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Women in the German Workplace: What Facilitates or Constrains Their Claims-Making for Career Advancement?

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Abstract: To contribute to the understanding of gender inequalities within the workplace, this article explored gender differences in claims-making for career advancement and how they depend on workplace contexts based on unique German linked employer–employee data. Applying organizational fixed-effects models, we found that women were less likely than men to make claims, especially when they had children, and that this was related to their working fewer hours. The gender gap in claims-making further depended on workplace characteristics that influenced women’s ability and their feeling of deservingness to work in more demanding positions. Although claims by mothers’ increased in work–life supportive workplaces, highly demanding workplace cultures seemed to hinder women’s attempts to negotiate for career advancement. Thus, the dominance of the ideal worker norm was a relevant driver for the gender gap in claims-making. Whereas this gap in making claims was found to be only partially related to the workplace gender structure, the formalization of human resource practices, such as performance-based evaluations in the workplace, fostered mothers’ claims-making, indicating that these evaluations were used to legitimize their claims in the workplace.

Keywords: gender inequality; claims-making; workplace; supportive workplace culture; formalized personnel policies

1. Introduction

Fostering work–life balance and gender equality has been a central item on the political agenda of the EU, as well as of many European member states. It has led to adaption processes with regard not only to the cost and provision of childcare and the flexibility of work relationships, but also to the reorganization of social welfare following the guiding principle of “activation” (Lewis and Giullari 2005; Letablier et al. 2011). In recent decades, German political policies with respect to childcare and parental leave have been adjusted to facilitate work–family balance and women’s participation in the labor market. Moreover, strategies to increase gender equality in the labor market have been presented and partially implemented (European Commission 2015), such as extending the right to request flexible employment and promoting gender balance on corporate boards (Jourova 2016). Political attempts for facilitating work–life balance and fostering gender equality have been put forward to empower women in pursuing a career (European Commission 2015).

In this study, we aim to shed light on whether such empowerment has translated into more equal claims-making for career advancement between men and women, focusing specifically on the workplace context, since that is where claims must be made in order to realize career advancement. According to relational inequality theory, claims-making in the workplace is one of the main mechanisms generating inequalities in employment outcomes

(Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). Claims-making describes a two-step process in which employees at first posit claims concerning wages, positions, or comparable resources. Secondly, a powerful actor within the workplace (e.g., supervisor) determines the legitimacy of the claim and whether or not to consider it. Therefore, employment outcomes between men and women differ because (1) women fail to ask for higher wages or (2) the organization might not consider the claims to be legitimate. In this study of women's claims-making, we evaluate the likelihood that women take the initiative and approach their direct supervisor about career advancement within the company because they consider their claim to be legitimate. Based on the relational inequality theory and existing supply- and demand-side arguments (Budig and England 2001; Hodges and Budig 2010; Correll et al. 2007; Uunk et al. 2005; Van der Lippe 2001) regarding gender differences in employment outcomes, we argue that women assess the legitimacy of their claims based on two perceptions: their ability to work in a more demanding position and their deservingness for career progress. We assume that women, and especially mothers, have a lower tendency to make claims, compared to men, because they have a lower ability to work on more demanding positions, based on constraints related to the gendered division of labor. Deservingness, on the other hand, should be internally driven by the woman's self-perception and externally shaped by the way coworkers and supervisors perceive her. We assume women to be less likely to make claims, because they feel less deserving for career progress based on gender stereotypes, related status value beliefs and existing gender-powered structures in workplaces. Experimental research in psychology and economics provides first evidence for gendered claims-making indicating that women are more reluctant to negotiate wages and lack success when they attempt to do so (Babcock et al. 2006; Leibbrandt and List 2015; Mazei et al. 2015; Stuhlmacher and Linnaberry 2013). Such findings further indicate that the situational context is relevant in terms of the initiation and outcome of these negotiation processes (Bowles et al. 2005). So far, however, we know very little about predictors of employees' claims-making or about the workplace characteristics that moderate them.

Based on relational inequality theory, gendered claims-making for career advancement would be expected to vary depending on the workplace context (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012; Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). Workplaces adhere to different inequality regimes owing to differences in their histories, institutions, and environments, as well as in their workers' heterogeneity traits (e.g., Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012; Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). According to this view, workplaces respond differently to political attempts to increase work-life balance and gender equality. Previous research indicates that the ideal worker norm—that is, an employee who has few family obligations and who prioritizes work—still predominates in many workplaces (Acker 1990; Cha and Weeden 2014; Hodges and Budig 2010; Kossek et al. 2010), but some workplaces have invested in the value of employees' work-life balance by providing supportive working arrangements and cultural work-life support (e.g., Abendroth and Dulk 2011; Abendroth and Reimann 2018; Kossek et al. 2010). Moreover, growing global competition, insecurity, and pressure to continuously increase productivity have in some workplaces been translated into greater demands on workers and greater expectations of overtime and availability, thus counteracting political attempts for work-family balance (e.g., Abendroth and Reimann 2018; Cha and Weeden 2014).

We consider different dimensions in which workplaces differ and influence the evaluation of legitimacy of employees' claims, such as the workplace culture, structure and policies. Accordingly, we investigate whether gendered claims-making, with women being less likely to make claims for career advancement, is largely dependent on whether workplace cultures support work-family balance or are highly demanding. Previous studies have already shown that such supportive workplace cultures facilitate work-family balance, whereas high work demands foster work-family conflict (e.g., Abendroth and Dulk 2011; Byron 2005; Kossek et al. 2010). We expect that these conditions are also likely to shape whether or not women feel they can meet both their family obligations and the demands that go along with a job promotion, shaping gendered claims-making resulting from a gendered division of labor. In keeping with the relational inequality theory (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012; Tomaskovic-Devey 2014) and the concept of status value

beliefs (Ridgeway 1997), we further investigate whether gendered claims-making also depends on a gendered power structure (share of women and management, having a female supervisor) within the workplace as well as on formalized personnel practices, which are argued to shape an employee's perceived deservingness in making claims.

We pose the following research questions: To what extent does claims-making for career advancement differ between men and women with and without children in the same workplace, and to what degree does it differ between workplaces depending on (a) work–family friendliness culture (support for reconciliation of work and family and high-demand workplace cultures), as well as (b) the gendered power structure, and (c) formalized personnel practices?

Our study aims to contribute to existing research in several ways: First, we investigate whether there is a difference in claims-making for men and women with and without children. To date, research has focused mainly on gender inequalities in terms of employment outcomes, but it has lacked a systematic analysis of gendered claims-making within the workplace as a possible mechanism behind these inequalities. Second, we take a closer look at the mixed signals being sent to women by the German labor market. Although the employment of women is strongly supported by recent political changes, family and social policies continue to foster the persistence of traditional gender roles by incentivizing a gendered division of labor between men and women, and the ideal worker norm is still highly prevalent within the workplace (Lott and Klenner 2016). Third, we adopt a relational inequality perspective in analyzing which organizational practices and structures either encourage or hamper women when it comes to making claims. We argue that organizations strongly influence the two relevant drivers for claims-making that can either reinforce or counteract political attempts to empower women in pursuing a career: the woman's ability to work in a more demanding position in the company, and the feeling to deserve to move ahead within the company. Fourth, we differentiate between men and women with and without children to gain insights into the relevance of organizational measures designed to detach women's success in the labor market from their status as a parent. It is widely argued that parenthood status in particular drives gender inequalities in labor market outcomes, because until now it has been mainly women who are responsible for care work in the household and who are therefore constrained when they try to combine work and family responsibilities after transitioning to parenthood (e.g., Van der Lippe 2001; Uunk et al. 2005). By comparing these four groups (men with or without children and women with or without children), we are able to disentangle whether workplace characteristics lead to differences in claims-making based on gender, based on parenthood status, or both. Lastly, we introduced a new research design for analyzing claims-making. We use data from the Linked Employer–Employee Panel Survey (LEEP-B3) (see (Diewald et al. 2014), which consisted of a representative sample of large German work organizations (i.e., organizations with more than 500 employees) and a simple random sample of their employees. We tested our hypotheses by applying linear probability models with organizational fixed effects to the unique data on large German workplaces. This enabled us to compare the effect of organizational practices and structures on individual labor market outcomes of men and women with and without children, controlling for unobserved organizational characteristics that could bias the results.

2. Gender Differences in Claims-Making across German Workplaces

2.1. The German Case

Achieving gender equality with regard to women's economic independence and participation in the labor market is a central goal of the EU's policy directives (European Parliament 2018). Within the last few decades, Germany has followed suit, changing its family and work policies significantly in order to provide men and women with equal chances for success in the labor market. In addition to more flexible employment arrangements where women can combine work and family, the eligibility requirement to receive paid parental leave has been reduced to one year to increase the commodification of women's employment and encourage women to return to work sooner after they have had a child

(Gangl and Ziefle 2015). These changes were supplemented by the 2005 and 2008 decisions to increase the childcare provision, especially for very young children, which was also often available for only half a day, making it difficult for mothers to return to full-time employment (Hummelsheim 2009; Kreyenfeld and Krapf 2016). Also in 2008, the action program Prospects for Re-entering the Work Force (Aktionsprogramm “Perspektive Wiedereinstieg”) was introduced, which supports both men and women in re-entering the labor market after taking time off for child-rearing. Although these policies and programs made it more practicable to return to work after transitioning to parenthood, other steps, such as the integration of gender quotas for supervisory board members in 2016¹ and the Transparency of Remuneration Act (Entgelttransparenzgesetz), were also taken to promote gender equality in employment and employment outcomes (BMFSFJ 2017).

Despite the strong political support for women’s participation in the labor market, there are still inconsistencies when it comes to family policies in Germany. Despite the abovementioned efforts to foster gender equality, Germany still taxes joint incomes, which makes it economically unattractive for women in couples to work the same number of hours as their partners (Dingeldey 2001). Moreover, the gendered division of labor (e.g., Grunow et al. 2012), whereby the woman in a couple tends to be responsible for care tasks and her (male) partner is responsible for financial security, has a historical precedent and is based on gender-normative beliefs (gender roles) (West and Zimmerman 1987) as well as economic considerations (new home economics) (Becker 1998). These roles remain highly influential drivers of employment decisions for couples, especially those who are transitioning to parenthood (e.g., Kuehhirt 2012). Although male and female careers have become more and more equitable during the past few decades, a more traditional division of labor within couples often prevails after the first child is born, thus following the normative image of the male-breadwinner model (Dechant and Blossfeld 2015; Dieckhoff et al. 2016; Trappe et al. 2015). Research on the gendered division of labor confirms that women are still predominantly responsible for care and household tasks (Dechant and Blossfeld 2015). Thus, women receive different signals from the government with respect to attaining a career. Although the goal of helping women to have a career is strongly supported by recent political changes, policies and gender-normative beliefs continue to foster the gendered division of labor between men and women. Women are still more likely to work fewer hours and interrupt their career because of motherhood (e.g., Uunk et al. 2005; Van der Lippe 2001). In addition, they still experience disadvantages with regards to employment outcomes, such as earning lower wages (Gangl and Ziefle 2009), even when differences in human capital, job, and workplace characteristics are taken into account (e.g., Ludsteck 2014). Women are at the same time less likely to work in leading positions in the organization (Holst and Kirsch 2015). These disadvantages have been attributed to gender stereotypes (Budig and England 2001; Gangl and Ziefle 2009).

