Penalizing fathers who use family-friendly arrangements. Comparative study with university students from Ghana and Spain

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Abstract

This article analyzes to what extent employers tend to penalize a father of high professional status who decides to use a family friendly measure existing in his company. We use an experimental methodology. A cross-cultural sample of university students from Ghana and Spain evaluated a hypothetical male employee who either used a reduction of the working day or worked traditional hours after the birth of a child. We compared the results obtained with those obtained for an identical female employee. We considered several variables that mediated the effect of using the reconciliation measure on the behavior proxy items. We also consider the participants' (explicit and implicit) attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father. We wanted to know if a more traditional attitudes in this domain increases the penalizing effect on fathers when they use the reconciliation measure.

Keywords

Penalizing fathers; ideal worker; family-friendly arrangements; cross-cultural; explicit and implicit attitudes

Introduction

Many fathers with a right (and also an inclination) to make use of reconciliation measures offered by companies very rarely request them. Many of them feel that these measures "are not for them". This may be due, in part, to the existence of a limited corporative culture supporting work family balance, but it can also be due to the lack of a specific sensitive corporate culture towards the incorporation of men to the use of reconciliation measures (Burnett et al. 2013).

On the one hand companies are still affected by significant inertia concerning the ideal worker norm (Williams 2012). The work is designed for people who, when they have family responsibilities, delegate care to someone else (traditionally a stay-at-home wife). From a context like this there emerges the phenomenon of the "flexibility stigma" (Williams et al. 2013): parents that use the reconciliation measures existing in their companies are usually seen as less productive workers and less committed to the company and tend to be penalized in aspects such as wages or professional advancement. This problem affects both working mothers and working fathers. On the other hand there may be some differential factors between the penalty for the working mothers and fathers (and for women and men in general). For instance, according to Rudman et al. (2009), people who violate stereotypes that justify the gender hierarchy should be most at risk for backlash. And for instance, a working father using family friendly policies existing in his company can be seen as an atypical man.

In this article we focus on analyzing to what extent employers tend to penalize a father of high professional status who decides to use a family friendly measure existing in his company. This case is compared with that of a mother with the same characteristics. We are based on the experimental methodology designed by Vandello et al. (2013) and Cuddy et al. (2004). Participants evaluated a hypothetical male or female employee who either used a reduction of the working day or worked traditional hours after the birth of a child. Additionally we considered several variables that mediated the effect of using the reconciliation measure on the behavior proxy items. And another novelty of this research is the consideration of the participants' (explicit and implicit) attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father. We wanted to know if a more traditional attitudes in this domain increases the penalizing effect on fathers when they use the reconciliation measure.

Another merit of this research is that we use a sample of university students in two very different countries (Ghana and Spain). That provides a dimension of cross-cultural comparative study (Aycan 2008). One of our aims is to grasp how cultural differences influence how our target (a male professional working father) is penalized for using a reconciliation measured. Ghana is an inherently collectivist culture, emphasizing family and work group goals above individual needs or desires (Hewstone et al. 2015;

Schwarzt 2004). This may contrast with the more individualist (idiocentric) culture of Spain. On the other hand, gender attitude and values may be more traditional in Ghana than in Spain. For example, according to The Global Gender Gap Index 2016 (World Economic Forum 2016), that range from .516 to .874, the index of Ghana is .705 (rank 59), whereas the index of Spain is .738 (rank 29). Or according to World Values Survey Wave (2016), 68.8% of Ghanaian respondent and 14.1% of Spanish respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "on the whole, men make better business executives than women do".

Theoretical justification

The flexibility stigma and the ideal worker

The "flexibility stigma" refers to the fact that often workers who use the reconciliation measures existing in their companies are penalized for this (Williams et al. 2013; Stone and Hernández 2013; Coltrane et al. 2013).

This phenomenon has to do with what Blair-Loy (2003) calls "the work devotion schema". That schema specifies the cognitive belief, moral commitment, and emotional salience of making work the central focus of one's life (Williams et al. 2013).

According to Williams et al. (2013) the work devotion schema is both coercive (many workers feel forced to comply) and seductive (workers may also believe that a strong work ethic helps form their sense of self and self-worth). In this context the use of reconciliation measures could be interpreted by superiors, co-workers, and even the employee him/herself as a signal that the employee is violating the work devotion schema and is therefore morally lacking.

This schema is closely related to the figure of the "ideal worker". The ideal worker is an individual who is unencumbered by family responsibilities (Rehel and Baxter 2015); and who, when he/she has family responsibilities, delegate care to someone else (traditionally a stay-at-home wife). Despite a dramatic shift in attitudes, workplaces are still largely organized for the ideal worker. That is, the norm of the ideal worker remains a key aspect in the culture of many organizations. For example, according to the Institutional theory (Scott 2005) –that considers the process by which structures, including schemas, rules, norms, and routines, becomes established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior-, the norm of the ideal worker can be considered as one deep and resilient guideline of the structure and culture of many companies.

In this sense, the workers who use the reconciliation measures can be considered as people who do not comply with this norm of the ideal worker and can be penalized for it. Empirical evidence points to this (Stone and Hernandez 2013) in experimental studies (Correll et al. 2007; Benard et al. 2008), in studies about the gender pay gap

(Budig and England, 2001; Molina and Montuenga 2009) and in qualitative studies (Baker 2012).

The norm of the ideal worker may have more or less force, depending on the social class and the status of the occupation. According to Williams et al. (2013), professionals and managers (workers in high-status jobs) typically are given much more control over their hours of work and are considered as "trusted workers" who are felt not to need close supervision. Instead, they often rely on norms, workplace culture, and informal sanctions to ensure compliance with their time mandates (Stone and Hernandez 2013). That means that the pressure of the norm of ideal worker is particularly important for this type of trusted workers.

Warmth and competence judgments: the stereotype content model (SCM)

One way of explaining the penalty experienced by many professionals and managers when deciding to use reconciliation arrangements is in the stereotype content model, SCM (Fiske et al. 2002; Cuddy et al. 2004; Fiske et al. 2007). The model posits that when people spontaneously interpret behavior or form impressions of others, warmth and competence form basic dimensions that, together, account for how people characterize others. So the model differentiates stereotyped groups along these two dimensions, resulting in four combinations of warmth (high/low) by competence (high/low) stereotypes.

People perceived as warm and competent elicit uniformly positive emotions and behavior (usually these people are ingroup; in American samples, this includes people who are middle class, Christian, and White), whereas those perceived as lacking warmth and competence (for instance, in American samples, homeless, "on welfare", etc.), elicit uniform negativity. People classified as high on one dimension and low on the other elicit predictable, ambivalent affective and behavioral reactions. For example, in the case of women, homemakers are viewed as warm but not competent; they are viewed as low status and cooperative group, eliciting paternalist emotions. In contrast, female professionals are viewed as competent, but cold, eliciting an envious prejudice (they are viewed as high-status competitors).

