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Work from Home and Perceptions of Career Prospects of Employees with Children

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Abstract: this study explores how various work and family-related contexts moderated the link between work-from-home (WFH) and self-perceived changes to the career prospects among employees with children after over a year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We argue that the link between WFH and the perception of changes to one's career prospects is likely to differ depending on gender, occupation, whether the employee has worked from home before the pandemic, how much time their children spent at home due to pandemic restrictions and the cohabiting status of the parent. We conducted fixed effects multinomial regression models using a unique multi-country dataset, including representative samples of parents with dependent children from Canada, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the US. Employees with children who had prior experience with WFH before the pandemic were more likely to report improved career prospects than those who worked solely in the office. The positive effect of WFH for newcomers to the world of remote work was less unequivocal and varied based on occupation and gender. We also find that the presence of children at home and the cohabitation status substantially moderate the link between WFH and perceived changes to one's career prospects, with different implications based on the employee's gender. We fill the research gap by showing how fluid workers' perceptions of career prospects depend on varying professional (prior experience with WFH and occupation) and personal (increased family demands) situations. This study also indicates the need for context-sensitive career management in organisations.

Keywords: career prospects, family, gender, work from home, remote work

JEL codes: J12, J13, J16, J21

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1. Introduction

Work from home (WFH), which falls into the broader definition of fluid work (Vaiman, 2021), represents the deviation from the "standard employment" that takes place within a bounded space at the employers' premises (Minbaeva, 2021). It has surged in prevalence thanks to the development of information communication technologies and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly increased the spread, speed and depth of this work transformation (Alfes *et al*., 2023; Barrero *et al*., 2021; Ozimek, 2020). WFH is associated with many positive outcomes, such as more autonomy, better work-life balance, and increased satisfaction with life and work (Angelici and Profeta, 2023; Gibbs et al., 2023; Kossen and van der Berg, 2022; DeFilippis *et al*., 2020; Felstead and Henseke, 2017; Gajendran and Harrison, 2007). During the pandemic, the possibility to WFH proved instrumental in enabling many workers to remain employed, particularly those with childcare responsibilities, as they faced closures of nurseries and schools and had limited opportunities to outsource childcare due to restrictions on meeting individuals (e.g., grandparents) outside their households (Scarborough *et al*., 2023; Prime *et al*., 2020; Settersten *et al*., 2020). During the pandemic, some workers reported improved work-life balance due to working from home (Kurowska et al., 2023; Kaufman and Taniguchi, 2021). Nonetheless, engaging in this mode of working during the pandemic was not a universally positive experience for all workers, with some encountering isolation, impaired social interaction, exhaustion, and burnout (Tursunbayeva et *al.*, 2023; Nesher Shoshan and Wehrt, 2022; DeFilippis *et al*., 2020). Many parents were solely responsible for overseeing, caring for, and educating their children, often within their regular working hours (Hu *et al*., 2023; Mandeville *et al*., 2022). These unprecedented shifts in work and family dynamics presented substantial challenges for many caregivers (Augustine and Prickett, 2022; Carlson and Petts, 2022; Derndorfer et al., 2021; Farre *et al*., 2021), and especially mothers who bore most of the burden related to increased childcare needs (Meraviglia and Dudka, 2021; Zamberlan *et al.*, 2021; Manzo and Minello, 2020).

A recurring theme identified in studies exploring remote workers' experiences during the pandemic is their concern regarding the impact of WFH on their careers (Çoban, 2022; Moens *et al.*, 2022; Fana *et al.*, 2020). Workers have expressed apprehensions about being perceived as secondary employees and potentially being overlooked for promotions due to their engagement in WFH. WFH negatively impacts careers predominantly through impaired social interactions,

diminished networking and mentoring opportunities, worse job visibility, and flexibility stigma (Emanuel *et al*., 2023; Chung, 2022; Srivastava, 2011). In addition, many remote workers experienced higher stress levels and lower productivity during the pandemic (Gibbs *et al*., 2023; Shirmohammadia *et al.*, 2022). This could have negatively influenced how they perceived changes to their career prospects.

On the other hand, the pandemic period was marked by a substantial surge in the remote workforce, potentially alleviating the flexibility bias (Chung, 2022). Companies also gained increased expertise in managing remote employees and invested in building the necessary infrastructure to support this shift in work dynamics, which could have further improved the career development chances of remote workers. Consequently, a question remains open regarding the link between WFH and changes to career prospects during the pandemic and how this association varies based on the personal circumstances and characteristics of individual workers.

In this study, we explore the link between WFH and perceived changes to employees' career prospects, focusing on employees with children. We look at their perception in mid-2021, more than a year after the pandemic outbreak, when the most severe COVID-19 pandemic waves were over (see Figure 1 in the Appendix), most of the confinement restrictions in Europe and North America lifted - at least temporarily - and vaccination was widespread (Mathieu *et al.* 2024). That juncture likely allowed employees to reflect on how the pandemic has influenced their professional trajectory and career prospects.

Moreover, we fill an important gap in the literature, as little is known about how WFH workers perceive their career prospects. Prior quantitative research has predominantly focused on WFH and objective career measures (Arntz *et al.*, 2022; Golden and Eddleston, 2020; Weeden, 2005) or the employer perspective on those who WFH (Matysiak *et al.*, 2023; Kasperska *et al.*, 2024; Wang and Chung, 2023). The focus on the employee perspective is essential because it gives us an idea of how employees feel about their jobs and careers and may help us better understand their behaviours. Notably, the existing literature recognises that employees' perceptions of their career prospects are not always aligned with the actual objective prospects - such perceptions are often based on employees' feelings and represent a very subjective measure (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014). Recognising the potential dissonance between objective and subjective career prospects, we contend that understanding the employee's interpretation of one's career prospects is

crucial. This is because such a perspective indicates how employees conceptualise their career development opportunities, which can, consequently, shape their professional attitudes and behaviour and affect their well-being (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014).

In our research, we focus on employed mothers and fathers as they encountered pronounced challenges during the pandemic, exacerbated by school closures, and consequently, simultaneous engagement in employment and childcare (Augustine and Prickett, 2022; Carlson and Petts, 2022; Derndorfer *et al*., 2021; Farre *et al*., 2021). We employ the role conflict theory with the competing demands concept to explore how the professional and personal spheres interact and influence one's career (Greenhaus and Powell, 2003; Carlson *et al.*, 2000; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Kahn *et al.*, 1964). Namely, we investigate how the family sphere impacts one's perception of career prospects while working from home by including the following moderators (1) time spent at home by children without formal childcare due to confinement policies and (2) the cohabiting status of the parent in the relationship between WFH and perceived changes to the career prospects. At the same time, we consider that the effect of WFH on the perception of changes to career prospects may differ depending on whether one has already worked from home before the pandemic and their occupational strata. Including prior experience with WFH is particularly important because it is likely that employees with prior experience are more accustomed to this mode of working and yield better professional results. However, this perspective has been largely missing in the literature, except for a recent study by Kurowska and colleagues (2023), who showed essential differences in this regard. The inclusion of this perspective provides valuable insights to address existing gaps in the literature. It is also something experts in the field have been urging to explore (Caligiuri *et al*., 2020). By focusing on various occupational categories, we can distinguish the varying impacts of the WFH experience on employees with different levels of autonomy and responsibility and diverse access to organisational resources. In terms of practical implications, our study illustrates how individuals are differently affected by flexible work arrangements, underscoring the need for additional support or reorganisation of work, especially for those facing heightened family demands and little experience with fluid working.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

The impact of WFH on careers remains ambiguous, especially in the current context marked by pandemic-induced increased prevalence of remote work (see for example Matysiak et al., 2023;

Kasperska *et al.*, 2024; Arntz *et al*., 2022; Golden and Eddleston, 2020; Munsch, 2016; Weeden, 2005; Bloom *et al.*, 2015; Leslie *et al.*, 20127). The positive impact of WFH on careers can be due to the improved work-life balance, job satisfaction (Laß and Wooden, 2022; Chung and Van der Lippe, 2020; Felstead and Henseke, 2017; Gajendran and Harrison, 2007), increased flexibility (Chung, 2022; White *et al*., 2003), greater autonomy over their tasks (Kossek and Thompson, 2016), and time saved on commuting (Arntz *et al*., 2022; Vega *et al*., 2015). However, WFH is also linked with impaired social interactions and communication and, therefore, those who WFH experience less knowledge exchange, networking, and mentoring (Emanuel *et al.*, 2023) and are less visible in the workplace (Maruyama and Tietze, 2012; Srivastava, 2011). Furthermore, workers can experience work distractions from other family members when working at home (Powell and Craig, 2015).

