



Navigating Gendered Work-Family Boundaries to Rebalance Care: Challenges and Effects for Working Men

PhD programme in Business and Territorial Competitiveness,
Innovation and Sustainability

Deusto Business School

Bilbao, June 2024

Doctoral Candidate:

Jon Pizarro Pérez

Doctoral supervisor:

Leire Gartzia Fernández, PhD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A lo largo de estos cinco años, han sido muchas las personas que me han acompañado en este proceso, haciendo que las caídas fueran más ligeras y los momentos buenos aún mejores. A todas, que con su apoyo y ánimo incondicional han sido parte fundamental de este viaje. Su amistad, comprensión y aliento han sido clave para mantenerme firme en los momentos difíciles y para celebrar juntos los éxitos y avances. Gracias por estar siempre ahí, por creer en mí y por hacer de esta etapa una experiencia inolvidable en mi vida académica.

En primer lugar, quisiera agradecer a mi directora de tesis, Leire Gartzia, la oportunidad que me ha dado de adentrarme en el mundo de la investigación, haciéndome partícipe de proyectos, ideas y actividades que iban más allá del doctorado, pero que han supuesto la apertura de grandes oportunidades.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof. Anne Laure Humbert, for hosting me in Oxford and being always there to provide insightful advices for my research career. Staying at your University not only introduced me to fresh ideas and a vibrant and new culture but also served as the first step in my international research career.

Al equipo del proyecto GEARING-Roles, y en especial a su IP María Silvestre y a María López, por permitirme participar en este proyecto que ha supuesto el impulso definitivo a mi propio proyecto de investigación doctoral.

Al Departamento de Educación del Gobierno Vasco, por hacerme beneficiario del *Programa Predoctoral de Formación del Personal Investigador no Doctor*, y darme el apoyo económico que me ha permitido dedicarme a la investigación a tiempo completo.

A Iñaki Peña, por sus consejos sobre el proceso doctoral y permitirme formar parte del equipo de investigación ICES, animándome siempre a desarrollar una buena carrera investigadora y darme consejos para ello.

No puedo dejar de mencionar a Josune Baniandrés, por apostar por mi desde el principio y ver en mi un potencial del que yo mismo no era consciente, y por cuidarme a lo largo de toda mi vida en la universidad.

A pesar de que la tesis doctoral es un proceso bastante solitario, he tenido la suerte de cruzarme con grandes personas que me han rescatado de la soledad. Mis compañeros de la universidad, con sus cafés, momentos, comidas... hacen que los días en la universidad sean mucho mejores. En concreto, Ane, Ciara, Edriga, Marta y Natalia han sido (y siguen siendo) grandes apoyos en el día a día. También quiero agradecer a todos los doctorandos con los que

he compartido este proceso, sus penas y alegrías, despachos y cafés. En especial a Marta, Fernanda y Juan Carlos.

En el plano personal, también son muchas las personas que se merecen este agradecimiento. A Elixabete y Miriam, porque aun estando físicamente lejos, siempre las he sentido a mi lado, preocupándose por cómo iba el proceso y cuidando la amistad que nació en la universidad hace ya diez años con nuestros viajes, cortos pero enormemente reparadores.

También quiero agradecer a mis padres, el transmitirme el valor del trabajo duro y apoyarme en cada uno de los pasos que he dado en mi vida. A Xabi, por su interés sincero en mi trabajo, y su apoyo. Porque a pesar de pasar menos tiempo juntos, estamos más cerca que nunca.

No puedo olvidarme de la ilusión con la que mi abuelo vivió el principio de esta tesis doctoral. Estoy seguro que hoy estaría igualmente feliz por ver el final del camino. A mi abuela, por el entusiasmo que me transmite por cada uno de mis pasos. Su amor y sabiduría me han guiado y estoy seguro de que continuarán haciéndolo. Tampoco quiero olvidarme del resto de mi familia, tíos y primos, así como de mi familia política, que siempre han tenido palabras de ánimo e interés.

Finalmente, a Íñigo. Por estar ahí, día tras día, animándome a seguir hasta cuando yo no quería hacerlo. Has tenido la generosidad de soportar momentos de mal carácter, dejar planes de lado para acompañarme en el proceso y siempre tener una palabra de aliento e infinitos gestos de cariño. Porque llegaste en los primeros meses del doctorado para construir lo mejor que tenemos juntos. Gracias.

ABSTRACT

Despite regulatory efforts and public policies aimed at promoting gender equality and rebalancing work-life balance with measures directed to both women and men, the reality shows that gender differences in the use of such measures still persist, with women continuing to bear greater caregiving responsibilities. This doctoral thesis aims to address these challenges by analysing two key elements to understand and promote working men's participation in domestic responsibilities: antecedents and effects of paternity leave and effects of organizational biases about men's domestic needs at work.

Throughout this doctoral research, two studies are presented that seek to shed light on the determinants and effects of each of these relevant domains of work-life balance from a gender perspective. The first study provides a systematic review of research on paternity leave, organizing it conceptually and identifying potential areas for development. Results point to paternity leave as a relevant yet unresearched work-life balance domain determined by a combination of macro, meso and micro level factors and with critical effects not only for gender equality but also for health, family and organizational outcomes. The second study empirically analyses whether and how organizational biases towards men's domestic needs affect several responses at work. In particular, it is demonstrated that biases about men's limited domestic needs occur both at cultural and supervisory levels and such biases influence work-family conflict and subsequent job attitudes for both female and male employees. The results of this research reveal the need to redefine work-family balance policies and approaches from a critical gender perspective that better understands antecedents and effects of men's domestic experiences and assess their complex effects at work and beyond.

Keywords: paternity leaves; organizational support; work-family balance; systematic literature review.

RESUMEN

A pesar de los esfuerzos regulatorios y las políticas públicas destinadas a promover la igualdad de género y reequilibrar la vida laboral y personal con medidas dirigidas tanto a mujeres como a hombres, la realidad muestra que las diferencias de género en el uso de tales medidas aún persisten, con las mujeres continuando asumiendo mayores responsabilidades de cuidado. Esta tesis doctoral tiene como objetivo abordar estos desafíos mediante el análisis de dos elementos clave para entender y promover la participación de los hombres en las responsabilidades domésticas: los antecedentes y efectos del permiso de paternidad y los efectos de los sesgos organizacionales sobre las necesidades domésticas de los hombres en el trabajo.

