely, among people in the control condition, identity contingency is associated with improved life satisfaction, b = 0.24, SE = 0.04, $t(1,423)$ = 6.06, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = 0.16, 0.32. I did not expect that identity contingency would be associated with life satisfaction. This interesting finding suggests that there may be some benefit to holding more contingent identities when neither identity is threatened. This reflects the moderated b path in my model (see Figure 4).

Contrary to my prediction that the effect of employment threat on life satisfaction would be more negative for fathers than mothers, I did not find a gender difference in life satisfaction between those in the experimental unemployed and the control condition, b = 0.09, SE = 0.13, $t(1,423)$ = 0.68, p = 0.50, *95% CI* = -0.16, 0.34, see Figure 4. This suggests that unemployment negatively impacts fathers and mothers well-being similarly. This reflects the moderated c path in my model (see Figure 4).

Finally, I found an overall moderated-mediation effect such that the indirect effect of participant gender on life satisfaction, via identity contingency, was stronger for participants in the employment threat condition than the control condition (Hypothesis 3; see Figure 4). Specifically, among people in the experimental condition, the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction via identity contingency was positive, b = 0.08, SE = 0.02, *95% CI* = 0.04, 0.12. Conversely, among people in the control condition, the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction via identity contingency was negative, b = -0.10, SE = 0.02, *95% CI* = -0.15, -0.06. That is, among participants anticipating unemployment, fathers were less satisfied than mothers,

as a result of their more-contingent identities, *Index* = 0.18, *SE* = 0.04, *95% CI* = 0.11, 0.25.

Exploratory Analyses

I found an overall moderated-mediation effect such that the indirect effect of participant gender on self-esteem, via identity contingency, was stronger for participants in the employment threat condition than the control condition. Specifically, among people in the experimental condition, the indirect effect of gender on self-esteem via identity contingency was positive, *b* = 0.14, *SE* = 0.03, *95% CI* = 0.09, 0.20. Conversely, among people in the control condition, there was no indirect effect of gender on self-esteem via identity contingency, *b* = -0.03, *SE* = 0.02, *95% CI* = -0.07, 0.01. That is, among participants anticipating unemployment, fathers exhibited worse self-esteem than mothers, as a result of their more-contingent identities, *Index* = 0.17, *95% CI* = 0.10, 0.25.

The effect of unemployment threat on self-esteem between mothers and fathers was significant, *b* = 0.35, *SE* = 0.15, *t*(1,423) = 2.31, *p* = 0.021, *95% CI* = 0.02, 0.05. Among people in the control condition, mothers had worse self-esteem than fathers, *b* = -0.35, *SE* = 0.11, *t*(1,423) = -3.22, *p* = 0.001, *95% CI* = -0.56, -0.14. Among people in the experimental condition, there was no gender difference in self-esteem, *b* = -0.0009, *SE* = 0.10, *t*(1,423) = -0.01, *p* = 0.993, *95% CI* = -0.21, 0.20.

Meanwhile, the effect of unemployment threat on self-esteem was stronger among people who indicated greater identity contingency, *b* = -0.42, *SE* = 0.06, *t*(1,423) = -6.45, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = 0.05, 0.64. Among people in the control condition, identity contingency was not associated with self-esteem, *b* = 0.07, *SE* = 0.05, *t*(1,427) = 1.57, *p* = 0.116, *95% CI* =-0.02, 0.16. Among people in the experimental condition, identity contingency was associated with self-esteem, *b* = -0.35, *SE* = 0.05, *t*(1,427) = -7.58, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = -0.43, -0.26.

Turning to my other exploratory measures, I examined how strongly participants identify with their work and parenthood identities. Consistent with my findings in Studies 2, fathers (M = 5.54, SD = 1.09) and mothers (M = 5.60, SD = 1.10) equally felt that their parenthood identity was important to them, $F(1, 1{,}427) = 1.32$, $p = 0.25$, $d = -0.06$. Conversely, as in Study 2, mothers (M = 4.71, SD = 1.38) compared to fathers (M = 4.30, SD = 1.51), felt that their employment identity was more important to them, $F(1, 1{,}427) = 27.96$, $p < 0.001$, $d = -0.34$. To probe this finding, I examined different motivations for work (e.g., personal fulfillment, salary). Mothers (M = 4.68, SD = 1.61) compared to fathers (M = 4.33, SD = 1.65), were more motivated by personal fulfillment, $F(1, 1{,}427) = 16.64$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.27$. In contrast, fathers (M = 6.54, SD = 0.62) compared to mothers (M = 6.43, SD = 0.73), were more motivated by salary, $F(1, 1{,}427) = 8.47$, $p = 0.004$, $d = 0.13$). Additionally, working for personal fulfillment is strongly correlated with work identity importance, $r(1{,}427) = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$. Conversely, working for a salary is not correlated with work identity importance, $r(1{,}427) = 0.04$, $p = 0.10$. This provides support for my theory that father's (vs. mother's) parenthood identity is contingent on work because fathers (vs. mothers) are more motivated to work for a salary, a motivation that fulfills breadwinner expectations, but is not intrinsically motivating. Given that personal fulfillment is strongly associated with work identity importance and mothers (vs. fathers) work more for personal fulfillment, it follows that mothers might experience their employment as more of a choice. Furthermore, mothers' parenthood identity is less contingent on work given that personal fulfillment is not directly linked to a parent's ability to care for a child. Conversely, working for a salary is not associated with work identity importance, but fathers (vs. mothers) are more motivated by salary. Fathers, then, might view work as a means to support their family, thus fulfilling breadwinner norms.

I also examined whether proportion of personal income to household income (vs. being male) explains these effects, see Figure 5. If it is the case that there is no effect of gender on life satisfaction when proportion of household income is taken into account, this challenges my theory that gender drives my hypothesized effects.

In this situation, we would expect to see breadwinning mothers and fathers experiencing similar drops in life satisfaction upon experiencing employment threat (i.e., no two-way Gender x Condition interaction at high levels of breadwinning). Similarly, we would expect to see non-breadwinning mothers and fathers experiencing similar drops in life satisfaction upon experiencing employment threat (i.e., no two-way Gender x Condition interaction at low levels of breadwinning).

The three-way interaction between Gender, Condition, and Proportion of Personal to Household Income achieved marginal significance, b = -1.21, SE = 0.62, $t(1,421) = 1.94$, p =.05, *95% CI* = -0.02, 2.43. Among participants whose personal income constituted less of the overall household income (-1 *SD* below the mean), the Gender x Condition interaction effect on life satisfaction was not significant, b = .07, SE = 0.59, $t(104) = 0.11$, p = .911, *95% CI* = -1.11, 1.24. Conversely, among participants whose personal income constituted more of overall household income (+ 1 *SD* above the mean), the Gender x Condition interaction effect on life satisfaction was significant, b = 1.07, SE = 0.39, $t(231) = 2.75$, p = .006, *95% CI* = 0.30, 1.84, such that the effect of condition is stronger among fathers than mothers. See Figure 5. Thus, the pattern among breadwinners (but not the pattern among non-breadwinners) suggests that gender still impacts life satisfaction when experiencing unemployment, even taking earnings into account. This provides some support for the idea that this phenomenon is driven by gender norms, not just by the degree to which a person is earning a greater proportion of their family's income.

Finally, I examined differences in socioeconomic status. It may be possible that couples in low (vs. high) income households already experience worse life satisfaction. Thus, a change in employment status might be less impactful to overall well-being among the low (vs. high) income households among mothers and fathers. Put another way, the effect of gender on life satisfaction might be stronger in higher (vs. lower) socioeconomic status couples. The three-way interaction between Gender, Condition, and Household Income did not achieve significance, b = 0.00, SE = 0.02, $t(1,364) = 0.03$, p = .98, *95% CI* = -0.04, 0.04. Thus, unemployment threat (vs. no threat to employment) appears to similarly impact the difference between mothers and fathers across household income levels.

Discussion

Study 3a reveals that, when anticipating unemployment, fathers (vs. mothers) experience worse well-being, and this is because fathers facing career failure are more vulnerable to losing their identity as a professional and their (contingent) identity as a parent. This supports Hypotheses 2 and 3, and represents a full test of my theorized model. By adding a comparison sample of people not anticipating unemployment, this study provides evidence that my proposed effects pertain only to people with a threatened work identity. Thus, father's (vs. mother's) more-contingent identities may contribute to fathers suffering more than mothers upon unemployment.

Additionally, exploratory analyses reveal that among people whose personal income constitutes a larger (vs. smaller) proportion of household income, men experience worse life satisfaction than women whereas among people whose personal income constitutes a smaller (vs. larger) proportion of household income, men and women experience similar decreases in life satisfaction. This analysis disentangles gender from breadwinning, a role traditionally performed by men, to show that even among high earners, gender still impacts life satisfaction above and

beyond the effects of being a higher earner.

Study 3b

Study 3a's use of random assignment to employment threat condition allowed me to conclude that employment threat is a cause of gender differences in life satisfaction (via identity contingency). However, Study 3a has one key limitation, which is that asking participants to consider the hypothetical possibility of unemployment does not allow me to capture the lived experience of people who are experiencing job insecurity. I cannot be sure that how Study 3a's participants report that they would feel and behave if unemployment were imminent is actually how they would feel and behave. Study 3b addresses this concern. Specifically, I use a continuous measure of employment insecurity to measure employment threat. By using this measure, I can determine whether actual employment insecurity strengthens the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction, via identity contingency.

This study includes the two measures of work motivation (e.g., salary, personal fulfillment) from Study 3a and an additional measure designed to evaluate working for professional status. It is possible that mothers (compared with fathers) are more concerned with modeling a professional identity to their children because they want to show that women can "have it all." Mothers – more than fathers – may experience their employment as more personal because they have had to systematically challenge gender norms that discouraged women from the labor market. This may help explain why mothers, more than fathers, indicate a stronger employment identity, in addition to mothers' stronger motivation to work for personal fulfillment.

Method

Participants

In this study, I used a correlational design to examine whether gender interacts with a real threat of imminent employment loss to affect life satisfaction, and if this effect is driven by gender differences in identity contingency. Following guidance on testing for mediation from Fritz & MacKinnon (2007) and using the effect size of the *a* path (gender to identity contingency) I found in Study 3a (d = 0.38), I require a minimum sample of 368 to detect a small to medium effect on the *a* path. As a conservative estimate, I assumed a small effect size for the *b* path (identity contingency to life satisfaction) and doubled the recommended sample size of 368 to result in a required sample size of 736 participants. To allow for participant exclusions (described below) and attrition, I aimed to recruit 1,000 participants, none of whom had participated in Study 2 or 3a.

As in Studies 2 and 3a, I used Prolific to recruit employed partnered heterosexual parents with children living in the home. Ultimately, 1,144 people participated, exceeding my recruitment goal of 1,000. I excluded participants whose responses to the demographic questions conflicted with their responses to the demographic information they provided to Prolific. This includes participants who were not in a relationship (n =16), not employed full-time (n = 29), not heterosexual (n = 1), did not have any children (n = 11), and did not have full custody (n = 177). Responses that did not indicate male or female gender were coded as missing (n = 8). I also excluded participants who failed the comprehension check (n = 128). Participants who did not answer questions that I used to control for effects of gender on life satisfaction were also excluded. These include age (n = 1) and income (n = 26). This resulted in a final sample of 747 participants.