The existing literature has also identified a differential treatment of those who use flexible working arrangements based on their supposed lower productivity levels and commitment to work, namely, the flexibility stigma (Chung, 2022; Williams *et al.,* 2013; Coltrane *et al*., 2013). Such stigmatisation may occur as a result of the deviation of employees from the ideal worker norms, namely, work centrality and devotion which is prevalent in most industrialised countries (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Kelly *et al.,* 2010; Acker, 1990). All of these could make remote employees doubt how well their careers progress, especially if they witness others' careers being harmed by the experience of flexible working. Post-pandemic research on the impact of WFH on careers has started to emerge. For example, Kasperska and colleagues (2024) show that managers perceive those who WFH worse and are less likely to grant them promotions and salary raises than office-based employees. The rationale behind this is that managers find WFH employees less productive and committed to the workplace than on-site workers (Matysiak *et al*., 2023). Hence, it appears that WFH is (still) perceived unfavourably, despite the increased prevalence and subsequent normalisation of this mode of working. Yet, a question remains how employees felt about their career prospects while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this article, we argue that experience with WFH before the pandemic could have impacted how remote workers perceive changes to their career prospects during the pandemic. It has already been widely evidenced that when employees are in novel and uncertain situations, they experience tension and stress (Caligiuri *et al.,* 2020; Stahl and Caligiuri 2005). Employees who

worked remotely before the pandemic and continued to do so during this period might have perceived the changes to their career prospects that happened during the pandemic differently than the newcomers to WFH. Firstly, they were already familiar with the challenges and advantages of remote work. For those who started to WFH during the pandemic, the sudden transition from in-person to online working mode brought about work intensification, stress, and decreased work engagement (Adisa *et al*., 2023). Secondly, adapting to simultaneous engagement in work and care at home due to pandemic-related childcare and school closures and quarantines might have been much easier for those who previously worked from home while having children. Thirdly, evidence indicates that most of the initial challenges with remote work were related to technical issues (Wang *et al*., 2021), and those with prior experience with working from home might have leveraged a comparative advantage in this regard. Finally, as working from home became more widespread, it could have brought hope, among remote workers, for improving their position in the organisation and, consequently, their career prospects. This is why we expect to find a *positive relationship between WFH and perception of change to one's career rather among those parents who had worked from home already before the pandemic and continued to do so during this period than among those who started WFH only during the pandemic* (H1).

Furthermore, the link between WFH and perceived changes to career prospects can also differ depending on the occupational strata that employees belong to. One of the reasons behind this is the differential levels of autonomy and responsibility that managers and professionals experience compared to other occupational groups. Managers and professionals typically have more work autonomy and conduct different tasks than other workers (Wheatley, 2017; Gallie, *et al*., 2004). When transitioning to WFH, managers and professional workers may have had more flexibility in managing their time and responsibilities, which could have increased productivity and perceived effectiveness in their roles. Teodorovicza and colleagues (2022) compared the tasks performed by managers before and during COVID-19 and found that managers exerted more effort (and worked longer hours) once they transitioned to WFH due to the pandemic. Meanwhile, non-managers used the time saved on commuting for personal activities (Teodorovicza *et al*., 2021). Consequently, the nature of managers' responsibilities, such as coordination and supervisory tasks (Drucker, 2012), led them to increase their workload, which could have improved their perception of career prospects. Non-managers may have faced challenges adapting to WFH, especially if they were under direct supervision or their work required constant coordination with colleagues.

Existing evidence confirms that autonomy is an important mediator in the relationship between WFH and job satisfaction (Gajendran and Harrison (2007), which in turn links to productivity levels and, as a consequence - employment outcomes (Parker *et al*., 2017; Cordery *et al*., 2010). Another reason managers and professionals may wield better than other occupational groups in the transition to WFH is that they often have better access to resources and support systems within their organisations (Autor and Dorn, 2013; Drucker, 2012). During the pandemic, they may have been better equipped to handle the transition to WFH, with access to necessary technology, support from IT departments, and established communication channels. Other employees may have faced barriers in accessing these resources, which could have affected their performance and perceived career prospects. Subsequently, due to their seniority and experience, managers and professionals generally have higher visibility within their organisations (Drucker, 2012) and may have already established their credibility and reputation before the pandemic. Hence, working remotely may not have significantly impacted their visibility or recognition for their contributions. However, for other groups of workers, especially those early in their careers, the lack of face-to-face interaction in a remote work setting could have hindered their ability to showcase their skills and achievements, potentially impacting their perceived career prospects. Correspondingly, it has been shown that the transition to WFH during the pandemic hindered mentoring and workers' relations and work quality, particularly for junior employees (Emanuel *et al*., 2023). Therefore, we hypothesise *WFH to be positively related to a perceived change in career prospects among managers and professionals, regardless if they have already had WFH before the pandemic or not, while for other workers positive relationship is to be found only if they had experience with WFH prior to the pandemic (H2)*.

Nevertheless, we also acknowledge that the way WFH was related to employees' perception of change in their career prospects during the pandemic might have been moderated by factors related to the intensity of role conflicts and competing demands from work and family spheres they have experienced during the pandemic. The *role-conflict theory* provides a useful theoretical lens to understand changes to the career prospects of remotely working parents during the COVID-19 pandemic (Carlson *et al.*, 2000; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). The theory recognises that individuals occupy multiple roles within various social structures, such as work and family, each with its expectations and demands. When these roles come into conflict, individuals may experience role conflict, leading to stress, tension, and difficulties in managing their

responsibilities. Correspondingly, the *competing demands* concept (Greenhaus and Powell, 2003; Kahn *et al*., 1964) recognises that workers are frequently confronted with various tasks, responsibilities, and expectations that may compete for their time, attention, and resources, impacting their performance and well-being (Greenhaus and Powell, 2003). The literature on competing demands underlines that the demands from different spheres of life can intertwine - they are not limited only to demands to one sphere, but it has been shown that professional and personal spheres interact (Michaelides *et al.*, 2023; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). The phenomenon of family demands interfering with work (and vice versa) is described in the literature as family-to-work (and work-to-family) spillover (Grzywacz and Demerouti, 2013; Grzywacz and Marks, 2000).

During the pandemic, the abrupt transition to WFH for those who started WFH only during the pandemic, coupled with heightened demands in the personal realm, such as childcare and housework, potentially posed significant challenges for those remote workers, elevating their stress levels and lowering productivity (Gibbs *et al*., 2023; Shirmohammadia *et al*., 2022). Juggling working and caring for children can be particularly difficult for single parents and adversely affect their careers and mental health as they often do not have anyone to take care of children while they work (Almeida *et al*., 2020; Power, 2020). Evidence suggests that single parents were 13 percentage points more likely than partnered parents to report working less efficiently when working from home than before the lockdown (Aczel *et al*., 2021). Therefore, *we expect to find a positive relationship between continued WFH and perceived changes in one's career prospects during the pandemic among those parents who lived with a partner but not among those who lived alone with their children (H3).* Furthermore, dealing with role conflicts and competing demands during the pandemic could have been particularly difficult for working parents who had children at home for several months due to childcare/school closures. Kurowska and colleagues (2023) have shown that having children at home for many months due to confinement policies during the pandemic limited the positive effect of WFH on perceived work-life balance among working parents. The difficulty in managing various roles and responsibilities and the potential conflicts arising from them could have translated to doubts about one's future career prospects among this group of parents. Therefore, *we expect to find a positive relationship between continued WFH and change in one's career prospects during the pandemic among those parents whose children stayed at home for shorter periods during the COVID-19 pandemic (H4).*