What does the SCM predict in the case of a professional/manager who has a first child depending on whether or not he/she uses the reconciliation measures (in this article, a reduction in working hours)? For a female manager, in both cases it would be perceived ambivalently (high on one dimension and low on the other): If she does not use the family-friendly measure she would probably be viewed as competent but not warm (being penalized for this); If she uses the measure she would be viewed as warm but not competent (very similar to the homemaker case), being penalized for this

(Cuddy et al. 2004). For a male manager, if he does not use the family friendly measure he would probably be viewed high on both dimensions (competent and warm), not being penalized; whereas if he uses the reconciliation measure he would be viewed as warm but not competent (the same as the female professional that uses the reconciliation measure), being penalized for this. So comparing the situation of not using versus using the family-friendly measure, the perception about the male professional deteriorates.

Social role theory and role incongruity: gender differences in backlash.

Social role theory (Eagly 1987; Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Wood 2016) is a social psychological theory that tries to explain gender differences and similarities in social behavior by emphasizing the social component of those behaviors. Its basic principle is that gender differences and similarities arise primarily from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society. That means that perceivers infer that there is correspondence between the types of actions people engage in ("there are many women in caring activities") and their inner dispositions ("so women are better as caretakers)". Thus gender stereotypes follow from observations of people in sex-typical social roles—especially, men's occupancy of the breadwinner and higher status roles (with perceivers attributing agentic traits to them) and women's occupancy of homemaker and lower status roles (with perceivers attributing communal traits to them).

In this framework Eagly and Karau (2002) distinguish two kinds of expectations, or norms: descriptive norms (consensual expectations about what members of a group actually do); and injunctive or prescriptive norms (consensual expectations about what a group of people ought to do). These gender roles would have pervasive effects. Gender is a personal characteristic that provides a strong basis of categorizing people, and stereotypes about women and men are easily and automatically activated (with the corresponding consequences).

A derivation of the Social role theory is the "role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders" proposed by Eagly and Karau (2002). This theory proposes that perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to two forms of prejudice: first, perceiving women less favorably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles; and second, evaluating behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leader role less favorably when it is enacted by a woman. One consequence is that attitudes are less positive toward female than male leaders and potential leaders.

But returning to the case of a professional/manager who has a first child, and who decides to use/not use the reconciliation measure, there may be several cases of role

incongruity. If a female professional does not use the reconciliation measures after having a baby, that can generate the already signaled perceived incongruence between her role as a mother and her role as a professional or manager (who does not reduce her dedication to work when having a child), with the corresponding consequences for prejudice and penalizing behaviors. But a very interesting case is that of the male professional/manager who uses the reconciliation measure when being a father. As already stated above, a male manager that uses the reconciliation measure would be viewed as warm but not competent (with the corresponding penalization for this). But additionally and according with the incongruity approach, there can arise a perceived incongruence between his role as an involved father that uses the reconciliation measure and his role as breadwinner and higher status person, which could lead to an additional penalty. This is another reason to expect a higher penalization for fathers that use reconciliation measures in comparison with mothers in the same circumstances.

A line of research related to the previous one is the "Status Incongruity Hypothesis" (Moss-Racussin et al. 2010; Rudman and Mescher 2013). This hypothesis states that defending the status quo provides a strong motivation for backlash; as a result, people who violate stereotypes that justify the gender hierarchy should be most at risk for backlash. According to Moss-Racussin et al. 2010, backlash emerges when atypical men or women are judged more negatively (e.g., as less likable and employable) compared with identically behaving members of the other gender. With respect to the specific case of men, they show that not conformity to masculine stereotypes prescriptions (be a winner, powerful, dominant, agentic, etc.) is associated with a set of risks. They make reference to some evidence suggesting that, relative to comparable women, men are penalized for passiveness, emotional self-disclosure or achieving success in feminine domains. In particular, the analyze the case of a "modest men", finding evidence that modest men were perceived as violating men's proscriptions linked to low status (weakness, uncertainty, etc.), as well as agentic men's prescriptions linked to high status (confidence, ambition, etc.).

In line with studies on men and masculinities (Pleck 1981; Connell 1995; Kaufman 1999; Kimmel 2017), another interesting contribution to the justification of the backlash against atypical men is that of the approach of precarious manhood (Bosson and Vandello 2011; Vandello and Bosson 2013). This theory posits that manhood is seen as a precarious social status that is difficult to achieve, tenuously held (compared with womanhood), and something that must be earned and maintained through publicly verifiable actions. Because of this, men (especially heterosexual men) would experience more anxiety over their gender status than women would do, particularly when gender status is uncertain or challenged (this is related to the concept of homohysteria; see McCormack and Anderson 2014). This can motivate a variety of negative behaviors, one of them affecting the domain of work-family balance. Indeed, some men could avoid using reconciliation measures in order not to look weak or

effeminate; on the other hand, male "flexibility seekers" could be seen as less masculine and being penalized for this.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: According to stereotype content model and role incongruity approaches, the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure (reduction of the working day) is penalized at work (in wage increase and in being recommended for a promotion) with respect to the working professional father who does not use the reconciliation measure.

Hypothesis 2: According to role incongruity approaches the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is penalized at work to a higher degree than in the case of an identical working professional mother.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of using the reconciliation measure (reduction of the working day) on wage increase and recommending for a promotion is mediated by the variable "perceived job commitment". In particular, the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is considered as less committed to the company than the one who does not use it; and being considered less committed has a negative effect on offering a wage raise and on recommending for a promotion.

Hypothesis 4: The effect of using the reconciliation measure on "perceived job commitment" is mediated by some variables related to masculinity. Specifically, the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is considered as less masculine and having less masculine prescriptive traits, and this has a negative influence in his "perceived job commitment".

Hypothesis 5: The effect of using the reconciliation measure (reduction of the working day) on wage increase and recommending for a promotion is moderated by the participants' explicit and implicit attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father. Specifically, if the participants have a higher score in the instruments "Explicit traditional attitude baby care" and "Implicit traditional attitude baby care" the penalizing effect of using the reconciliation measure is higher.

Hypothesis 6: Ghanaian society is more traditional, conservative and communal than Spanish society, so there must be some statistically significant differences between the Ghanaian and Spanish samples of university students, both in the results obtained as well as in the estimated path analysis model.

Method

Participants

928 university students participated in the experiment. 498 of them in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and 430 of them in the Complutense University of Madrid and in ESIC Business & Marketing School, Both located in the region of Madrid, Spain. Sampling was performed in each institution separately, during the period October-2016-June 2017. All the participants were studying bachelor or master degrees (672 in the field of Business Administration or Economics and 256 in other areas of Social Sciences). 386 were female students and 542 were male students. In the Ghanaian sample 0% of the students were immigrants and 1% were foreign students; in the Spanish sample these figures were 7.8% and 9.2% respectively. Average age of participants was 23.6 years in Ghana and 21.8 in Spain.