Within this sample, the majority of respondents were male (55%). The average child age was 9.19 (SD = 5.96) and average number of children per respondent was 1.99 (SD = 0.93). The

sample was largely White (85%) with a mean age of 41.08 years (*SD* = 8.68). Most of the sample was from the UK (78%). A majority of the sample held a college degree (64%) and was married (82%). The average personal income was $63,293 (*SD* = $37,186) and the average household income was $100,040 (*SD* = $10,006). Most (73%) of the sample are financial breadwinners and earned over half their household income. On average, participants had spent 3.85 years (*SD* = 1.48 years) at their jobs. Additionally, I took the average of 4 items designed to measure employment threat. An example of an item from this measure is: "I feel insecure about the future of my job." On average, participants indicated that they were not worried about losing their jobs in the near future (*M* = 1.65, *SD* = 0.88). However, participants believed it would be somewhat difficult to find new employment if they lost their jobs (*M* = 3.13, *SD* = 1.09). Overall, this sample experienced relatively low employment threat.

Procedure

Study materials for Study 3b are available in Appendix C. Participants first gave their consent to participate in the survey, provided their unique Prolific ID, and answered demographic questions (e.g., employment status) and questions about their family's composition (e.g., custodial arrangements). Next, they completed the same measure of identity contingency, as in Studies 2 and 3a. The identity contingency measure is the mediator in my analysis. Participants completed the same exploratory measures about the importance of their parenthood and employment identities as well as motivations for work. Participants were then presented with measures of job insecurity. Next, participants answered the same measure of life satisfaction, my dependent variable, and self-esteem as in Study 3a. Finally, participants answered the same comprehension check and another set of demographic questions, as in Studies 2 and 3a.

Measures

Independent Variable. Gender was coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male).

Identity Contingency. As in Studies 2 and 3, participants were asked to complete the same measure of identity contingency ($\alpha = 0.84$).

Identity Importance. As in Studies 2 and 3a, participants answered the same exploratory measures about the importance of their parenthood ($\alpha = 0.83$) and employment ($\alpha = 0.91$) identities.

Reasons for Working. Participants also assessed the same reasons for working to include working for personal fulfillment ($\alpha = 0.87$), working for a salary ($\alpha = 0.83$), as in Study 3a, and working for professional status ($\alpha = 0.83$). The measure of working for professional status consisted of the following items: "I work because I want my children to be proud of my professional status in the world" and "I work because I want to model a professional identity for my children."

Measurement of Employment Threat. After completing these, participants rated their likelihood of imminent employment loss using a four-item measure ($\alpha = 0.90$) developed by Vander Elst, De Witte, & De Cuyper (2014). An example of an employment threat item is: "I think I might lose my job in the near future" measured using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Participants were then asked to respond to two items that I created designed to capture anticipated re-employment difficulty ($\alpha = 0.78$). These items are: "In the next few months, how difficult would it be for you to find a new job if you lost your job?" and "In the next few months, how difficult would it be for you to find a job as good as the job you are in now?" Both are measured using a Likert scale (1 = Not difficult at all, 5 = Very difficult). Similar to past usage of multiplicative approaches (e.g., Berenson et al., 2009), I created an index of employment threat by taking the product of participants' anticipated

employment loss and their anticipated re-employment difficulty. This index is used as the moderator of the relationship between identity contingency and life satisfaction.

Dependent Variable. Finally, participants were presented with the same measure of life satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.92$), the primary dependent variable, as in Study 3a.

Self-Esteem. Participants were also presented with the same measure of state self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.91$), as in Study 3a.

Comprehension Check. To verify that participants comprehended the questions they were asked, they were presented with the same comprehension check as in Studies 2 and 3a.

Control Variables. In all models, I controlled for age, age squared, income, race, and education given their established relationships with parenthood, gender, and well-being (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004, 2008; Deaton, 2008; Horley & Lavery, 1995; Martinez, Daniels, & Chandra, 2012; Salinas-Jiménez, Artés, & Salinas-Jiménez, 2011; Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002).

Age was measured on a continuous scale from age 18 – 99.

Household income before unemployment was measured in increments of $9,000 Participants were allowed to select a household income between less than $10,000 and $500,000. I logged income to account for the skewed nature of the variable.

Race was measured using the following categories: White, Black, Asian, Native American Indian, Pacific Islander, and Other. Because of the small number of respondents identifying as Asian, Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, or Other, I categorized participants as White, Black, or Other Race and created two dummy variables: Black (1 = Black, 0 = not Black) and Other Race (1 = Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, or Other, 0 = not one of these groups).

Education was coded as 1 if the respondent had a college diploma and 0 if not.

Results

Means and standard deviations for all variables are shown in Table 7 and correlations for all variables are shown in Table 8. This study examined identity contingency as a mediator and employment status as a moderator of gender on life satisfaction using Hayes SPSS Process Macro (Model 15, Hayes, 2013). Consistent with Study 1, I controlled for age, age squared, income, Black race, other race, and education, given that these factors predict both well-being and unemployment (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004, 2008; Deaton, 2008; Horley & Lavery, 1995; Leino-Arjas, Liira, Mutanen, Malmivaara, & Matikainen, 1999; Salinas-Jiménez et al., 2011; Utsey et al., 2002). Motherhood was associated with less identity contingency, $r(747)$ -0.16, $p < 0.001$ and less self-esteem, $r(747)$ -0.13, $p < 0.001$.

Hypothesis Tests

The indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction via identity contingency and moderated employment threat is shown in Table 9. Results from Table 9 suggest that regardless of age, race, and socioeconomic factors, fathers (vs. mothers) tend to construe their parenthood identities as more contingent on work and fathers (vs. mothers) tend to experience similar levels of life satisfaction during unemployment (and not). Supporting Hypothesis 1 and results from Studies 2 and 3a, fathers (M = 4.85, SD = 1.18), compared to mothers (M = 4.47, SD = 1.09) construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity, b = -0.384, SE = 0.08, $t(739)$ = -4.53, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = -0.55, - 0.22, d = 0.36, see Figure 6. This reflects the a path in my model (see Figure 6). There was no gender difference in life satisfaction between mothers (M = 4.74, SD = 1.29) and fathers (M = 4.64, SD = 1.30), b = 0.12, SE = 0.09, $t(739)$ = 1.25, p = 0.211, 95% CI = -0.07, 0.30, d = -0.09, see Figure 6. This reflects the c path in my model (see Figure 6).

I next examined the effect of identity contingency on life satisfaction. Greater identity contingency is associated with better life satisfaction, $b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.04$, $t(739) = 4.76$, $p < 0.001$, *95% CI* = 0.11, 0.27, see Figure 6. Building on this, my prediction that the effect of employment threat on life satisfaction will be more negative for people whose identities are more contingent was not supported. The interaction between identity contingency and employment threat on life satisfaction, controlling for gender, was not significant, $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.0112$, $t(739) = 0.90$, $p = 0.270$, *95% CI* = -0.023, 0.081, see Figure 6. This reflects the moderated *b* path in my model (see Figure 6).

Contrary to my prediction that the effect of employment threat on life satisfaction would be more negative for fathers than mothers, the interaction between gender and employment threat on life satisfaction was not significant, $b = 0.029$, $SE = 0.027$, $t(735) = 1.10$, $p = 0.270$, *95% CI* = -0.023, 0.081, see Figure 6. This reflects the moderated *c* path in my model (see Figure 6).

Finally, I did not find an overall moderated-mediation effect such that the indirect effect of participant gender on life satisfaction, via identity contingency, was not stronger for participants whose employment was more (vs. less) threatened, *Index* = -0.004, $SE = 0.004$, *95% CI* = -0.013, 0.004.

Exploratory Analyses

Next, I turn to my exploratory measures. I did not find an overall moderated-mediation effect such that the indirect effect of participant gender on self-esteem, via identity contingency, was not stronger for participants whose employment was more (vs. less) threatened (*Index* = -0.002, $SE = 0.006$, *95% CI* = -0.014, 0.010).

Additionally, consistent with my findings in Studies 2 and 3a, fathers ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.08$) and mothers ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 1.11$) equally felt that their parenthood identity was important

to them, b = 0.02, SE = 0.08, $t(739)$ = 0.24, p = 0.811, 95% CI = -0.14, 0.18, d = -0.01. As in Studies 2 and 3a, mothers (M = 4.83, SD = 1.48) compared to fathers (M = 4.47, SD = 1.50), indicated that their employment identity was more important to them, b = 0.37, SE = 0.11, $t(739)$ = 3.47, p =.001, *95% CI* = 0.16, 0.59, d = -0.29. To probe this finding, participants were asked to indicate their motivation for work (e.g., personal fulfillment, salary, professional status). Replicating results from Study 3a, mothers (M = 4.90, SD = 1.55) compared to fathers *(*M = 4.37, SD = 1.68), were more motivated by personal fulfillment, b = 0.55, SE = 0.12, $t(739)$ = 4.64, p < 0.001, *95% CI* = 0.32, 0.78, d = -0.40 while fathers (M = 6.54, SD = 0.65) compared with mothers (M = 6.39, SD = 0.86), were more motivated by salary, b = -0.16, SE = 0.06, $t(739)$ = -2.94, p = 0.033, *95% CI* = -0.27, -0.05, d = 0.17. Furthermore, mothers (M = 4.97, SD = 1.54) compared to fathers (M = 4.69, SD = 1.52), were more motivated by holding professional status, b = 0.26, SE = 0.11, $t(739)$ = 2.36, p = 0.018, *95% CI* = 0.04, 0.48, d = -0.23. As in Study 3a, working for personal fulfillment was strongly correlated with work identity importance, $r(745)$ = 0.77, p < 0.001 while working for a salary was not correlated with work identity importance, $r(745)$ = 0.06, p = 0.9. Additionally, working for professional status was strongly correlated with work identity importance, $r(745)$ = 0.51, p < 0.001. These results suggest that mothers and fathers attribute different meanings to work. Mothers – compared to fathers – are more motivated by personal fulfillment and professional status, two motives that drive work identity importance and simultaneously are not tied to their efficacy as a "good" mother. Meanwhile, fathers' (vs. mothers') greater motivation to work for a salary is fundamentally tied to his capacity to be a "good" father through breadwinning. Taken together, fathers – compared with mothers – might endorse employment as less important to their identity because fathers view work as a means to fulfill the obligation to provide.

I also examined whether proportion of personal income to household income (vs. being male) explains these effects. If it is the case that participants whose personal income constitutes more (vs. less) of the total household income experience worse life satisfaction, this challenges my theory that gender drives my hypothesized effects. The three-way interaction between Gender, Condition, and Proportion of Earnings did not reach statistical significance, b = -0.43, SE = .92, $t(733)$ = -0.47, p = 0.641, *95% CI* = -2.24, 1.38. Although exploratory, this analysis at least suggests that there is no evidence that gender differences are strengthened among people who earn a higher (vs. lower) proportion of their household income.