2.2. Gendered Claims-Making and RIT

Relational inequality theory (RIT, Tilly 1998) stresses that inequalities, such as gender earning inequalities, are produced within workplaces as this is the place where economic resources are distributed. Scholars point out that these inequalities are not inherent to a position, class, or job within an organization but rather develop through interaction of individuals and their relative position to each other in these interaction processes.

According to RIT, claims-making in workplaces is one of the main mechanisms generating inequalities in employment outcomes (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). As a first step, an employee posits claims concerning wages, positions, or comparable resources. In response, a powerful actor within the workplace (e.g., supervisor) determines the legitimacy of the claim and whether or not to consider it. Whether a claim is made and whether it is perceived to be

¹ Since 2015, supervisory boards must ensure that 30% of their members are female. In cases of non-compliance, companies will be sanctioned by facing empty board seats or administrative fines (Holst and Kirsch 2015).

legitimate is dependent on institutionalized “locally legitimate resources” in workplaces such as specific efforts and skills (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2014, p. 385). The predominance of the ideal worker norm in many workplaces, that is, an employee with continuous full-time work experience who has few family obligations and who prioritizes work (Acker 1990; Cha and Weeden 2014; Hodges and Budig 2016; Kossek et al. 2010), has institutionalized high work investments such as continuous and long work experience in full-time employment as central resources to legitimize claims for career progress. Accordingly, economic studies indeed show that working hours and work experience are highly relevant determinants of wages (Mandel and Semyonov 2014). This ideal worker norm, however, follows typical male life courses and provides women less ability to make claims. Because the gendered division of labor is still a predominant model for German couples in dividing their hours of paid work especially during family formation, women are predominantly responsible for caring tasks, whereas men are responsible for earning an income. This translates into men being able to correspond to the ideal worker norm, whereas women are likely to have work interruptions due to parental leave and are likely to work part-time when they have young children. This aligns with supply-side arguments in research on gender inequality in the labor market (e.g., Abendroth et al. 2014a; Budig and England 2001; Hodges and Budig 2010; Correll et al. 2007; Uunk et al. 2005; Van der Lippe 2001). Especially after childbirth, women tend to decrease their working hours to meet the demands of motherhood (e.g., Uunk et al. 2005; Van der Lippe 2001). In addition, Azmat and Ferrer (2017) argue that differences in performance between men and women can be explained to a great extent by the fact that women are also caring for a young child at home. There is also reason to assume that women who have no children anticipate this potential conflict and therefore shy away from demanding jobs and from investing too much in a career (Blau and De Varo 2006). If productivity metrics, such as working hours or working experience are relevant differentiation aspects within organizations, women should be less likely than men to consider claims-making for career progress as feasible because they are missing resources to legitimize their claims for career progress or because they will anticipate missing resources in the future when they will have children. We refer to this as ability-based arguments for a gender gap in claims-making where women are less likely to pose claims for career progress.

In addition to that, Tomaskovic-Devey (2014, p. 52) argues that “skill and effort must be recognized and validated by others in order to be the basis for claims on respect or income”. Whether or not claims are being made should therefore also depend on the evaluation of men’s and women’s efforts by others, irrespectively of their actual investments which should also translate to their self-perception of their investments. Concerning self-perception and gender differences, we rely on the cognitive concept of gender status beliefs (Ridgeway 1997) which has been integrated in RIT and which states that male and female categorizations also align with beliefs about one’s relative status based on widely held characteristics that are ascribed to men and women, such as competence (Fiske et al. 2002; Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). Because most female (vs. male) employees continue to fill lower level positions and earn lower wages than men, men’s claims-making is more likely to be evaluated to be legitimate in workplaces. The relevance of occupational status for legitimizing claims is already stated in RIT. Individuals in higher-status positions have the chance for opportunity hoarding (or occupational closure), which increases their ability for making claims, based on their position, and causes inequalities to persist, based on existing status differences in the organization (Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). Festinger (1954) contends that people tend to compare themselves to other, similar persons. Therefore, women are more likely to choose other women in lower-level positions as their comparison group, strengthening existing status value beliefs (Pfeifer and Stephan 2018; Schneck 2014). Following (Ridgeway 1997; Ridgeway et al. 1998), differences become internalized through daily interactions between men and women in the workplace, resulting in men and women’s productivity to adapt to these widely held beliefs. As status beliefs are embedded in gender stereotypes, men and women perceive differences to be legitimate and start to share those beliefs about themselves. Hence, women accept that certain ascriptions legitimize status differences in relation to employment

outcomes. If these status beliefs are carried into and institutionalized within the organizational context, organizations are considered to be gendered, in that they disadvantage women through organizational practices (Acker 1990, 2006). It is argued that even when men and women perform in the same way, a woman's performance is still evaluated as worse than a man's. In particular, women who are mothers are seen as less productive (Correll et al. 2007). As a result, women might think they do not deserve to work in a higher position and are therefore reluctant to make claims for advancement (Pfeifer and Stephan 2018; Schneck 2014). In addition, the fact that women experience discriminatory behavior in the workplace is likely to discourage such claims-making because the decision-makers might also consider them undeserving. Demand-side theories already suggest that employers consider not only the accumulated human capital in their decision-making, but also other characteristics (Correll et al. 2007; England 2010). For example, employers might associate motherhood with lower productivity, owing to the presumably inequitable division of labor within couples (Correll et al. 2007; England 2010). When women in general are seen as bearing more responsibility than men for care-related tasks at home (e.g., based on traditional gender ideologies) and are also more likely to take leave or work part-time, employers may assume that all women will be less productive in the future (England 1994; Phelps 1972). This phenomenon, called statistical discrimination (Aigner and Cain 1977; England 1994; Pettit and Hook 2009; Phelps 1972), suggests that women without children, by proxy, will also be disadvantaged in the workplace. Following these arguments, we assume that women are less likely to pose claims, compared to men, because they feel less deserving of career progress. We refer to this as deservingness-based arguments for a gender gap in claims where women are less likely to pose claims for career advancement. Following our arguments on ability and deservingness, we assume that women are less likely to claim career progress compared to men because their ability to meet expectations in these positions is lower compared to men's but also because their career investments are perceived differently compared to men. We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Women are less likely to pose claims for career progress compared to men (gender gap hypothesis).*

2.3. Gendered Claims-Making across Workplaces

RIT further suggests that there are differences in gendered claims-making across workplaces. The relational inequality perspective prescribes that inequalities are reproduced in organizational inequality regimes (Acker 2006; Tomaskovic-Devey 2014). These regimes are characterized by differences in structure, culture, policies, environment, and history, that permit inequalities between groups to endure within organizations. Hence, with respect to claims-making for career advancement, the meanings of gender and parenthood are negotiated within workplaces in relation to the norms and beliefs about men and women that predominate within each and every workplace. It is the interplay of categorical differences and environmental factors that translates into inequality, because these aspects define the legitimacy of claims being made by a specific group (in this case, women) (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey 2014).

For Germany, there is also first evidence of considerable variation among workplaces in terms of gendered earning inequalities that is related to segregation (Ludsteck 2014), the number of women in management (Hirsch 2013; Abendroth et al. 2017), and personnel policies (Huffman et al. 2017; Abendroth et al. 2017), as well as collective bargaining agreements, work councils, and product market competition (Heinze and Wolf 2010). This finding suggests that gendered claims for career advancement might depend not only on the national context but also on the workplace context—a situation that is in line with relational inequality theory.

In the following paragraph, we will discuss workplace characteristics as part of the organizational inequality regime which are likely to shape employees' ability and their feeling of deservingness to make claims: supportiveness of the workplace in reconciling work and private life as well as the demandingness of workplaces (workplace culture and policies), gendered power structure (structure)

and the formalization of personnel policies (policies). Although our following arguments show that workplace characteristics seem to be more strongly related to ability-based arguments (supportive work environment, structural reconciliation measures) or deservingness-based arguments (gender power structure, formalization of resource practices) for gender differences in claims-making, we consider these processes to be interrelated.

2.3.1. Supportiveness of the Work Environment

To begin with, we consider supportiveness of the work environment in helping female employees to combine work and family as an indicator of workplace resources that mainly shape women's ability to meet expectations in the work environment. In line with Kossek et al. (2010), we differentiate between structural work–life initiatives (availability and use of flexible work arrangements, such as telework and flexible working hours) and cultural support for the employees' work–life reconciliation (support from supervisors or colleagues) to address the supportiveness of the work environment. Research indicates that these dimensions are highly relevant factors that influence parents' decisions regarding their employment behavior (Abendroth and Dulk 2011; Kossek et al. 2010). Studies have revealed the positive effects of supervisor support on work–life balance (Abendroth and Dulk 2011; Hilbrecht et al. 2008; Kossek et al. 2010; Lucia-Casademunt et al. 2018) but also on the working hours of mothers (Abendroth et al. 2012). Although findings with regard to support from colleagues are still scarce (Kossek et al. 2010), it appears to be negatively related to work–family conflict (Thompson and Prottas 2005). When flexible working arrangements are used in the workplace, on the one hand it might help women to keep up their career investments, because they can plan their work tasks around their family duties. On the other hand, men also have the chance to use alternative working arrangements. Both should result in decreasing gender differences with regards to working hours, productivity, or work experience, which are considered legitimate resources for claiming career progress, and hence, women might be more likely to consider career progress feasible. Considering our deservingness-based arguments, we state that when supervisors and colleagues support women in reconciling their work and family spheres, the provision of resources that enable women to manage differing responsibilities conveys a belief contradictory to the ideal worker norm—that is, a woman's career is valued and supported by others despite family obligations. This should increase women's feeling of being deserving for career progress, compared to men. Hence, we hypothesize that gender disparities in claims-making will decrease in more supportive workplace cultures, because women are more likely to pose claims in a supportive environment.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Experiencing cultural support within the workplace for the reconciliation of work and private life reduces the gender gap in claims-making.*

Our second hypothesis concerning a supportive work environment is concerned with structural work–life initiatives. Findings from work–life research show mixed results on the effect of the availability and use of flexible work arrangements on women's employment outcomes and their work–life balance (Kossek et al. 2010; Gajendran and Harrison 2007; Allen et al. 2015; Lott and Chung 2016; Hilbrecht et al. 2008; Hill et al. 2001). There is evidence that flexible arrangements support women in actually combining work and family, as they enable women to structure their work around family duties (Chung and van der Horst 2017). Telework in particular has been shown not only to increase mothers' working hours when they return to the labor market after childbirth (Chung and van der Horst 2017) but also to increase their productivity (Gajendran and Harrison 2007). Following ability-based arguments on the gender gap in claims-making, teleworking mothers are able to invest more time and therefore view claims regarding their career development as more legitimate. Studies have also shown that flexible work arrangements have a positive effect on work–life balance when accompanied by a supportive work environment (Abendroth and Reimann 2018; Kossek et al. 2010). Again, we can assume that women anticipate these features within a company

whether or not they have children. Taking the deservingness-based side of legitimacy into account, organizations may provide reconciliation measures because female labor power is relevant to them so that they are willing to invest in women's careers by providing measures to keep women in employment. This can have an equalizing effect on gender status beliefs, because male and female careers are supported. To conclude, we hypothesize that gender differences in claims-making decrease if structural work–life initiatives are offered because women are more likely to pose claims in workplaces that offer these measures.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *The provision of structural work–life initiatives within the workplace reduces the gender gap in claims-making.*