A lo largo de esta investigación doctoral, se presentan dos estudios que buscan arrojar luz sobre los determinantes y efectos de cada uno de estos ámbitos relevantes del equilibrio entre trabajo y vida desde una perspectiva de género. El primer estudio proporciona una revisión sistemática de la investigación sobre el permiso de paternidad, organizándola conceptualmente e identificando áreas potenciales de desarrollo. Los resultados señalan que el permiso de paternidad es un dominio relevante pero poco investigado del equilibrio entre trabajo y vida determinado por una combinación de factores a nivel macro, meso y micro, y con efectos críticos no solo para la igualdad de género, sino también para la salud, la familia y los resultados organizacionales. El segundo estudio analiza empíricamente si los sesgos organizacionales hacia las necesidades domésticas de los hombres afectan diversas respuestas en el trabajo. En particular, se demuestra que los sesgos sobre las limitadas necesidades domésticas de los hombres ocurren tanto a nivel cultural como de supervisión y dichos sesgos influyen en el conflicto trabajo-familia y las actitudes laborales subsecuentes tanto de empleadas como de empleados. Los resultados de esta investigación revelan la necesidad de redefinir las políticas y enfoques de equilibrio trabajo-familia desde una perspectiva crítica de género que comprenda mejor los antecedentes y efectos de las experiencias domésticas de los hombres y evalúe sus complejos efectos en el trabajo y más allá.

Palabras clave: permisos de paternidad; apoyo de la organización; conciliación trabajo-familia; revisión sistemática de la literatura.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Term
HR	Human Resources
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WFB	Work-Family Balance
WFC	Work-Family Conflict
WFE	Work-Family Enrichment
WNW	Work-Nonwork

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation comprises two studies on the work-family experiences of working men, including an analysis of their antecedents and effects at work. Derived from the need to further investigate work-family balance particularly in relation to working men, in Chapter 1 we embark upon an exploration of the relevance of work-family balance in today's organizations, with a particular focus on pending challenges regarding men's involvement in caring and domestic work. This approach fills a gap in previous organizational research focused mainly on women's experiences, seeking to unravel the intricate dynamics surrounding men's growing role in work-family dimensions and needs at work.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework and hypotheses to try to understand two specific areas of study in this domain: 1) men's use of paternity leaves as a special form of work-family balance, and 2) organizational biases towards men's need to balance work and family life. By focusing on paternity leave and both its antecedents and consequences, the first study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of this pivotal aspect of contemporary work arrangements. By exploring implicit gendered biases from one's direct supervisor vs. broader organizational cultural values about men's limited domestic needs, Study 2 analyses a previously unexplored area, endeavouring to discern the differential role played by several organizational elements in shaping employees' responses in the organization (i.e., experiences of work-family conflict and subsequent satisfaction levels at work). This approach serves to elucidate the broader implications of gendered biases for organizational attitudes and outcomes of employees. To be inclusive in scope, the empirical approach is addressed for both women and men employees, controlling for potential effects of the gender variable.

The landscape we navigate in the methodological chapter is one characterized by an exigent call for research that delves into the multifaceted intricacies of work-family balance. Our research approach aligns with this imperative, as we set out to untangle the complexities inherent in paternity leave and broader work-family balance research, examining its impact on individuals, families, and organizations. In relation to paternity leave, we aspire to shed light on the intricate interplay between organizational structures, cultural norms, and individual experiences, thereby elucidating the macro, meso and micro mechanisms that underpin paternity leave decisions in contemporary workplaces. To do so, a systematic analysis of the literature is performed to provide an overarching conceptual framework to understand this unresearched area of study. In relation to organizational biases, which represents a more established field, a more conventional field study empirical approach is used to understand how supervisor vs. cultural biases in relation to men's needs to balance their family and work responsibilities shape both men's and women's responses, incorporating a multi-level approach.

Finally, a general discussion of the most relevant findings, focusing on theoretical and practical implications is provided. This section not only addresses empirical gaps but also advances theoretical understandings, thereby enriching scholarly discourse and informing evidence-based interventions. Central to our effort is the recognition of the empirical and theoretical significance of the research to the previous work-family balance and gender literatures. By grounding our inquiry in both empirical data and theoretical frameworks focused on men and work-family balance, we aim to contribute substantively to the existing body of literature in these fields. Through rigorous analysis and meticulous inquiry, we attempt to offer insights that resonate with both academic rigor and practical relevance, fostering a deeper understanding of work-family balance dynamics from a novel gender perspective and paving the way for meaningful organizational change.

1.1. The Importance of Work-family Balance

Work-family balance refers to the equilibrium individuals seek between their professional responsibilities and personal well-being (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It encompasses the allocation of time and energy to work-related tasks as well as activities outside of work, such as family, leisure, and self-care. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, achieving work-family balance has become increasingly crucial for maintaining overall health, satisfaction, and productivity (Kossek et al. 2023). It is recognized for its profound implications not only on individuals but also on organizations and society as a whole.

At the core of the work-family balance discourse lies the fundamental importance of preserving one's physical, mental, and emotional health. A balanced lifestyle enables individuals to effectively manage stress, prevent burnout, and mitigate the risk of mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Research consistently demonstrates the detrimental effects of prolonged work-related stress on both physical and mental health, underscoring the critical need for boundaries between work and personal life (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2023).

Contrary to conventional wisdom, incessant work does not necessarily equate to greater productivity (Hildenbrand et al., 2023). In fact, numerous studies have highlighted the diminishing returns associated with prolonged working hours, indicating that productivity declines as fatigue and burnout set in (Lee & Shin, 2023; Lin et al., 2022). On the other hand, a well-balanced lifestyle enables individuals to recharge one's energy, resulting in improved focus, creativity, and efficiency during working hours (Susanto et al., 2022).

One of the most significant benefits of work-family balance is its positive impact on relationships and social connections. Strong social connections have been linked to numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of chronic diseases, improved immune function, and enhanced longevity. Thus, prioritizing time for social activities and leisure pursuits is not merely a luxury but a critical investment in one's holistic well-being (Haar & Brougham, 2022). From this perspective, it is understood that meaningful interactions with family, friends, and community foster a sense of belonging and support, buffering individuals against the stresses of work life. By allocating time and energy to nurture these relationships, individuals cultivate a robust support network, enhancing their resilience and overall satisfaction with life (Muse et al. 2008; Jung et al., 2024).