As in Study 3a, I examined differences in socioeconomic status. The three-way interaction between Gender, Job Insecurity, and Household Income did not achieve significance, b = 0.01, SE = 0.04, $t(739)$ = 0.31, p = .76, *95% CI* = -0.06, 0.08. Thus, household income did not strengthen the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction via identity contingency among people experiencing more job insecurity (vs. less job insecurity).

I also examined whether models differed when removing control variables, see Table 9. I discovered that the models do not differ as a function of whether the controls were included. Furthermore, Black race positively predicts greater identity contingency. Meanwhile, age and other race predict worse life satisfaction while income predicts greater life satisfaction.

Discussion

In Study 3b, I demonstrated that fathers, compared, to mothers construe their parenthood identities as more contingent on work. However, this study was not able to show that, among people more fearful of imminent employment loss, fathers (vs. mothers) experience poorer well-being, and this is because fathers' more-contingent identities mean that the potential for unemployment threatens their parenthood identity along with their work identity. I attribute my

mixed findings to the lack of employment threat in this sample. Participants indicated that they were not concerned about unemployment (*M* = 1.65, *SD* = 0.88, *variance* = 0.59, *min* = 1, *max* = 4.5). In the original research conducted in 2004, participants indicated higher average employment threat (*M* = 2.29, *SD* = 0.96, Vander Elst et al., 2014). Taken together, the sample I collected may be anomalous in that participants indicated particularly low fear of unemployment. However, participants believed it would be somewhat difficult to find new employment if they lost their jobs (*M* = 3.13, *SD* = 1.09, *variance* = 0.95, *min* = 1, *max* = 5). Overall, this sample experienced relatively low employment threat. Because of the small number of participants who felt that their employment was threatened, this study lacked enough variance in the moderator to test for an effect. The lack of employment threat is likely due to the strong labor market conditions present in late 2022 through early 2023 which made finding new employment relatively easy (*The Employment Situation—February 2023*, 2023). Additionally, I did not replicate my exploratory findings in Study 3a that earning a larger (vs. smaller) proportion of household income might influence how men and women experience job insecurity. This may, again, be due to the lack of variance in job insecurity in my sample. That is, earning more (vs. less) of the total household income may have little impact on well-being among people experiencing more (vs. less) employment threat in this sample because this sample indicated low job insecurity overall.

General Discussion

Working mothers, relative to working fathers, have historically been disadvantaged by their separate work and caregiving identities. In this dissertation, however, I demonstrate that unemployment is a context in which mothers (vs. fathers) may actually benefit from their less-contingent identities. Across four studies, I show that fathers display greater identity contingency

– the idea that men's identity as a parent depends on his ability to fulfill his identity as a worker. As a result, during unemployment, mothers (more than fathers) can retain their less-contingent parenthood identity despite losing their work identity. Conversely, when fathers lose employment, they also lose the aspect of their parenthood identity that is satisfied by their ability to provide for their families.

In Study 1, using a longitudinal sample of people facing involuntary unemployment, I found that having children (vs. not) is associated with greater life satisfaction for women than for men. These effects are even stronger for people in romantic partnerships, consistent with my theory. This means that mothers (more than fathers) may benefit from their less-contingent identities since mothers can retain their parenthood identity when they fail at work. This is counter to existing literature that shows that managing multiple distinct identities leads women (more than men) to suffer. It also differs from existing literature showing that men experience more well-being benefits from being parents than women.

In Study 2, I demonstrated that fathers construe their parenthood identity as more contingent on their work identity than mothers. My theory holds that this identity contingency is the reason why, in Study 1, men benefitted less than women from parenthood during a period of unemployment.

Finally, in Studies 3a and 3b, I tested whether identity contingency helps explain why mothers (more than fathers) experience greater life satisfaction, and whether this is especially true among those facing a threat to their work identity. Study 3a used an experimental design to test whether my proposed pathway is stronger for those imagining employment threat (vs. not). I discovered that the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction is stronger for those facing employment threat, and this is because father's parenthood identity is more contingent on their

work identity. Since involuntary unemployment is a greater threat to father's (vs. mother's) parenthood identity, fathers are more likely to anticipate being negatively impacted by involuntary unemployment.

I also discoverd in exploratory analyses that fathers (vs. mothers) experience worse life satisfaction when experiencing work identity threat, even among high earners. By disentangling gender from proportion of personal to household income, I demonstrate that gender is the primary driver of differences in well-being during unemployment. That is, gender – not breadwinner status – explains differences in well-being when experiencing a career threat. Thus, men (vs. women) experience more adverse consequences when employment is threatened.

Study 3b used a survey to examine whether employment threat as experienced by working people strengthens the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction, via identity contingency. Study 3b provided additional support that fathers, compared with mothers, construe their parenthood identities as more contingent on work, but did not replicate the moderated-mediation effects found in Study 3a. I reconcile these mixed findings to the lack of employment threat and resulting floor effects of my moderator in Study 3b. That is, Study 3b may have been prone to a Type 2 statistical error since the felt employment threat (vs. lack of employment threat) was relatively small. Conversely, the sample in Study 3a was more balanced across conditions (employment threat vs. control) and thus, may be a more reasonable indicator of the relationship between my tested variables.

I also did not replicate the exploratory analyses testing the interaction between gender, job insecurity, and proportion of income found in Study 3a. This may be because of the lack of job insecurity in Study 3b. This suggests that there is no evidence that gender differences in well-being are strengthened by earning more (vs. less) of the total household income.

Implications for Identity Literature

In this dissertation, I introduce the construct of *identity contingency*, defined as the degree to which performance in one identity depends on performance in another identity. In the case of more-contingent identities, failure – or success – in one identity informs failure or success in another. This new construct allows me to explain why people may construe the same identity combinations differently.

Additionally, I contribute to the identity literature by demonstrating that fathers, compared with mothers, construe their parenthood identity as contingent on their work identity. This shows that the same identities can have different meanings and cognitive representations depending on who occupies them. Although having distinct, sometimes conflicting identities as parents and workers poses challenges for working mothers, these less-contingent identities also provide woc with an identity – and a source of well-being – separate from work. In sum, holding identities that are not contingent on each other may be particularly advantageous when one identity is threatened.

Finally, my research extends scholarship on identity by discovering that the identities people have may be contingent on each other. This advances seminal work proposing that multiple identities can overlap with each other, that these identities can spillover to other identities and impact an individual's self-esteem, and that having more distinct identities reduces the negative impact of stressful experiences (Linville, 1985, 1987). I advance this work in three ways. First, I am articulating a mechanism by which identity spillover happens, something not included in Linville (1985, 1987). Specifically, I am suggesting gender roles as one mechanism by which spillover occurs differently for men and women. In this instance, gender roles cause men, more than women, to have greater identity contingency, which has downstream

consequences for well-being when work is threatened. My research provides a foundation to explore other mechanisms that affect identity spillover.

Second, I suggest that identity complexity, measured by Linville (1985, 1987) as the number of roles an individual incorporates into their sense of self, may not buffer against the negative well-being effects that occur with failure if the failure in one identity necessarily leads to failure in another identity. Thus, more identities may not protect well-being when experiencing a threat to an identity that is contingent (vs. not contingent).

Third, building on past work demonstrating that multiple – *distinct* – roles helps people endure stressful experiences, I suggest that the reason more (vs. less) distinct roles are more helpful is because they are less contingent on each other. Threat to one distinct identity impacts another distinct identity less because the two identities are not contingent on each other. In sum, my identity contingency construct builds on Linville (1985, 1987) and provides a foundation for new research on how people experience their contingent (and non-contingent) identities.

Implications for Unemployment Literature

This dissertation also extends scholarship on how people cope with unemployment. While managing distinct and demanding parental and employment roles is often challenging, my findings suggest that holding identities that are not contingent on employment may help people endure unemployment. Thus, I show that holding identities that are not contingent on work success may help people weather unemployment.

Implications for Parenthood Literature

This project also adds to scholarship on parenthood, revealing a context in which the gendered effects of parenthood actually reverse. Because employed mothers are more beholden to caretaking norms than fathers, mothers may be overextended when they are employed, but

may draw strength from their less-contingent parenthood identity when they are unemployed. This demonstrates that in the context of unemployment, working fathers (vs. working mothers) may be disadvantaged by the fact that their parenthood identity is more contingent on their work identity. Thus, although parenthood tends to benefit working fathers more than working mothers, unemployment offers a context in which parenthood helps women, more than men.

Implications for Gender Literature

Finally, I highlight a context in which gender role expectations exact costs for men as well as women, which has important implications for scholarship on gender. While women have increasingly incorporated professional roles into their identities (Gino, Wilmuth, & Brooks, 2015; Greene & DeBacker, 2004), this has seemingly come in addition to, rather than in place of, their caretaking identities. Conversely, men's traditional roles as providers have not similarly expanded to include caretaking. As a result, men's tightly intertwined personal and professional identities seemingly heighten the cost of professional setbacks.

Although considerable attention has been given to the constraints that traditional gender roles place on working mothers, relatively little attention has been given to the implications these roles have for men. I posit that although asymmetric social changes that have opened professional opportunities for women create added strain for working mothers, the presence of a distinct parenthood identity may provide a psychological safety net during a period of job loss. Conversely, because fathers continue to enact their parenthood identity largely through their work roles, fathers remain especially vulnerable to the devastation of career setbacks.

Practical Implications

Importantly, I am not recommending that unemployment is good for women. Rather, I am suggesting that because women's socially determined merit as a parent is less reliant on her

ability to provide, mothers may be better prepared to cope with job loss since women can retain their more-distinct parenting identity when they become unemployed.

Instead, I recommend societal change that weakens the breadwinner norm among men. Organizational and government policy can help create this change by eliminating penalties for fathers who take paternity leave and/or prioritize family in times of need. Male leaders are best suited to create this change by taking family leave themselves, talking openly about their family responsibilities, withholding judgment of fathers who take family leave, and encouraging others to do the same. Organizations can also increase paternity leave to be on par with women's maternity leave. This would expand men's fatherhood identity to include caregiving as well as breadwinning. By implementing actionable policy at different societal levels, men may feel permitted to include caregiving in their identities in the similar way that women have expanded their identities to include work.

Limitations and Future Directions

This dissertation has some limitations, which point to fruitful areas for future research. First, while my project offers a well-powered examination of involuntarily unemployed people, people anticipating job loss, and people imagining unemployment, I do not have a longitudinal study examining the transition from employment to unemployment. Thus, I cannot detect changes in life satisfaction across different employment statuses. Future work could better understand the nature of these effects by utilizing a longitudinal sample of employed people experiencing involuntary unemployment.

Second, future research could explore whether similar patterns emerge following other workplace setbacks. For instance, parenthood may buffer the negative effects of being passed over for a promotion or receiving negative performance feedback for mothers more than fathers.