In contrast to jobs in workplaces that provide resources, jobs within a high-performance workplace culture are likely to be more demanding in terms of the time and effort required. Previous research has indicated that increased global competition, insecurity, and pressure to continually increase productivity translate into greater demands being made on workers, with a high expectation of overtime and availability, which negatively affects an employee's work–family balance (e.g., [Cha and Weeden 2014](#)). As described above, excessive demands within the work sphere are potentially detrimental to the employee's private life, thus impeding work–life reconciliation. Workplaces that emphasize constant availability and long working hours and that impose pressure on their workers convey strong support of the ideal worker norm, whereby employees are expected to focus only on their work and not be distracted by their personal lives. [Abendroth and Reimann \(2018\)](#), for example, found that teleworkers for large German workplaces experienced greater work–family conflicts if they perceived their workplace culture to be highly demanding. We assume that for women employed in a highly demanding work environment, a promotion might be seen more as an unrealistic burden than as a chance for career progress. A deservingness-oriented argument for the negative effect of a demanding workplace culture on female claims-making is that this type of organization more strongly emphasizes the ideal worker norm, which allows to assume that within this work environment stereotypes about women and especially mothers are salient. As a result, female careers are devalued, because women, and especially mothers, are systematically disadvantaged with regards to career investments considered legitimate in these environments. Research indicates that the gender wage gap is partly driven by rising wage returns for working more hours (overtime) which men are more likely to do than women ([Cha and Weeden 2014](#)). These findings strongly point towards the prevalence of the ideal worker norms in these work contexts. Hence, we assume that women in highly demanding work environments where high investments are rewarded feel even less deserving for career advancements compared to men. Thus, women would be afraid to make claims regarding career progress in a highly demanding workplace culture, because it might be difficult for them to meet future expectations in such an environment due to their current or future family responsibilities.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Being employed in a highly demanding workplace culture increases the gender gap in claims-making.*

2.3.2. Gendered Power Structure

Next, we take the organization's gendered power structure into account and argue that this mainly influences women's status beliefs and, with that, their sense of deservingness. Our understanding of the gender power structure is derived from theories of gendered power relations (e.g., [Stainback et al. 2010](#)) which state that persons in powerful positions can favor persons that are similar to themselves. Gender is understood to be one of the characteristics that powerful actors decide by. The more men are in powerful positions, the more power in the organizations is held by men in the organization to promote each other and disadvantage women. The more women are in these powerful positions, the greater is the disruption of the traditional power structure and the more women might be supported

in getting promoted. This concept is also used by [Abendroth et al. \(2017\)](#). Major discrepancies between the numbers of men and women in management, as well as the presence of a male supervisor, are indicators of a strongly gendered organization, so having more women in management positions, as well as having a female supervisor, would lead to a more egalitarian structure ([Stainback et al. 2015](#)). A more egalitarian gender structure within the workplace could decrease discrepancies in gender status beliefs and, as a result, reduce inequalities between men and women in claims-making. If a large proportion of women are given management positions, thereby contradicting existing gender stereotypes, we assume that women's status beliefs can change through interactions with other powerful women. In this way, female employees may feel more empowered and deserving of career advancement within an organization. According to [Kanter \(1977\)](#), having more women in higher positions makes them more visible; in contrast, seeing only a few women at the top makes them seem like "tokens" ([Kanter 1977](#)). In the latter situation, gender differences become even more accentuated and may further constrain women's power in the workplace. With a more balanced gender structure at the top of an organization, gender stereotypes and related status beliefs might be dispelled, because they represent a contradiction to traditional norms in the workplace ([Martin 2003](#)).

Some researchers argue that, just as men would do, women promote and hire employees based on the concept of homophily, which [Kanter \(1977\)](#) termed "homosocial reproduction." Homophily refers to the tendency of individuals to attract and connect with people who are similar to themselves with respect to traits such as education level, gender, race, and age ([McPherson et al. 2001](#)). [McPherson et al. \(2001\)](#) argue that networks, especially those in workplaces, are characterized by gender homophily, and this can profit male workers who receive support and mentoring from powerful male colleagues. Women in managerial positions can also mentor and promote the career progress of women in lower-status positions, resulting in more women with the power to introduce egalitarian work practices into the organization and will again prove profitable for all the female employees ([Kanter 1977](#); [Dobbin et al. 2011](#)). In keeping with these deservingness-based arguments, female employees might then anticipate support from the more powerful women in the organization and come to feel more deserving of recognition and more likely to make claims regarding their career progress. [Tomaskovic-Devey \(2014\)](#) also argues that women can experience empowerment when the demographic composition of their workplace is more egalitarian. We think that the ability-arguments for gender differences in claims-making are only indirectly related to the balanced gender power structure in that the greater the number of powerful women in the workplace, the greater the chances that these women provide other women in the organization with resources necessary to succeed in the job after a promotion (such as flexible work arrangements or mentoring).

Researchers have already observed that female employees face disadvantages, especially in segregated workplaces, suggesting that gender stereotypes are relevant to their employment outcomes in that they receive lower wages ([Ludsteck 2014](#)) and do not have access to positions of power ([Reskin 2003](#); [Stainback et al. 2010](#)). Previous research further indicates that having more women in high positions reduces gender differences in terms of a decrease in wage differentials (e.g., [Cohen and Huffman 2007](#); [Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2009](#); [Hedija 2015](#); [Droganova 2017](#); [Abendroth et al. 2017](#)), as well as a decrease in gender segregation ([Stainback et al. 2015](#)). To summarize, having a more egalitarian gender structure, with a greater proportion of women in management, should increase women's claims-making, when compared with men's, for two reasons: first, women revise their gender status belief, rejecting the notions that men are superior to them career-wise and that women are not suited to fill high positions within the company; and second, the more women there are in management positions, the more power they will have to follow through on promoting other women. Female employees might therefore feel more confident in making claims because they can anticipate support from the more powerful women in the company.

The same arguments should be true when women have a female supervisor, because they see that career progress is possible, at least to some extent, and it has a positive effect on a woman's self-perception. Applying the concept of homophily, women should expect to be given support by

their female supervisors in direct interactions. Moreover, women who work under a female supervisor are less likely to face gender-biased handling of their claim, untainted by gender stereotypes and discrimination, and gender differences in claims-making will presumably be reduced. We therefore present the following two hypotheses regarding the effects of having a greater proportion of women in management positions and having a female supervisor:

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *With a greater proportion of women in management the gender gap in claims-making decreases.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *If employees are working under a female supervisor the gender gap in claims-making decreases.*

However, having a female supervisor in an otherwise highly gender-segregated workplace still might not strengthen women's power to push through decisions to promote female employees. [Stainback et al. \(2015\)](#) argue that even if women have access to higher-status positions, the existing norms and practices in the workplace might continue to limit their power. In the same vein, [Kanter \(1977\)](#) observed that disadvantages for female employees can even increase when only a few "token" women are put in powerful positions. In their study of conditions under which employees make use of company's work–life policies, [Blair-Loy and Wharton \(2002\)](#) found that, for female employees, having a powerful supervisor to support their decisions was relevant, but it is possible that having a female supervisor alone might not be enough for women to perceive them as powerful supporters in their quest for career advancement. [Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey \(2009\)](#) show that although gender segregation decreases when women are given powerful positions, such women are often put in charge of female teams of lower status. In addition, [Abendroth et al. \(2017\)](#) have noted that a woman's wage level is not necessarily affected by her having a female supervisor. We therefore argue that the positive influence of having a female supervisor depends on the overall proportion of women in management positions within a workplace. We assume that the positive effect of having a female supervisor on female claims-making will be even more pronounced when there are more women in management positions, because female supervisors would then have a more powerful group of women to help them put through their decisions.

Hypothesis 7 (H7). *Having a female supervisor further decreases the gender gap in claims-making when the workplace structure includes a larger proportion of women in management positions.*

2.3.3. Formalization of Human Resource Practices

We now move to the formalization of human resource practices which is again rather touching deservingness-based arguments for gender differences in claims-making. In addition to an employee's self-perception of deservingness, the perceptions of others in the workplace (such as colleagues and supervisors) also influence the likelihood that an employee will make a claim for career advancement. We argue that formalized human resource practices (formalized career planning and performance evaluations) help women to deal with these perceptions. Whereas formalized career planning describes a predefined career plan for employees within an organization that is formally recorded, with regards to aspects such as development in the company or further education, performance evaluations are written feedback for employees' performance. Such practices and evaluations were introduced to minimize the discriminatory behavior of supervisors ([Dobbin 2009](#)). If this type of bias is thereby reduced, women's claims-making might increase by being disentangled from gender stereotypes and from others' perceptions of their deservingness. Research findings support this idea, in that the formalization of policies was shown to decrease wage inequalities between men and women in organizations (in Germany: ([Huffman et al. 2017](#)); in the U.S.: ([Dobbin et al. 2015](#))). Concerning women's career progress, findings further indicate that formalized human resource

practices cause less gender bias in personnel decisions (Green and Kalev 2007), and others have shown that women are more likely to be given managerial and supervisory jobs in such settings (Hultin and Szulkin 1999; Reskin and McBrier 2000). If it turns out that women's claims to career advancements are affected less by gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices and more by formal prerequisites for progress, women should feel empowered to use these latter policies as a tool to argue the legitimacy of their claims even if they are defying prevalent gender norms in the workplace. Comparable to the influence of gendered power structure, also formalization of personnel policies should only indirectly influence women's evaluation of their ability for career progress. Because formalized resource practices might legally bind the employer to provide their employees with specific work arrangements in a given situation or mentoring programmes, this could positively influence women's ability to work in a more demanding position. Lastly, formalization of personnel policies should have a positive effect on women's claims-making, because it reduces ambiguity during negotiations. In their experimental study, Leibbrandt and List (2015) showed that women tend to bargain even more than men do when it is openly stated that the organization supports wage negotiations. It has also been shown that women avoid ambiguous situations (Bowles et al. 2005), so having formal indicators can reduce their insecurity because women will know when it is appropriate to initiate a negotiation and what they have to do to get promoted. These findings lead us to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 8 (H8). *Highly formalized career planning within the workplace reduces the gender gap in claims-making.*

The same arguments should hold true with regard to the use of written performance evaluations. If women encounter difficulties when arguing for advancement, such an evaluation provides an opportunity to discuss the content with those in charge. Whereas the formalization career progress is subject to external indicators such as tenure, performance evaluations can be used to strengthen a woman's awareness of her accomplishments within the organization and can thereby offer objective, performance-based arguments in favor of advancement. In addition to serving as a tool to make a case for promotion, a performance evaluation could improve a woman's self-perception by offsetting her tendency to undervalue her work investments (Niederle and Vesterlund 2007). Furthermore, evaluations can inform employees about what they need to work on in order to prepare for future discussions about advancement. Analogous to the use of formal personnel policies, performance evaluations can be another tool in women's claims-making armamentarium:

Hypothesis 9 (H9). *Having written performance evaluations in the workplace reduces the gender gap in claims-making.*

3. Data

Our analysis was based on data collected during the second wave (2014–2015) of the German Linked Employer–Employee Panel Survey (LEEP-B3), which took place as part of the study entitled “Interactions Between Capabilities in Work and Private Life: A Study of Employees in Different Work Organizations.” The study was conducted in cooperation with the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg (Abendroth et al. 2014b; Diewald et al. 2014; Pausch et al. 2014). We selected data that contained information at the organizational level and on the level of employees of these organizations and their partners or spouses. Individual employees were randomly selected, and the dataset allowed for the integration of each person's work history. Information was also derived from administrative data at the IAB (IAB Establishment Panel [BHP] and IAB Integrated Employment Biographies [IEB]; Reimann et al. (2015)). The data are representative of workers employed in large work organizations in Germany (i.e., those having at least 500 employees), with the exception of those who were marginally employed (i.e., who worked less than 10 h per week)

(Abendroth et al. 2014b). Using information on both the organizational and individual levels, we lost about 10% of the sample because we were unable to match all the employees with an organization. Furthermore, we excluded lone mothers and fathers from the sample, because of their unique family and work situation. After these subjects were excluded, our final dataset included information on 3988 individuals from 121 work organizations.