Finally, the way remotely working parents perceived changes to their career prospects during the pandemic might have also differed for men and women as the experience of remote working in the pandemic may not have been uniform across gender lines. This is due to the differential engagement of men and women in housework and childcare responsibilities, which posed significant challenges for working parents during the pandemic. Recent evidence indicates that women, especially working mothers, bore most of the burden of simultaneously caring for the family and working during the pandemic, with likely adverse effects on their future careers (Mandeville *et al.*, 2022; Hu *et al*., 2023). Although men increased their time spent on childcare and housework, women increased it even more, thereby exacerbating the gender gap in this domain (Christin Landivar *et al.*, 2023; Pabilonia and Vernon, 2022; Hipp and Bünning, 2021; Petts *et al*., 2021; Ruppanner *et al*., 2020). In addition, pressure caused by increased responsibilities during the pandemic negatively impacted mothers' sleep, overall well-being, and mental health (Ruppanner *et al*., 2021). Access to WFH has been identified as a critical resource in helping mothers maintain their work engagement throughout the pandemic (Scarborough *et al*., 2023). However, it is important to recognise that WFH likely functioned more as a coping mechanism for managing increasing caregiving demands rather than fundamentally challenging the traditional norms that have imposed domestic responsibilities on mothers. This is evident in the research conducted during the pandemic, revealing that mothers working remotely either maintained or increased their commitment to childcare (Shockley *et al*., 2021). In contrast, the influence of remote work on fathers' engagement was less prominent, often contingent on their partners' employment circumstances (Martucci, 2023; Hank and Steinbach, 2021; Hipp and Bünning, 2021; Zoch *et al*., 2021; Del Boca *et al*., 2020). As a result of these increased demands, working mothers reported a drop in their productivity levels compared to the time before the pandemic, whereas fathers did not report that (Feng and Savani, 20202). Therefore, engaging in WFH may have come at a considerable cost to mothers' careers, even though it helped maintain their employment. Considering the above evidence, we *expect to find a negative relationship between WFH and changes in one's career prospects during the pandemic for mothers who started to work from home only during the COVID-19 pandemic (H5).* Furthermore, we expect the H3 and H4 to be particularly true for mothers.

3. Data and methods

We use data from a unique, cross-country comparative dataset, the Familydemic Harmonised Dataset (Kurowska *et al*., 2023). The data collection for this survey was conducted online between June and September 2021 on representative samples of mothers and fathers living in six countries of various welfare regimes: Canada, Italy, Germany, Poland, Sweden and the US. The survey collected comprehensive - current as well as retrospective - information on the lives of respondents and their families over the time period starting just before the outbreak of COVID-19 (February 2020) until the time of the interview (June-September 2021). The total sample of this study amounts to 9,634 parents, with a slight majority of fathers (51%) and individuals with a university degree (51%). Most are under age 40 (57%) and have at least two children (58%). Regarding the perceived change to one's career prospects, a higher proportion of men (20%) indicated improvement to career prospects than women (18%). Yet, most workers reported no change (66% of men and 67% of women). The are interesting country differences, with USA (49%) and Canada (21%) having the highest shares of workers who report improved career prospects. Whilst the highest shares of no change to career prospects are reported in Germany, Poland and Sweden, all above 70%. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study.

Table 1. The structure of the sample (in %): full sample used in the analysis, by gender and by country.

	Full sample	**Gender**		**Country**					
		Fathers	Mothers	CA	DE	IT	PL	SE	US
		50.89	49.11	21.77	14.76	14.69	24.40	16.44	6.94
Change in perceived career prospects:									
No change	66.19	65.76	66.64	59.57	71.48	65.02	71.03	74.95	39.74
Improved	19.19	20.06	18.29	21.14	16.76	16.98	14.59	15.47	48.62
Worsened	14.62	14.18	15.07	19.29	11.76	18.01	14.39	9.58	11.64
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Change in the use of WFH									
No use-No use	60.51	61.24	59.75	60.36	57.93	65.43	70.55	46.84	52.84
No use-Use	15.29	13.91	16.73	08.07	22.02	20.89	13.67	21.36	3.35
Use-Use	24.20	24.86	23.51	31.57	20.59	13.68	15.78	31.80	43.81
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Educational attainment									

Less than tertiary	49.28	52.11	46.35	45.34	60.60	64.67	47.26	35.67	44.69
Tertiary education	50.72	47.89	53.65	54.66	39.40	35.33	52.75	64.33	55.31
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Age group									
20-30 years old	12.70	9.86	15.64	11.08	10.40	7.77	16.26	8.23	30.71
31-39 years old	44.65	40.96	48.47	53.87	48.15	31.82	40.02	49.05	41.92
40-49 years old	34.93	38.80	30.91	31.15	35.16	44.95	33.66	37.32	24.02
50-59 years old	7.72	10.37	4.97	3.89	6.29	15.46	10.06	5.40	3.35
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Parthership status									
Living with a partner	89.73	92.78	86.57	90.45	87.96	92.10	89.94	90.42	83.82
Not living with a partner	10.27	7.22	13.43	9.55	12.04	7.90	10.06	9.58	16.18
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Number of children									
1	42.00	41.42	42.61	34.77	41.93	52.10	54.77	25.91	34.93
2	44.63	44.83	44.42	47.33	47.95	41.44	35.57	54.45	45.71
3+	13.37	13.75	12.97	17.90	10.12	6.46	9.66	19.64	19.36
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Number of months children stayed at home									
0-1	40.77	41.77	39.73	38.02	35.43	29.97	14.82	89.75	46.72
2-5	34.26	34.06	34.47	42.28	43.30	47.56	33.32	7.49	28.09
6+	24.97	24.17	25.79	19.70	21.27	22.47	51.86	2.76	25.18
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Occupation									
ARMED FORCES OCCUPATIONS	0.21	0.38	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.79	0.00	.15
MANAGERS	11.22	13.39	8.96	16.97	4.45	10.38	8.39	8.72	25.62
PROFESSIONALS	31.72	28.33	35.23	37.04	28.11	20.96	25.28	50.15	25.33
TECHNICIANS AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS	19.81	18.27	21.40	20.96	25.24	15.19	19.32	19.52	16.89
CLERICAL SUPPORT WORKERS	11.77	8.79	14.86	5.93	20.38	23.44	11.33	4.60	5.68
SERVICE AND SALES WORKERS	11.32	8.73	14.00	8.25	14.30	13.06	12.92	7.86	13.25
SKILLED AGRICULTURAL,	0.40	0.58	0.23	0.37	0.27	0.00	0.56	0.74	0.29

FORESTRY AND FISH									
CRAFT AND RELATED TRADES WORKERS	5.74	10.14	1.19	5.24	3.56	4.26	8.51	4.85	7.13
PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATORS, AND ASSEMB	4.92	8.41	1.29	3.43	1.37	9.62	7.59	3.13	1.60
ELEMENTARY OCCUPATIONS	2.90	3.00	2.80	1.81	2.33	03.09	5.33	0.43	4.028
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sector of the economy									
Public	38.67	32.43	45.14	43.30	32.15	26.25	34.82	50.95	49.41
Private	58.05	65.16	50.69	51.60	62.11	72.65	62.04	46.90	50.59
Other	3.27	2.40	4.17	5.10	5.75	1.10	3.14	2.15	0.00
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Change in working hours									
No change	82.89	84.86	80.84	78.26	81.33	84.95	88.55	86.62	66.81
Fewer hours	8.96	7.93	10.03	10.15	10.47	8.25	5.37	6.75	21.98
More hours	8.15	7.20	9.13	11.59	8.21	6.80	06.08	6.63	11.21
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Life satisfaction									
Dissatisfied	50.63	49.70	51.59	63.51	36.32	51.75	54.53	43.73	40.32
Satisfied	49.37	50.30	48.41	36.49	63.68	48.25	45.47	56.27	59.68
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Job lost									
No	97.40	97.44	97.35	96.52	98.29	99.73	95.99	98.04	96.94
Yes	2.60	2.56	2.65	3.48	1.71	0.27	04.01	1.96	03.06
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Employer reduced working hours									
No	89.48	88.83	90.15	91.98	92.41	87.84	87.88	94.05	73.94
Yes	10.52	11.17	9.85	08.02	7.59	12.16	12.12	5.95	26.06
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Type of employment contract									
Permanent job	93.15	94.09	92.17	92.68	91.93	100.00	92.89	96.01	76.86
Temporary job	6.85	5.91	7.83	7.32	08.07	0.00	7.11	3.99	23.14
Total:	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

The dependent variable, **perceived changes to career prospects**, has been constructed based on respondents choosing the most relevant ending to the following statement: "Comparing the current situation with the month before COVID-19, my career prospects…". The possible answers included: "1. Improved a lot, 2. Somewhat improved, 3. Did not change, 4. Somewhat deteriorated, 5. Deteriorated a lot". We have created a variable with three values: no change in career prospects (answer 3), improvement in career prospects (answers 1 and 2) and worsening of career prospects (answers 4 and 5).

