

Dear participant,

We are asking you to participate in a research study entitled “Parenting While Publishing in Europe: How Parenthood Policies and Support Networks Shape Career Paths in Academia” This study is being led by Dr. Lisette Espín-Noboa, postdoc at the Complexity Science Hub Vienna (CSH), and Central European University (CEU). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Fariba Karimi, Professor at Graz University of Technology and Team Lead at CSH. Learn more about our team on our project website: https://netin.csh.ac.at/parenthood_survey

Below is a summarized version of the consent form; for more detailed information on data collection, data privacy, and GDPR compliance, please refer to the [Appendix](#) (pages 4-6).

What the study is about

The project investigates the crucial intersection of academic careers and parenthood in the European context. It will analyze how family-oriented policies, both at institutional and national levels, either enable or constrain the career advancement of academic parents. Furthermore, the project will explore how parenthood itself influences academics' career trajectories, including decisions about job mobility, research output, and overall professional experiences. The project aims to identify specific policy areas and support structures that would promote a more inclusive and equitable academic landscape for parents.

What we will ask you to do

We will ask you to answer three types of questions: (1) demographics about yourself, your parents, your partner, and children (if applicable); (2) your views on current policies and inequalities in academia; (3) your experience as a postdoc/faculty in academia. The survey has no time constraint, thus, once you start, you can fill the form at your own pace. Nevertheless, we estimate a duration of approximately 18 minutes to finish the entire survey.

Why you were selected

You were selected to participate in this survey because you are a corresponding author of at least one scholarly paper published between 2010 and 2023 that is indexed by SCOPUS. Our study focuses on research trends within Europe, and your affiliation with a European institution during the time of publication makes your insights particularly valuable.

Risks and discomforts

The survey includes a question about whether you have considered leaving academia or have already left. You will be asked to briefly discuss your reasons for doing so or considering it. The intent of this question is to better understand the factors that influence decisions to leave academia, including the potential impact of parenthood. While this information is valuable to our research, we recognize that it might touch on sensitive experiences. Please feel free to share only as much as you are comfortable with, and please ensure you omit any identifying names or details of third parties to protect your privacy.

Benefits and incentives for participation

Your contribution to this survey is invaluable. The findings from this study have the potential to make a real difference. By sharing your experiences, you can help us shed light on the challenges faced by parents in academia, particularly regarding gender parity in higher positions. This research can inform policy briefs and influence institutional and government policies to bridge the gender gap in academia. Ultimately, our goal is to dismantle the stigma often attached to parenthood in academic careers. By understanding these challenges, we can work towards creating a more supportive environment that empowers current and future generations of scientists, both women and men, to pursue both fulfilling careers and families.

Privacy

In this survey, we will collect three types of data for each participant: (1) consent form (*this document*), (2) questionnaire responses, and (3) academic achievement and networks.

1. After accepting this consent form (also shown at the beginning of the survey), you can immediately proceed to the survey questionnaire.
2. The questionnaire will be anonymized from the beginning of the survey (i.e., we will not store any information in these questions that could potentially identify you). This means that you will have an anonymous ID which cannot be linked to your true identity.
3. The academic achievements and networks refer to your CV and publications. While this information is public (e.g., via digital libraries, or authors' websites) we will treat them anonymously to keep the questionnaire anonymous. We will provide three options that you can choose from to provide your networks:
 - a. **CV**: Where you can upload your CV as a PDF or WORD file.
 - b. **Online profile**: Where you can provide the link (or URL) of your preferred academic online profile, e.g., Google Scholar, ORCID, Research Gate, etc.
 - c. **Stats**: Where you can provide metrics such as your number of publications, number of citations, h-index, i10-index, number of unique collaborators, etc.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used. We cannot guarantee against interception of data sent via the internet by third parties. Only four members of this research team will have access to the data in either form: raw responses or aggregates.

Data security

The survey is being conducted with the help of the IT infrastructure of the Central European University (CEU). We anticipate that your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet.

Please note that email communication is neither private nor secure. Though we are taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should be aware that information sent through email could be read by a third party.

Sharing de-identified data collected in this research

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance science. We will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are

shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Taking part is voluntary

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate before the study, discontinue at any time, or skip the optional questions with no penalty to you. Note that if you choose to “discontinue at any time,” we will not consider any of your responses for the study.

If you have questions

The main researcher conducting this study is Lisette Espín-Noboa, a postdoc at the Complexity Science Hub Vienna, and Central European University. Should you have any questions, please contact Dr. Espín-Noboa at espin@csh.ac.at.

By clicking on “I have read and understood the consent form and given my permission to participate in this study” in the main survey, you will be giving us your consent to be part of this study, and will be able to continue the survey. By not clicking the above mentioned button, you will not be contacted again for this study. If you take no action, we will send you a reminder via email after two weeks.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Appendix

Survey Platform

We utilize Qualtrics through an academic license offered to CEU. Qualtrics is a platform provided by the affiliation of Dr. Espín-Noboa. This platform serves dual purposes: designing and collecting survey responses, and sending bulk email invitations for the surveys. The data stored in Qualtrics-CEU are hosted in a datacenter located in Frankfurt, Germany.