Materials

Participants had to complete two questionnaires and perform an IAT (the latter only in the case of Spain). The first questionnaire was based (with some slight modifications) in Vandello et al. (2013) and Cuddy et al. (2004). It presented participants with a brief description of a female high status employee (Esi/María) or a male high status employee (Oko/Manuel). The employee was described as a 32-year-old associate consultant working for a prestigious Accra/Madrid consulting firm. The job was well-paid and desirable. After some information about gender-neutral hobbies (running and music), the description noted that the target and his/her spouse recently had their first baby. Participants then read that the consulting firm instituted a facility that allowed employees the option of working part-time (25-30 hours per week) to accommodate personal circumstances. Half of the participants read that the target decided to enroll in the program and currently takes afternoons off to help care for the baby at home, while half read that the target decided not to enroll in the program and works in the office 5 days, 40 hours a week. All other details remained the same across conditions.

"Male prescriptive traits" and "masculine" ratings.

Following the description, participants rated the target on 42 traits (Vandello et al. 2013 used 36 traits) using a seven-point (1=not at all; 7=extremely) Likert scale. These traits are basically those used by Cuddy et al. (2004) and Vandello et al. (2013), most of them coming from the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem 1977). With these 42 traits is possible to construct instruments to measure male and female prescriptions and proscriptions. In this paper we are using two instruments: the first is a "Male prescriptive traits", obtained as the average score of these 5 traits: "Leadership ability", "career oriented", "business sense", "high in self-esteem", and "competitive"

(Cronbach's alpha=.739). The second (following Vandello et al. 2013) is the single item "masculine".

Perceived job commitment

Next, the students were asked to imagine themselves as an executive of the company and to evaluate the target by answering or evaluating 8 questions (1 = not at all; 7 = extremely): "How committed is this employee to her/his job?"; "How reliable is this employee?"; "How dedicated is this employee?"; "How valuable is this employee to her/his company?"; "How comfortable would you be giving Esi (María) / Oko (Manuel) an important assignment?"; "Esi (María) / Oko (Manuel) is a key player in the team"; "Esi (María) / Oko (Manuel) is persistent in completing job tasks"; "Esi (María) / Oko (Manuel) is an efficient worker". The instrument "perceived job commitment" is the average score of these 8 items (Cronbach's alpha=.889). The range of values is from 1.78 to 6.22. The higher the score, the higher is the perception that the target is committed with the company.

Behavior proxy items

After answering the questions from the previous block, the participants were asked two questions that had to do with their behavior regarding the target. The first one was "How likely would you be to recommend Esi (María) / Oko (Manuel) for a promotion? (1 = "with very low probability"; 7 = "with very high probability"). The second one was "what percentage raise in the hourly wage (ranging from 0% to 8%) would you give to this employee? As emphasized by Vandello et al. (2013), in order to minimize the possibility that lower raises would be assigned to flexibility seekers simply because they worked fewer hours, it was highlighted the fact that it was an "hourly raise". Through these two items we want to capture possible discriminatory behaviors (penalization) towards the father who uses the working day reduction.

Explicit attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father

After filling out the previous questionnaire, the participants had to complete a second questionnaire that included demographic and attitudinal questions, including the attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father. Specifically we constructed the instrument "explicit traditional attitude baby care". This instrument is composed of 2 items: "A man may be just as qualified as a woman to care for his baby and connect emotionally with him/her"; and "at some point in the future men will use just as much as women the measures that companies offer to achieve a good work-family balance". The two items scores were reversed. The measure is the average score of these 2 items (Cronbach's alpha= .556). The range of values is from 1 to 5. Because we

reversed the scores of the items, we have that the higher the score of the instrument the more traditional the attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father.

Implicit attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father

Finally the Spanish students performed an implicit association test (IAT) (Greenwald et al. 1998). The IAT assesses attitudes without the necessity of asking the participant for a direct verbal report, the responses on these measures being less likely to be affected by socially desirable responding (Hewstone et al. 2012). Several IATs have been designed to assess implicit stereotypes in the domains of gender roles (for instance, Rudman et al. 2001; and White and White 2006). In our research we use an IAT that is a modification of the "gender-career IAT" develop by Nosek et al. (2002) (see also Banaji and Greenwald 2013).

We want to measure the underlying automatic associations between female and baby-care activities and between male and activities related to paid work. There are four categories in the test: "Female", with five stimuli (she, woman, feminine, girl, wife); "male", with five stimuli (he, man, masculine, boy, husband); "baby-care activities", with eleven stimuli (pictures of feeding bottle, diaper box, baby bath, etc.); and paid work activities, with eleven stimuli (pictures of laptop computer, meeting room, office, etc.). The IAT captures attitudes towards the "care of the baby by the father" comparing the speeds of completing two different sorting tasks: the non stereotyped combination ("female + paid work" and "male + baby-care") and the stereotyped combination ("female + baby-care" and "male + paid work"). In order to obtain the IAT score we used the algorithm of Greenwald et al. (2003), administered through the program FreeIAT (Meade 2009). In order to correct problems of kurtosis we performed a transformation of the IAT score (adding 1 to the score and squaring it). The range of values is from .03 to 5.50. The higher the score the higher the automatic associations between female and baby-care (more traditional attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father). Pearson's correlation coefficient between "explicit traditional attitude" and "implicit traditional attitude" was $r=.162$, $p<.01$, for the Spanish participants.

Other variables

In the different analyses that we are going to performed, our independent variable is "Using reduction" (using the working day reduction) (dichotomous variable: 1=yes; 0=no). We also use these variables: "Male target" (dichotomous variable: 1= Oko /Manuel; 0= Esi/María); "Spain" (dichotomous variable: 1= Spain; 0=Ghana); "female participant" (dichotomous variable: 1= yes; 0=no).

Procedure

The students who participated in the study performed the tests either in two phases – the Ghanaian students- or in three phases –the Spanish students-: First, they filled out the questionnaire with the target evaluation; second, they filled out the demographic-attitudinal questionnaire; and third –only in the case of the Spanish participants-, they performed the IAT. In the case of the University of Cape Coast, the first and the second questionnaires were distributed in classrooms (the four experimental conditions of the first questionnaire were randomly assigned). In the case of the two Spanish universities, 46.0% of the participants completed the first and the second questionnaire in the classrooms. Keeping their identification numbers, these participants did the IAT in a computer located in the office of the researchers. The remaining 54.0% of Spanish students performed the three tasks in the researchers' office. 78.6% of the Spanish participants performed the IAT. The four experimental conditions of the first questionnaire were randomly assigned in all the cases.

Results

The analysis of the penalization against the father who uses a family-friendly arrangement was made following these three parts: Analysis of variance; path analysis with mediating variables; and analysis of the attitudes as moderating variables.