Our main explanatory variable related to **the use of WFH** has three values:

- No use - No use, denoting parents who neither worked from home before the pandemic (February 2020) nor at the moment of the survey (June/September 2021);
- No use - Use, denoting parents who did not work from home before the pandemic (February 2020) but did it at the moment of the survey (June/September 2021) and
- Use - Use, denoting parents who did work from home before the pandemic (February 2020) as well as the moment of the survey (June/September 2021).

Our moderating variables include **the number of months the children were at home** and the **cohabiting status of the parent**. The length of time the child(ren) was at home due to childcare/school closures during the pandemic is measured with three values: i) 0-1 month; ii) 2-5 months; iii) 6 months or more. Cohabiting status is measured as a dummy variable with those living with a partner and those who are single parents or live alone with children. The moderator related to occupational strata is recoded from ISCO 1-digit occupational codes, with 1-3 representing the managerial and professional group, and 4-10 defined as other occupations.

We estimate fixed effects multinomial logistic regression models with standard errors clustered on the country variable. We run separate models for mothers and fathers as the perceived change in their career prospects can be affected differently by the same covariates. To compare the moderation effects, we run the interaction models in which we interact WFH with the presented moderators. In all models, we control for age (in years: 20-30;31-39; 40-49; 50-59), education (less than tertiary; tertiary), number of children (1; 2; 3+), employment sector (public; private; other), change in working hours during the pandemic (increased; no change; decreased), life satisfaction

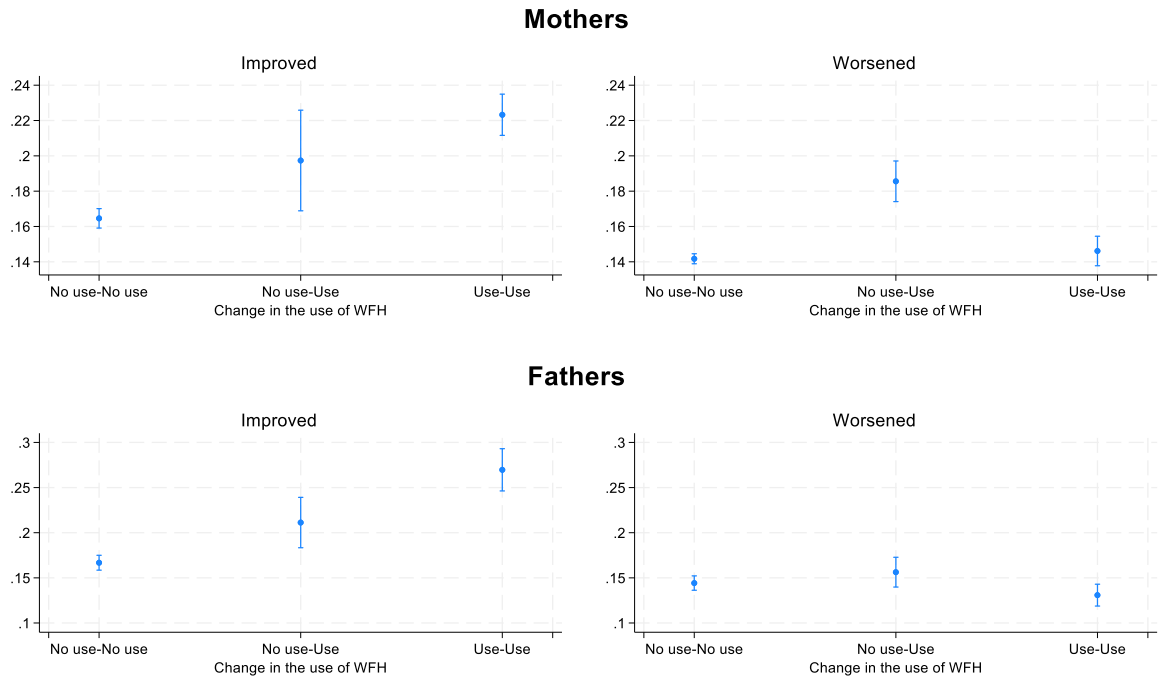
at the moment of the survey (dissatisfied; satisfied), employment type at the moment of the survey (permanent job; temporary job), whether the respondent lost or left a job during the pandemic (yes; no) and whether his/her hours of work were reduced (yes; no) as well as pregnancy occurrence during the pandemic (for mothers only) (yes; no). In models that do not use an occupational group as a moderator, we also control for occupation (ISCO 1-digit codes).

While interpreting our findings, we use predicted probabilities (estimated marginal means). Demonstrating findings using predicted probabilities, as compared to coefficients or odds ratios, is recommended as the most accurate and straightforward inference in multinomial regressions (Paolino, 2021, Wulf 2015). We evaluate whether the difference between two predicted probabilities is significant by comparing 83% confidence intervals. We do it following Austin and Hux (2002) who showed that two means differ from each other with the p-value at the p-level of 0.05 if 83% CIs do not overlap. The coefficients of the estimated models can be found in Tables 1-4 in the Appendix.

4. Findings

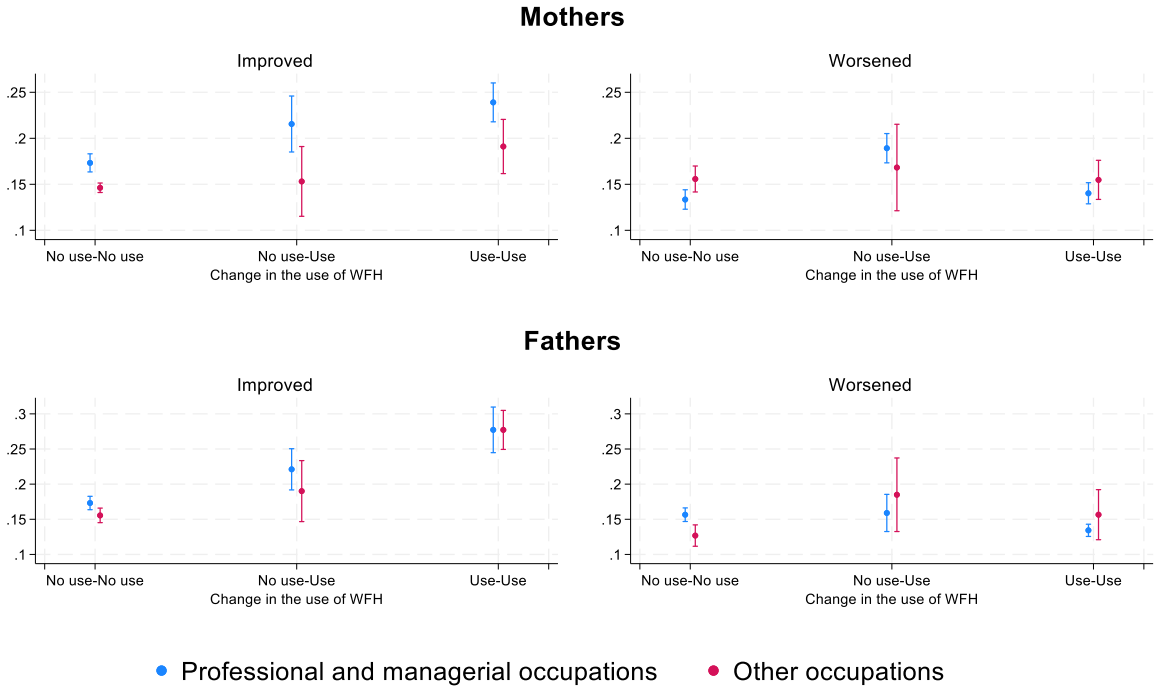
Our findings indicate that both mothers and fathers who continued to WFH throughout the pandemic had a substantially higher predicted probability of reporting improved career prospects than those mothers and fathers who worked solely in the office, thereby providing evidence for H1 (Figure 1). The gaps between those who worked solely in the office and those who continued to WFH are 6 percentage points (pp.) for mothers and 10 pp. for fathers. Notably, fathers who started to WFH also reported improved career prospects as compared to those who worked solely from the office by 4 pp. Among mothers, a similar difference between the groups is not statistically significant. Moreover, mothers who started to WFH during the pandemic were more likely to report worsened career prospects (by 5 pp.) than those who solely worked on-site and those who continued to WFH. This finding provides evidence for H5.

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of improved / worsened career prospects by WFH, CI 83%.