My work suggests that men's (but not women's) more-contingent work and parenthood identities may make workplace setbacks particularly costly. Future work could consider other ways in which gender roles exact a toll on fathers' well-being.

Third, future scholarship could examine whether other identities (e.g., friend, spouse, etc.) offer the same buffering effects as parenthood during a threat to one's employment identity. My study demonstrates that parenthood may help women, more than men, cope with unemployment. While parenthood is central to many people's sense of self, other identities may benefit people during unemployment so long as they are not contingent on work.

Fourth, while Study 3b replicated my findings that fathers – more than mothers – experience greater identity contingency (Studies 2 and 3a), I was unable to determine if felt employment threat strengthened the indirect effect of gender on life satisfaction via identity contingency, as in Study 3a. I attribute these mixed findings to a surplus of available jobs characteristic of the strong labor market in late 2022 – early 2023. Given these mixed findings, future research could examine this relationship during harsher economic times when job opportunities are scarce.

Finally, my research takes a heteronormative approach in that it examines men and (women in heterosexual partnerships). While my theory suggests that role contingency drives well-being differences among unemployed people – regardless of sexual orientation – future research could examine these effects among all sexual orientations.

Conclusion

My research highlights the persistence of gender norms that put employment at the center of men's identity and parenthood at the center of women's, resulting in men construing their parenthood identity as more contingent on work than women. My findings suggest that these

divergent identity construals affect people's ability to cope with the devastation of work identity loss.

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Footnotes

[1] Personal income was not captured in this study. I was unable to examine whether being the family breadwinner (vs. being male) drives differences in life satisfaction.

[2] At the beginning of the survey period, October 2009, unemployed participants in New Jersey were eligible for up to 79 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits. Because of poor economic conditions arising from the Great Recession, the federal government extended unemployment insurance benefits for up to 99 weeks in November 2009. As such, for most of the study period, participants were eligible for 99 weeks of unemployment insurance.

[3] Since children's ages were not captured, I was unable to determine whether children were minors and/or still living with the respondent. However, this should add noise to my tests rather than systemically biasing any results.

[4] As a robustness check, I examined whether these effects held for married parents, excluding those in domestic partnerships. People in domestic partnerships may be different than married people in important ways – they may be same-sex couples, they may not share finances to the same degree, and it may be less likely that the children belong to both parents. With married respondents only, the gender x parenthood interaction remained significant, (b = .36, SE = .07, z = 4.84, p < .001, CI = .21, .50). Likewise, simple-slopes analyses found that parenthood was associated with improved life satisfaction among married women (b = .16, SE = .05, z = 3.00, p = 0.003, CI = .05, .26) but worsened life satisfaction among married men (b = -.20, SE = .05, z = -3.67, p < .001, CI = -.30, -.09). These results are consistent with those from the partnered sample.

[5] Two of the three-way interactions achieved marginal significance, specifically that with traditional partnerships, b = -.278, p =.065, and with other race, b = .289, p = .088. Regarding

traditional partnerships, follow-up analyses revealed that the two-way parenthood X gender interaction was marginally significant for those in traditional partnerships, $b = .177$, $p = .091$ and significant for those not in traditional partnerships, $b = .466$, $p < .000$. Regarding the other race variable, follow-up analyses revealed that the two-way parenthood X gender interaction was significant for other-race participants (i.e., those who identified as neither Black nor White), $b = .393$, $p = .015$, and significant for participants who identified as Black or White, $b = .107$, $p = .012$.

[6] I converted all income variables to U.S. dollars using January 2023 foreign exchange rates. I did this by multiplying income from UK citizens by 1.21 and multiplying income from Australian citizens by 0.69. I applied the same conversion in Studies 3a and 3b.

[7] As a result of a survey programming error, the Parenthood Identity Importance scale was measured using a 5-point Likert scale while the Employee Identity Importance scale was measured using a 7-point scale. To resolve this error, I recoded the Parenthood Identity Importance values to match the 7-point Likert scale.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables (N = 4,816), Study 1

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Life Satisfaction	2.56	0.67										
Gender[b]	0.52	0.50	0.03***									
Parenthood[c]	0.69	0.46	0.07***	-0.02**								
Partnership Status[d]	0.59	0.49	0.16***	-0.16***	0.35***							
Age	47.91	11.66	0.05***	-0.15***	0.30***	0.21***						
Age Squared	2431.66	1072.69	0.06***	-0.15***	0.28***	0.20***	0.99***					
Days Unemployed[e]	76.54	44.2	-0.03***	0.05***	0.04***	-0.00	0.13***	0.13***				
HH Income (Log)	1.82	0.63	0.15***	-0.14***	0.16***	0.46***	0.21***	0.19***	-0.19***			
Black Race[f]	0.13	0.33	-0.01*	0.10***	0.02***	-0.18***	-0.14***	-0.13***	0.00	-0.23***		
Other Race[g]	0.05	0.22	-0.02***	-0.05***	-0.03***	0.05***	-0.06***	-0.06***	-0.01*	0.05***	-0.09***	
Education[h]	0.55	0.50	0.07***	-0.08***	-0.06***	0.10***	0.00	-0.01	-0.02***	0.27***	-0.08***	0.13***

[a]Life Satisfaction correlations were calculated using the means of participants' weekly life satisfaction scores.
[b]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
[c]Parenthood was coded as 0 for having no children and 1 for having children.
[d]Partnership Status was coded 0 for single, divorced, widowed, or separated and 1 for married or in a domestic partnership.
[e]Days Unemployed correlations were calculated from participants' days unemployed at the end of the survey (i.e., each person's highest duration of unemployment).
[f]Black Race was coded 0 for not Black and 1 for Black.
[g]Other Race was coded 0 for not Other Race and 1 for Other Race.
[h]Education was coded 0 for no undergraduate degree and 1 for undergraduate degree.
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 2

Multilevel Models Predicting Life Satisfaction from Gender and Parenthood Status, Study 1

Variable	**Model 1** *Controls*	**Model 2** *Main Analysis*	**Model 3** *Women*	**Model 4** *Men*
Gender[a]		0.023		
		(0.034)		
Parenthood[b]		-0.041	0.087**	-0.054
		(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.036)
Gender x Parenthood		0.125**		
		(0.041)		
Age	-0.046***	-0.049***	-0.046***	-0.048***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Age Squared	0.001***	0.001***	0.0004***	0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Days Unemployed[c]	-0.0002	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
HH Income (log)	0.102***	0.109***	0.122***	0.098***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.024)	(0.027)
Black Race[d]	0.005	-0.002	0.042	-0.071
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.035)	(0.044)
Other Race[e]	-0.128**	-0.119**	-0.197**	-0.065
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.062)	(0.055)
Education[f]	0.063**	0.070**	0.056*	0.070*
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.030)
Partnership[g]	0.171***	0.177***	0.187***	0.149***
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.035)
Constant	3.175***	3.193***	3.165***	3.149***
	(0.114)	(0.116)	(0.157)	(0.170)
N	4,816	4,816	2,493	2,322

Note: Values presented are unstandardized regression coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses.

[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.

[b]Parenthood was coded as 0 for having no children and 1 for having children.

[c]Days unemployed was calculated as the difference between the date the participant reported last working and the date of that particular weekly survey.

[d]Black Race was coded 0 for not Black and 1 for Black.

[e]Other Race was coded 0 for not Other Race and 1 for Other Race.

[f]Education was coded 0 for no undergraduate degree and 1 for undergraduate degree.

[g]Partnership Status was coded 0 for single, divorced, widowed, or separated and 1 for married or in a domestic partnership.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 3

Multi-Level Models Predicting Life Satisfaction from Gender, Parenthood, and Partner Status, Study 1

Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
	Entire Sample	*Partnered Participants*	*Partnered Women*	*Partnered Men*	*Single Participants*	*Single Women*	*Single Men*
Gender[a]	0.096*	-0.129*			0.092*		
	(0.041)	(0.059)			(0.042)		
Parenthood[b]	0.067	-0.150**	0.167***	-0.155**	0.080	0.020	0.060
	(0.048)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.041)	(0.054)
Partner Status[c]	0.298***						
	(0.052)						
Gender x Parenthood	-0.043	0.316***			-0.058		
	(0.060)	(0.065)			(0.061)		
Gender x Partner Status	-0.226**						
	(0.072)						
Parenthood x Partner Status	-0.205**						
	(0.065)						
Gender x Parenthood x Partner Status	0.358***						
	(0.089)						
Age	-0.051***	-0.046***	-0.038**	-0.047***	-0.059***	-0.053***	-0.076***
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.013)
Age Squared	0.001***	0.0005***	0.0004**	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.0001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.0001)
Days Unemployed[d]	0.000	-0.0003***	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
HH Income (log)	.107***	0.206***	0.218***	0.197***	0.355	0.053	0.019
	(0.018)	(0.028)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.036)
Black Race[e]	-0.002	0.016	0.042	-0.008	-0.009	0.049	-0.137*
	(0.027)	(0.043)	(0.059)	(0.062)	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.061)
Other Race[f]	-0.121**	-0.083	-0.131	-0.054	-0.153*	-0.314**	-0.009
	(0.041)	(0.050)	(0.075)	(0.066)	(0.072)	(0.106)	(0.097)
Education[g]	0.072***	0.033	0.011	0.044	0.113***	0.093*	0.115*
	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.031)	(0.040)	(0.050)

Constant	3.180***	3.202***	2.952***	3.201***	3.434***	3.428***	3.723***
	(0.116)	(0.187)	(0.256)	(0.279)	(0.159)	(0.204)	(0.249)
N	4,816	2,698	1,237	1,461	2,117	1,256	863

Note: Values presented are unstandardized regression coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses.
[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
[b]Parenthood was coded as 0 for having no children and 1 for having children.
[c]Partner Status was coded as 0 for single and 1 for partnered.
[d]Days unemployed was calculated as the difference between the date the participant reported last working and the date of that particular weekly survey.
[e]Black Race was coded 0 for not Black and 1 for Black.
[f]Other Race was coded 0 for not Other Race and 1 for Other Race.
[g]Education was coded 0 for no undergraduate degree and 1 for undergraduate degree.
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 4
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables (N = 851), Study 2

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender[a]	0.48	0.5					
2. Identity Contingency	4.67	1.19	-0.22***				
3. Parenthood Importance	4.79	0.65	0.02	0.03			
4. Work Importance	4.65	1.47	0.11**	0.34***	0.26***		
5. Identity Separation	4.08	1.83	0.01	0.13***	0.15***	0.30***	
6. Harmony	2.49	0.99	0.23***	-0.50***	0.03	-0.14***	-0.
7. Blendedness	3.92	0.51	0.07*	0.18***	0.29***	0.38***	0.3

[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables (N = 1,429), Study 3a