Analysis of Variance

As a first approximation to the results obtained in the experiment, and using the complete sample, it becomes clear that the working professional person who used the reduction of the working day was penalized in behavior proxy items (recommending for a promotion, wage increase), with respect to the working professional person who did not use the reconciliation measure. Indeed, according to the four-way ANOVA reported in table 1, there was a significant main effect of "using working day reduction" on these two variables. For instance, when the target did not use the reconciliation measure the participants offered him/her an average wage hourly raise of 5.52%, while when the target used it the average raise was de 4.77% ($F(1, 911)= 45.86$, $p<.001$), which means that there was a penalty of 15.8%. Something similar happens with the variables "Perceived job commitment", "Male prescriptive traits" and "Masculinity".

There are some other statistically significant main effects and interactions. A particularly interesting interaction for this study is "Using working day reduction $\times$

Male target" on "Perceived job commitment" (F(1, 911)= 3.12, p<.1). This result provides marginally significant evidence that the penalty for using the reconciliation measure may be greater for the working professional father than for the identical working professional mother.

Table 1. Four-way ANOVA analysis

	Recommend promotion	Raise hourly wage	Perceived job commitment	Male prescriptive traits	Masculinity
	F	F	F	F	F
Using working day reduction	37.49 ***	45.86 ***	88.36 ***	33.90 ***	18.65 ***
Male target	.07	7.67 ***	2.19	2.44	420.77 ***
Spain	6.49 **	55.24 ***	.00	1.21	.05
Female participant	1.06	4.44 **	1.70	.18	.03
Using working day reduction × Male target	2.56	.28	3.12 *	.21	1.22
Using working day reduction × Spain	.95	.00	4.35 **	.08	.14
Male target × Spain	3.19 *	2.36	5.53 **	.07	22.63 ***
Male target × Female participant	.02	4.06 **	.09	.28	2.94 *
Spain × Female participant	7.29 ***	3.19 *	7.61 ***	16.96 ***	.02
Using working day red. × Male target × Spain	1.46	.14	2.48	1.43	2.96 *
Using working day red. × Spain × Female Part.	2.27	6.37 **	8.68 ***	1.93	.01
Male target × Spain × Female Part.	3.67 *	5.80 **	.32	.84	.17

*p<.1 ; **p<.05; ***p<.01.

The table 2 offers more detailed results (evaluations) according to whether the target had used or had not used the reconciliation measure. Given the hypotheses to be tested in this article, we focus on the penalization of the male target. Both with the sample of students from Ghana and with the one from Spain it is observed that, in agreement with the hypothesis 1, the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is penalized at work (in wage increase and in recommending for a promotion) with respect to the working professional father who does not use the reconciliation measure. The corresponding one-way ANOVAS are statistically significant. For instance, taking the increase in hourly wage and the Spanish sample, table 2 shows that when the male target did not use the reconciliation measure the participants offered him an average hourly raise of 4.95%, while when he used it the average raise was 4.09% (F(1, 210)= 13.83, p<.001). That means that the male target that used working day reduction was penalized by 21%.

The penalty for using the reconciliation measure tends to be greater for the male than for the female target. However, this result is statistically significant only for the sample

of participants from Ghana. Indeed, for the participants at the University of Cape Coast, for the variable "Recommend promotion", the ratio between the mean score for target "not using" and for the target "using" is 115.3 in the case of male target and 106.2 in the case of female target. This difference is statistically significant since the interaction "Using × Male target", obtained in a two-way ANOVA is significant ($F(1, 494)= 3.88$, $p<.05$). Additionally, the variable "Perceived job commitment" –which is as important mediator in the effect of "using working day reduction" on the two Behavior proxy items- also presents a statistically significant difference between ratios "not using" - "using" corresponding to male (116.3) and female targets (108.3). Thus this type of result provides some partial evidence (for the case of Ghanaian participants) for the hypothesis 2.

Table 2. Detailed results (evaluations) according to whether the target had used or had not used the reconciliation measure

			Recommend promotion				Raise hourly wage				Perceived job commitment				Male prescriptive traits				Masculinity			
			Male target		Fem. target		Male target		Fem. target		Male target		Fem. target		Male target		Fem. target		Male target		Fem. target	
			N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Ghana	**Female participants**	Target **Not using**	45	5.933	51	5.529	45	5.956	51	6.010	45	5.200	51	5.089	45	5.280	51	5.490	45	4.778	51	2.784
		Target **Using**	53	5.208	43	5.093	53	5.038	43	5.163	53	4.394	43	4.504	53	4.823	43	4.949	53	4.094	43	2.442
		[Ratio]		114%***		109%		118%***		116%***		118%***		113%***		109%**		111%**		117%*		114%
		(Interaction)																				
	Male participants	Target **Not using**	79	5.975	80	5.700	79	5.709	80	5.885	79	5.259	80	4.944	79	5.582	80	5.328	79	4.519	80	3.013
		Target **Using**	91	5.148	56	5.464	91	5.132	56	5.304	91	4.569	56	4.708	90	5.153	56	5.389	91	4.066	56	2.482
		[Ratio]		116%***		104%		111%**		111%**		115%***		105%		108%***		99%		111%		121%*
		(Interaction)		(‡‡)								(‡‡)				(‡‡)						
	All	Target **Not using**	124	5.960	131	5.634	124	5.798	131	5.934	124	5.237	131	5.001	124	5.473	131	5.391	124	4.613	131	2.924
		Target **Using**	144	5.170	99	5.303	144	5.097	99	5.242	144	4.505	99	4.620	143	5.031	99	5.198	144	4.076	99	2.465
		[Ratio]		115%***		106%*		114%***		113%***		116%***		108%***		109%***		104%		113%**		119%*
		(Interaction)		(‡‡)								(‡‡)										
Spain	**Female participants**	Target **Not using**	38	5.434	55	5.664	38	4.750	55	5.455	38	4.909	55	5.149	38	5.553	55	5.724	38	5.132	54	2.407
		Target **Using**	53	5.151	48	5.563	53	4.191	48	5.354	53	4.782	47	4.901	53	5.272	48	5.279	53	4.925	48	1.792
		[Ratio]		105%		102%		113%		102%		103%		105%**		105%		108%***		104%		134%**
		(Interaction)																				
	Male participants	Target **Not using**	64	5.453	58	5.483	64	5.063	58	5.086	63	4.942	58	5.069	63	5.298	58	5.445	64	4.781	58	2.707
		Target **Using**	57	4.868	56	4.839	57	3.991	56	3.943	57	4.312	56	4.599	57	4.919	56	5.046	56	4.750	57	1.877
		[Ratio]		112%***		113%***		127%***		129%***		115%***		110%***		108%**		108%**		101%		144%***
		(Interaction)																		(‡‡)		
	All	Target **Not using**	102	5.446	113	5.571	102	4.946	113	5.265	101	4.930	113	5.108	101	5.394	113	5.581	102	4.912	112	2.563
		Target **Using**	110	5.005	104	5.173	110	4.087	104	4.594	110	4.538	103	4.737	110	5.089	104	5.154	109	4.835	105	1.838
		[Ratio]		109%***		108%***		121%***		115%***		109%***		108%***		106%**		108%***		102%		139%***
		(Interaction)																		(‡‡)		

"Ratio": Ratio between the mean score for target "not using" the working day reduction and for the target "using" it. One-way ANOVA test of the statistical significance of the difference of these two means: *p<.1 ; **p<.05; ***p<.01.