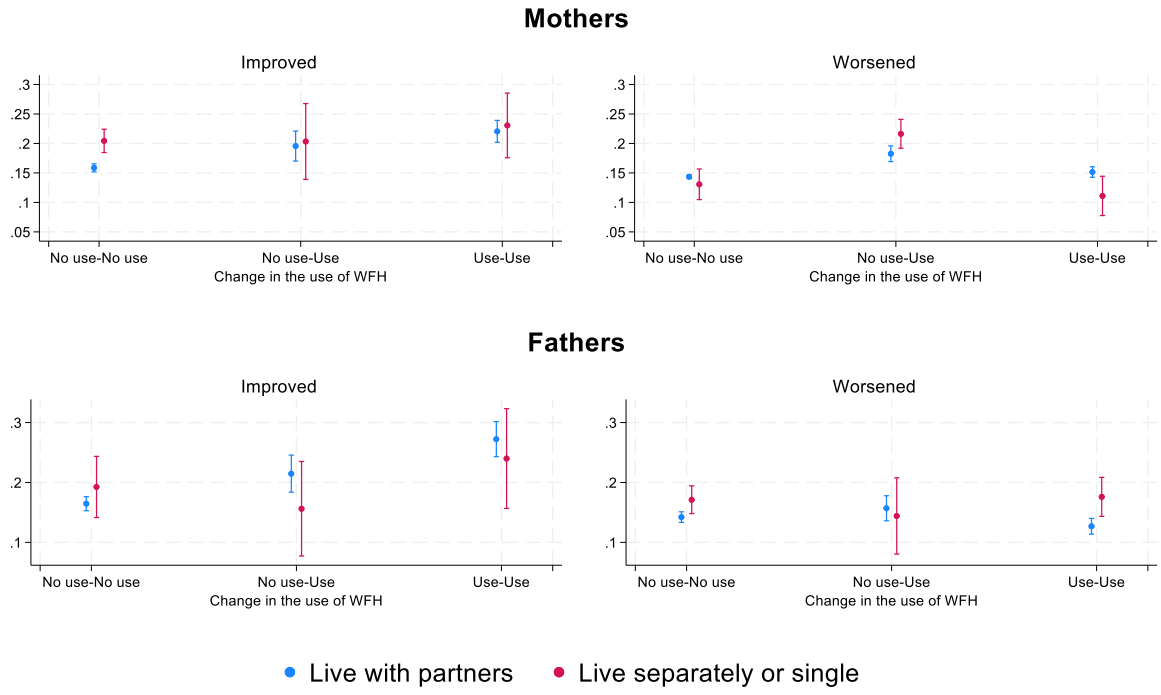
We also find that occupational strata are important in moderating the link between WFH and perceived changes in career prospects (Figure 2). As expected (H2), we find that managers and professionals had a higher probability of reporting improvement to career prospects not only if they used to WFH already before the pandemic but also if they only started WFH during the pandemic. The same is not true of other occupational groups. Yet, for mothers in managerial or professional positions who started WFH, we also evidence an increased likelihood of reporting worsened career prospects compared to managerial and professional mothers working from the office. The same is not true for other occupational groups of mothers. This means that for mothers being a newcomer to the world of remote work during the pandemic didn't have unequivocal effects if one was a manager or a professional. Finally, for mothers and fathers who were already used to WFH before the pandemic, both managers/professionals and non-managers/non-professionals experienced improved career prospects.

Figure 2. Predicted probabilities of improved / worsened career prospects by WFH and occupational category, CI 83%.



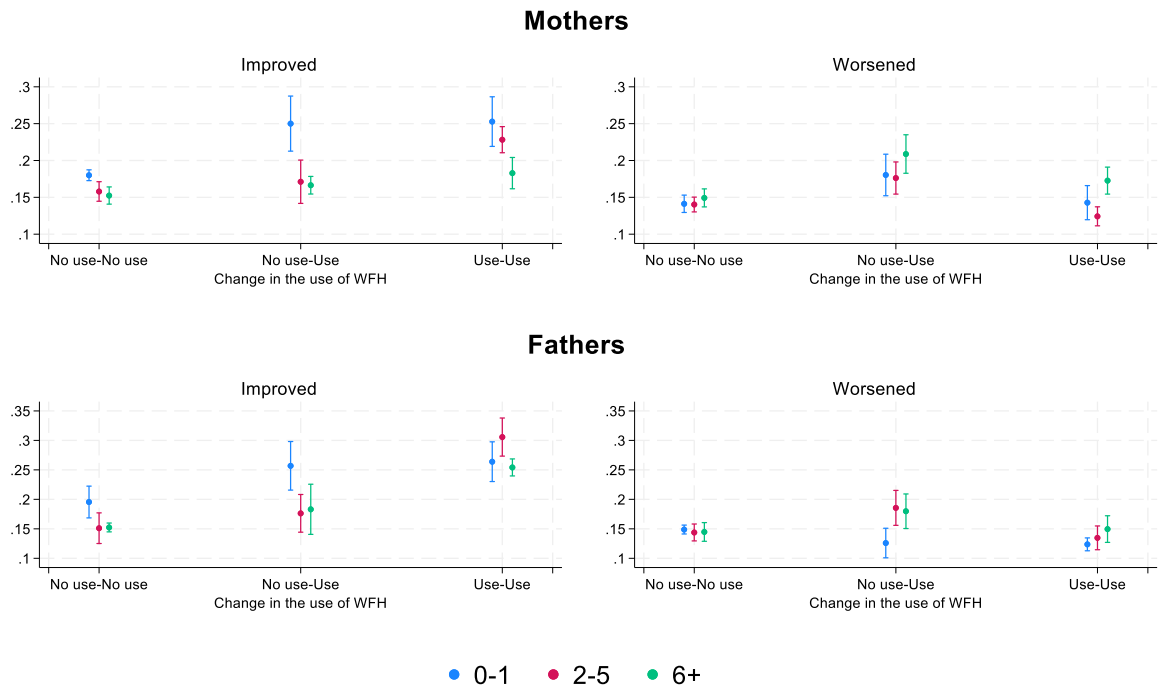
In line with H3, the positive association between WFH and perceived changes to career prospects is only evidenced for those living with partners (Figure 3). We do not find positive associations for single individuals or those with a partner but who live separately. Notably, mothers who started to WFH during the pandemic were more likely to report worsened career prospects than those who worked solely on-site and continued to WFH regardless of their partnership-cohabiting status. We find no such negative association for men, but partner fathers who continued to WFH during COVID-19 were less likely to report worsened career prospects (by 1 pp).

Figure 3. Predicted probabilities of improved / worsened career prospects by WFH and the cohabitation relationship status, CI 83%.



The presence of children at home also proved to be an important moderator of the studied relationships (Figure 4). The positive effects of WFH on the perception of one's career prospects are particularly visible for those whose children spend no longer than 1 month at home. This provides support for H4. Furthermore, findings indicate that women who started WFH during the pandemic and continued to do so reported a positive change in their career prospects if the child(ren) stayed at home for a short period (0-1 month). This positive relationship gradually fades away with more extended periods, and for mothers whose children have stayed at home for 6 months or longer, the positive association is no longer observable. In fact, such mothers are more likely to report worsened career prospects if they started to WFH during the pandemic (by 6 pp). Fathers who continued to WFH appear to experience improved career prospects regardless of the length of the period the child stayed home.

Figure 4. Predicted probabilities of improved / worsened career prospects by WFH and the number of months a child stayed at home without formal care, CI 83%.



5. Discussion

The recent COVID-19 pandemic brought about many changes to people's lives and ways of working and accelerated the work transformation regarding where and at what time work is conducted (Alfes *et al*., 2023). The widespread adoption of WFH has notably increased employees' flexibility, enabling them to achieve a better work-life balance and enhance overall life satisfaction (Kurowska *et al*., 2023; Gibbs *et al*., 2023; Kossen and van der Berg, 2022; DeFilippis *et al.*, 2020). However, not all employees experienced this transition equally; many grappled with feelings of isolation and deteriorating mental health (Gibbs *et al*., 2023; Tursunbayeva *et al.*, 2023; Shirmohammadia *et al*., 2022; Adisa *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, parents faced challenges in juggling childcare responsibilities alongside remote work due to school closures and limits on contact with people from other households (Augustine and Prickett, 2022; Carlson and Petts, 2022; Derndorfer *et al*., 2021; Farre *et al*., 2021). Consequently, while WFH offers numerous advantages, it is not a universal solution to all workplace challenges. Nevertheless, it remains a valuable resource many

employees appreciate (Barrero *et al*., 2021; Ozimek, 2020), empowering them professionally and personally to navigate their jobs and lives more effectively.