Importantly to organizational behaviour concerns, work-family balance is not only an individual concern but also a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to attract and retain top talent (Banik et al., 2021; Susanto et al., 2022). In today's competitive labour market, employees place a premium on employers who demonstrate a commitment to employee well-being and work-family balance initiatives (Shockley, 2017). Organizations that prioritize flexibility, remote work options, and supportive policies enjoy a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining skilled professionals (Lamane-Harim et al., 2023). Moreover, a positive work-family balance culture contributes to higher employee morale, lower turnover rates, and increased loyalty (Hildenbrand et al., 2023). By fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, organizations cultivate a sense of belonging and engagement among employees, resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Kossek et al., 2023; Bocean et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also significantly intensified the importance of work-family balance as the boundaries between work and personal life have become increasingly blurred (Chan & Tai, 2022). With remote work becoming the new norm for many, the physical separation between the office and home vanished, making it challenging to switch off from work and fully engage in personal activities (Bocean et al. 2023; Alfano et al., 2023). This constant connectivity has led to longer work hours, increased stress levels, and heightened burnout risks. As a result, individuals are increasingly prioritizing work-family balance to maintain their mental and physical well-being (Vyas, 2022; Elbaz et al., 2022). Employers are also recognizing the significance of supporting their employees in achieving balance, implementing flexible work arrangements, promoting mental health initiatives, and encouraging regular breaks (Atkinson, 2022). Indeed, fostering a culture of work-family balance within organizations enhances employee engagement and commitment, driving performance and innovation (Wayne et al.,

2017). Employees who feel supported in managing their work and personal responsibilities are more likely to demonstrate discretionary effort, contributing their best work to the organization's mission and objectives (Yildiz, 2022).

All in all, work-family balance is a multifaceted concept with far-reaching implications for individuals, organizations, and society. As we continue to adapt to evolving work dynamics, the emphasis on work-family balance will remain paramount in ensuring the holistic health and productivity of individuals and the sustainability of organizations (Adisa et al., 2022). By prioritizing health and well-being, enhancing productivity and performance, nurturing relationships and social connections, fostering a positive organizational culture, and promoting societal well-being, work-family balance emerges as a cornerstone of a thriving and sustainable future. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, it is widely recognized the importance of achieving harmony between work and personal life, striving to create environments that empower individuals to live fulfilling and purposeful lives.

1.1.1. Evolution of Work-Family Balance Research

Through the history of work-family balance as a discipline, a number of theories have been proposed in seeking to explain the phenomenon and understand its basic components, antecedents and consequences. Before the 1970s, 'work' and 'family' were perceived as mutually exclusive domains but Kanter (1977) emphasized the fundamental interconnectedness of the two by highlighting how work affects the family and vice versa. Along the same lines, Pleck (1995) defined what he termed as spillover as a phenomenon where work role affects the family role and contrariwise. He further stated, in the same study, that women experience spillover from family to work whereas men experience it from work to family.

Originally proposed by Wilensky (1960), spillover model is based on the notion that there is an 'extension' of experiences from the sphere of work to non-work in a way that the perception of the social experience of the spheres of work and non-work for an individual is effectively boundary-less (Parker, 1971). Theoretically, spillover has been characterized as - Negative Spillover and Positive Spillover, being the latter approach more recently developed. The negative approach defends that the relationship between work and non-work spheres is inverse and antithetical (Staines, 1980). Positive spillover, in contrast, refers to the fact that positive experiences in one domain result in fulfilment and attainment in another domain (Kumar & Janakiram, 2017).

In describing conflict, Greenhaus & Beutell came up with conflict theory which states that the aspects of work and life are contrasting in nature and in demanding effort and time these two aspects compete for an individual's attention. They define work-family conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures of the role from the work and family domains are mutually inharmonious in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p.77). That is, taking part in the one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other role. In particular, Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) differentiate between three types of conflict: time-based conflict, stress-based conflict and behaviour-based conflict. Time-based conflict occurs because of limited time which makes it difficult to manage effectively the demands of different roles. Long working hours, irregular shift work and work time not being flexible have been pointed out to being the source of the time-based work-family conflict. Strain based conflict arises from psychological demand of work, interaction fatigue and job burnout. Behaviour-based conflict arises from a situation when work demands exhibiting behaviours which may not be conducive to a family role and switching between the two roles can be a source of conflict (Roy, 2016).

In response to criticisms of the initial attempt to conceptualize the relationship between work and family domains, other theoretical frameworks emerged, seeking to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive analysis of the underlying dynamics. Particularly noteworthy is Staines' (1980) exploration of this relationship through the lens of compensation theory. According to this theoretical perspective, individuals seek to address deficiencies in one aspect of life—whether it be professional or familial—by allocating greater resources to the other, thus striving to achieve a balance between the two domains. The compensation has been described as a negative relationship between work and family. It has been termed as negative because negative experiences in one domain result in perception of the other domain positively. According to Edwards & Rothbard (2000), two forms of compensation are known. The first one is characterized by decreasing participation in the dissatisfying aspect of life and increased participation in a satisfying domain. Alternatively, a person may respond to dissatisfaction in one domain by pursuing rewards in another. Rewards being those experiences that fulfil individuals' desires which may further enhance his/her satisfaction.

Concurrently with Greenhaus & Beutell's understanding of the work-family relationship as a conflict, Boundary theory (Nippert-Eng, 1996) emphasizes on the ways that workers create, preserve and alter boundaries so that they may simplify and classify the world that they experience (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000), seeking to find and assign meaning to work and home and ease the transition between the two. Boundary theory posits that there are psychological, physical and/or behavioural boundaries existing between the work and non- work

aspects of individual's life which outline the two domains as being different and distinct from each other (Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014). Further developments of this theory posit that the individuals manage and negotiate the work and non-work domains in a way so that a balance may be attained between them (Clark, 2000). This idea assumes that 'work' and 'non-work' are two separate domains but that they affect each other. The border theory views this relationship between the domains on a continuum which ranges from segmentation to integration, such that on the pole of segmentation the two domains are mutually exclusive and on the pole of integration the two may be conceived as identical (Voydanoff, 2005).