Target Population

The surveys target corresponding authors of papers indexed by SCOPUS and published between 2010 and 2023. In this project, we target around 1 million scientists in Europe.

Through an agreement between SCOPUS and GESIS - The Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, GESIS has access to the *corresponding authors'* information, including their names, emails, and countries of affiliation. According to ELSEVIER, corresponding authors play a critical role in the manuscript submission process and are often senior researchers or group leaders. SCOPUS is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, trusted abstract and citation database offered as a product by ELSEVIER, a major scientific publisher. Dr. Espín-Noboa is entitled to use this data as she is a visiting researcher at GESIS until 31.12.2024 or the conclusion of this project.

Corresponding authors implicitly consent to being contacted by voluntarily making their email address public in their role as corresponding author in scientific publications. We are contacting corresponding authors whose responsibility includes providing timely responses to queries related to their manuscripts, such as individual approaches, letters to the editor, and requests for data sharing [1]. Moreover, corresponding authors are often invited to provide peer reviews for manuscripts on similar research topics [1]; thus, reaching out to them through this survey is essential for gathering insights and feedback on *career paths in academia with or without kids*. Importantly, most questions are optional, allowing respondents to skip them or terminate the survey at any time.

“Unsolicited” Emails

We adhere to Austrian law in all aspects of our work. In compliance with the legal requirements for sending emails, we have followed the guidelines provided by the Chamber of Commerce of Austria. The Chamber states: *“Beispiel: Ohne Einwilligung versendet werden können daher zum Beispiel E-Mails zu Zwecken der bloßen Meinungsforschung ohne jeden Werbecharakter.”* (translated into English: *“Example: Without consent one can send, for example, emails purely for the purpose of opinion research without any advertising character.”*) cited from “E-Mails versenden – aber richtig” section “2. Was versteht das Gesetz unter Direktwerbung?” [2].

It is important to emphasize that our emails are intended to invite researchers to participate in a survey on career paths in academia. Responses will be analyzed exclusively for *research purposes*. Participants can unsubscribe from future communications at any time. Consent for participation is required and will be requested on the first page of the survey, accessible via the URL in the invitation email.

Data Protection

We recognize the rights of all authors not to be contacted and to opt-out of these surveys at any time, starting from the “unsubscribe” link provided in the invitation email, and by not giving consent on the first page of the survey. Corresponding authors who unsubscribe will not be contacted again regarding this survey. Additionally, authors can request via email to be completely removed from the Qualtrics-CEU database. All emails will be deleted from Qualtrics-CEU and CSH servers after the study's publication.

Data Privacy

This project ensures anonymity, however, it may request academic data such as publications or CVs, but respondents can choose to ignore these questions or provide anonymized data. We will anonymize all academic data provided by the respondents and handle it with the utmost care and responsibility, ensuring it is used solely for relevant research questions without linking it to real identities.

GDPR Compliance

Our data collection is in strict accordance with the seven principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):

1. **Lawfulness, Fairness, and Transparency:** The processing of data is lawful, fair, and transparent to each respondent. GESIS has legal access to the corresponding author information through an agreement with SCOPUS by ELSEVIER.
2. **Purpose Limitation:** The corresponding emails will be used solely for the duration of this project. The collected emails are only used to invite scientists to participate in the survey. Specifically, around 1 million people in Europe will receive invitations for this survey.
3. **Data Minimization:** We collect only the necessary data, which includes the email, and country of affiliation of the targeted participant. The email is used to send the invitations, and the country of affiliation ensures invitations are sent based on the recipient's time zone, ensuring delivery in the morning according to their local time.
4. **Accuracy:** Data accuracy for “corresponding authors” is the responsibility of SCOPUS, which parses and verifies the information before sharing it with GESIS. Respondents are responsible for the accuracy of their survey responses.
5. **Storage Limitation:** The list of corresponding authors will be deleted after the completion of this study. The responses to the surveys, which will be anonymized and contain no personal identifiers, may be shared for scientific purposes.
6. **Integrity and Confidentiality:** All data will be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate confidentiality, anonymity, integrity, and security.
7. **Accountability:** We, the authors of these projects, are responsible for demonstrating compliance with all the above principles, ensuring the protection and privacy of the respondents' data throughout the research process.

Conclusion

We are committed to maintaining transparency, ethical standards, and data privacy in our research. This project aims to contribute valuable insights into academic career advancement, especially for parents, supporting the broader goals of reducing inequalities and promoting well-being in academia.

References

- [1] Birnbaum, Y., Kitakaze, M., Grieve, D., & Uretsky, B. F. (2023). Who Should Be the Corresponding Author, What Are Their Responsibilities, and What Email Address Should They Provide?. *Cardiovascular Drugs and Therapy*, 37(6), 1039-1040.
- [2] Wirtschaftskammer Österreich. E-Mails versenden – aber richtig. <https://www.wko.at/internetrecht/e-mails-versenden--aber-richtig>.