The LEEP-B3 dataset contains information on organizations, their structure and personnel policies, and their employment practices. Special focus was placed on diversity programs and equal opportunities within the chosen companies. On the individual level, employees provided information about their personal lives (e.g., parental status), their working lives (e.g., working hours, job satisfaction, work gratifications), and their demographics. Furthermore, the data contained detailed information about the employees' partners. We were also able to obtain data about an organization's structure and individual employees' economic situation and personal lives, which made a detailed analysis of inequalities and how they might be shaped by organizational characteristics possible.

3.1. Dependent Variable: Claims-Making

Our dependent variable was claims-making. In line with Babcock et al. (2006), we measured claims-making as actions taken by employees to discuss their career progress within the company with their supervisors. The respondents were asked the following question: "Have you taken the initiative within the past 2 years to talk with your direct supervisor about your career advancement?" Respondents answered either yes (1) or no (0). The descriptive sample shown in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that claims-making is common in German workplaces. Furthermore, we can already see gender differences as well as differences by parenthood status in claims-making in this sample.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of study variables for men ($N = 2206$).

	Men without Children				Men with Children			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Individual Characteristics								
Claims	0.724	0.447	0	1	0.662	0.473	0	1
Children in household	0.677	0.468	0	1	0.661	0.474	0	1
Age youngest child	13.143	0.0	0	13.143	12.575	7.611	0	40
Number of children	0	0	0	0	2.062	0.824	0	7
<i>Partner</i>								
no partner	0.380	0.486	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	1
Partner	0.412	0.493	0	1	0.101	0.301	0	1
Married	0.208	0.406	0	1	0.899	0.301	0	1
Age	36.633	9.387	19	54	45.967	6.452	24	54
Promotion Relevance	2.572	1.143	1	5	2.720	1.197	1	5
<i>Education</i>								
Low Education	0.141	0.348	0	1	0.046	0.209	0	1
Medium Education	0.311	0.463	0	1	0.318	0.466	0	1
High Education	0.549	0.498	0	1	0.637	0.481	0	1
<i>Qualification</i>								
Low Qualified	0.643	0.480	0	1	0.607	0.489	0	1
Qualified	0.357	0.480	0	1	0.393	0.489	0	1
Job Characteristics								
<i>ISCO</i>								
Legislators, senior officials, manager	0.021	0.144	0	1	0.058	0.233	0	1
Professionals	0.267	0.443	0	1	0.270	0.444	0	1
Technicians, associate professional	0.222	0.416	0	1	0.253	0.435	0	1
Clerks	0.114	0.318	0	1	0.082	0.275	0	1
Service workers, shop, market sales	0.045	0.207	0	1	0.037	0.190	0	1
Skilled agricultural, fishery workers	0.004	0.065	0	1	0.001	0.037	0	1
Craft, related trades workers	0.183	0.387	0	1	0.151	0.358	0	1
Plant, machine operators, assembler	0.082	0.274	0	1	0.102	0.303	0	1
Elementary occupations	0.062	0.241	0	1	0.045	0.207	0	1
Hourly Wage (log.)	3.105	0.375	1.391	5.445	3.316	0.403	1.238	5.962
Tenure	7.394	6.805	0.499	36.301	11.490	8.417	0.499	37.534
In fixed-term employment	0.073	0.261	0	1	0.020	0.140	0	1
In public sector	0.242	0.429	0	1	0.217	0.413	0	1

Table 1. Cont.

	Men without Children				Men with Children			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Workplace Characteristics								
Supervisor Support	3.928	0.995	1	5	3.928	1.041	1	5
Colleague Support	4.084	1.065	1	5	3.981	1.155	1	5
Demanding Workplace	7.480	2.165	0	12	7.834	2.129	1	12
Use of Telework	0.138	0.345	0	1	0.191	0.393	0	1
Working Flexible Hours	0.685	0.465	0	1	0.689	0.463	0	1
Having a female supervisor	0.169	0.375	0	1	0.118	0.323	0	1
<i>N</i>	711				1495			

Note: For dichotomous variables, mean values refer to proportion of respondents with the value 1 on that variable; e.g., $0.724 \times 100 = 72.4\%$ of men without children make claims.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of study variables for women (*N* = 1782).

	Women without Children				Women with Children			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Individual Characteristics								
Claims	0.697	0.460	0	1	0.586	0.493	0	1
Children in household	0.677	0.468	0	1	0.661	0.474	0	1
Age youngest child								
Number of children	0.314	0.464	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	1
Partner	0.418	0.494	0	1	0.173	0.378	0	1
No partner	0.268	0.443	0	1	0.827	0.378	0	1
Partner	13.143	0.0	0	13.143	15.005	8.303	0	46
Married	0	0	0	0	1.89	0.775	0	6
Age	36.577	9.345	17	54	45.462	6.709	24	54
Promotion Relevance	2.638	1.261	1	5	2.955	1.343	1	5
Education								
Low Education	0.046	0.209	0	1	0.061	0.239	0	1
Medium Education	0.318	0.466	0	1	0.430	0.495	0	1
High Education	0.637	0.481	0	1	0.509	0.500	0	1
Qualification								
Low Qualified	0.604	0.490	0	1	0.660	0.474	0	1
Qualified	0.396	0.490	0	1	0.340	0.474	0	1
Job Characteristics								
ISCO								
Legislators, senior officials, manager	0.011	0.104	0	1	0.017	0.129	0	1
Professionals	0.219	0.414	0	1	0.207	0.405	0	1
Technicians, associate professional	0.398	0.490	0	1	0.443	0.497	0	1
Clerks	0.219	0.414	0	1	0.178	0.383	0	1
Service workers, shop, market sales	0.093	0.292	0	1	0.0737	0.261	0	1
Skilled agricultural, fishery workers	0.0	0.0	0	1	0.003	0.0569	0	1
Craft, related trades workers	0.009	0.0951	0	1	0.154	0.123	0	1
Plant, machine operators, assembler	0.0110	0.104	0	1	0.0211	0.144	0	1
Elementary occupations	0.040	0.196	0	1	0.0413	0.199	0	1
Hourly Wage (log.)	2.982	0.365	1.908	5.796	3.015	0.363	0.961	4.259
Tenure	7.452	7.547	0.499	35.942	10.138	7.508	0.499	33.729
In fixed-term employment	0.0748	0.273	0	1	0.053	0.225	0	1
In public sector	0.445	0.497	0	1	0.525	0.500	0	1
Workplace Characteristics								
Supervisor Support	3.945	1.0511	1	5	4.138	1.0159	1	5
Colleague Support	3.998	1.083	1	5	4.108	1.121	1	5
Demanding Workplace	7.998	2.157	1	12	7.964	2.269	2	12
Use of Telework	0.124	0.326	0	1	0.131	0.338	0	1
Use of Telework	0.630	0.483	0	1	0.675	0.469	0	1
Working Flexible Hours	0.423	0.495	0	1	0.443	0.497	0	1
Having a female supervisor	0.011	0.104	0	1	0.017	0.129	0	1
<i>N</i>	548				1234			

Note: For dichotomous variables, mean values refer to proportion of respondents with the value 1 on that variable; e.g., $0.697 \times 100 = 69.7\%$ of women without children make claims.

3.2. Independent Variables

3.2.1. Gender and Family Status

To investigate gendered claims-making and its dependence on parental status, we generated a categorical variable that includes four different combinations: men with children (0), men without children (1), women without children (2), and women with children (3). By using the factor notation “i” in the Stata 15 software program, we integrated each category into our model as a dummy. Based on their advantageous labor market situation, “men with children” (as opposed to men without children and women with and women without children) was chosen as the reference category (Cooke 2014; Hodges and Budig 2010; Killewald 2012; Zhang et al. 2009; Lundberg and Rose 2002).

3.2.2. Supportiveness of the Work Environment for Reconciling Work and Life

To determine the cultural supportiveness of a workplace, we looked at whether supervisors were concerned with whether their employees’ family life and work life were compatible. We also determined whether an employee’s colleagues provided support by finishing their coworker’s tasks if the employee had to leave work for personal reasons. The value of each of these variables ranged from 1 (“does not apply”) to 5 (“applies completely”). To measure the structural supportiveness of the workplace, we took into account whether the company offered flexible work arrangements, such as telework or flexible working hours. Table 3 shows that, although only about 71.8% (see Table 3) of the workplaces offered telework, flexible working hours were available in almost all the organizations in our sample (95.0%). Supplementing a company’s deployment of flexible work arrangements at the workplace level with the actual use of such arrangements at the individual level, we integrated two dummy variables on the use of flexible working hours and telework into our models.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of study variables for companies.

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Company Characteristics				
Telework is offered	0.718	0.450	0	1
Flexible Working Hours offered	0.950	0.217	0	1
Performance Evaluation	0.647	0.478	0	1
Formalization of Career Plan	0.979	0.829	0	2
% Women in Management	2.056	4.367	0	33.333
Workplace Characteristics				
Supervisor Support	3.995	1.031	1	5
Colleague Support	4.041	1.120	1	5
Demanding Workplace	7.834	2.190	0	12
Use of Telework	0.153	0.360	0	1
Working Flexible Hours	0.676	0.468	0	1
Having a female supervisor	0.270	0.444	0	1
N	121			

Note: For dichotomous variables, mean values refer to proportion of companies with the value 1 on that variable; e.g., $0.718 \times 100 = 71.8\%$ of companies provide possibilities for employees to use telework. Company characteristics are measured at the company level, workplace characteristics are measured at the individual level and aggregated at the organizational level.

3.2.3. Highly Demanding Workplace Culture

A high-performance culture was defined as the summated index of the relevance of (a) the employee’s reachability (availability), (b) need for overtime, and (c) demand to work under pressure. Since the value of each of these variables can range from 1 to 5, the index for performance ranges from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 15, with higher numbers indicating a higher-performance culture. To give our variable a natural value of 0, we subtracted 3, so the variables would range from 0 to 12, where 12 indicates a workplace context with very high demands.

3.2.4. Gendered Power Structure

In order to assess the gendered power structure of a company, we took into account individual as well as organizational indicators. Having a female supervisor was measured on the individual level, and respondents had to indicate whether they did (1) or did not (0) work under a female supervisor. On the organizational level, we included the proportion of women in the company that were in management, which was based on the organizational proportion of women who were senior officials or managers according to the single-digit ISCO-08 classification of occupations (ISCO = International Standard Classification of Occupations). Thus, if 50% of the employees are women and generally about 1% of the managers in the company are female, we divide the 1% by 50% and determine that 2% of the female employees are in managerial positions. This variable ranges from 0% to 33.3%. In addition, we accounted for a cross-level interaction between working under a female supervisor and the proportion of women in management positions by multiplying these two variables.