"Interaction": statistical significance of the interaction "Male target × Using", obtained in a two-way ANOVA (a statistically significant result means that one of the targets is more penalized than the other for using the working day reduction). ‡ p<.1 ; ‡‡ p<.05; ‡‡‡ p<.01.

Path analysis with mediating variables

Now we want to explain how the fact of using the reconciliation measure affects the recommendation for a promotion and the hourly wage increase offered to our male target. According to hypotheses 3 and 4, in figure 1 and figure 2 we present two path analysis models for the dependent variables "recommend promotion" and "raise hourly wage". These models have two main characteristics: first, the effects of using the reduction of the working day on "recommend promotion" and "raise hourly wage" are mediated by the variable "perceived job commitment". And second, in its turn, the effect of using the reduction of the working day on "perceived job commitment" is mediated by two variables related to masculinity ("male prescriptive traits" and "masculinity").

In addition we want to know if these direct and indirect effects are different for the samples of students of Ghana and Spain. This is the reason why we carry out a multigroup analysis.

These two path analysis (for the two behavior proxy items) were performed with the Amos 22.0 program in the SPSS 22.0 software package (Arbuckle, 2013). Multigroup path analysis (through structural equation modeling) was used to analyze cross-cultural data, comparing Ghanaian and Spanish samples. Multigroup analysis raises the question of whether a path model (with several mediating variables) is consistent across two (or more) groups. The 2 groups are actual levels of a "moderator variable" (in our case the participant's country). So the purpose of multigroup analysis is to determine whether the path model is moderated by levels of the moderating variable, and if so, which paths in the model present differences between the two groups (Tammelin et al. 2017).

Both the path analysis for "recommend promotion" (figure 1) and the path analysis for "raise hourly wage" (figure 2) present quite acceptable fits ("recommend promotion": χ^2=.596, df=4, p=.963; TLI=1.038; RMSEA=.000. "Raise hourly wage": χ^2=1.997, df=4, p=.736; TLI= 1,030; RMSEA=.000). On the other hand, and within each of these two path analyses, we reject the null hypothesis that the corresponding models for Ghana and Spain are identical ("recommend promotion": χ^2(8)=26.63, p=.001; "raise hourly wage": χ^2(8)=31.92, p=.000). This evidence that the models corresponding to Ghana and Spain are different (the variable "country" moderates the results obtained) represents a certain support to hypothesis 6 (there must be some statistically significant differences between the Ghanaian and Spanish samples of university students).

Figures 1 and 2 show that "using reduction" has a statistically significant negative effect on "Perceived job commitment". In addition, this effect is more intense in Ghana than in Spain (the difference is marginally significant). This result supports hypothesis 3

(the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is considered as less committed to the company than the one who does not use it).

But also "using reduction" has an indirect effect on "Perceived job commitment" through the variables "masculinity" and "male prescriptive traits". In this sense it is interesting to highlight the path from "using reduction" to "masculinity". It seems that the use of the reduction of the working day makes the male target be seen as less masculine in the case of Ghana (β=-.537, p=.014), and not in the case of Spain (β=-.071, p=.685). These results seem to confirm the hypothesis 4.

On the other hand, "perceived job commitment" has a positive effect (figures 1 and 2) on the two behavior proxy items ("recommend promotion" and "raise hourly wage"). For example, in the case of the Spanish sample, when "perceived job commitment" goes up by 1, "raise hourly wage" goes up by 1.177.

Finally, taking into account the direct and indirect effects, two aspects are worth noting: first, the indirect effects of using the working day reduction on the two behavior proxy ítems are more important than the direct effects (There is only one statistically significant direct effect: the direct effect of "use reduction" on "wage raise" corresponding to the Spanish sample (β=-.339, p=.068). Second, the negative total effect of using the working day reduction on "recommend promotion" seems to be greater in Ghana than in Spain, whereas the total effect on "raise hourly wage" seems to be similar (see at the bottom of figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Mediating variables in the effect of using the reconciliation measure on recommending for a promotion (male target). Multigroup path analysis for Ghanaian and Spanish samples.
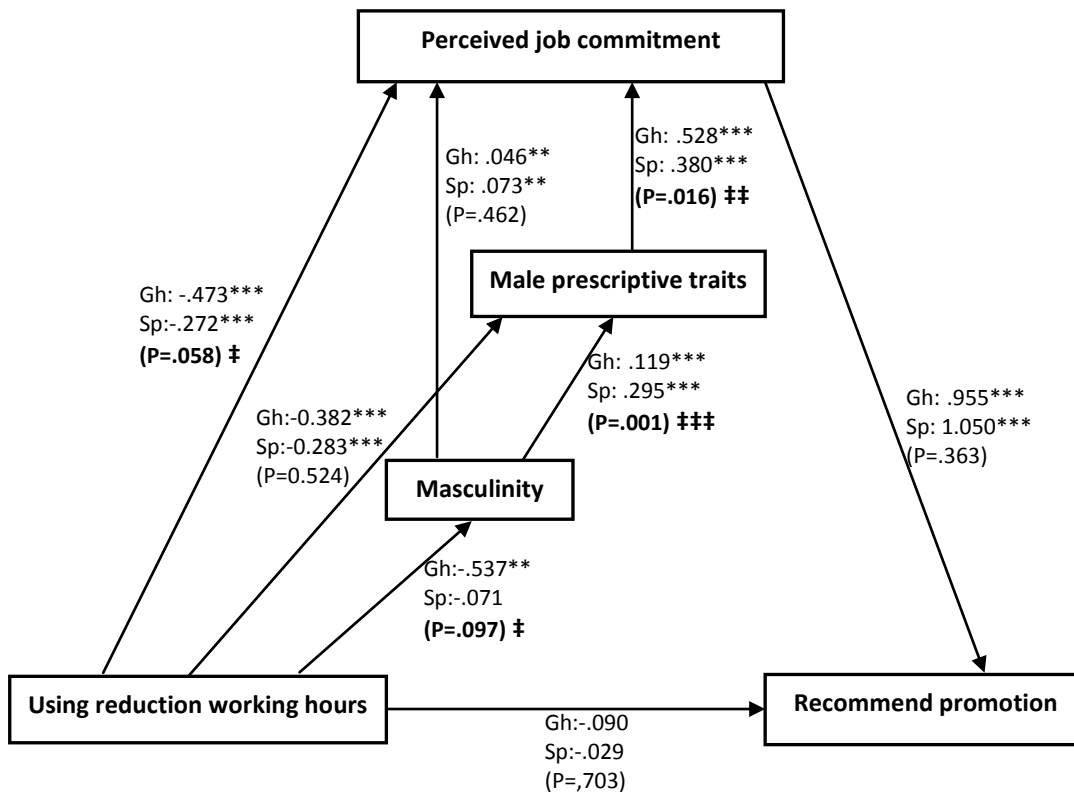
- Ghana, N = 268; Spain, N=212.
- Unstandardized Regression Weights are provided for each path. Gh: Ghana; Sp: Spain. *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.
- P-value for critical ratios for differences between each pair of regression weights (for Ghana and Spain) are provided for each path; ‡ p<.1 ; ‡‡ p<.05; ‡‡‡ p<.01.
- Direct effect of "Use reduction" on "recommend promotion": Ghana=-.090; Spain=-.029.
- Indirect effect of "Use reduction" on "recommend promotion": Ghana=-.700; Spain=-.412.
- Total effect of "Use reduction" on "recommend promotion": Ghana=-.790; Spain=-.442.