The dialectic of segmentation and integration is further analysed by determining the permeability and flexibility of the boundaries between the two domains. Flexibility signifies the malleability of the borders between the two domains and permeability deals with as to what extent the boundaries allow psychical or behavioural elements to pass from one domain into another (Saarenpää, 2016). The flexibility of the boundaries is seen in the policies like flexitime, job-sharing, part-time work and telecommuting (Cowan & Hoffman, 2007). In having described the boundaries according to permeability and flexibility, Clark (2000) asserts that the boundaries could be strong (impermeable and inflexible) to weak (flexible and blended), suggesting that the individuals accordingly can be characterized as 'border crossers' and 'border keepers'. Individuals are generally seen to be border-crossers who manage and negotiate the domains of work and family.

For most of its history work-family balance studies were dominated by conflict-oriented perspectives. Research has also led to the fact that the relationship of conflict that work and life have is bidirectional. That is, the domain of work can interfere with the domain of non-work and non-work can interfere with the work (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Both of the aforementioned conflicts have a negative effect on work and family domains (Adams, King, & King, 1996). However, in contemporary studies researchers have also started to look into the potential symbiotic relationship between work and life. For instance, enrichment theory was developed by Powell & Greenhaus (2006) in order to analyse the phenomenon of enrichment processes that link work to family and family to work. They define enrichment as a process that occurs when experience in one role improves the quality of life in another role. Alternatively, it can also be defined accumulation of psychological resources in a given role that are spilt over into another role (Carlson et al., 2011).

Enrichment models have been posited to be bidirectional as both family- to-work enrichment (when workers transfer positive behaviour and emotions from family to work

domain) and work-to-family enrichment (when workers transfer positive behaviour and emotions from work to family domain) have been shown to occur by researchers. Powell & Eddleston (2011) added family derived enrichment to the mix. Family derived enrichment occurs when the family members of worker support and assist him/her in work. In the same positive vein, Grzywacz (2002) explains that facilitation occurs when resources linked with one role improve or make easier partaking in the other role (Voydanoff, 2004a). It is the extent to which participation in a role leads to experiences, learning of skills, gaining opportunities which make participation easier in another role.

From a theoretical standpoint, in sum, early scholarly investigations predominantly focused on delineating the concept of work-family conflict, which highlights the discordant interaction between professional and familial responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964). Later on, the notion of work-family enrichment has garnered substantial scholarly attention in recent times, encapsulating the various benefits stemming from active involvement in multiple roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Despite the growing recognition of the positive aspects of the work-family interface, it remains paramount to acknowledge that the emphasis on work-family enrichment does not diminish the significance or relevance of investigating work-family conflict. While the exploration of enriching experiences in balancing work and family roles is valuable, it's equally important to continue studying the challenges, tensions, and struggles individuals encounter when navigating their professional and familial responsibilities.

1.1.2. Multi-faceted and Multilevel Predictors and Outcomes of Work-Family Balance

To comprehensively navigate the work-family balance literature stream and provide theoretical and analytical insights, researchers have tried to identify the most relevant predictors and outcomes. Thus, building upon the theories outlined earlier, researchers have primarily focused on two main goals to understand psychological factors involved in work-family balance. First, they aim to identify the factors predicting work-family balance and, second, they seek to understand the consequences that emerge from the experience of work-family balance in individuals' lives. To do so, researchers have generally organized the diverse thematic areas of analysis into two overarching dimensions: antecedents and effects. This classification, commonly utilized more broadly in content-analytic reviews in the organizational behaviour discipline, allows for a structured examination of the intricate interplay between various factors influencing organizational behaviour. Such an approach has been highlighted in studies such as those conducted by Schilke, Hu, and Helfat (2018) and Hassan et al. (2022), facilitating a deep understanding of the multifaceted dynamics within organizational settings.

In the work-family domain, the concept of work-family conflict has received extensive examination compared to alternative inter-role constructs such as work-family enrichment or the broader concept of work-family balance. Thus, analyses of its antecedents and effects are also common in the literature, with several meta-analyses aimed primarily at identifying consistent predictors and outcomes of work-family conflict (for example, Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton (2000) and Michel et al. (2011) identified in particular various factors contributing to work-to-family conflict. These include work role stressors (such as job stressors, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and time demands), work role involvement (involving job involvement and work interest/centrality), work social support (including organizational support, supervisor support, and co-worker support), work characteristics (such as task variety, job autonomy, and family-friendly organization policies), and personality traits (including internal locus of control and negative affect/neuroticism). Conversely, family-to-work conflict is influenced by factors like family role stressors (such as family stressors, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, time demands, parental demands, and the number of children/dependents), family social support (encompassing family and spousal support), family characteristics (like family climate), and personality traits (including internal locus of control and negative affect/neuroticism).

Subsequently, the focus also shifted towards evaluating cross-domain models concerning work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict (for example, Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007). Extensive research has also delved into the ramifications of work-family conflict, revealing a spectrum of adverse outcomes. Among these consequences are a decline in overall health, as evidenced by studies conducted by Frone, Russell, & Cooper (1997), which link work-family conflict to poor health outcomes. Additionally, work-family conflict has been associated with mental health issues such as depression and hypertension, as highlighted by Thomas & Ganster (1995). Furthermore, Haynes (1984) found correlations between work-family conflict and an increased risk of developing coronary heart diseases, underscoring the profound impact on cardiovascular health. Gender-specific research conducted by Burley (1995) has also identified male-related physical problems as being influenced by work-family conflict, further emphasizing the gendered dimensions of these health implications. Moreover, psychological distress, manifesting as anxiety and irritability, has been identified as a common consequence of work-family conflict, as documented by Hertz (1986) and other scholars.