3.2.5. Formalized Human Resource Practices

The formalization of personnel policies was operationalized according to the system described by [Abendroth et al. \(2017\)](#)² and was based on data from the employer survey. We differentiated between the formalization of career planning and the use of written performance evaluations. With regard to the formalization of career planning, we integrated the sum of two variables indicating whether the company used the following two instruments: “written agreements on objectives with worker” and “planning of advanced training set out in writing.” Again, this variable ranged from 0 to 2, with 35.5% of the workplaces scoring 0 and 33.3% scoring 2 (results not shown). We also integrated data on whether the company used written performance evaluations, differentiating between companies that used such evaluations (1) and those that did not (0). The result was that 64.7% of the workplaces in our sample did use written performance evaluations (see [Table 3](#)).

3.2.6. Additional Predictors of Women’s Claims-Making

Individual and family characteristics that were taken into account included being married vs. being in a partnership (couple), the number of children in the household, the age of the youngest child in the household and education based on the CASMIN education classification as well as additional qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma). Employees’ decision to make claims concerning their career progress naturally depended on how relevant their employment was to them in each case. Hence, we controlled for whether or not the respondent expected good career opportunities within the organization. Concerning job characteristics, we integrated information on whether a person’s employment was fixed-term or regular, occupational status (following the ISCO-08 classification of occupations), hourly wages, and whether a person is employed in the public or private sector. Concerning career investments we measured actual working hours, overtime (hours), and tenure in years.

4. Methods

Reflecting the two-level structure of the data, we used multilevel models to test our hypotheses. Having multiple workers in the same organizations violates the independence assumption in conventional ordinary least squares (OLS) estimators. Because we are interested in differences in claims-making between men and women who work in the same workplace, we applied organizational fixed effects. Fixed-effects regressions also have the advantage of controlling for the unobserved differences between organizations ([Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012](#)). Estimations are therefore based solely on within-workplace variance. The main objective of our analysis was to examine the

² An earlier approach to categorizing personnel policies was conducted by [Dobbin et al. 2015](#).

moderating effect of organizational characteristics on the claims-making of men and women with and without children. Hence, we use interaction terms between the gender–parenthood combination and characteristics at the organizational level (e.g., formalization of personnel policies) to investigate how they shape gendered claims-making. Because cross-level interactions are of great relevance in our models and are more straightforward in linear probability models, we followed [Brady et al. \(2017\)](#) in deciding not to estimate logistic regressions despite having a dichotomous dependent variable. Another disadvantage of logistic regression models is that they do not allow a comparison of results between models or samples ([Brady et al. 2017](#)).³ Specifically, we estimated cross-sectional linear probability models that contained organizational fixed effects.

Our final model has the following structure:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{pr}(y_{ij} = 1 \mid X) = & \beta_{0j} + \beta_1 * (\text{MEAN FS}_j - \text{FS}_{ij}) + \beta_2 * (\text{MEAN CV}_j - \text{CV}_{ij}) \\ & + \beta_3 * ((\text{MEAN FS}_j - \text{FS}_{ij}) * (\text{MEAN SUP}_j - \text{SUP}_{ij})) \\ & + \beta_4 * ((\text{MEAN FS}_j - \text{FS}_{ij}) * \text{TW}_j) + e_{ji} + u_j \end{aligned}$$

With $\text{pr}(y_{ij} \mid X)$ indicating the probability that individual i in workplace j makes a claim, under the conditions of a certain set of control variables (X) (i.e., family status [FS], differentiating being a man with children vs. being a man without children, being a woman with children vs. being a woman without children): $(\text{MEAN FS}_j - \text{FS}_{ij})$.

The equation $\beta_3 * ((\text{MEAN FS}_j - \text{FS}_{ij}) * (\text{MEAN SUP}_j - \text{SUP}_{ij}))$ indicates the interaction of family status and being supported by the supervisor (SUP) in the reconciliation of work and private life. Because both variables are measures at the individual level, both are demeaned on the organizational level in our fixed-effects models. We also integrated cross-level interactions of family status and whether or not the workplace offered telework (TW): $(\beta_4 * ((\text{MEAN FS}_j - \text{FS}_{ij}) * \text{TW}_j))$. Because we estimated organizational fixed-effects models, the main effect of providing telework could not be included since there is no variance within the organization. We further controlled for a set of control variables (CV), such as working hours or having a fixed-term contract, at the individual level.

5. Results

Table 4 shows the results of the organizational fixed-effects models on gendered claims-making, taking into account personal and job related characteristics on the individual level. Model 1 shows the results for gendered claims-making excluding all other variables. It indicates that being a woman with children in an average workplace decreases the likelihood of her making a claim by about 8.6%, as compared with men with children (see model 1).

However, we see that this is only the case for mothers, whereas there is no claims-making gap for childless-women and men with children. We even observed that men without children made more claims than did men with children. Once we integrated control variables on individual characteristics and family status into the model (model 2), the differences in claims-making between men and mothers decreased in size, but stayed significant. Individual level characteristics partly explain mothers' lower likelihood to pose claims. In model 3 we integrated job characteristics, which are also considered relevant for legitimizing claims, as they are indicators of an existing status hierarchy between employees and can be used to further legitimize claims when workers are already in a rather advantageous situation compared to those in lower positions. Interestingly, we found that mothers were still less likely to make claims than men but that job characteristics, such as occupational status, significantly influence their claims-making. In line with RIT, claiming career progress is more likely

³ We also estimated logistic regression models of our full models, including organizational controls, to check whether our results were robust and noted only slight differences in coefficients. For the results of the logistic regression models, see Appendix A.

in high occupations. Lastly, we integrate career investments into the model (model 4) to investigate whether working hours and tenure are driving the gender gap in claims-making. Controlling for working hours and tenure (which we consider as career investments), we found that the negative effect of being a mother on claims-making turned insignificant.⁴ The results hint towards the relevance of working hours when considering claiming career progress. Thus, the overall models suggest that mothers' lower likelihood to pose claims is mainly driven by them working fewer hours. In hypothesis 1, we assumed that women are less likely to pose claims, compared to men. We find this hypothesis partially supported as it is mothers that make fewer claims than men with children, when tenure and working are not taken into account. This gap seems to be driven mainly by mothers' different investments in their careers. However, when workplace moderators are taken into account, a more differentiated picture is revealed, as indicated in Tables 5–7.

Table 4. Gender differences in claims-making, with only individual-level control variables (results of fixed-effects regressions).

	Mod. 1		Mod. 2		Mod. 3		Mod. 4	
Men with Kids	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
Men no Kids	0.050 *	(0.021)	0.029	(0.037)	0.040	(0.037)	0.049	(0.037)
Women no kids	0.013	(0.026)	−0.013	(0.040)	0.003	(0.040)	0.017	(0.040)
Women with kids	−0.086 ***	(0.022)	−0.073 **	(0.022)	−0.061 *	(0.024)	−0.002	(0.028)
Individual & Family Characteristics								
Partnership								
<i>Not in a couple</i>			0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
<i>Coupled</i>			0.064 *	(0.027)	0.066 *	(0.027)	0.068 *	(0.027)
<i>Married</i>			0.015	(0.029)	0.015	(0.028)	0.025	(0.028)
Age youngest Child			−0.001	(0.001)	−0.000	(0.001)	−0.002	(0.001)
No. of Children			0.011	(0.012)	0.013	(0.012)	0.012	(0.012)
Age			−0.004	(0.009)	−0.004	(0.009)	−0.006	(0.009)
Age sq.			0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
Education (CASMIN)								
<i>Low Education</i>			0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
<i>Middle Education</i>			0.112	(0.096)	0.098	(0.097)	0.093	(0.096)
<i>High Education</i>			0.010	(0.115)	−0.025	(0.119)	−0.011	(0.118)
Qualification								
<i>Low Qualified</i>			0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
<i>High Qualified</i>			0.143 *	(0.066)	0.138 *	(0.067)	0.112 *	(0.067)
Relevance of promotion			−0.082 ***	(0.006)	−0.079 ***	(0.006)	−0.075 ***	(0.006)
Job Characteristics								
ISCO 1-digit								
<i>Legislators, senior officials, manager</i>					0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
<i>Professionals</i>					−0.047	(0.039)	−0.013	(0.038)
<i>Technicians, associate professional</i>					−0.034	(0.039)	0.005	(0.039)
<i>Clerks</i>					−0.078 *	(0.039)	−0.041	(0.038)
<i>Service workers, shop, market sales</i>					−0.080	(0.051)	−0.047	(0.049)
<i>Skilled agricultural, fishery workers</i>					−0.086	(0.192)	−0.038	(0.171)
<i>Craft, related trades workers</i>					−0.069	(0.044)	−0.024	(0.043)
<i>Plant, machine operators, assembler</i>					−0.177 **	(0.059)	−0.137 *	(0.059)
<i>Elementary Occupations</i>					−0.144 *	(0.058)	−0.108 *	(0.057)
Hourly Wage					0.073 *	(0.028)	0.044	(0.027)
Regular Employed					0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
Fixed-Term employed					0.072	(0.045)	0.068	(0.043)
Career Investments								
Actual Working Hours							0.007 ***	(0.002)
Overtime (hours)							0.001	(0.002)
Tenure (years)							−0.002 *	(0.001)
Constant	0.670 ***	(0.011)	0.892 ***	(0.174)	0.770 ***	(0.191)	0.553 ***	(0.204)
Observations	3988		3988		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP-B3 2014–2015; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Standard Error in parentheses. LEEP: Linked Employer–Employee Panel.

⁴ In addition, we ran the models by only including tenure or working hours and we find that it is mainly working hours that are causing the significance to disappear.

Table 5. Gender Gap in Claims-Making and Family-Friendliness of the Work Environment (results of linear fixed-effects regressions).

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.139	(0.154)	0.120	(0.152)
	Women no Children	0.486 **	(0.159)	0.447 **	(0.163)
	Women with Children	0.121	(0.139)	0.038	(0.143)
IND	Supervisor Support	0.005	(0.011)	0.002	(0.011)
	IA: Supervisor Support × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.018	(0.018)	0.018	(0.018)
	Women no Children	−0.026	(0.023)	−0.024	(0.024)
	Women with Children	0.039 *	(0.017)	0.039 *	(0.018)
IND	Colleague Support	0.013	(0.010)	0.012	(0.010)
	IA: Colleague Support × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.006	(0.021)	0.011	(0.021)
	Women no Children	−0.010	(0.020)	−0.008	(0.020)
	Women with Children	−0.018	(0.014)	−0.016	(0.014)
ORG	Telework is offered × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.120 **	(0.041)	−0.116 **	(0.041)
	Women no Children	−0.053	(0.060)	−0.055	(0.061)
	Women with Children	−0.054	(0.059)	−0.063	(0.058)
IND	Telework is used	0.088 **	(0.034)	0.099 **	(0.034)
	Telework is used × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.011	(0.053)	−0.008	(0.053)
	Women no Children	−0.131 *	(0.061)	−0.134 *	(0.061)
	Women with Children	−0.019	(0.047)	−0.028	(0.046)
ORG	Flexible Working Hours offered × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.026	(0.075)	−0.052	(0.069)
	Women no Children	−0.104	(0.081)	−0.089	(0.086)
	Women with Children	−0.053	(0.062)	−0.045	(0.070)
IND	Flexible Working Hours Used	0.001	(0.030)	−0.009	(0.030)
	Flexible Working Hours Used × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.021	(0.044)	−0.017	(0.044)
	Women no Children	−0.005	(0.050)	−0.004	(0.051)
	Women with Children	0.023	(0.044)	0.040	(0.043)
IND	High-Demand Culture	0.019 **	(0.006)	0.022 ***	(0.006)
	IA: High-Demand Culture × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.005	(0.009)	−0.004	(0.009)
	Women no Children	−0.021 *	(0.010)	−0.022 *	(0.011)
	Women with Children	−0.015 *	(0.009)	−0.014	(0.009)
Constant		0.257	(0.219)	0.485 **	(0.209)
Observations		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP-B3 2014–2015; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; One-sided t -test for directed hypotheses; Standard Error in parentheses; IND = individual level, ORG = organizational level, IA = interaction; controls include partnership status (single, couple, married), working hours, fixed-term employment, occupational status (ISCO), hourly wage, education level (CASMIN), tenure, employed in public or private sector, relevance of career progress to employee, and qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma), employed in public or private sector × gender-family-status; model 2 excludes working hours and tenure.