Figure 2. Mediating variables in the effect of using the reconciliation measure on wage increase (male target). Multigroup path analysis for Ghanaian and Spanish samples.
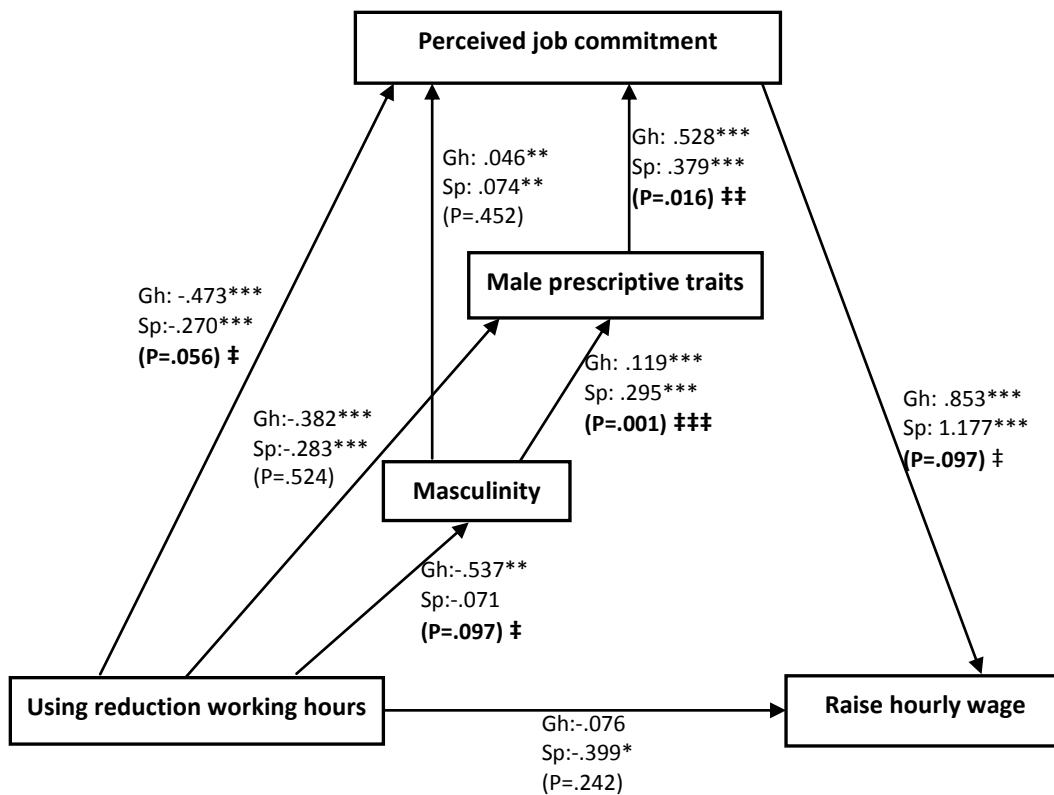
• Ghana, N = 268; Spain, N=212.
• Unstandardized Regression Weights are provided for each path. Gh: Ghana; Sp: Spain. *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.
• P-value for critical ratios for differences between each pair of regression weights (for Ghana and Spain) are provided for each path. ‡ p<.1 ; ‡‡ p<.05; ‡‡‡ p<.01.
• Direct effect of "Use reduction" on "wage raise": Ghana=-.076; Spain=-.399.
• Indirect effect of "Use reduction" on "wage raise": Ghana=-.625; Spain=-.460.
• Total effect of "Use reduction" on "wage raise": Ghana=-.701; Spain=-.859.

Attitudes as moderating variables

Now we carry out an analysis to determine whether the relationship between "use reduction" and the main response variables depends on (is moderated by) the participants' explicit and implicit attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father.

We first conduct a simple moderation model. We estimate the coefficients of several regression models (OLS) in which the effect of male target's condition to use (or not) the reduction in working time, X, on the dependent variable ("recommend promotion", etc.), Y, is allowed to vary linearly with the attitudes of participants (M), by including the product (the interaction) of X and M as predictor of Y along with X and M (Hayes 2013).

Table 3 shows the results obtained with the five response variables used in this study (the same ones that appear in the anova analysis of tables 1 and 2). At the top of the table the case is considered where the moderator variable is the explicit attitudes of the participants towards the care of the baby by the father ("explicit traditional attitudes"). Recall that a higher value of this variable indicates more traditional attitudes ("men are not as skilled as çwomen to care for a baby"). The table shows the coefficients corresponding to the interaction "Using reduction" x "explicit traditional attitudes". As can be seen, in the case of the Spanish sample, the explicit attitudes of the participants moderate the effect of "use reduction" on "recommend promotion" (β=-.454, p=.015) and the effect on "perceived job commitment" (β=-.285, p=.015). As a visual example of this kind of relation, in figure 3 the graph corresponding to "perceived job commitment" is presented. In the case of the Ghanaian sample, no statistically significant interaction was obtained.

At the bottom of the table the case is considered where the moderator variable is the implicit attitudes of the participants towards the care of the baby by the father ("implicit traditional attitudes"). Now only the cases of the Spanish sample appear (only the Spanish participants performed the IAT). The higher the score the higher the automatic association between women and baby-care. The table shows the coefficients corresponding to the interaction "Using reduction" x "implicit traditional attitudes". The implicit attitudes of the participants moderate the effect of "use reduction" on three response variables: "raise hourly wage" (β=-.478, p=.071), "perceived job commitment" (β=-.168, p=.043), and "male prescriptive traits" (β=-.265, p=.050). As a visual example of this kind of relation, figure 4 shows the graph corresponding to "perceived job commitment". As the figure shows, the greater the participant's association between the care of the baby and the mother, the greater the tendency to penalize the father who uses the working reduction.