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Gender[a]	.45	.51							
2. Identity Contingency	4.59	1.16	-.18***						
3. Life Satisfaction	3.31	1.68	.02	.03					
4. Self-Esteem	3.77	1.60	-.04	-.07**	.59***				
5. Parenthood Importance	5.57	1.09	.03	.13***	.02	-.08**			
6. Work Importance	4.48	1.47	.14***	.33***	-.01	-.19***	.27***		
7. Work for Fulfillment	6.49	.67	.11***	.38***	.05	-.11***	.13***	.73***	
8. Work for a salary	4.48	1.64	-.08**	.13***	-.06*	-.08**	.21***	.04	.(
9. Condition[b]	.51	.50	.02	-.04	-.69***	-.45***	.03	.02	.(

[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
[b]Experimental condition was coded 0 for control condition and 1 for experimental condition. The experimental condition induced employment threat.
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Life Satisfaction as a function of Gender and Condition (N = 1,429), Study 3a

	Female	Male

Condition	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Control	4.48	1.16	4.51	1.30
Employment Threat	2.32	1.24	2.09	1.18

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations among Study Variables (N = 747), Study 3b

Variable	*M*	*SD*
1. Gender[a]	0.45	0.5
2. Identity Contingency	4.68	1.16
3. Life Satisfaction	4.68	1.3
4. Self-Esteem	4.38	1.39
5. Parenthood Importance	5.6	1.09
6. Work Importance	4.63	1.5
7. Work for a salary	6.48	0.75
8. Work for Fulfillment	4.61	1.65
9. Work for Status	4.81	1.53
10. Job Insecurity[b]	5.32	3.44

[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
[b]Job insecurity statistics were calculated from the product of participants' mean anticipated employment loss and their mean anticipated re-employment difficulty

Table 8

Correlations among Study Variables (N = 747), Study 3b

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender								
2. Identity Contingency	-.16***							
3. Life Satisfaction	.04	.15***						
4. Self-Esteem	-.13***	.11**	.39***					
5. Parenthood Identity Importance	.01	.09*	.19***	-.03				
6. Work Identity Importance	.12**	. 34***	.12***	-.09*	.26***			
7. Work for a Salary	-.10**	.12***	.00	-.05	.13***	.06		
8. Work for Fulfillment	.16***	.37***	.24***	.01	.18***	.77***	.02	
9. Work for Status	.09*	.42***	.18***	-.06	.21***	.51***	.17***	.65***
10. Job Insecurity	-.02	-.11**	-.27***	-.13***	-.07	-.08*	.02	-.17***
11. Age	-.04	.07	-.07	.11**	-.03	.03	-.14***	.00
12. Age Squared	-.03	.07	-.06	.11**	-.03	.02	-.14***	.00
13. HH Income (log)	-.07*	.01	.20***	.10**	.05	.10**	-.01	.11**
14. Other Race	-.07	.02	-.07*	.03	-.03	.01	-.01	.03
15. Black Race	.05	.07	.03	.05	-.03	.03	.01	.11**
16. Education	.00	-.01	.03	-.04	.06	.15***	-.02	.16***

[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
[b]Job insecurity statistics were calculated from the product of participants' anticipated employment loss and their anticipated re-employment difficulty
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Variable	10	11	12	13	14	15
11. Age	.04					
12. Age Squared	.03	.99***				
13. HH Income (log)	-.02	.13***	.11**			
14. Other Race	.05	-.01	-.02	.04		
15. Black Race	-.04	-.04	-.04	.03	-.07*	
16. Education	.04	-.01	-.02	.22***	.11**	.09*

[a]Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.
[b]Job insecurity statistics were calculated from the product of participants' anticipated

employment loss and their anticipated re-employment difficulty
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 9

Indirect effect of Gender on Life Satisfaction via Identity Contingency and Moderated by Job Insecurity

Independent Variable					Gender		
Predictor	*b (SE)*	*t*	*p*	*95% CI*	*b (SE)*	*t*	*p*
					DV: Identity Contingency		
Constant	4.485 (0.055)	87.500	0.000	4.742, 4.960	5.059 (0.828)	6.106	.000
Control Variables							
Age					-0.018 (0.039)	-0.462	0.644
Age Squared					0.000 (0.000)	0.698	0.486
Black race					0.465 (0.209)	2.230	0.026
Education					-0.025 (0.090)	-0.273	0.785
Other race					0.061 (0.136)	0.449	0.653

Log HH Income					-0.013 (0.094)	-0.134	0.893
Gender	-0.396 (0.083)	-4.779	0.000	-0.559, -0.234	-0.384 (0.085)	-4.534	0.000
				DV: Life Satisfaction			
Constant	4.845 (0.356)	13.608	.000	4.140, 5.540	5.997 (0.927)	6.467	.000
Control Variables							
Identity Contingency	0.083 (0.070)	1.180	.238	-0.548, 0.219	0.098 (0.070)	1.394	.163
Job Insecurity	-0.159 (0.055)	-2.986	.004	-0.267, -0.051	-0.149 (0.055)	-2.738	.006
Gender x Job Insecurity	0.035 (.027)	1.329	.184	-0.017, 0.088	0.029 (0.027)	1.103	.270
Identity Contingency x Job Insecurity	0.010 (0.011)	0.878	.380	-0.012, 0.032	0.010 (0.011)	.902	.367
Age					-0.111(0.041)	-2.689	.007
Age Squared					0.001(.001)	2.430	.015
Black race					-0.072(.220)	-0.328	.743
Education					0.02 (0.10)	0.24	.807
Other race					-0.294(0.144)	-2.045	.041
Log HH Income					0.575 (0.993)	5.79	.000
Gender	-0.066 (0.167)	-0.398	.691	-0.039, 0.261	-.009 (.166)	-0.059	.953

Figure 1

Hypothesized Moderated-Mediation Model, Predicting the Effect of Gender on Life Satisfaction as Mediated by Identity Contingency and Moderated by Employment Threat, Studies 3a and 3b

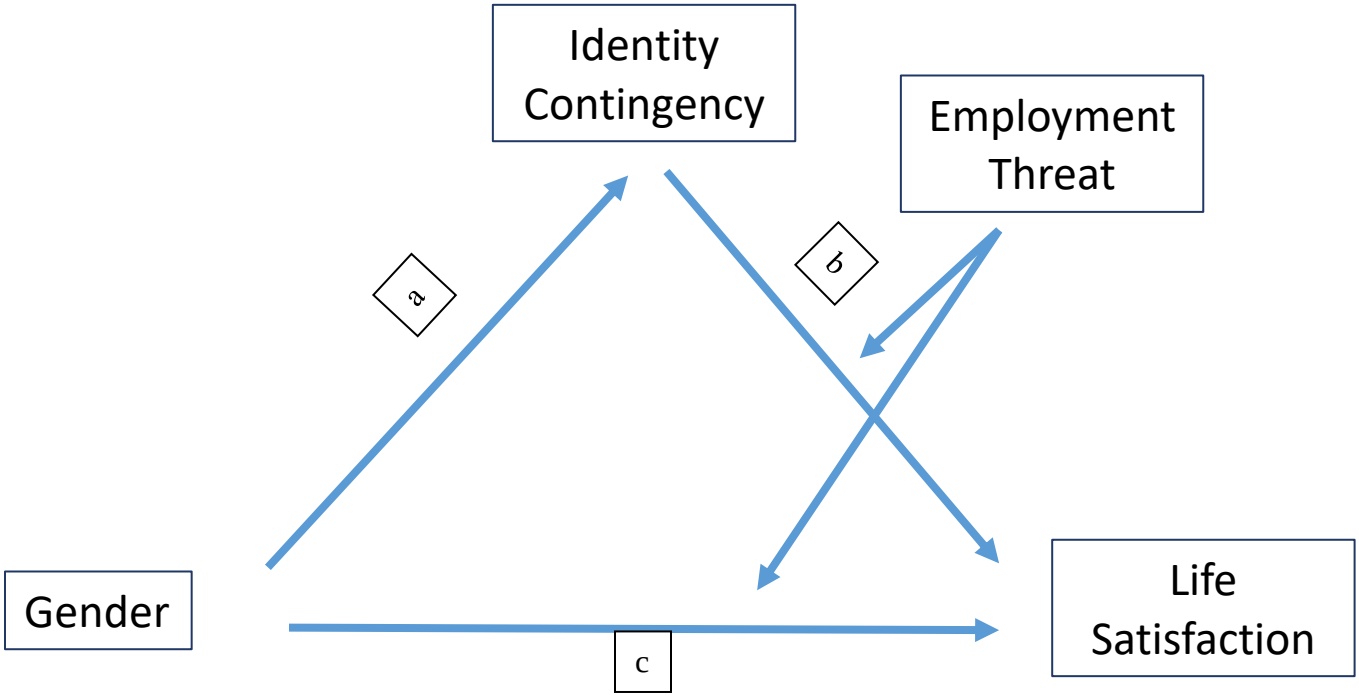


Figure 2

Effects of Parenthood and Gender on Life Satisfaction, Study 1

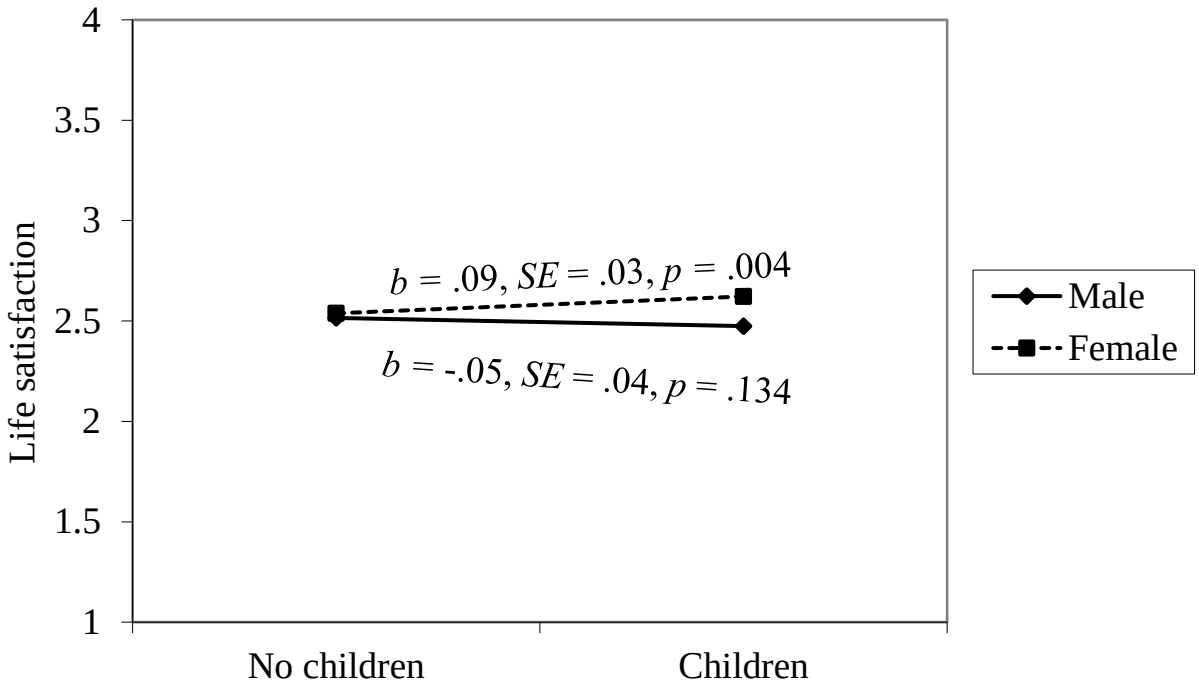


Figure 3a

Effects of Parenthood and Gender on Life Satisfaction among Participants in Romantic Partnerships, Study 1