The effects of work-family conflict extend beyond the individual and permeate various aspects of the workplace environment. Organizational productivity and effectiveness can be significantly impacted by employees experiencing work-family conflict. Reduced job satisfaction,

lower morale, and increased turnover rates are common consequences observed in workplaces where employees struggle to balance their work and family responsibilities. This can result in decreased employee engagement and commitment to organizational goals (Grzywacz & Butler, 2008; Kossek & Lee, 2017). Moreover, work-family conflict can impede career advancement and professional development opportunities for affected employees. Difficulty in managing work and family responsibilities may lead to decreased performance, missed deadlines, and increased absenteeism or presenteeism, ultimately hindering individual career progression and organizational success (Shockley et al., 2017; French et al., 2018). Additionally, work-family conflict can create challenges in team dynamics and interpersonal relationships within the workplace. Increased stress and tension among colleagues may diminish collaboration, communication, and overall team effectiveness. This can further exacerbate work-related stressors and contribute to a negative organizational culture (Chung et al., 2018)

The concept of work-family enrichment has also been primarily analysed as both a dependent and independent variable. First, as a dependent variable, it has been observed that various family-related factors such as family involvement, marital role, and family cohesion can predict the level of experienced work-family enrichment by individuals (Allis & O'Driscoll, 2008; Graves, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 2007; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006). Similarly, occupational factors such as work involvement (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005), as well as the variety, complexity, and autonomy of work (Grzywacz & Butler, 2005), can influence work-family enrichment. Additionally, personality also plays an important role in work-family enrichment, with extraversion, self-esteem, and a secure attachment style predicting enrichment in both directions (Grzywacz & Butler, 2005; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Wayne et al., 2006; Westring & Ryan, 2010). Finally, similar to work-family conflict, various interpersonal and organizational factors influence perceptions of enrichment, such as social support including support from peers, supervisors, family members, as well as community and friends (Korabic & Warner, 2009; Kelly et al., 2008; Wayne et al., 2006; Voydanoff, 2004).

Researchers have also identified numerous beneficial outcomes associated with the effective integration of work and family responsibilities. McNall et al. (2010) delineated three primary categories of favourable consequences: firstly, within the realm of employment, including heightened job satisfaction, enhanced affective commitment, and reduced turnover intentions; secondly, extending beyond the workplace to encompass broader life domains such as overall life satisfaction and familial contentment; and thirdly, encompassing health-related advantages such as improved mental and physical well-being, alongside enhanced stress coping mechanisms. The conceptualization of multiple roles as advantageous is grounded in the notion

that such roles afford individuals the opportunity to leverage resources and energy across domains, facilitate the transfer of positive experiences, and expand social networks. Drawing from Marks' (1977) and Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) frameworks, it is posited that proficiency in one role, such as caregiving, may engender positive spillover effects into another role, such as professional pursuits, thereby augmenting energy and resources conducive to enhancing quality of life in the latter sphere.

While work-family conflict and work-family enrichment related research constituted related but independent research areas, in recent years scholars have broadened the scope of this research field, aiming to capture employees' comprehensive evaluation of their work-family interface overall, encompassing both synergies and antagonies. Wayne and colleagues (Wayne et al., 2017) spearheaded ground-breaking research in the exploration of multidimensional work-nonwork balance, shedding light on its pivotal role as a fundamental work-family construct. Their pioneering work not only delineated the intricate dimensions of work-nonwork balance but also underscored its profound implications for various outcomes within individuals' lives. In their seminal study, Wayne et al. (2017) illuminated the paramount importance of work-nonwork balance by demonstrating its surpassing influence over outcomes when compared to the combined effects of work-family conflict and enrichment. This finding underscores the unique and central role that achieving equilibrium between work and nonwork domains plays in individuals' overall well-being and functioning.

All in all, researchers have revealed a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underlying work-nonwork balance by identifying its predictors and outcomes and how both of its main dimensions—namely, conflict and enrichment—mediate the impact of work-nonwork dynamics on outcomes. This insight highlights the intricate interplay between psychological experiences of conflict and enriching across work and nonwork domains and their subsequent effects on individuals' outcomes. This academic work pointing to the complexities of work-family dynamics and experiences continues to serve as a cornerstone for further research and theoretical development in this critical area of study, which serves as a conceptual basis for the current work.

1.1.3. The role of Social Support in Work-Family Balance

As we just described, the pursuit of work-family balance has emerged as a critical aspect of contemporary employment dynamics, reflecting the evolving expectations and demands of individuals and organizational dimensions within modern societies. In relation to this, work-nonwork balance is understood by underscoring its profound significance in shaping individuals'

psychological experiences and outcomes within the complex interplay of work and nonwork domains (Wayne et al., 2017). Throughout the theoretical exploration of work-family balance, a comprehensive understanding has also been cultivated elucidating the complex interplay of various predictors and outcomes at several levels of analysis. This approach underscores the multifaceted and multilevel landscape of work-family balance dynamics, weaving together insights from studies exploring relevant psychological constructs such as work-family conflict and organizational variables, policies and culture.

In relation to contextual elements, research in the field of work-family balance consistently highlights the importance of social support as a particularly critical variable in influencing work-family experiences and also helping individuals effectively manage the demands of both their work and family roles. Social support encompasses various forms of assistance and resources, including for instance emotional and instrumental support (Bröckel, 2018). This support may include emotional and physical assistance, help with household chores, and childcare support (Spiteri & Xuereb, 2012). Numerous studies have explored the various dimensions of social support and its impact on work-family balance, shedding light on its multifaceted role in promoting well-being and productivity (Kossek et al., 2011; French et al., 2018; Frone et al., 1997). For instance, one recurring theme in the literature is the significant influence of spousal support on work-family balance. Studies have shown that a supportive spouse can act as a buffer against work-related stressors, providing emotional encouragement, practical assistance, and understanding during challenging times (French et al., 2018; Leung et al., 2020).

Having social support during critical times in life (e.g., when a baby is born or with young children) is crucial to effectively navigate the roles as both caregivers and employees. Research generally emphasizes the importance of social support beyond the family unit, including support from colleagues, supervisors, friends, and community networks (Van Engen et al., 2012; Van Engen & Gartzia, 2023; Žnidaršič & Bernik, 2021). Generally, studies highlight the role of organizational support policies and practices in facilitating work-family balance (Tremblay, 2023; Žnidaršič & Bernik, 2021). Companies that offer benefits such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and employee assistance programs demonstrate a commitment to supporting their employees' work-family integration (Susanto et al., 2022; Haas & Hwang, 2019). These supportive policies not only benefit individual employees but also contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and retention within the organization (Tremblay, 2023). As the theoretical framework unfolds, it becomes evident that work-family balance is not merely an

individual-level construct but rather a complex tapestry influenced by a myriad of interconnected elements operating at different levels of analysis.