Table 3. Explicit and implicit traditional attitude towards the care of the baby by the father as a moderating variable (male target)

	Moderation of the effects:	Spain			Ghana		
		Interaction Coeff	P	R-sq	Interaction Coeff	p	R-sq
Interaction "Using reduction" x "**EXPLICIT** traditional attitude"	Using → Recommend promotion	-.454**	**.015**	.105	-.005	.979	.099
	Using → Raise hourly wage	.023	.937	.065	.072	.787	.058
	Using → Perceived job commitment	-.285**	**.015**	.189	-.002	.987	.164
	Using → Male prescriptive traits	-.072	.602	.076	-.087	.576	.054
	Using → Masculinity	-.279	.194	.042	.317	.256	.047
Interaction "Using reduction" x "**IMPLICIT** traditional attitude"	Using → Recommend promotion	-.110	.374	.094	-	-	-
	Using → Raise hourly wage	-.478*	**.071**	.090	-	-	-
	Using → Perceived job commitment	-.168**	**.043**	.122	-	-	-
	Using → Male prescriptive traits	-.265**	**.050**	.066	-	-	-
	Using → Masculinity	.136	.498	.016	-	-	-

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.

Figure 3. A visual representation of the moderation of the participants' explicit attitudes in the effect of "use reduction" on "perceived job commitment" (male target). Spanish sample.
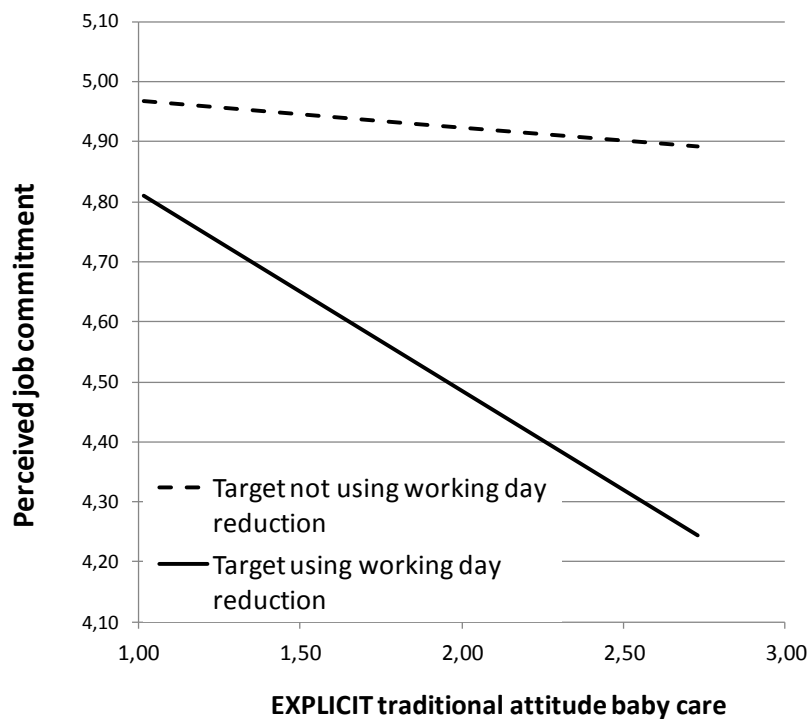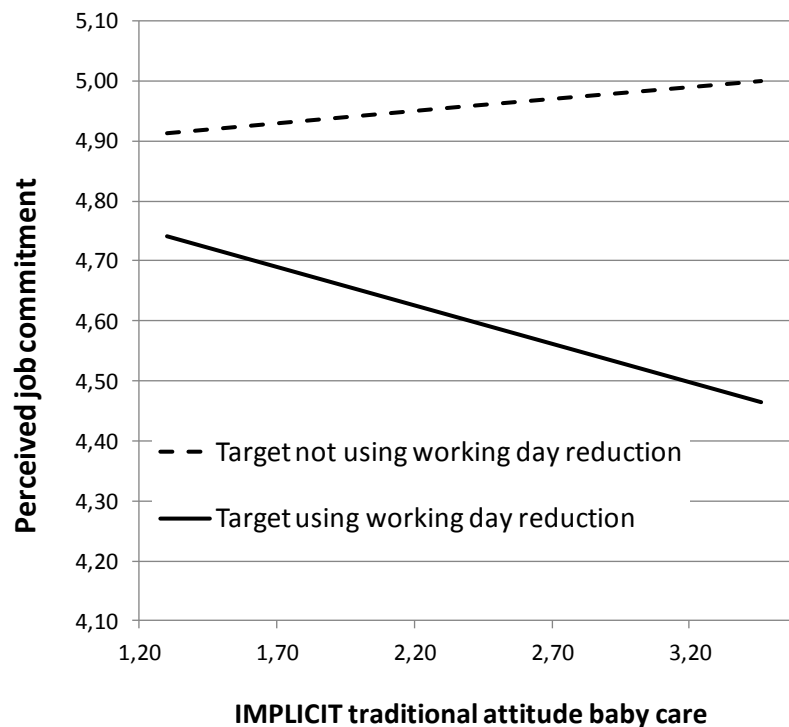
Figure 4. A visual representation of the moderation of the participants' implicit attitudes in the effect of "use reduction" on "perceived job commitment" (male target). Spanish sample.

What has been done so far in this subsection was based on a simple moderation model. Now it may be very interesting to complete this analysis using the conceptual scheme provided by the model of path analysis of the previous section. Now the dichotomous variable from which the multigroup path analysis will be performed will not be the country (as before) but the fact that the participants have a high or low score in their (explicit/implicit) traditional attitudes. For this we dichotomize the variables "explicit traditional attitudes" (high score= above the 51th percentile; low score= below the 51th percentile) and "implicit traditional attitudes" (high=above the 60th percentile; low=below the 60th percentile). In addition we now carry out the analysis separately for the Spanish and Ghanaian sub samples.

Due to space constraints, instead of making a detailed and visual presentation of the results (as was done previously), these are presented in a summarized way in Table 4. In particular it offers only the total effects (sum of the indirect and direct effects) of "Use reduction" on "recommend promotion" and "wage raise", for each of the groups of participants with "high" and "low" score in the traditional attitudes scales.

Two results can be highlighted: firstly, in almost all cases, the penalizing effect (on the male target) of using the working reduction is greater when the evaluators (the

participants) have traditional attitudes towards baby care (high score) than when these attitudes are more advanced (low score). Secondly, these differences are much more important in the case of the Spanish sample. For example, if a Spanish participant belongs to the "high score" group in implicit attitudes (he/she has traditional implicit attitudes), the total effect (the penalty) for using the working reduction on "raise hourly wage" is -1.571, while if the participant belongs to the group "low score" (more advanced attitudes), the total effect is -.359.

In short, the results achieved in this sub-section seem to support hypothesis 5, at least in the case of the Spanish sub sample.

Table 4. Total effect, from our path analysis model, of "Use reduction" on "recommend promotion" and "wage raise". High and low explicit/implicit traditional attitudes as a moderating variable. Male target.

