

# The wage penalty for motherhood: Evidence on discrimination from panel data and a survey experiment for Switzerland <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access full PDF online through Research Gate <sup>[2]</sup>

## Abstract

### BACKGROUND

Survey-based research finds a sizeable unexplained wage gap between mothers and nonmothers in affluent countries. The source of this wage gap is unclear: It can stem either from the unobserved effects of motherhood on productivity or from employer discrimination against mothers.

### OBJECTIVE

This paper opens the black box of the motherhood wage gap by directly measuring discrimination in Switzerland based on two complementary methods.

### METHODS

We first use two longitudinal population surveys to establish the size of the wage residual for motherhood. We then run a factorial survey experiment among HR managers (N=714) whom we asked to assign a starting wage to the résumés of fictitious job candidates.

### RESULTS

The population surveys show an unexplained wage penalty per child of 4% to 8%. The factorial survey experiment shows that recruiters assign wages to mothers that are 2% to 3% below those of nonmothers. The wage penalty is larger for younger mothers, 6% for ages 40 and less, but disappears for older mothers or mothers in a blue-collar occupation.

### Related link:

**Region:** Europe <sup>[3]</sup>

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