Table 6. Gender Gap in Claims-Making and Gendered Power Structure (results of linear fixed-effects regressions).

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.037	(0.041)	0.026	(0.041)
	Women no Children	−0.005	(0.051)	−0.017	(0.051)
	Women with Children	0.002	(0.035)	−0.060 *	(0.034)
ORG	IA: %-Women in Management × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.002	(0.005)	0.002	(0.005)
	Women no Children	−0.001	(0.007)	−0.002	(0.007)
	Women with Children	0.001	(0.007)	0.002	(0.007)
IND	Female Supervisor	−0.048	(0.040)	−0.056	(0.041)
	IA: Female Supervisor × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.156 **	(0.063)	0.152 **	(0.062)
	Women no Children	0.104 *	(0.060)	0.102	(0.062)
	Women with Children	0.033	(0.048)	0.046	(0.048)
IND/ORG	% Women in Management × Female Supervisor × Men with Children (Ref.)	−0.009	(0.007)	−0.009	(0.007)
	Men no Children	−0.007	(0.012)	−0.006	(0.012)
	Women no Children	0.004	(0.012)	0.006	(0.012)
	Women with Children	0.015	(0.010)	0.016 *	(0.010)
	Constant	0.540 **	(0.207)	0.760 ***	(0.196)
Observations		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP-B3 2014–2015; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; One-sided t -test for directed hypotheses; Standard Error in parentheses; IND = individual level, ORG = organizational level, IA = interaction; controls include partnership status (single, couple, married), working hours, fixed-term employment, occupational status (ISCO), hourly wage, education level (CASMIN), tenure, employed in public or private sector, relevance of career progress to employee, and qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma), employed in public or private sector × gender-family-status; model 2 excludes working hours and tenure.

Table 7. Gender Gap in Claims-Making and Formalization of Human Resource Practices (results of linear fixed-effects regressions).

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.023	(0.051)	0.022	(0.050)
	Women no Children	0.007	(0.058)	−0.016	(0.059)
	Women with Children	−0.070	(0.047)	−0.132 **	(0.046)
ORG	Formalization of Career Plan 1 × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.010	(0.055)	−0.012	(0.055)
	Women no Children	0.001	(0.059)	0.011	(0.059)
	Women with Children	0.063	(0.054)	0.085	(0.054)
	Formalization of Career Plan 2 × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.000	(0.049)	−0.006	(0.048)
	Women no Children	0.005	(0.057)	0.014	(0.057)
	Women with Children	−0.054	(0.046)	−0.032	(0.047)
ORG	IA: Performance Evaluation × Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.051	(0.047)	0.040	(0.047)
	Women no Children	0.006	(0.047)	0.008	(0.048)
	Women with Children	0.110 *	(0.046)	0.099 *	(0.045)
	Constant	0.542 **	(0.203)	0.763 **	(0.192)
Observations		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP-B3 2014–2015; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$; One-sided t -test for directed hypotheses; Standard Error in parentheses; IND = individual level, ORG = organizational level, IA = interaction; controls include partnership status (single, couple, married), working hours, fixed-term employment, occupational status (ISCO), hourly wage, education level (CASMIN), tenure, employed in public or private sector, relevance of career progress to employee, and qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma), employed in public or private sector × gender-family-status; model 2 excludes working hours and tenure.

5.1. Claims-Making and the Family-Friendliness of the Work Environment

To investigate the role of workplace indicators in moderating the gender gap in claims-making, we estimated two models for each workplace characteristic: one full model (model 1) and one model excluding our investment variables working hours and tenure (model 2), because they were found to be main predictors of gendered claims-making (see Table 4). In that we are taking into account the differentiation of our two lines of arguing: whether workplace characteristics influence the legitimacy of claims by increasing the employees' feeling of deservingness or by increasing employees' ability to invest in their career, irrespective of their investments, or both.

Table 5 presents all interactions between the gender–parenthood combination and workplace characteristics that describe the supportiveness of the work environment for the reconciliation of work and private life (structural reconciliation measures, cultural support, and demandingness of the workplace).

Our second hypothesis (H2) stated that the gender gap in claims-making decreases with the work–life support of the supervisor. Our results (see Table 5, model 1) point towards a narrowing of the gender gap in claims-making within workplaces where there is a high level of supervisor support for employees in reconciling work and family. Figure 1 shows gender differences in the average marginal effect compared with the reference group (men with children). We can see that women with children are less likely to claim career progress than are men with children in contexts where they experience no support. However, if the support increases above the value 4 (mean value of support for men with children = 3.995; see Table 3), the differences in claims-making between men and women become insignificant. These findings point toward an equalization of claims-making between men and women with children when they are working under a supportive supervisor. Claims-making of women without children does not seem to be affected by supervisor support. We also considered the interaction of colleague support and parenthood. However, we found no significant effect on claims-making by mothers (see Table 5), leading to the assumption that the support of a powerful actor is more relevant in positively influencing mothers' claims-making. Comparing models with (model 1) and without (model 2) investments variables, it seems that the effects are not solely driven by a change in working hours due to supervisor support, because effects are of the same size in both models.

Focusing on structural work–life initiatives in the workplace (see Table 5), we did not find the expected positive effect on women's claims-making compared to men. Instead, we found evidence that the availability of telework itself negatively influenced childless men's claims-making for career advancement compared to fathers. Whereas the employees' individual use of telework positively influenced the likelihood of making claims among men with children (0.088 [$p < 0.01$]), we found that using telework decreases claims-making of women without children (−0.131 [$p < 0.05$]). It seems that these policies are rather relevant with regard to parenthood than gender. Another feature of structural work–life initiatives is flexibility of working hours. Integrating the interaction of gender and flexible working hours, we observed no significant effect on the degree of claims-making among childless women and mothers. Thus, there was no evidence to support our third hypothesis (H3), which argued that structural support for the reconciliation of an employee's work life and private life decreases gender differences in claims-making. The use of telework even decreased childless women's likelihood to make claims.

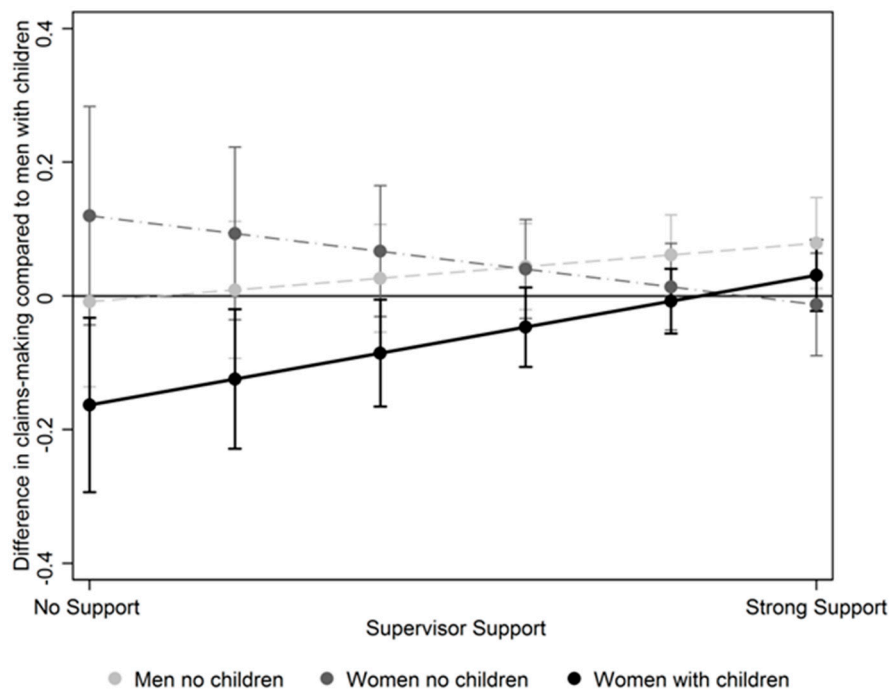


Figure 1. Gender differences in estimated values for claims-making according to supervisor support. Note: Based on results shown for model 1 in Table 5. The graph shows the interaction between supervisor support and family status; reference group = men with children; 90% confidence intervals, using Stata command contrast (StataCorp 2015).

Considering claims-making in highly demanding workplaces, we assumed that working in a demanding work environment would further reduce the likelihood that women with children would make claims, compared with men. Model 1 in Table 5 shows a significant interaction between demanding workplace cultures and the gender–parenthood combination. The findings support the assumptions made in our fourth hypothesis (H4) (women without children = -0.021 [$p < 0.01$]; women with children = -0.015 [$p < 0.05$]). Figure 2 shows gendered claims-making in relation to a highly demanding workplace culture. Interestingly, we can see that claims-making by women does not significantly differ to claims-making by men in workplace cultures that were not highly demanding. However, the higher the demands in the workplace, the less likely women with and without children were to make claims when compared with fathers. Comparing models 1 and 2, it is interesting that, once we exclude tenure and working hours (model 2), the negative effect of working in a highly demanding workplace disappears for mothers, indicating that mothers in these workplaces already work relatively long hours. For women without children, the effect is robust, regardless of their working hours.