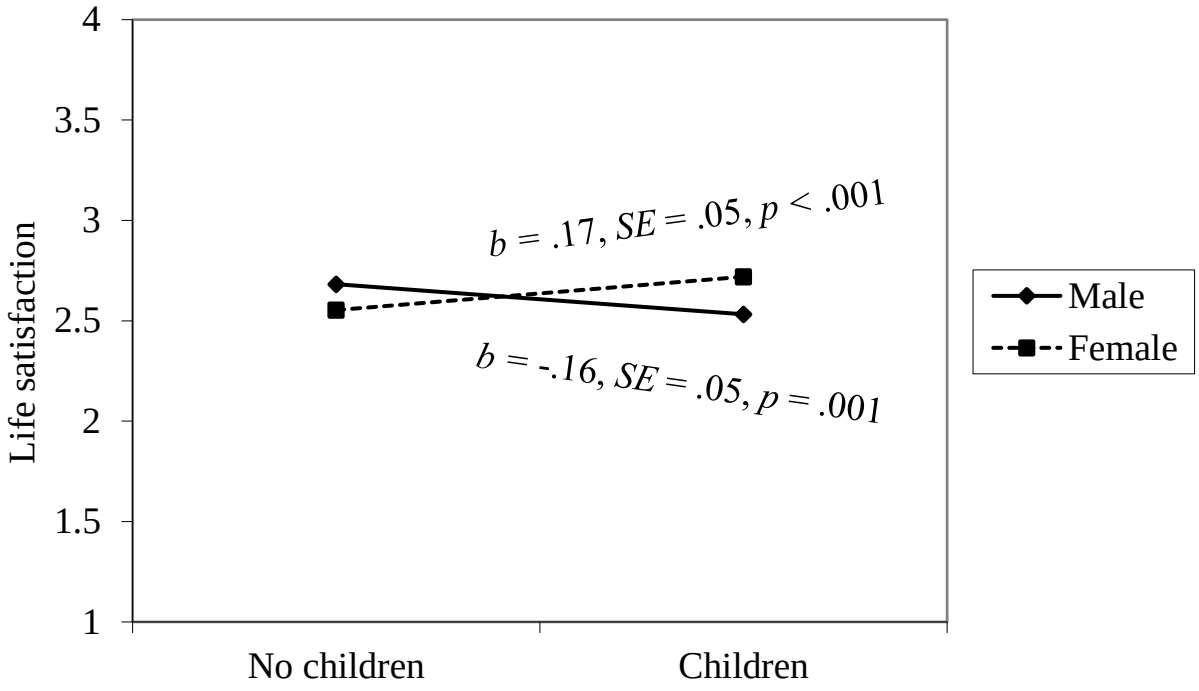


Figure 3b

Effects of Parenthood and Gender on Life Satisfaction among Single Participants, Study 1

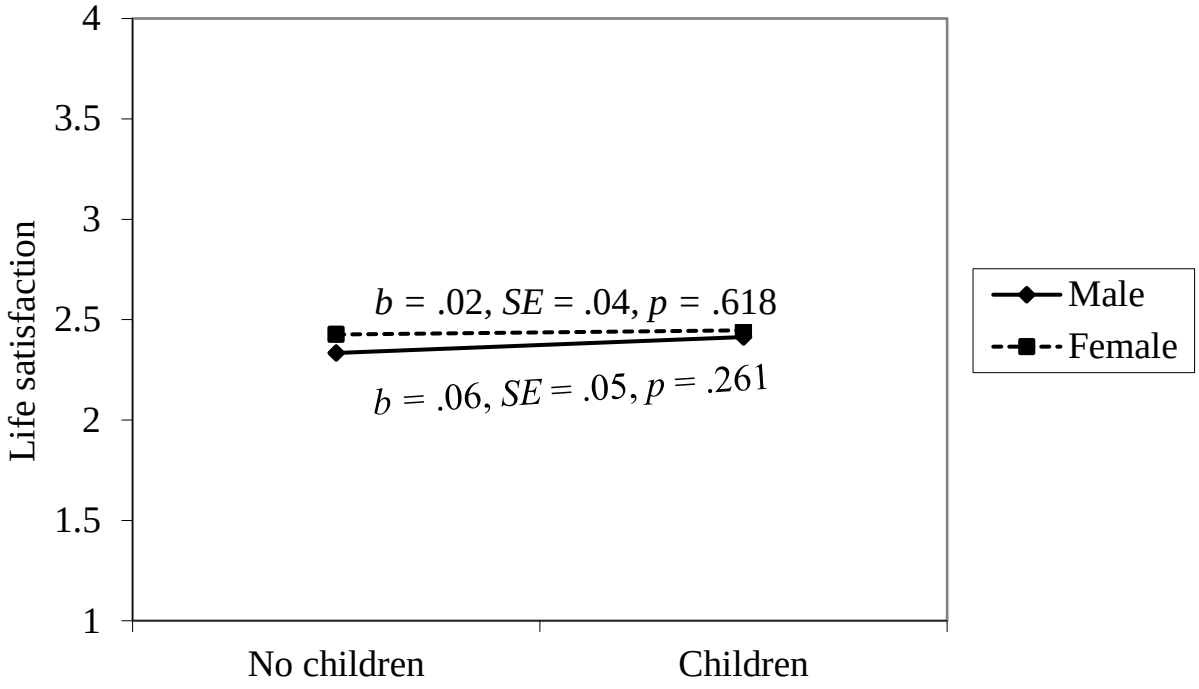
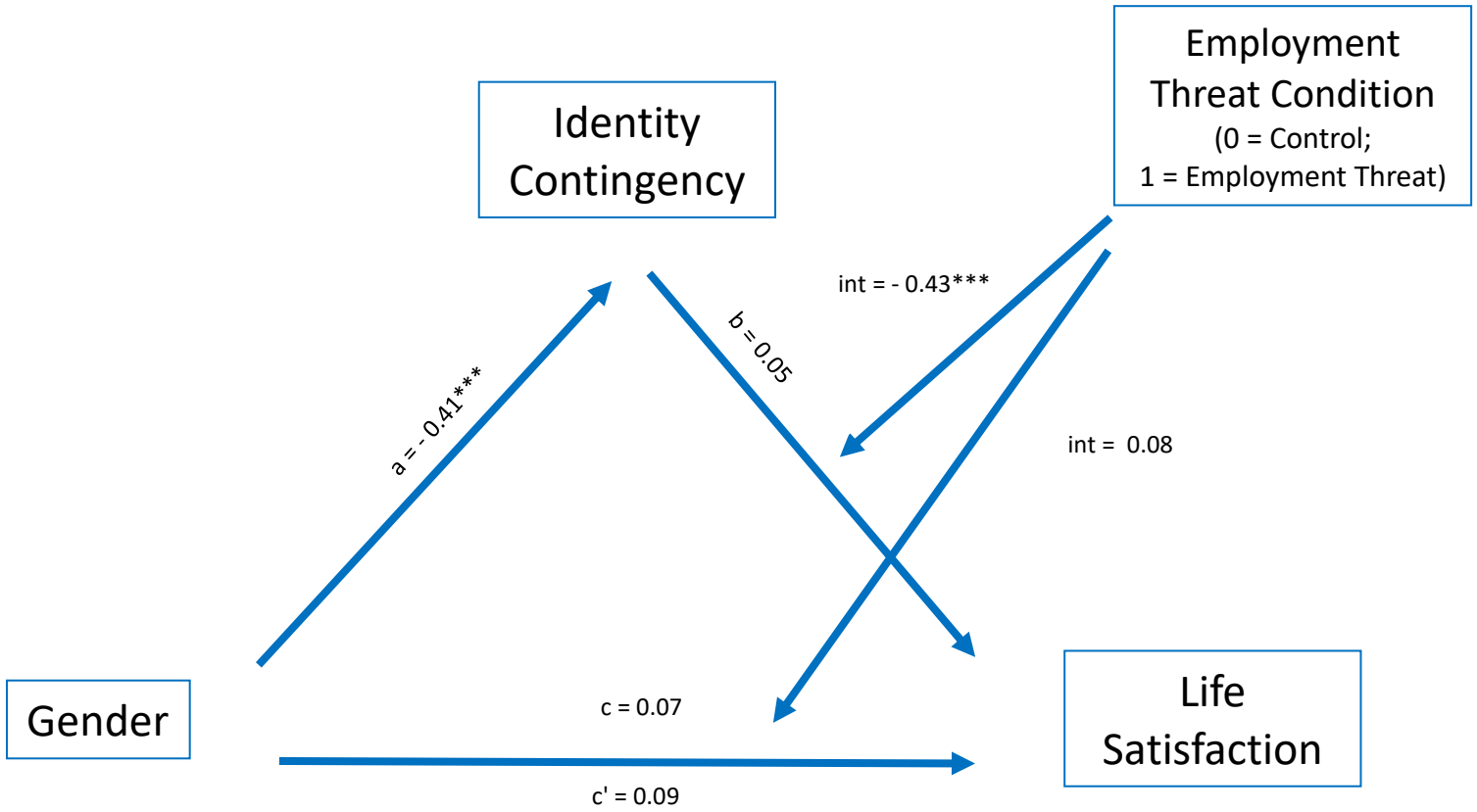

4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
Life satisfaction
b = .02, SE = .04, p = .618
b = .06, SE = .05, p = .261
No children
Children
Male
Female

Figure 4

Moderated-Mediation Model, Predicting the Effect of Gender on Life Satisfaction as Mediated by Identity Contingency and Moderated by Employment Threat, Study 3a



*** $p < .001$

Figure 5

Effects of Condition and Gender on Life Satisfaction among Participants who Earn a Greater Proportion (+1 SD, upper panel) or Smaller Proportion (- 1SD, lower panel) of their Household Income, Study 3a