Additionally, the literature underscores the importance of social support in mitigating the negative impact of work-family conflict on individual well-being and performance. When individuals perceive high levels of support from their social networks, they are better equipped to cope with the demands of work and family roles, leading to reduced stress, improved mental health, and greater job satisfaction (Gartzia & Van Engen, 2023; Wayne et al., 2020). Co-worker support has also been found to be particularly instrumental in creating a positive work environment conducive to work-family balance (Miyajima & Yamaguchi, 2017; Dahl et al., 2014). Colleagues who offer understanding, flexibility, and assistance can help alleviate work-related pressures, fostering a culture of mutual support and teamwork within organizations (Wayne et al., 2020). Finally, research points to the relevance of family support. For instance, research suggests that when partners offer more social support, workers are more likely to return to the workforce (Bröckel, 2018). Married or partnered workers may have the financial support needed to take an unpaid leave through their employed spouse or partner, whereas single mothers or fathers may lack such support as they are often the primary earners in their families (Andres et al., 2016). Relatedly, unmarried people exhibit lower utilization rates of leave, likely due to their inability to afford unpaid leaves (Andres et al., 2016).

Overall, the literature on social support in work-family balance underscores its critical role in promoting individual well-being, marital satisfaction, organizational effectiveness, and societal resilience. By cultivating supportive relationships within and beyond the family unit and implementing supportive policies at the organizational level, societies can better enable individuals to navigate the complexities of modern life and achieve greater harmony between their work and family responsibilities. As the theoretical foundations and implications advance, it becomes increasingly apparent that work-family balance is not a static equilibrium but rather a dynamic process shaped by the interplay of diverse factors operating at multiple levels. Moving forward, researchers and practitioners alike must adopt a holistic approach that recognizes the complex interdependencies inherent within the work-family balance paradigm, which is a premise for the current work. By embracing a multilevel perspective, a more nuanced understanding of work-family balance can be attained, paving the way for the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at fostering greater harmony between work and life domains.

1.2. The Relevance of Gender in Understanding Work-Family Balance

Importantly, gender inherently plays a critical role in work-family related perceptions and outcomes. Because the bulk of domestic work continues to rest on women, difficulties to achieve work-family balance result in negative consequences for women's career including lower income, limited access to managerial roles, and selection and evaluation biases (Budig & England, 2001), but also in more limited achievements of work-family balance overall (Michel et al, 2011; Mills et al., 2014; Power, 2020). The reality shows that inequalities and limitations to successfully implement actions to effectively promote gender equality still exist. Some factors contributing to these limitations are the domestic division of labour and the stronger dedication of women to care and education of underage children, as well as care for people who are in situation of dependency (Angelov, Johansson, & Lindahl, 2016). For example, across European Union Member States, there's a spectrum of gender disparities in household chores, ranging from approximately two-thirds of hours in Nordic nations to exceeding 13 hours in Southern European regions (Eurofound, 2020).

Women generally tend to prioritize achieving a harmonious balance between work and family responsibilities, seeking arrangements that support a healthy work-family equilibrium (Barbulescu & Bidwell, 2013). These imbalances manifest in detrimental outcomes for women's careers, such as reduced income, restricted advancement opportunities into managerial positions, and biases in both selection and evaluation processes (Budig & England, 2001). Consequently, discrimination against women persists across various facets within organizations. The challenges of maintaining work-family balance emerge as a pivotal aspect in the broader pursuit of gender parity (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Fernández Cornejo, Pozo García, et al., 2018). Connected to these concerns, a critical goal in most if not all countries around the globe is to reduce the domestic division of labour (Mills et al., 2014).

In these gendered discussions revolving around work-family balance, the spotlight often hones in on women, understandably, given their often juggling of professional and familial roles. However, it is crucial to recognize that gender is a broader social system involving gender stereotypes for both women and men that are interrelated, and also that men face their own distinct set of challenges in this arena, which subsequently also influence women. Appreciating these challenges is pivotal in crafting solutions that genuinely cater to everyone's needs. Indeed, because work-family concerns seriously compromise all family life, gender equality and organizational development, a critical goal is to increase specifically men's engagement in domestic work (Gartzia et al., 2018; Haas & Hwang, 2019). Contrasting these challenges, little is

known about how men engage in domestic functions. Still today, women are widely perceived as being the primary agents for domestic work and family care (Apak, 2022), with a limited understanding of the factors that can increase men's engagement in domestic work and whether and how the adoption of family-related organizational and legislative policies can help improve these trends. With changes in domestic and family structures, the literature is moving from a markedly women-focused gender perspective to a broader approach that includes broader organizational issues and work-family benefits as a critical dimension in work dynamics (Muse et al., 2008; Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020). This emerging tradition is also connected to a growing literature on work-family balance, which captures the challenges that working adults face to combine family and work responsibilities and can result in low levels of family, job and life satisfaction (Allen et al. 2020; van Engen & Gartzia, 2022).

One of the primary hurdles women and men encounter in achieving work-family balance is the expectation, and sometimes the stark reality, of long working hours, which is particularly strong for men given remaining connections between masculinity and breadwinner ideals (Gonalons-Pons & Gangl, 2021). For instance, men may encounter challenges in accessing flexible work arrangements or parental leave policies if these are associated with women. This lack of focus on men's domestic responsibilities can make it difficult for men to actively participate in caregiving roles or take time off to address family needs without fear of judgment or repercussions in the workplace (Rudman & Menscher, 2013; Chung, 2020). In contrast, women suffer from the so-called "motherhood penalty", which refers to the situation in which working mothers encounter systematic differences in perceived competence, and benefits (Budig & England, 2001; Budig et al., 2013, 2015; Fernández-Cornejo et al., 2018). This concept captures all the negative effects of maternity on women, who suffers to a higher extent these negative side of childbearing. Note that men are also limited in these personal and professional domains indirectly when engaging in caring tasks, as mentioned above.

These effects of work-life balance clearly translate into different career advancement outcomes for mothers and fathers. Maternity leave provision enables mothers to return to work postnatally, facilitating their recovery from childbirth and adjustment to their new role as mothers (Ulker & Guven, 2011; Ybarra, 2013). Access to adequate maternity leave may also encourage mothers who may not otherwise return to work to do so (Goodman, 2018). However, despite returning to work, mothers often face wage penalties postnatally, contributing to the persistent gender wage gap (Budig et al., 2012). Negative biases against mothers, such as perceptions of reduced competence or commitment, further exacerbate this wage disparity (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007). These biases can hinder mothers' opportunities for hiring, promotion,

and training, perpetuating a lack of career advancement options (Cuddy et al., 2004). The use of leaves by fathers or by both parents simultaneously reduce these negative effects in women's career, transferring some of these negative effects to fathers (i.e. mothers' wage penalty gets reduced, fathers' get increased; Gartzia et al., 2018; Cools & Strom, 2016; Druedahl et al., 2019).