In this article, we explored the link between WFH and changes to the perceived career prospects of employees within various family- and work-related contexts after over a year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reveal that, on average, those who continued to WFH during the pandemic (i.e. those with prior experience with WFH) reported an improvement in their career prospects. This improvement may stem from their familiarity with WFH and the necessary technologies to conduct such work acquired through previous experience, potentially decreasing anxiety related to the sudden change of working mode and elevating their status within the company due to their adeptness in remote work (Adisa *et al.*, 2023; Wang *et al*., 2021). However, this positive link was driven by those parents who lived with their partners. In other words, a positive relationship was not observed for those mothers and fathers who lived alone with their kids. Single parents likely faced unique challenges in managing both paid work and caregiving responsibilities (Almeida *et al*., 2020; Power, 2020), which could negatively impact their ability to remain productive and focused on work. This finding is consistent with recent evidence showing that single parents were substantially more likely than partnered parents to report working less efficiently when engaging in WFH than before the lockdown (Aczel *et al*., 2021). We additionally found that for mothers (also partnered ones), the positive effect of continuing WFH was weaker if children were at home for more extended periods due to pandemic-related confinement measures. Juggling work, childcare, and schooling placed significant strain on parents, particularly mothers, who experienced a disproportionate increase in caregiving and household duties, exacerbating gender disparities in these domains (Augustine and Prickett, 2022; Carlson and Petts, 2022; Derndorfer *et al*., 2021; Farre *et al*., 2021). This highlights how crucial the family context and family-related care responsibilities are for WFH in yielding a positive perception of career outcomes for parents, particularly mothers.

Among the newcomers to the world of remote work, i.e. those who only started WFH during the pandemic, the effect on the perception of change in one's career prospects was less clear and even more gendered. We found a positive link only among fathers, but again this relationship was driven by those who lived with partners and those whose children did not stay home for extended periods during the pandemic. Furthermore, it was evidenced for fathers in managerial and

professional positions but not other occupations. This likely results from WFH being particularly convenient for jobs characterised by higher autonomy, flexibility, and access to resources (Autor and Dorn, 2013; Drucker, 2012), particularly among men. For mothers, being a newcomer to WFH was related to reporting worsened career prospects, mainly when the mother lived without a partner and her children stayed home for extended periods. Mothers might likely have felt that their careers suffered due to the transition to WFH mode if this transition was combined with increased childcare needs. These gendered results resonate well with other findings on the effects of the pandemic on paid and unpaid work of mothers and fathers. It has been widely documented that mothers faced increased demands and spent more time on childcare and housework than fathers during the pandemic (Christin Landivar *et al.*, 2023; Hu *et al.*, 2023; Feng and Savani, 20202; Mandeville et al., 2022; Pabilonia and Vernon, 2022; Hipp and Bünning, 2021; Petts *et al*., 2021; Shockley *et al*., 2021; Ruppanner et al., 2020). Stefanova and colleagues (2021) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, women allocated more time to caregiving and significantly less time to work than men. Correspondingly, women reported feeling more dissatisfied with the division of housework labour than men (Craig and Churchill, 2020). Evidence confirms that the more caregiving women performed during the pandemic relative to other tasks, the more negative their self-reported career outcomes were, specifically in terms of career self-efficacy and aspirations (Stefanova *et al.*, 2021).

Overall, our findings underscore the differential professional realities experienced by men and women. Men tend to benefit more straightforwardly from WFH regarding career advancement, while women's experiences are nuanced and influenced by various factors beyond professional considerations. Our findings underscore the critical influence of family demands on individuals' perceptions of their career prospects, highlighting the interplay between professional factors, personal life dynamics and gender.

6. Theoretical and practical contributions

Our study addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing on the distinction between individuals who transitioned to WFH and continued this mode of work - an area that has received limited attention despite calls from experts for investigation (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, our research contributes to a deeper understanding of the impact of fluid working on various employees by examining its effects on different occupational groups. We provide insights into why different employees may experience distinct effects from fluid working. This is a critical

consideration, as emerging studies highlight the varied nature of the WFH experience among different groups of employees (Barrero *et al.*, 2023). We also add to the existing literature by showing important gender differences in this domain and the impact of family-related aspects on one's perceptions of career development prospects. Consequently, we argue that it is essential to recognise that the fluid work experiences are not uniform across all workers and to acknowledge the diverse perspectives and needs within the workforce.

This study also contributes to the practice as we demonstrate the need for greater support for employees undergoing changes in their mode of working. In light of the technological revolution, increasing automation and the exponential advancement of AI, employees may increasingly find themselves compelled to adapt to new work solutions (Alfes *et al*., 2022). It is crucial to recognise that for these solutions to benefit employee careers, they must be accompanied by appropriate support mechanisms to facilitate smooth transitions and foster employee well-being. Our findings underscore the importance for organisations to consider both professional factors, such as occupation and prior experience with fluid working, as well as personal circumstances, including family demands. By doing so, organisations can better support the diverse needs of their workforce and promote inclusive and effective remote work practices for all employees and more efficiently manage careers of diverse types of employees.

7. Limitations

Although our study comprises several countries and a large sample of over 9,000 employees, a limitation of this study is that we use cross-sectional data. Consequently, we cannot establish causality or determine the direction of the effects (Antonakis *et al*., 2010). Additionally, conducting cross-country comparisons proves challenging due to the limited number of six countries in our study, which insufficiently captures the variation between welfare states, types of capitalism, and other important factors. For instance, hierarchical modelling could provide a more comprehensive analysis, yet, the number of countries would have to be at least 25-30 to yield unbiased results (Bryan and Jenkins, 2016). Due to the limited number of respondents by country, we could not estimate triple interactions (gender x work from home x moderator) by country to explore potential country differences in the effects observed. Future research could address these limitations by exploring the relationship between WFH and perceived career prospects through longitudinal data or experimental designs.

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Appendix

Figure 1. The time of data collection in the Familydemic Survey (June - September 2021) is marked on the WHO graph with the number of COVID-19 deaths reported on a weekly basis.

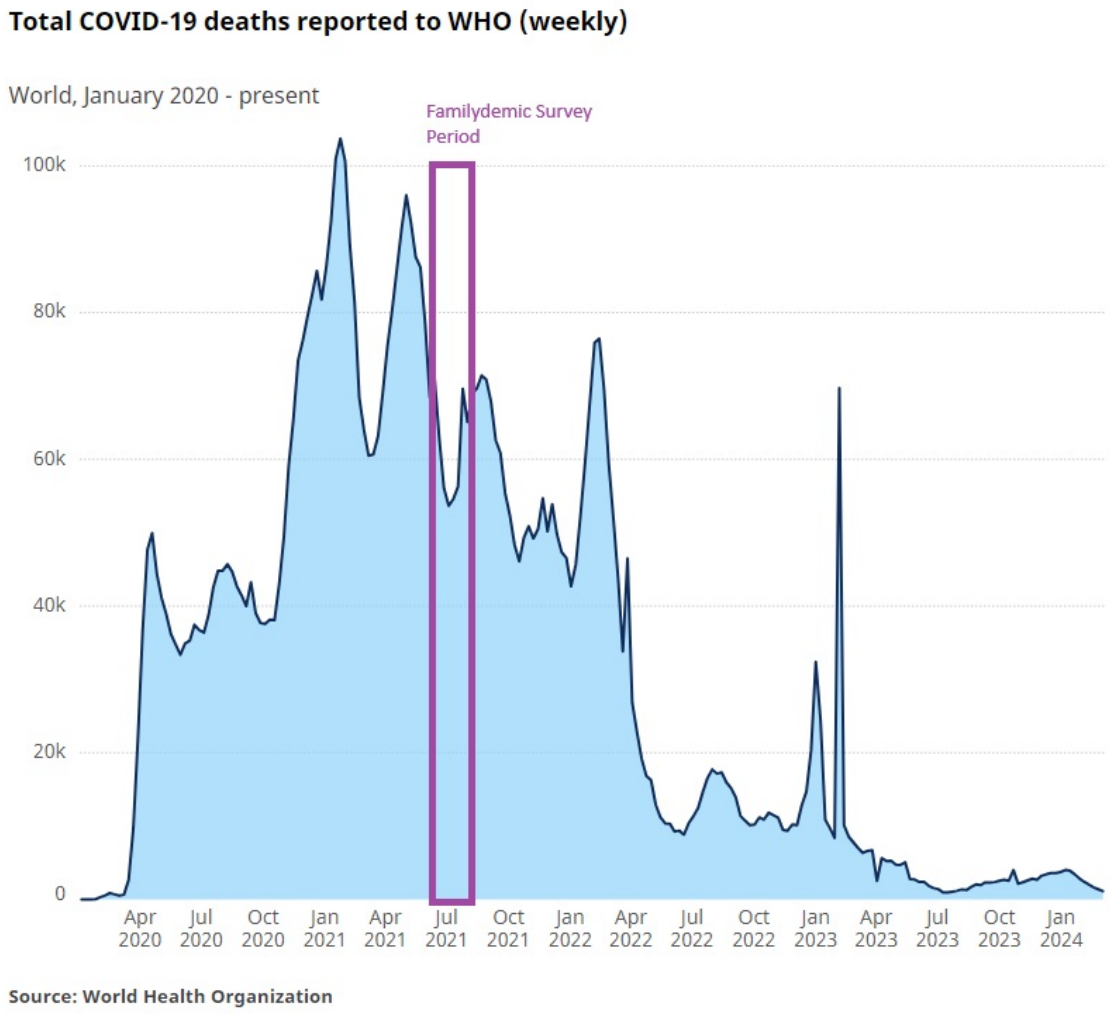

Table 1. Odd-ratio of reporting improved / worsened career prospects by WFH for (1) mothers and (2) fathers separately: multinomial logit models (Figure 1 in the main body of the manuscript).