Moderating variable:	Moderation of the effects (total effect):	Attitude score	Spain			Ghana		
			Total effect	Lower bound	Upper bound	Total effect	Lower bound	Upper bound
"**EXPLICIT** traditional attitudes"	Using → Recommend promotion	High	**-.643*****	-.978	-.329	**-.786*****	-1.058	-.532
		Low	**-.279**	-.542	.023	**-.817****	-1.331	-.362
	Using → Raise hourly wage	High	**-1.027*****	-1.540	-.502	**-.708*****	-1.010	-.393
		Low	**-.662 ***	-1.164	-.019	**-.686**	-1.372	.014
"**IMPLICIT** traditional attitudes"	Using → Recommend promotion	High	**-.654*****	-1.025	-.280	-	-	-
		Low	**-.368 ****	-.633	-.080	-	-	-
	Using → Raise hourly wage	High	**-1.571*****	-2.226	-.944	-	-	-
		Low	**-.359**	-.941	.266	-	-	-

Explicit traditional attitudes: High (above the 51th percentile of "explicit traditional attitude baby care"); low (below the 51th percentile).
Implicit traditional attitudes: High (above the 60th percentile of "implicit traditional attitude baby care"); low (below the 60th percentile).
Bootstrap bias corrected confidence intervals.
*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.

Discussion

In the first place, this article has offered causal experimental evidence on the phenomenon of flexibility stigma (Williams et al. 2013). According to our results, the participants in our study tended to penalize in the two job indicators (hourly wage increase and recommending promotion) to the working parent who decided to use a reduction of the working day after having a first child. The use of this family-friendly arrangement by the (male or female) target could have been interpreted by the participants as a signal that the target (the employee) was violating in some way the so call "work devotion schema" (Blair-Loy 2003). Or, put in another way, the use of this "individual accommodation policy" (Correll 2013) could have fueled the ideal worker norm by clearly signaling who is not an ideal worker. In addition, this result is consistent both with the stereotype content model (the target is viewed as warm but not competent, being penalized in the work sphere for this) and with the social role theory and role incongruity (perceived incongruence between the caring role and the professional/leadership role).

This penalty occurs similarly in two social spaces as different as those of Ghana and Spain. A homogenizing factor of the two samples is that in both cases the evaluators are university students; that is, they are a relatively favored, young and cultured group. However, the Ghanaian and Spanish cultural environments introduce an important cross-cultural element of differentiation between these two samples (Aycan 2008).

It should also be remembered that the target's profile considered in this study also delimits the applicability of the results achieved. The target evaluated has a profile of a worker in a high-status job (professional and potential manager). As discussed earlier, these are "trusted workers" (Williams et al., 2013), on whom the pressure of the norm of ideal worker is particularly intense. In this sense it would be interesting to perform this type of experiment with a target from a very different social group (for instance, a target with a low-wage job).

An issue that also could question the relevance of the obtained results is that the evaluators (the participants) are university students and not real employers or managers of human resources. In this sense it is worth mentioning that there are some studies where, after performing a controlled experiment with students, a field experiment with real employers was carried out. This was the case of Correll et al. (2007), and the results achieved with both methodologies were very similar. On the other hand, all the students who participated in our research were in social sciences fields and, in particular, 72% of them were studying bachelor or master degrees in the fields of Business Administration or Economics, which are areas quite related with management of human resources.

One result to be highlighted is that the penalty for using the family-friendly arrangement tends to be higher for the male than for the female target, although several of these results are statistically significant only for Ghanaian participants. This type of result is in line with those obtained by Vandello et al. (2013) and Moss-Racusin et al. (2010). They also provide empirical evidence in favor of the "role congruity theory" of Eagly and Karau (2002) (when the father use the working time reduction, this could lead to a perceived incongruity between his role as an involved father that uses the reconciliation measure and his role as breadwinner and higher status person); and in favor of the "Status Incongruity Hypothesis" of Rudman et al. (2009) (backlash emerges when atypical men are judged more negatively). But these results are also coherent with the theory of precarious manhood (Bosson and Vandello 2011) (male flexibility seekers could be seen as less masculine and being penalized for this).

Another aspect to emphasize is that concerning what might be the main variables that mediate the effect of using the reconciliation measure on the proxy behavior variables. The main moderating variable (as suggested by Cuddy et al. 2004) was participants' perception of how committed was the target (the employee). We have obtained strong evidence that the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is considered as less committed to the company than the one who does not use it, and being considered less committed has a negative effect on offering a wage raise and on recommending for a promotion. But also some variables related to masculinity or to gender stereotypes acted as mediating variables. We have obtained evidence that the working professional father who uses the reconciliation measure is considered as less masculine and having less masculine prescriptive traits, and this has a negative influence in his "perceived job commitment" (this result is similar to that obtained by Vandello et al. 2013).

One of the novelties of this article is the consideration of the attitudes toward the care of the baby by the father as moderating variable. We have provided empirical evidence, for the subsample of Spanish participants, that the effect of using the reduction of the working day on recommending for a promotion and on hourly wage increase is moderated by the participants' explicit and implicit attitudes towards the care of the baby by the father. If the participants have more traditional (explicit or implicit) attitudes (they think that men are not as qualified as a woman to care for his baby and bonding with him/her) the penalizing effect of using the reconciliation measure is higher.

It is convenient to make a recapitulation of some of the cross cultural results obtained in this study. Nowadays, in some societies, like the Spanish one, there are rising expectations and norms for men to become carers (Aumann et al. 2011; Kaufman 2013; Meil et al. 2017; Adler and Lenz 2017). In Spain three groups of fathers can be distinguished (Abril et al. 2015): "Traditional fathers" (probably a minority group);

"committed fathers" (also a minority group), with advanced attitudes toward caring and gender equality; and fathers belonging to a third, more intermediate group. This typology of fathers is consistent with the existence among the Spanish society of a diversity of ideals (of attitudes) towards fatherhood, which should be reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of the young males and females that participated in our study. Although in Ghanaian society things are also changing, it is quite possible that in this country the ideal of paternity is still less diverse and more traditional (on average) than the existing in Spain. And this cultural difference may contribute to explain some of the differences observed between these two social spaces. Here we highlight three.

First, the penalty for using the family-friendly arrangement seems to be somewhat higher in the case of the male target than in the case of the female target, but this gender gap is larger for the Ghanaian sample.

Secondly, and as has been shown previously, it seems that our "explicit traditional attitude" scale moderates the relationship between using the reduction of the working day and the penalization in the field of promotion and salary only in Spain, while this does not happen in the case of Ghanaian participants.

Thirdly, it is worth noting that the fact of using the working day reduction makes the male target be judged as less masculine in the case of Ghana, whereas in the Spanish case it seems that this effect does not occur. It is likely that in Spain (at least among university students) the model of the involved father is socially normalized, to the point that using the working reduction is no longer seen as something questioning masculinity.

What can be done to reduce the flexibility stigma (and its differential effect on male workers?) First, be aware that there are these biases and then try to neutralize them (Correll 2013); second, promoting a culture change in the workplace in favor of balancing work and family (without any gender biases); and third, generating gender egalitarian role models in the family and in the workplace (for instance, equalizing the parental leave system through an equal and non-transferable parental leave for the father and the mother; see Castro and Pazos 2016).

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