Compounding these challenges are the gendered work cultures prevalent in many industries. Particularly in certain male-dominated sectors, women and particularly men may find themselves pressured to adhere to antiquated gender norms dictating that their professional pursuits take precedence over their family life (Doucet & McKay, 2020; Cech & O'Connor, 2017). This creates a quandary not only for women but also for men desiring active involvement in caregiving or other personal endeavours. Not only does this dynamic impede men's efforts to attain equilibrium between work and life, but it also perpetuates stereotypes that hinder progress toward gender equality in society (Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Sainz et al., 2023). For men employed in sectors traditionally dominated by men such as construction or heavy industries, attaining a balanced existence can prove even more arduous (Rathi & Barath, 2013; Tremblay, 2013). These professions often demand extended, irregular, and socially isolating hours, making it challenging for men to carve out moments for personal endeavours and familial commitments (Adler & Lenz, 2017; Alio et al., 2011). Furthermore, the inherent hazards associated with such vocations add an extra layer of strain and apprehension, both for the men directly involved and their family members (Chan et al., 2017; Nkwake, 2009).

Despite the strides made toward fostering more flexible and accommodating workplaces, studies reveal that men are less inclined than women to avail themselves of work-family balance policies. For instance, while 77% of women engage in some form of flexible work arrangements, a significantly lower proportion of men do so (OECD, 2023). Also, a staggering 70% of men find themselves entrenched in lengthy workdays, leaving scant time for personal pursuits, relaxation, and family obligations (OECD, 2023). This normalization of overwork not only exacts a toll on men's physical and mental well-being but also severely curtails their engagement in life beyond the confines of their job, thereby limiting gender equality. This underutilization of flexibility options may stem from various factors, including apprehension of facing stigma, concerns regarding potential repercussions on their career trajectory, or simply a lack of awareness (Rudman & Menscher, 2013; Gartzia et al., 2018). Nevertheless, this reluctance to embrace flexibility impedes men's endeavours to achieve a more harmonious integration of their professional and personal lives. For instance, there is evidence that women tend to perceive a higher level of work-family enrichment than men (Aryee et al., 2005; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijart, 2007).

In relation to work-family conflict, and contrary to the mainstreamed perception, studies have also found that women and men report similar levels of work-family conflict (Shockley et al., 2017). Adding to these complexities, men often face societal pressures to prioritize their careers over their personal lives, leading to a neglect of family responsibilities and personal well-being. Traditional gender norms dictate that men should be the primary breadwinners, which can create a stigma around prioritizing family or personal time over work commitments (Gonalons-Pons & Gangl, 2021). It has also been observed that for men commitment to the family role can benefit commitment to the professional role, while for these same men commitment to the professional role can hardly benefit commitment to the family role (Rothbard, 2001).

Taken together, these studies suggest that addressing gender-specific challenges in the work-family balance domain requires a shift in societal and organizational attitudes towards developing and understanding new forms of masculinity that embrace domestic work, as well as proactive efforts from employers to promote inclusivity and flexibility in the workplace for all employees (Pavicevic & Herrera, 2019). By acknowledging and addressing the unique work-family balance issues faced by men, we can work towards creating a more equitable and supportive environment for all employees, regardless of gender. Aligned with this goal and the aforementioned research inquiries, the principal aim of this doctoral dissertation resides in addressing several key dimensions of work-family balance from a gender perspective that focuses on several pending challenges regarding men and masculinities in this domain. First, we aim to understanding antecedents and effects of men's use of work-family balance measures, and in particular their use of work-family balance measures about childcare (i.e., paternity leave), given that paternity leave is a special form of care with formal absence from work and thus one of the remaining challenges to promote gender equality. Second, we aim to understand social and organizational factors that influence work-family balance experiences of men and women at work from a gender perspective, examining how cultural and managerial biases against work-family needs of fathers influence work-family balance experiences (e.g., work-family conflict) and subsequent job outcomes at work.

In adopting this approach focused on organizational factors and recognizing the gender-specific challenges that men face in achieving work-family balance, we deal with two relevant topics previously neglected in the literature, which are key to address current challenges in this field. Drawing from these foundations and given the particularly limited current state of scholarly inquiry concerning work-family balance initiatives and research in the organizational

behaviour field, the forthcoming doctoral investigation endeavours to answer the following questions:

1. What precursors underpin the utilization of work-family measures by men (i.e., paternity leave), and what are the discernible effects thereof, as substantiated by empirical investigations within academic discourse?
2. To what extent are certain domains within the study of paternity leave underdeveloped in comparison to the extensive literature addressing maternity and/or parental leave?
3. To what degree does prejudice against paternal engagement in work-family balance practices influence satisfaction levels of employed individuals?
4. Are organizational components related to work-family balance, particularly biases inherent within organizational frameworks and supervisory practices, uniformly influential in shaping job satisfaction across all employees? Furthermore, which of these components exerts a more pronounced impact?

This initiative aims to enhance our comprehension of the intricate outcomes stemming from gender equality and also broader work-family balance challenges at work, with implications for the development of more inclusive and egalitarian policies and normative guidelines. Through meticulous analysis, it will offer robust empirical insights into the extent to which a gender perspective that incorporates analyses of men and masculinities serves to more effectively understand work-family concerns in organizations and foster gender equality, contributing to narrowing the prevailing gender gap evident in work-family balance dynamics. By delving into their impact on various facets such as organizational cultures, structural disparities, and individual experiences, this research endeavours to unveil the underlying mechanisms that shape differential patterns of engagement in work-family balance initiatives from a complex gender perspective. Consequently, it aims to provide a solid foundation for the formulation of evidence-based policy interventions aimed at cultivating a workplace ethos that is more equitable, inclusive, and conducive to the realization of genuine gender equality.