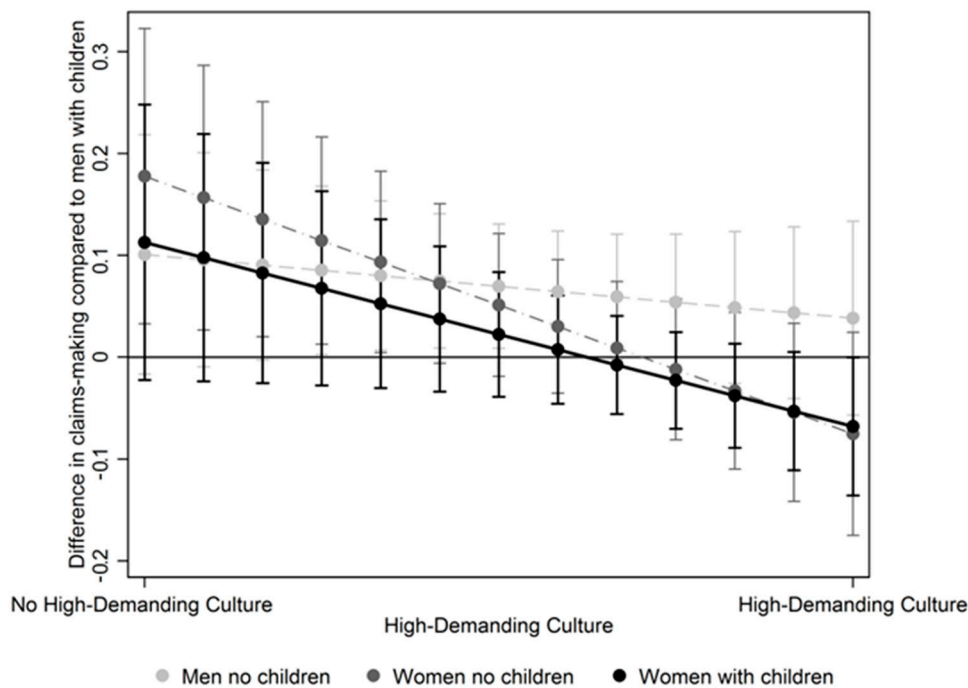


Figure 2. Gender differences in estimated values for claims-making according to highly demanding workplace culture. Note: Based on results model 1, Table 5. Figure shows interaction of high demanding workplace culture and family status; reference group: men with children; 90% Confidence Intervals, using stata-command contrast.

5.2. Claims-Making and the Gender Power Structure

Table 6 shows the interactions between our gender–parenthood combination and the gendered power structure which have been argued to strongly touch employees’ evaluation of being deserving for career advancements. We considered that an egalitarian gender structure in the organization might positively influence the legitimacy of women’s claims for career advancements. In our fifth hypothesis (H5), we supposed that the greater the proportion of women who work in management positions within the workplace, the more the gender gap in claims-making would decrease. However, the results did not support our assumption about the proportion of women in management, because the effects approached zero and were insignificant (see Table 6, model 1).

In our sixth hypothesis (H6), we further supposed that working under a female supervisor would increase the likelihood that women would make claims, when compared with men. The results of our analysis can be seen in Figure 3. We found that working under a female supervisor, women and men without children make more claims compared to men with children; however, having a female supervisor did not seem to result in more claims-making by mothers. Interestingly, the comparison of models 1 and 2 (excluding working hours) points towards a moderation of working hours when women work under a female supervisor. Once we exclude working hours from the model, the differences in claims-making between childless women and fathers become insignificant, indicating that women work more equal hours in comparison to men when they have a female supervisor and that the perceive claims making more legitimate. For childless men, the positive effect on claims-making is independent from their working hours. Our findings only partially support H6. Although working under a female supervisor increases the likelihood of childless women compared to men to increase their claims, this is not the case for mothers.

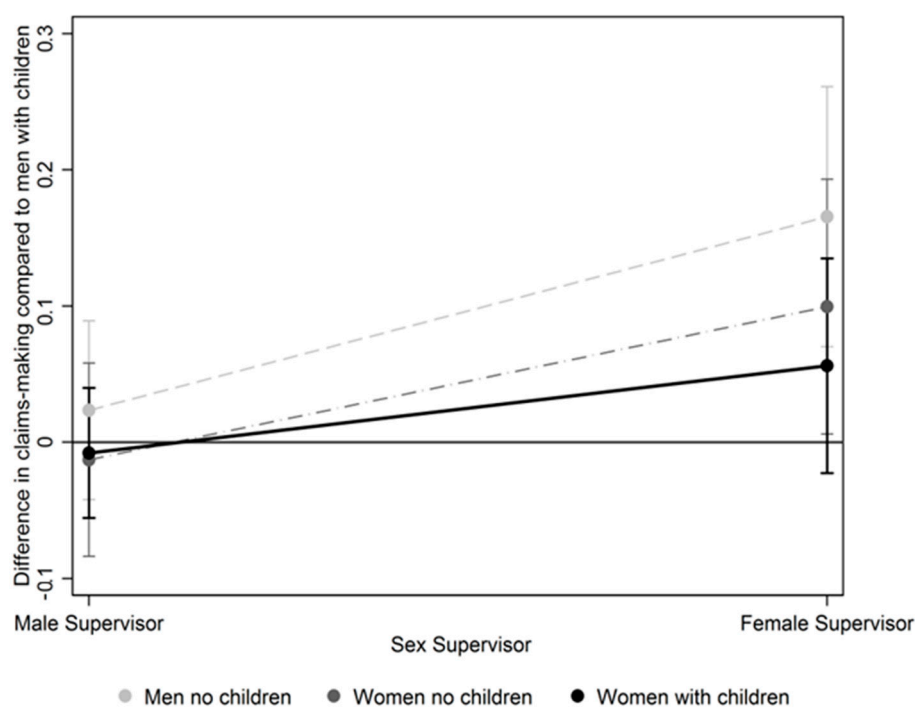


Figure 3. Gender differences in estimated values for claims-making according to supervisor’s gender. Note: Based on results model 1, Table 6. Figure shows interaction of supervisor-sex and family status; 90% Confidence Intervals, using stata-command contrast.

We assumed that working under a female supervisor increases female claims-making even more, when this is accompanied by a balanced gender structure in the workplace (H7). If we take a look at the three-way interaction term that included female supervisor \times the proportion of women working in management positions \times gender–parenthood, we do not find that women’s claims-making increases with an increase in the proportion of women holding a management position in the company (Table 7, model 1). However, comparing model 1 and 2, we find that mothers do make more claims, if we do not consider their working hours. This indicates that women working under a female supervisor in a gender-balanced work environment are more likely to pose claims even if they work fewer hours. However, the proportion of female employees in management positions ranged from 0 to 33.33% (see Table 3) of women holding a management position, whereas the mean was only about 2.06% of women in the workplace. Although the results support H7, our findings must be interpreted with caution, because there was only a small number of cases in which there was a high proportion of women in powerful positions.

5.3. Claims-Making and the Formalization of Human Resource Practices

Based on our theoretical argument, we supposed in our eighth hypothesis (H8) that the formalization of career planning in the workplace would positively influence women’s claims-making compared with men’s. However, our data did not support these assumptions (see Table 7, model 1). The results did, however, show a positive effect of performance evaluations on claims-making by women with children. Compared with receiving no evaluations, receiving performance evaluations from one’s supervisor had a more positive effect on women’s claims-making than on men’s (0.110 [$p < 0.05$]), causing the gender gap in claims-making between mothers and fathers to decrease in contexts where written performance evaluations were offered, as shown in Figure 4. This positive effect on women’s likelihood is rather steep. While women are less likely to make claims, compared to men, their likelihood even exceeds that of men in contexts where they receive a written evaluation of their performance (see Figure 4). Thus, our results support hypothesis 9 (H9).

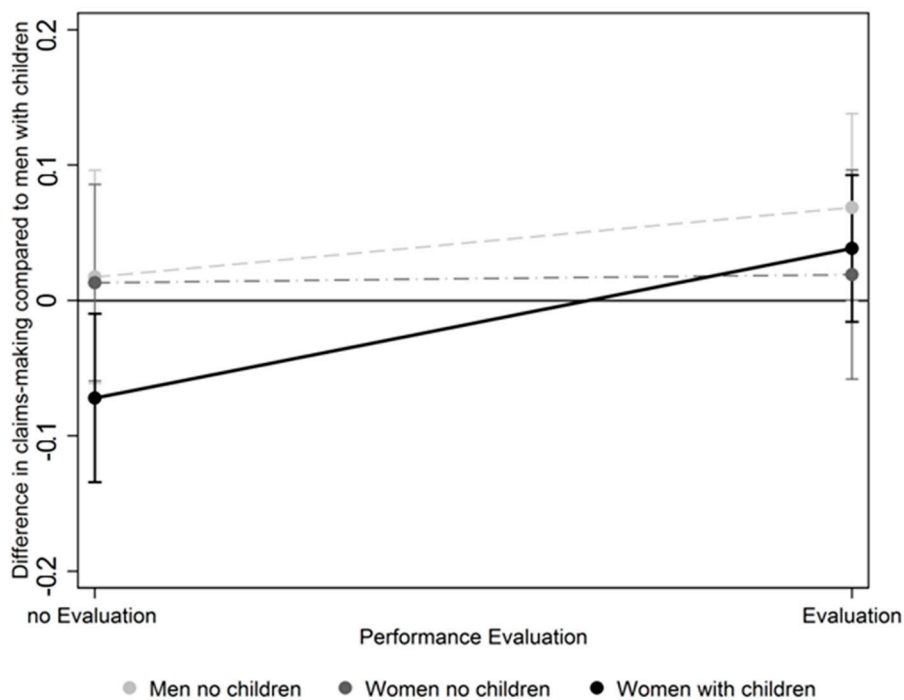


Figure 4. Gender differences in estimated values for claims-making according to performance evaluations in the workplace. Note: Based on results shown for model 1 in Table 7. The graph shows the interaction between performance evaluations and family status; reference group = men with children; 90% confidence intervals, using stata-command contrast.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Within the past few decades, the European Union has been concerned with fostering both gender equality and the reconciliation of work and private life with the goal of bringing more women into gainful employment and enabling them to attain economic independence. In addition, the labor market in Germany, which for many years was structured around the ideal worker norm (i.e., a worker who has few family obligations and prioritizes work) and a social policy system that fostered traditional family models, has experienced significant changes, with the result that its female labor force is constantly growing.

Our study was designed to investigate whether such political empowerment has led to an equalization of claims-making for career advancement between men and women with and without children within the German workplace, and whether gendered claims-making is strongly related to the workplace context in which such claims must be made (Tomaskovic-Devey 2014).

In keeping with relational inequality theory and the results of research on gender inequalities in the labor market (Acker 1990; Cha and Weeden 2014; Hodges and Budig 2010; Kossek et al. 2010), we argued that there are gender differences in whether or not claims for career advancements are considered legitimate and that they are driven by two evaluation processes: whether or not an employee considers to be able to work in a more demanding position and whether employees think they are deserving for career progress, based on their career investments. We argue that these processes are moderated by workplace contexts as the central site where such claims are made.

Our results are based on rich linked employer–employee data analyzed by means of linear probability models that included organizational fixed effects. We found that men without children were most likely to make claims for career advancement and women with children were least likely to do so, when organizational characteristics are not considered. In these models, men with children and women without children did not differ significantly in their claims-making. For both men and women, parenthood rendered claims-making less likely, which is especially interesting, because research on work gratification has revealed a fatherhood premium and a motherhood penalty (e.g.,

Killewald 2012; Hodges and Budig 2010; Correll et al. 2007; Gangl and Ziefle 2009). Despite of expected processes of opportunity hoarding job characteristic, such as occupational status, earnings and working on a regular contract, only explained a small part of the gender gap in claims-making. In line with RIT, which stresses the relevance of productivity metrics as accepted resources to legitimize claims, we however find that the described lower likelihood of women's claims-making can mainly be explained by differences in working hours (including overtime). Despite recent policy changes that aimed to achieve work–family balance, men and women seem to consider their working time as a relevant indicator of the legitimacy of claiming career progress. Doing part-time work (for mothers) seem to reflect their perceptions that such claims-making is less legitimate, because employees in higher-status jobs are expected to work full-time and even to work overtime—conditions that are difficult to meet when one has family responsibilities. These findings suggest that employees' perceived ability and perceived deservingness are both important when it comes to claims-making for career advancement. In addition, they point toward the persistent relevance of the ideal worker norm in Germany (Acker 1990; Cha and Weeden 2014; Hodges and Budig 2016; Kossek et al. 2010).