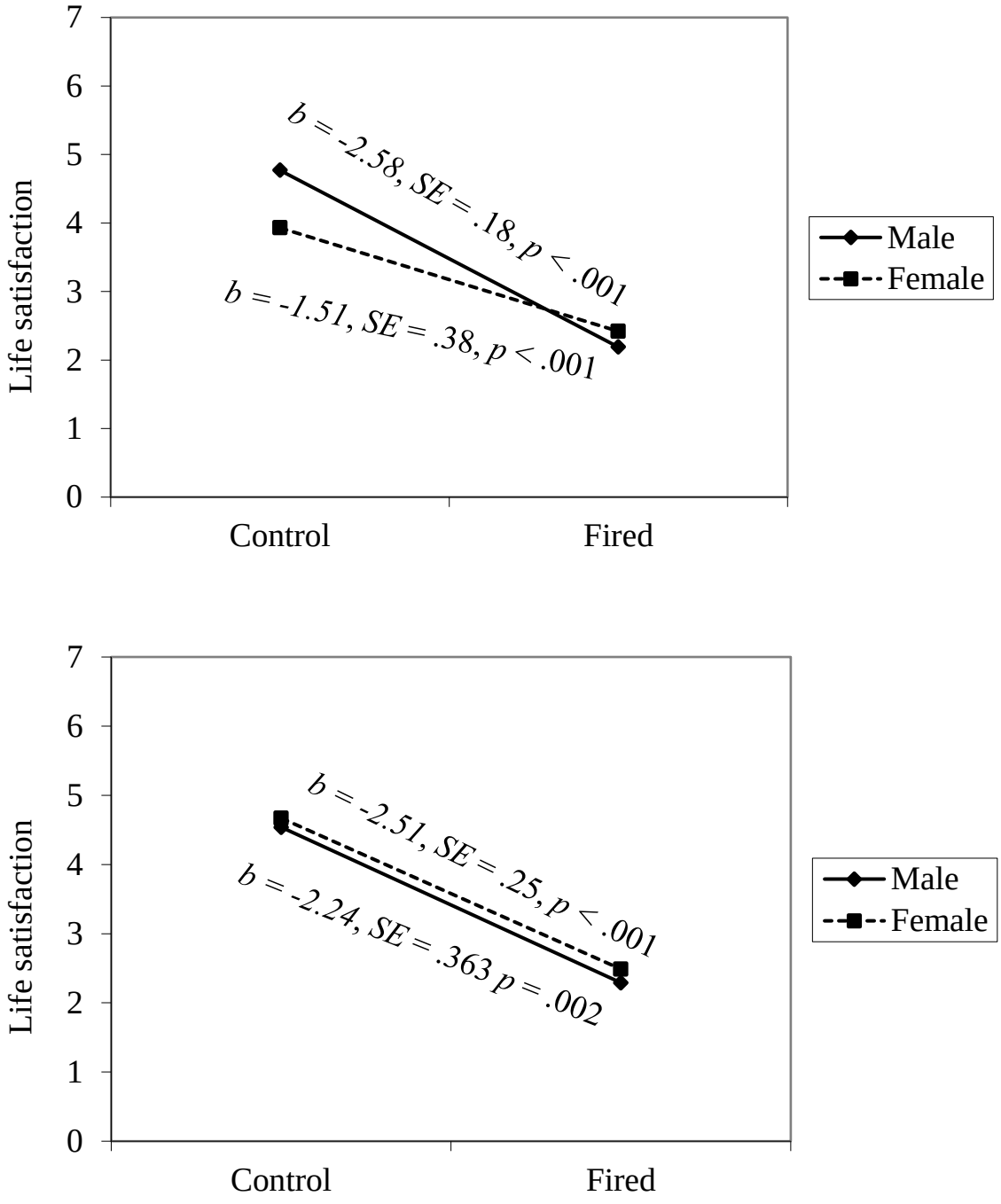
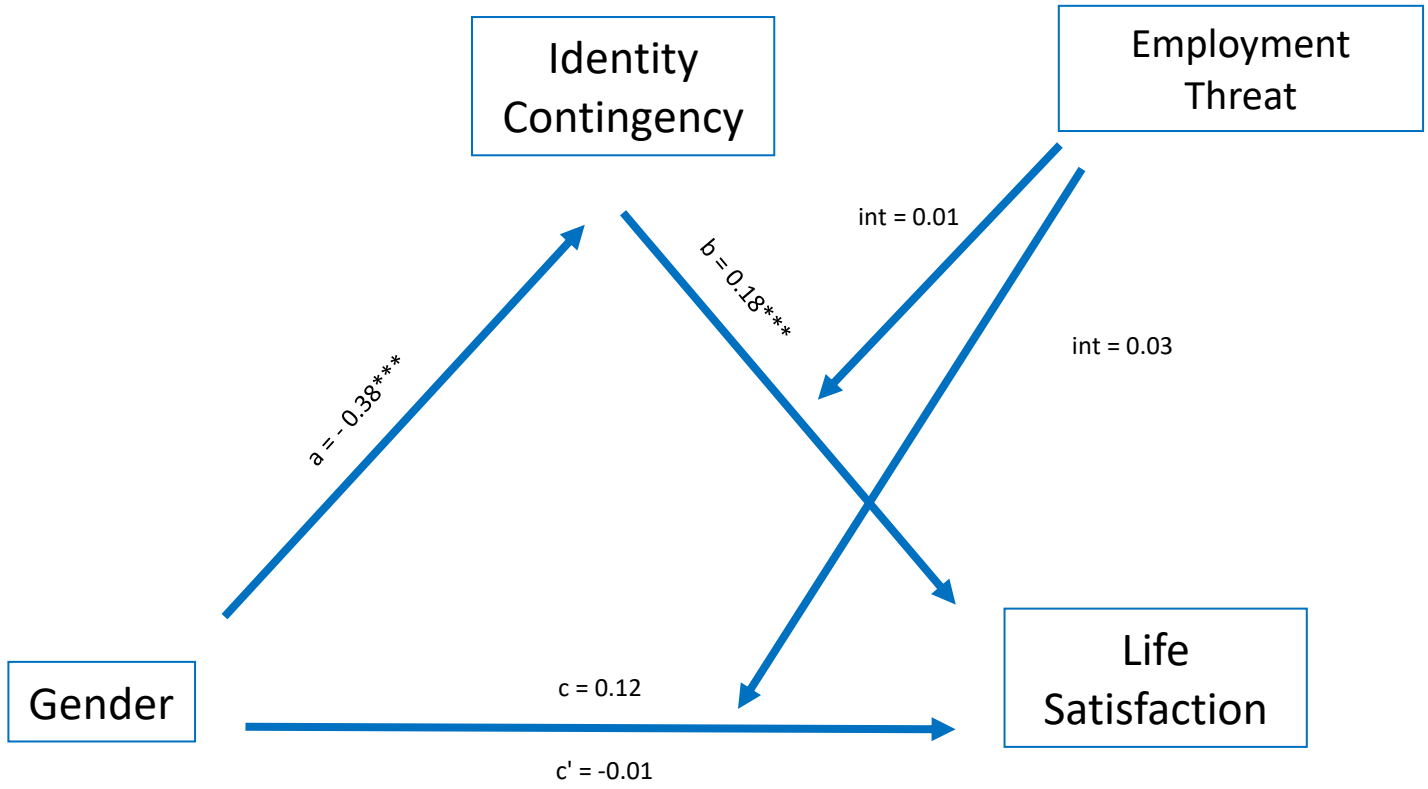


Figure 6

Moderated-Mediation Model, Predicting the Effect of Gender on Life Satisfaction as Mediated by Identity Contingency and Moderated by Employment Threat, Study 3b



*** $p < .001$

Appendix A – Materials for Study 2

Welcome! In this study, we are researching how people experience their identities. Throughout this study, please be as honest about your experiences as possible. There are no wrong answers.

Demographics, Part 1

First, a few questions about yourself

1. Do you have children?
2. How many children do you have?
3. How would you describe your current employment status?
    a. Employed full-time (40 or more hours per week), Employed part time (39 hours or less), Unemployed and looking for work, Unemployed and not currently looking for work, Student, Retired, Homemaker, Self-employed, Unable to work, Primarily earn income through mTurk, Prolific, etc.
    b. If you are employed part time, is it because you: Could not find full time work, Did not want full time work

Identity Contingency

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

4. If I did not have a job, I would see myself as less of a parent
5. If I was unemployed, I would see myself as a bad parent
6. If I wasn't working, I would be able to be a better parent
7. If I wasn't employed, I would see myself as a better parent

8. Being employed helps me be the kind of parent I want to be
9. Having a job makes me a better parent
10. Working hurts my ability to be the kind of parent I want to be
11. Being employed makes me a worse parent

Identity Importance

Parenthood subscale

Please consider your parenthood identity and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

30. Overall, my parent identity has very little to do with how I feel about myself
31. My parent identity is an important reflection of who I am
32. Being a parent is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am
33. In general, being a parent is an important part of my self-image

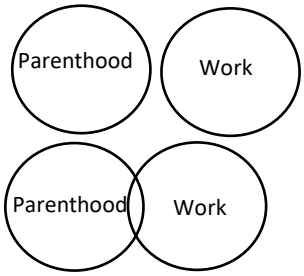
Employee subscale

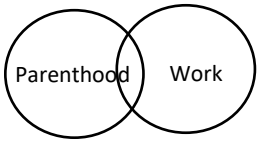
Please consider your work identity and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

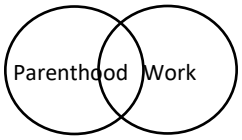
34. Overall, my work has very little to do with how I feel about myself
35. My work identity is an important reflection of who I am
36. My work is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am
37. In general, my work is an important part of my self-image

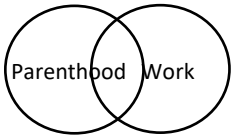
Identity Separation

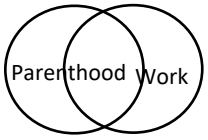
1. Please consider the responsibilities, obligations, and goals you have as a parent and as a working professional. Please select the picture below that best describes the relationship between these identities.

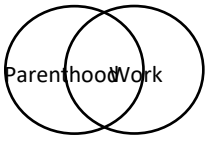












Please consider your work and parenthood identities and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Harmony Subscale

2. I find it easy to harmonize parenthood and work
3. I rarely feel conflicted about my parenthood and work identities
4. I find it easy to balance both my parenthood and work identities
5. I do not feel trapped between my parenthood and work identities
6. I feel torn between my parenthood and work identities
7. Being a working parent means having two forces pulling on me at the same time
8. I feel that my parenthood and work identities are incompatible
9. I feel conflicted between my parenthood and work identities
10. I feel like someone moving between my parenthood and work identities
11. I feel caught between my parenthood and work identities

Blendedness subscale

12. I cannot ignore my parenthood or work identities
13. I feel like a parent and a working professional at the same time
14. I relate better to being a working parent that to being a parent or worker alone
15. I feel like a working parent
16. I do not blend my parenthood and work identity
17. I keep my parenthood and work identities separate

Comprehension Check

38. What did you not get asked about during this survey? (Parenthood, Friendship, Work)

Demographics, Part 2

Almost done! Please fill out the following demographic information.

39. How old is child 1, child 2, etc. (If-then follow up Q)
40. Have you been unemployed in the last year?
    a. If so, how long were you unemployed for? (0-4 weeks, 5-12 weeks, 13-24 weeks, 25-51 weeks, 52 weeks or more)
41. Have you been with the same employer for the last 12 months?
42. How likely are you to quit your job? (1=Not likely at all, 5 = Very Likely)
    b. Are you quitting because you found a different job in which you will soon be employed? (Yes, No)
43. Is there any possibility that you will get laid off in the near future?
44. What is your occupation?
45. Do your children under age 18 live with you?
    c. No – What type of custody if your child/children do you have? Sole, Joint, No, Other
    d. No – How often do you see your child/children if they are not living with you? Whenever I like, Every day, A few days a week, During weekends, Once a month, Other
46. Do your children over age 18 live with you?
47. Are you expecting to have children in the next year?