	(1) Mothers		(2) Fathers	
	Improved	Worsened	Improved	Worsened
Change in the use of WFH				
No use-Use	0.333*	0.427***	0.366***	0.187
	(0.185)	(0.100)	(0.137)	(0.133)
Use-Use	0.440***	0.146**	0.704***	0.062
	(0.065)	(0.073)	(0.155)	(0.146)
Age: 31-39 years old	-0.152	0.136	-0.410***	-0.034
	(0.163)	(0.130)	(0.129)	(0.130)
Age: 40-49 years old	-0.547***	-0.206	-0.691***	-0.051
	(0.142)	(0.213)	(0.140)	(0.119)
Age: 50-59 years old	-0.613**	-0.037	-1.020***	0.068
	(0.300)	(0.337)	(0.185)	(0.204)
Tertiary education	-0.093	0.216	0.119*	0.147
	(0.072)	(0.145)	(0.067)	(0.102)
Germany	-0.421***	-0.547***	-0.330***	-0.510***
	(0.035)	(0.054)	(0.045)	(0.049)
Italy	0.271***	-0.017	-0.036	0.063***
	(0.049)	(0.035)	(0.055)	(0.013)
Poland	-0.422***	-0.397***	-0.377***	-0.380***
	(0.023)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.027)
Sweden	-0.504***	-0.901***	-0.808***	-0.738***
	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.034)	(0.037)
USA	0.983***	0.051	0.904***	-0.436***
	(0.048)	(0.075)	(0.112)	(0.079)
ISCO (1 digit)	-0.055***	0.017	-0.043***	-0.063
	(0.016)	(0.031)	(0.012)	(0.039)
Private sector	-0.010	0.197*	0.167**	0.326***
	(0.102)	(0.101)	(0.082)	(0.048)
Other sector	0.490***	0.407	0.120	-0.180
	(0.114)	(0.266)	(0.184)	(0.236)
Pregnancy - yes	-0.043	0.208		

	(0.229)	(0.206)		
Pregnancy - don't know	0.059	0.708***		
	(0.056)	(0.127)		
Change in working hours - less hours	0.234	0.840***	0.676***	1.272***
	(0.178)	(0.089)	(0.120)	(0.076)
Change in working hours - more hours	0.818***	0.434***	0.692***	0.433**
	(0.061)	(0.085)	(0.093)	(0.175)
		-		-
Satisfied with life	0.342***	0.708***	0.352***	0.753***
	(0.113)	(0.125)	(0.136)	(0.156)
Job lost during Covid-19 - yes	0.917***	1.160***	0.948***	1.168***
	(0.245)	(0.158)	(0.289)	(0.209)
Left job during Covid-19 - yes	1.625***	0.308	1.570***	0.513***
	(0.313)	(0.294)	(0.182)	(0.148)
Employer reduced working hours during Covid-19 - yes	0.311***	0.745***	0.366***	0.427***
	(0.089)	(0.126)	(0.117)	(0.094)
Temporary job	0.544***	0.697***	0.830**	0.558
	(0.179)	(0.131)	(0.335)	(0.339)
	-	-	-	-
Constant	1.307***	1.638***	1.300***	1.310***
	(0.186)	(0.221)	(0.144)	(0.179)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.09		0.11	
N	4,599		5,035	

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2. Odd-ratio of reporting improved / worsened career prospects by an interaction between WFH and occupation for (1) mothers and (2) fathers separately: multinomial logit models (Figure 2 in the main body of the manuscript).

	(1) Mothers		(2) Fathers	
	Improved	Worsened	Improved	Worsened
Change in the use of WFH				
No use-Use	0.414**	0.553***	0.365**	0.108
	(0.195)	(0.058)	(0.147)	(0.118)
Use-Use	0.476***	0.184	0.680***	-0.010
	(0.122)	(0.135)	(0.181)	(0.086)
Other occupations (ref: professional and managerial occupations)	-0.189*	0.156	-0.201***	-0.304**
	(0.101)	(0.169)	(0.041)	(0.142)
No use-Use # Other occupations	-0.331	-0.437**	0.022	0.455*
	(0.269)	(0.186)	(0.258)	(0.264)
Use-Use # Other occupations	-0.113	-0.113	0.245	0.510**
	(0.277)	(0.301)	(0.212)	(0.235)
Age: 31-39 years old	-0.139	0.123	-0.390***	-0.007
	(0.169)	(0.130)	(0.129)	(0.135)
Age: 40-49 years old	-0.532***	-0.219	-0.671***	-0.020
	(0.149)	(0.216)	(0.137)	(0.124)
Age: 50-59 years old	-0.613**	-0.020	-1.010***	0.085
	(0.307)	(0.345)	(0.184)	(0.212)
Tertiary education	-0.104	0.221	0.137**	0.182*
	(0.088)	(0.140)	(0.065)	(0.096)
Germany	-0.408***	-0.545***	-0.322***	-0.519***
	(0.046)	(0.070)	(0.048)	(0.060)
Italy	0.295***	-0.009	-0.031	0.042
	(0.066)	(0.053)	(0.067)	(0.029)
Poland	-0.428***	-0.386***	-0.389***	-0.407***
	(0.027)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.018)
Sweden	-0.500***	-0.921***	-0.803***	-0.722***
	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.036)
USA	1.001***	0.047	0.902***	-0.445***

	(0.045)	(0.074)	(0.113)	(0.085)
Number of children: 2	-0.087***	-0.134**	-0.105*	-0.096*
	(0.028)	(0.057)	(0.062)	(0.056)
Number of children: 3+	-0.102*	0.018	0.037	-0.047
	(0.060)	(0.086)	(0.109)	(0.083)
Private sector	-0.014	0.201**	0.160**	0.317***
	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.080)	(0.040)
Other sector	0.492***	0.412	0.110	-0.176
	(0.094)	(0.258)	(0.182)	(0.253)
Pregnancy - yes	-0.075	0.229		
	(0.220)	(0.201)		
Pregnancy - don't know	0.056	0.699***		
	(0.074)	(0.118)		
Change in working hours - less hours	0.237	0.840***	0.678***	1.278***
	(0.181)	(0.097)	(0.115)	(0.093)
Change in working hours - more hours	0.828***	0.424***	0.686***	0.442**
	(0.058)	(0.087)	(0.097)	(0.179)
Satisfied with life	-0.344***	-0.714***	-0.357***	-0.749***
	(0.119)	(0.127)	(0.136)	(0.160)
Job lost during Covid-19 - yes	0.928***	1.153***	0.945***	1.163***
	(0.246)	(0.153)	(0.293)	(0.222)
Left job during Covid-19 - yes	1.611***	0.309	1.565***	0.515***
	(0.313)	(0.291)	(0.184)	(0.147)
Employer reduced working hours during Covid-19 - yes	0.316***	0.741***	0.365***	0.414***
	(0.094)	(0.127)	(0.118)	(0.091)
Temporary job	0.552***	0.696***	0.831**	0.550*
	(0.178)	(0.132)	(0.338)	(0.327)
Constant	-1.382***	-1.703***	-1.363***	-1.399***
	(0.213)	(0.178)	(0.199)	(0.200)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.09		0.11	
N	4,599		5,035	

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. Odd-ratio of reporting improved / worsened career prospects by an interaction between WFH and partner-cohabitation status for (1) mothers and (2) fathers separately: multinomial logit models (Figure 3 in the main body of the manuscript).