We can further conclude that the gender gap claims-making is related to work–life supportive supervisors and a highly demanding work culture. Women with children are less likely to make claims for career advancement if their workplace does not offer support for work–family reconciliation. However, when work–life support from one's supervisor is readily available, the gender gap in claims-making within workplaces vanishes. We did not find the same effect for mothers without children. It is possible that the support for work–life reconciliation is rather an informal and situation-based help that only becomes relevant once children are born. Women who do not have children might not pay as much emphasis on this workplace characteristic when considering career progress. In the same vein, a demanding work environment, characterized by a strong focus on reachability, long working hours and working under pressure, increases the gender differences in claims-making. Both women with and without children decrease claims-making, compared to men, when working in a highly demanding workplace. Thus, in addition to resources offered by the state, resources in the workplace and a culture that deviates from the ideal worker norm seem to be prerequisites for fostering gender equality in claims-making. This finding further supports the argument that women consider their ability to meet the requirements of higher-status jobs before they pose claims. Moreover, once the ideal worker norm is dispelled, especially mothers consider their claims to career progress to be legitimate, regardless of the number of hours they work. Our findings also point toward the relevance of receiving support from a powerful actor, instead of from colleagues. The data did not support our assumptions about the effects of structural work–life reconciliation measures in the workplace (e.g., the provision and use of flexible working hours or telework) on gender differences in claims-making. This is in line with previous research concerning flexible employment arrangements which shows that a flexible work schedule can also blur the lines between an employee's work life and private life, thus increasing work–life conflicts (e.g., Chung 2017a, 2017b; Kossek et al. 2010; Abendroth and Reimann 2018). The likelihood of posing claims decreased for women and men without children when they used telework. This indicates the evaluation of telework in terms of compensating differentials for childless men and women.

With regard to the gender power structure that we consider to be moderating employees' perceived deservingness for claims-making, we find that women did not make fewer claims, compared to men, in workplaces where men dominated in managerial positions or when they had a male supervisor. Interestingly, having a female supervisor increased the likelihood of claims-making by men and women without children. Our findings also suggest that, at the organizational level, mothers begin to consider women with children to hold high positions as legitimate only when the number of such women in the workplace is large and when it can be expected that a female supervisor will represent them in their quest for career progress. Still, within our sample, there were only a small number of women in such positions.

Lastly, we argued that formalized human resource practices and performance evaluations can serve as tools for women to confront stereotypes and discriminatory practices in the organization when they are not considered to be deserving, as perceived by others. Being armed with these objective indicators, women could then argue their deservingness in front of others when making claims for career advancement. However, our assumptions were only partly affirmed by the results of our analyses. The use of performance evaluations in the workplace facilitated mothers' claims-making, probably because they could prove the legitimacy of their claims. We did not find that formalized career planning shaped gendered claims-making.

Overall, our results did not paint the unified picture of women, compared to men, being supported or disadvantaged by certain workplace characteristics as we expected. Our individual level models, but also the interactions with organizational variables, showed that the gender gap in claims-making is mainly driven by mothers' lower likelihood to pose claims and that this is strongly related to their working hours. Especially when working in high-demanding workplaces, the gender gap in claims-making increases but working in an environment that is supportive of the reconciliation of work and private life is helping in narrowing that gap (for mothers), irrespective of actual working hours. The female power structure in the workplace also helps to increase mothers' claims-making, but only when having a female supervisor is accompanied by a balanced gender structure in management positions. We find evidence that the positive effect is driven by the provision of a work environment that allows mothers to increase their working hours. Hence, a balanced gender structure rather influences women's claims-making by enabling them to invest more in their career. Lastly, we find that mothers' claims-making can be supported by arming them with written performance evaluations in order to legitimize their claims for career advancements. Grounding claims for progress on objective indicators might increase women's feeling of deservingness for advancements. However, this finding also shows that mothers need to make claims in order to signal their ambitions for career progress, despite their family obligations. Contrasting to mothers' lower likelihood to pose claims, we did not find a gender gap in claims-making between men and childless women. However, working in a demanding workplace culture is likely to involve gender gaps in claims-making between men and childless women. This is supposedly caused by childless women anticipating difficulties in meeting expectations concerning working hours (or working overtime), in demanding work environments after family formation. The gender gap also widens when childless women use telework. This finding leads to the assumption that women consider telework as an alternative reward to career progress in the company, when not having children. We find the same effect for men without children.

Summarizing, in keeping with experimental research results ([Babcock et al. 2006](#); [Leibbrandt and List 2015](#); [Mazei et al. 2015](#); [Stuhlmacher and Linnaberry 2013](#)), our findings indicate that women in the workplace, especially mothers, tend to be less likely to negotiate for career advancement and that the likelihood, as well as the outcomes, of such negotiations is related to the workplace context.

It must be noted that our study also had some shortcomings. Based on our data, we were not able to truly differentiate the motivation for claims-making. We cannot say whether it is an expression of women needing to discuss career progress because they are otherwise overlooked or because they feel empowered to ask for advancements in the organization. Both considerations seem possible but have contrasting implications for women's position in the workplace. However, based on our findings, it seems plausible to assume that the structures and measures we integrated into our models are working for rather than against women and hence are supporting women's self-perception with regard to their careers. Furthermore, our results allow us to assume that workplaces shape women's likelihood to make claims. Future research based on longitudinal data is required to investigate the relationship between claims-making and career progress within the workplace. Our results point towards the relevance of breaking with the ideal worker norm in order to increase gender equality in claims-making. In addition, fostering the use of performance-based measures, separately from

ascriptive characteristics, might be a helpful tool for strengthening women’s position when posing claims for career progress.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Gender Gap in Claims-Making and Family-Friendliness of the Work Environment (results of logistic fixed-effects regressions).

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.745	(1.182)	0.594	(1.167)
	Women no Children	2.612 **	(0.980)	2.353 **	(0.966)
	Women with Children	0.757	(0.791)	0.328	(0.779)
IND	Supervisor Support	0.019	(0.062)	0.003	(0.062)
	IA: Supervisor Support ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.105	(0.119)	0.098	(0.119)
	Women no Children	−0.131	(0.120)	−0.117	(0.119)
Women with Children	0.193 *	(0.091)	0.188 *	(0.090)	
IND	Colleague Support	0.069	(0.055)	0.064	(0.054)
	IA: Colleague Support ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.048	(0.104)	0.076	(0.104)
	Women no Children	−0.046	(0.111)	−0.037	(0.111)
Women with Children	−0.096	(0.080)	−0.084	(0.079)	
ORG	Telework is offered ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.703*	(0.280)	−0.673 *	(0.280)
	Women no Children	−0.272	(0.311)	−0.272	(0.309)
Women with Children	−0.301	(0.241)	−0.328	(0.240)	
IND	Telework is used	0.066**	(0.212)	0.705 **	(0.211)
	Telework is used ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.004	(0.404)	0.032	(0.406)
	Women no Children	−0.881*	(0.378)	−0.902 *	(0.375)
Women with Children	−0.256	(0.297)	−0.324	(0.292)	
ORG	Flexible Working Hours offered ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.283	(0.953)	−0.368	(0.935)
	Women no Children	−0.598	(0.647)	−0.521	(0.633)
Women with Children	−0.263	(0.579)	−0.210	(0.571)	

Table A1. Cont.

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Flexible Working Hours Used	-0.029	(-0.147)	-0.074	(0.146)
	Flexible Working Hours Used ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	-0.073	(0.250)	-0.052	(0.249)
	Women no Children	-0.028	(0.283)	-0.014	(0.280)
	Women with Children	0.121	(0.216)	0.204	(0.208)
IND	High-Demand Culture	0.100 **	(0.030)	0.117 ***	(0.029)
	IA: High-Demand Culture ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	-0.015	(0.053)	-0.007	(0.0526)
	Women no Children	-0.116 *	(0.057)	-0.115 *	(0.057)
	Women with Children	-0.087*	(0.042)	-0.081*	(0.041)
Observations		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP 2012–2014; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Standard Error in parentheses; IND = individual level, ORG = organizational level, IA = interaction; controls include partnership status (single, couple, married), working hours, fixed-term employment, occupational status (ISCO), hourly wage, education level (CASMIN), tenure, relevance of career progress to employee, and qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma), employed in public or private sector × gender-family-status.

Table A2. Gender Gap in Claims-Making and Gendered Power Structure (results of logistic fixed-effects regressions).

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.227	(0.201)	0.178	(0.199)
	Women no Children	-0.014	(0.249)	-0.067	(0.246)
	Women with Children	0.018	(0.172)	-0.301*	(0.159)
ORG	IA: %-Women in Management ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.009	(0.023)	0.008	(0.023)
	Women no Children	-0.003	(0.037)	-0.009	(0.036)
	Women with Children	0.0047	(0.026)	0.011	(0.025)
IND	Female Supervisor	-0.261	(0.218)	-0.306	(0.217)
	IA: Female Supervisor ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	1.017 *	(0.394)	0.981 *	(0.062)
	Women no Children	0.577 *	(0.326)	0.555 *	(0.062)
	Women with Children	0.192	(0.260)	0.258	(0.258)
IND/ORG	% Women in Management ×				
	Female Supervisor ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	-0.063	(0.073)	-0.057	(0.072)
	Women no Children	0.018	(0.065)	0.027	(0.064)
	Women with Children	0.069	(0.053)	0.074	(0.053)
Observations		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP 2012–2014; * $p < 0.05$; Standard Error in parentheses; IND = individual level, ORG = organizational level, IA = interaction; controls include partnership status (single, couple, married), working hours, fixed-term employment, occupational status (ISCO), hourly wage, education level (CASMIN), tenure, relevance of career progress to employee, and qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma), employed in public or private sector × gender-family-status.

Table A3. Gender Gap in Claims-Making and Formalization of Human Resource Practices (results of logistic fixed-effects regressions).

		Model 1		Model 2	
IND	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.125	(0.266)	0.126	(0.264)
	Women no Children	0.086	(0.316)	0.002	(0.313)
	Women with Children	−0.353	(0.248)	−0.652**	(0.238)
ORG	Formalization of Career Plan 1 ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	−0.044	(0.271)	−0.061	(0.270)
	Women no Children	0.015	(0.311)	0.022	(0.308)
	Women with Children	0.300	(0.259)	0.396	(0.256)
	Formalization of Career Plan 2 ×	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.084	(0.286)	0.047	(0.284)
	Men no Children	0.019	(0.318)	0.033	(0.315)
Women no Children	−0.265	(0.250)	−0.152	(0.246)	
Women with Children	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)	
ORG	IA: Performance Evaluation ×				
	Men with Children (Ref.)	0.000	(.)	0.000	(.)
	Men no Children	0.279	(0.244)	0.224	(0.243)
	Women no Children	−0.013	(0.277)	−0.010	(0.275)
Women with Children	0.574*	(0.227)	0.500*	(0.225)	
Observations		3988		3988	

Source: Adapted from LEEP 2012–2014; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$; Standard Error in parentheses; IND = individual level, ORG = organizational level, IA = interaction; controls include partnership status (single, couple, married), working hours, fixed-term employment, occupational status (ISCO), hourly wage, education level (CASMIN), tenure, relevance of career progress to employee, and qualifications (vocational training or master craftsman diploma), employed in public or private sector × gender-family-status.

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