48. Do you want children in the future?
49. What is your annual household income?
50. How old are you?
51. Where were you born?
52. How would you describe your ethnic background; prefer to self-describe as option?
53. Are you Male, Female, Do not wish to answer?
54. How would you characterize your political beliefs?
55. How would you describe your current relationship status?
56. Would you describe yourself as Straight, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Prefer to self-describe?
57. What is the highest level of education you have received?
58. Which of the following categories best describes the industry you primarily work in (regardless of your actual position)?
    e. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
    f. Mining
    g. Utilities
    h. Construction
    i. Manufacturing
    j. Wholesale
    k. Retail
    l. Transportation and Warehousing
    m. Publishing

n. Software

o. Telecommunications

p. Broadcasting

q. Information Services and Data Processing

r. Other Information Industry

s. Finance and Insurance

t. Real Estate, Rental and Leasing

u. College, University, and Adult Education

v. Primary/Secondary (K-12) Education

w. Other Education Industry

x. Health Care and Social Assistance

y. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

z. Hotel and Food Services

aa. Government and Public Administration

bb. Legal Services

cc. Scientific or Technical Services

dd. Homemaker

ee. Military

ff. Religious

gg. Other Industry

Appendix B – Materials for Study 3a

Welcome! In this study, we are researching how people experience their identity. Throughout this study, please be as honest about your experiences as possible. There are no wrong answers.

Demographics, Part 1

First, a few questions about yourself

1. What is your relationship/marital status?
    a. Single
    b. In a relationship
    c. Engaged
    d. Married
    e. Widowed
    f. Divorced
    g. Separated
    h. Never Married
    i. Rather Not Say
    j. In a civil partnership/civil union or other
2. What is your employment status?
    a. Full-time
    b. Part-time
    c. Due to start a job within the next month
    d. Unemployed (and job seeking)
    e. Not in paid work (e.g., homemaker, retired, or disabled)

f. Other

3. What is your sexual orientation?
    a. Heterosexual
    b. Homosexual
    c. Bisexual
    d. Asexual
    e. Other
4. Do you have any children?
5. How many children do you have?
6. How old is [child 1, child 2, etc.]?
7. How much of the time does [child 1, child 2, etc.] live with you?
    a. Never
    b. Some of the time
    c. Half the time
    d. Most of the time
    e. All the time

Identity Contingency

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

4. If I did not have a job, I would see myself as less of a parent
5. If I was unemployed, I would see myself as a bad parent
6. If I wasn't working, I would be able to be a better parent
7. If I wasn't employed, I would see myself as a better parent

8. Being employed helps me be the kind of parent I want to be
9. Having a job makes me a better parent
10. Working hurts my ability to be the kind of parent I want to be
11. Being employed makes me a worse parent

Identity Importance

Parenthood subscale

Please consider your parenthood identity and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

12. Overall, my parent identity has very little to do with how I feel about myself
13. My parent identity is an important reflection of who I am
14. Being a parent is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am
15. In general, being a parent is an important part of my self-image

Employee subscale

Please consider your work identity and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

16. Overall, my work has very little to do with how I feel about myself
17. My work identity is an important reflection of who I am
18. My work is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am
19. In general, my work is an important part of my self-image

Reasons for Working Measure

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

20. I work because my career is important to my identity
21. I work because my career is personally fulfilling to me
22. I work because my salary is beneficial to my family
23. I work so that that my family can maintain an acceptable standard of living

< Experimental manipulation begins>

Condition 1 (Experiment):

Now imagine that you just got fired from your job with no severance pay. It could be a while before you become re-employed. Please spend the next 30 seconds considering what you would think and feel if you lost your job?

1. What would you think if you were fired?
2. How would you feel if you were fired?

Condition 2 (Control):

Now imagine the next few weeks at work. Please spend the next 30 seconds considering what the next few weeks look like for you.

3. What are you thinking about in terms of the next few weeks at work?
4. How do you feel about the next few weeks at work?

<Next page>

5. What did the last page ask you about?
    a. Your Career
    b. Your Parents

c. Your Health

d. Your Friendships

Life Satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985)

Continue to think about being unemployed/the next few weeks. Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

24. My life is close to my ideal

25. The conditions of my life are excellent

26. I am satisfied with my life

27. I am be getting the important things I want in life

28. I am change almost nothing about my life

Self-Esteem (Exploratory) (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991)

Continue to think about being unemployed (the next few weeks). Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

29. I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure

30. I feel self-conscious

31. I feel displeased with myself

32. I am worried about what other people think of me

33. I feel inferior to others at this moment

34. I feel concerned about the impression I am making

35. I am worried about looking foolish

Comprehension Check

36. What did you not get asked about during this survey?

a. Work
b. Parenthood
c. Friendship

Demographics, Part 2

Almost done! Please fill out the following demographic information.

37. How would you describe your partner's current employment status? (Full-time, Part-time, Due to start a job within the next month, unemployed (and job seeking), Unemployed (and not looking for work), Not in paid work (e.g., homemaker, retired, or disabled), Other)
38. Are you expecting to have or adopt children in the next year?
39. Do you want children in the future?
40. Is your income: (US Currency, UK Currency, Australia Currency, Other)
41. What is your personal household income?
42. What is your annual household income?
43. How old are you?
44. Where were you born?
45. How would you describe your ethnic background; prefer to self-describe as option?
46. Are you male, Female, Do not wish to answer?
47. How would you characterize your political beliefs?
48. What is the highest level of education you have received?
49. What is the gender distribution of people in your *organization*? Your best

guess is fine.

50. What is the gender distribution of people at your *worksite*? Your best guess is fine.
51. What is the gender distribution of people at your *specific job*? Your best guess is fine.

    Does your occupation fall into any of these categories? (HEED, Finance, STEM)
52. How long have you been at your organization?
53. How long have you been in your current role at your organization?
54. What is your work experience?
55. How many hours per week do you work?
56. How many hours per week do you work?
57. In the next few months, how likely are you to quit your current job?

Appendix C – Materials for Study 3b

Welcome! In this study, we are researching how people experience their identity. Throughout this study, please be as honest about your experiences as possible. There are no wrong answers.

Demographics, Part 1

First, a few questions about yourself

8. What is your relationship/marital status?
    a. Single
    b. In a relationship
    c. Engaged
    d. Married
    e. Widowed
    f. Divorced
    g. Separated
    h. Never Married
    i. Rather Not Say
    j. In a civil partnership/civil union or other
9. What is your employment status?
    a. Full-time
    b. Part-time
    c. Due to start a job within the next month
    d. Unemployed (and job seeking)
    e. Not in paid work (e.g., homemaker, retired, or disabled)

f. Other

10. What is your sexual orientation?

    a. Heterosexual

    b. Homosexual

    c. Bisexual

    d. Asexual

    e. Other

11. Do you have any children?

12. How many children do you have?

13. How old is [child 1, child 2, etc.]?

14. How much of the time does [child 1, child 2, etc.] live with you?

    a. Never

    b. Some of the time

    c. Half the time

    d. Most of the time

    e. All the time

Identity Contingency

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

58. If I did not have a job, I would see myself as less of a parent

59. If I was unemployed, I would see myself as a bad parent

60. If I wasn't working, I would be able to be a better parent

61. If I wasn't employed, I would see myself as a better parent

62. Being employed helps me be the kind of parent I want to be

63. Having a job makes me a better parent

64. Working hurts my ability to be the kind of parent I want to be

65. Being employed makes me a worse parent

Identity Importance

Parenthood subscale

Please consider your parenthood identity and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

66. Overall, my parent identity has very little to do with how I feel about myself

67. My parent identity is an important reflection of who I am

68. Being a parent is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am

69. In general, being a parent is an important part of my self-image

Employee subscale

Please consider your work identity and rate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

70. Overall, my work has very little to do with how I feel about myself

71. My work identity is an important reflection of who I am

72. My work is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am

73. In general, my work is an important part of my self-image

Reasons for Working Measure

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

74. I work because my career is important to my identity
75. I work because my career is personally fulfilling to me
76. I work because my salary is beneficial to my family
77. I work so that that my family can maintain an acceptable standard of living
78. I work because I want my children to be proud of my professional status in the world
79. I work because I want to model a professional identity to my children

Employment threat measure (Vander Elst et al., 2014)

Likeliness (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

80. Chances are, I will soon lose my job
81. I am sure I can keep my job (R)
82. I feel insecure about the future of my job
83. I think I might lose my job in the near future

Re-employment

84. *In the next few months,* how difficult would it be for you to find a new job if you lost your current job? (1 = Not difficult at all, 5 = Very difficult)
85. *In the next few months,* how difficult would it be for you to find a job as good as the job you are in now? (1 = Not difficult at all, 5 = Very difficult)

Life Satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985)

Continue to think about being unemployed/the next few weeks. Below are five statements

with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

86. My life is close to my ideal

87. The conditions of my life are excellent

88. I am satisfied with my life

89. I am be getting the important things I want in life

90. I am change almost nothing about my life

Self-Esteem (Exploratory) (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991)

Continue to think about being unemployed (the next few weeks). Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

91. I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure

92. I feel self-conscious

93. I feel displeased with myself

94. I am worried about what other people think of me

95. I feel inferior to others at this moment

96. I feel concerned about the impression I am making

97. I am worried about looking foolish

Comprehension Check

98. What did you not get asked about during this survey?

a. Work
b. Parenthood
c. Friendship

Demographics, Part 2

Almost done! Please fill out the following demographic information.

99. How would you describe your partner's current employment status? (Full-time, Part-time, Due to start a job within the next month, unemployed (and job seeking), Unemployed (and not looking for work), Not in paid work (e.g., homemaker, retired, or disabled), Other)
100. Are you expecting to have or adopt children in the next year?
101. Do you want children in the future?
102. Is your income: (US Currency, UK Currency, Australia Currency, Other)
103. What is your personal household income?
104. What is your annual household income?
105. How old are you?
106. Where were you born?
107. How would you describe your ethnic background; prefer to self-describe as option?
108. Are you male, Female, Do not wish to answer?
109. How would you characterize your political beliefs?
110. What is the highest level of education you have received?
111. What is the gender distribution of people in your *organization*? Your best guess is fine.
112. What is the gender distribution of people at your *worksite*? Your best guess is fine.

113. What is the gender distribution of people at your *specific job*? Your best guess is fine.

    Does your occupation fall into any of these categories? (HEED, Finance, STEM)

114. How long have you been at your organization?

115. How long have you been in your current role at your organization?

116. What is your work experience?

117. How many hours per week do you work?

118. How many hours per week do you work?

119. In the next few months, how likely are you to quit your current job?