	(1) Mothers		(2) Fathers	
	Improved	Worsened	Improved	Worsened
Change in the use of WFH				
No use-Use	0.360**	0.394***	0.414**	0.221
	(0.172)	(0.111)	(0.166)	(0.162)
Use-Use	0.478***	0.183***	0.733***	0.049
	(0.093)	(0.057)	(0.183)	(0.152)
Live separately from the partner or single	0.328***	-0.042	0.277	0.298***
	(0.100)	(0.179)	(0.319)	(0.114)
No use-Use # Live separately from the partner or single	-0.207	0.306	-0.760	-0.517
	(0.287)	(0.215)	(0.701)	(0.519)
Use-Use # Live separately from the partner or single	-0.336	-0.343	-0.387	0.080
	(0.351)	(0.418)	(0.450)	(0.170)
Age: 31-39 years old	-0.135	0.122	-0.408***	-0.013
	(0.172)	(0.130)	(0.131)	(0.130)
Age: 40-49 years old	-0.538***	-0.217	-0.689***	-0.042
	(0.147)	(0.211)	(0.138)	(0.123)
Age: 50-59 years old	-0.618**	-0.039	-1.022***	0.071
	(0.301)	(0.331)	(0.182)	(0.207)
Tertiary education	-0.082	0.214	0.117*	0.155
	(0.075)	(0.146)	(0.063)	(0.100)
Germany	-0.429***	-0.543***	-0.338***	-0.512***
	(0.036)	(0.055)	(0.047)	(0.051)
Italy	0.276***	-0.007	-0.033	0.072***
	(0.053)	(0.040)	(0.056)	(0.013)
Poland	-0.430***	-0.392***	-0.372***	-0.371***
	(0.024)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.028)
Sweden	-0.495***	-0.901***	-0.811***	-0.734***
	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.031)

USA	0.952***	0.045	0.896***	-0.445***
	(0.044)	(0.070)	(0.100)	(0.074)
ISCO (1 digit)	-0.059***	0.017	-0.044***	-0.064
	(0.017)	(0.032)	(0.012)	(0.039)
Private sector	-0.004	0.193*	0.166**	0.330***
	(0.104)	(0.102)	(0.083)	(0.045)
Other sector	0.495***	0.411	0.114	-0.181
	(0.112)	(0.267)	(0.191)	(0.237)
Pregnancy - yes	-0.023	0.198		
	(0.237)	(0.202)		
Pregnancy - don't know	0.068	0.741***		
	(0.078)	(0.152)		
Change in working hours - less hours	0.246	0.842***	0.669***	1.271***
	(0.179)	(0.095)	(0.118)	(0.073)
Change in working hours - more hours	0.818***	0.442***	0.683***	0.426**
	(0.058)	(0.085)	(0.090)	(0.170)
Satisfied with life	-0.357***	-0.717***	-0.355***	-0.744***
	(0.111)	(0.123)	(0.128)	(0.152)
Job lost during Covid-19 - yes	0.911***	1.172***	0.943***	1.167***
	(0.255)	(0.155)	(0.284)	(0.209)
Left job during Covid-19 - yes	1.615***	0.299	1.574***	0.510***
	(0.306)	(0.288)	(0.177)	(0.150)
Employer reduced working hours during Covid-19 - yes	0.299***	0.746***	0.365***	0.428***
	(0.087)	(0.123)	(0.114)	(0.096)
Temporary job	0.541***	0.693***	0.822**	0.550
	(0.179)	(0.129)	(0.340)	(0.339)
Constant	-1.366***	-1.621***	-1.317***	-1.353***
	(0.201)	(0.220)	(0.152)	(0.181)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.09		0.11	
N	4,598		5,035	

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4. Odd-ratio of reporting improved / worsened career prospects by an interaction between WFH and the number of months children stayed at home without formal care for (1) mothers and (2) fathers separately: multinomial logit models (Figure 4 in the main body of the manuscript).

	(1) Mothers		(2) Fathers	
	Improved	Worsened	Improved	Worsened
Change in the use of WFH				
No use-Use	0.560***	0.470***	0.382	-0.091
	(0.129)	(0.166)	(0.256)	(0.262)
Use-Use	0.502***	0.150	0.419*	-0.106**
	(0.163)	(0.191)	(0.217)	(0.054)
Children at home without formal care: 2-5 months	-0.180	-0.048	-0.390	-0.133
	(0.111)	(0.082)	(0.305)	(0.186)
Children at home without formal care: 6+ months	-0.212*	0.024	-0.364*	-0.120
	(0.108)	(0.151)	(0.186)	(0.170)
No use-Use # Children at home without formal care: 2-5 months	-0.386*	-0.137	-0.069	0.509
	(0.223)	(0.314)	(0.326)	(0.419)
No use-Use # Children at home without formal care: 6+ months	-0.332*	0.025	-0.069	0.473
	(0.191)	(0.212)	(0.261)	(0.375)
Use-Use # Children at home without formal care: 2-5 months	-0.011	-0.181	0.666*	0.326
	(0.228)	(0.203)	(0.403)	(0.216)
Use-Use # Children at home without formal care: 6+ months	-0.211	0.103	0.352	0.352
	(0.293)	(0.271)	(0.225)	(0.229)
Age: 31-39 years old	-0.073	0.096	-0.392***	-0.106
	(0.161)	(0.136)	(0.126)	(0.122)
Age: 40-49 years old	-0.443***	-0.271	-0.626***	-0.123
	(0.139)	(0.198)	(0.122)	(0.111)
Age: 50-59 years old	-0.477	-0.061	-0.970***	-0.045
	(0.309)	(0.361)	(0.178)	(0.147)
Tertiary education	-0.107	0.215	0.125**	0.152
	(0.080)	(0.149)	(0.054)	(0.107)
Germany	-0.418***	-0.543***	-0.298***	-0.525***

	(0.028)	(0.060)	(0.048)	(0.059)
Italy	0.313***	-0.010	0.006	0.054***
	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.056)	(0.016)
Poland	-0.334***	-0.364***	-0.199***	-0.326***
	(0.024)	(0.062)	(0.018)	(0.054)
Sweden	-0.667***	-0.941***	-0.876***	-0.679***
	(0.067)	(0.054)	(0.071)	(0.070)
USA	1.002***	0.024	0.909***	-0.447***
	(0.060)	(0.072)	(0.123)	(0.084)
Number of children: 2	-0.040	0.129**	-0.076	-0.118**
	(0.025)	(0.059)	(0.080)	(0.056)
Number of children: 3+	-0.061	-0.015	0.071	-0.085
	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.101)	(0.100)
ISCO (1 digit)	-0.062***	0.013	-0.040***	-0.053*
	(0.016)	(0.035)	(0.011)	(0.032)
Private sector	-0.006	0.208**	0.211***	0.328***
	(0.102)	(0.095)	(0.069)	(0.053)
Other sector	0.486***	0.399	0.160	-0.138
	(0.131)	(0.298)	(0.209)	(0.208)
Pregnancy - yes	-0.050	0.267		
	(0.209)	(0.226)		
Pregnancy - don't know	-0.017	0.979***		
	(0.117)	(0.107)		
Change in working hours - less hours	0.181	0.817***	0.649***	1.306***
	(0.169)	(0.088)	(0.097)	(0.070)
Change in working hours - more hours	0.834***	0.441***	0.681***	0.470***
	(0.049)	(0.090)	(0.104)	(0.172)
Satisfied with life	-0.314***	-0.711***	-0.363***	-0.737***
	(0.107)	(0.138)	(0.139)	(0.153)
Job lost during Covid-19 - yes	0.934***	1.226***	0.988***	1.195***
	(0.279)	(0.155)	(0.290)	(0.212)
Left job during Covid-19 - yes	1.628***	0.327	1.585***	0.475***
	(0.331)	(0.307)	(0.184)	(0.175)
Employer reduced working hours during Covid-19 - yes	0.326***	0.753***	0.412***	0.428***

	(0.085)	(0.138)	(0.115)	(0.097)
Temporary job	0.577***	0.686***	0.876***	0.538*
	(0.152)	(0.151)	(0.334)	(0.319)
	-	-	-	-
Constant	1.199***	1.628***	1.177***	1.159***
	(0.205)	(0.229)	(0.208)	(0.179)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.09		0.11	
N	4,410		4,806	

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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