1.3. Overview of the Dissertation

In accordance with the general objective of this study, and after this introductory section, Chapter 2 of this doctoral thesis will present the general theoretical framework on which this doctoral research is based. First, we will focus on studies dealing with two very specific men's work-family balance research areas, namely paternity leaves and biases against fathers' work-family balance. As pointed out in the introductory section, and as will be discussed

in more detail in Chapter 2, childcare leave is one of the main measures adopted by public policies to facilitate work-family balance. In this section, several studies will be presented to analyse the effectiveness of this type of leave in general, as well as the antecedents and effects of such leave. In the field of bias against fathers' work-family balance, we will showcase the different studies that tried to elucidate the determinant effects of this phenomenon on work-family balance.

In relation to men-specific caregiving leaves, research has shown that these are essential for addressing the imbalance in caregiving responsibilities between men and women (Andersen, 2018; Harvey & Tremblay, 2020). While maternity leave is a well-established benefit for women, men often have limited access to paternity or parental leave, which perpetuates the notion that caregiving is primarily a woman's responsibility (Hennekam et al., 2019; Romero-Balsas, 2015). Research has also shown that men who take advantage of caregiving leave are more likely to be involved fathers in the long term, contributing to healthier family dynamics and better outcomes for children (Grau-Grau et al., 2022; Johansson, 2011; Schober & Zoch, 2019). Therefore, studying and advocating for inclusive caregiving leave policies and cultures that promote men's use of paternity leaves and understanding effects of this on several dimensions of social and organizational development is crucial for promoting gender equality and facilitating greater participation of men in caregiving roles.

Social and organizational factors that influence work-family balance experiences have also proven to be detrimental for how employees respond to and experience work-family balance and we thus also attempt to address these specific challenges from a gender perspective in chapter 2. In particular, drawing from research pointing specifically to connections between masculinity and breadwinner ideals, we examine whether and how organizational and managerial biases against fathers in work-family balance at work can influence job outcomes and work-family balance experiences. Attempting to balance work and family responsibilities is influenced by gender stereotypes and this bias is rooted in traditional gender norms that associate masculinity with breadwinning and prioritize women's caregiving roles (Major, 2004; Wayne et al., 2006; Vandello et al., 2008; Bowles et al., 2022). As a result, fathers may encounter resistance or scepticism from employers or colleagues when requesting flexible work arrangements or time off to fulfil caregiving duties (Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Settles et al., 2012). This bias not only limits men's ability to actively engage in caregiving but also perpetuates the idea that men should prioritize work over family, contributing to work-related stress and overall dissatisfaction (Simosi et al., 2023; Erdogan et al., 2022).

This theoretical framework serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it will present an updated state of the art on work-family balance and care leaves for men; and, on the other hand, it will allow us investigating and addressing biases against fathers in work-family balance, which is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and supportive work environment that recognizes and accommodates the diverse needs of all employees (Sainz et al., 2023; Las Heras et al., 2023). Through this comprehensive investigation, the research endeavours to offer practical insights into the factors shaping employees' work experiences, thereby laying the groundwork for targeted interventions aimed at fostering a more harmonious and equitable work-family balance. From a more empirical standpoint, Chapter 3 focuses on the methodological aspects of the analysis conducted, explaining for each of the studies the quantitative and/or qualitative techniques employed, as well as the ethical considerations observed throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the two studies that comprise this doctoral dissertation. In the first part of the chapter, we develop a conceptual framework around paternity leave. To do so, it uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) procedure to comprehensively collect, evaluate and synthesise all available evidence on a particular topic. This type of review is carried out following a predefined protocol and using rigorous methods to identify, select and analyse relevant studies. Furthermore, the subsequent part of the chapter delves into the outcomes yielded by the second study. This study, conducted across various European organizations, utilizes advanced multilevel regression analysis techniques facilitated by the STATA software. Its central objective is to explore the impact of organizational and supervisor biases against fathers' involvement in work-family balance practices, alongside examining other pertinent variables related to the adoption of work-family balance initiatives.

Wrapping up the doctoral dissertation, Chapter 5 serves as the culmination of the studies, presenting key conclusions and their practical implications. It also addresses the limitations inherent in this work, while pointing out promising avenues for future research. Through a holistic examination of the findings, this chapter provides meaningful insights into how the research outcomes can inform both academia and practice. Additionally, it sets the stage for ongoing scholarly exploration, identifying areas of interest for future investigation and offering a roadmap for continued research in the field.

In summary, the primary objective of this study is to contribute fresh insights from a gender perspective into a pressing issue within the business landscape, one that significantly impacts a cornerstone stakeholder within any contemporary organization: work-family balance.

By doing so, we aim to not only enrich theoretical understanding but also offer tangible benefits for practical application. Our endeavour seeks to augment existing literature by offering both theoretical frameworks and actionable insights that resonate with real-world scenarios. In applied terms, our aim is to equip companies and their human resources managers with novel strategies and perspectives aimed at fostering a more harmonious equilibrium between work responsibilities and family life. Furthermore, by providing evidence-based recommendations, we aspire to empower policymakers to enact measures that promote a conducive environment for achieving work-family balance, thereby nurturing employee well-being and ultimately enhancing organizational productivity.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Paternity Leaves as a Relevant Form of Work-Family Balance

With important changes in the division of labour and more dual-earner families, working parents' challenges to combine household and work responsibilities are growing dramatically (Aunkofer et al., 2018). These difficulties to combine domestic and career work have persisted in contemporary organizations and economy and become even more exacerbated after the pandemic (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2020; Power, 2020), with particularly negative effects for women's career (Alon et al., 2020; Kmec, 2010). Compared to other forms of domestic and family work such as housework, childcare work is a particularly distinctive component of domestic life with critical negative effects for both women's career and work-family balance (European Commission, 2019; Flood & Grasjö, 1997). For instance, in EU Member States gender inequalities in childcare work range from 13 hours in Nordic countries to over 18 hours in Southern European countries (EIGE, 2021). Therefore, within the many domains and organizational practices that are available to facilitate work-family balance of working adults, organizational practices and measures that facilitate men's childcare work are particularly relevant.

One of the most prominent forms of care leave is parental leave, which grants time off to new parents following the birth or adoption of a child (International Labour Office, 2014). Care leaves also encompass a range of policies designed to support employees in managing their caregiving responsibilities, particularly concerning dependents such as children, elderly parents, or family members with disabilities. Research indicates a growing trend towards greater utilization of parental leave globally, with an increasing number of countries and organizations recognizing the importance of supporting new parents in the early stages of parenthood (EIGE, 2021; Kossek et al., 2011). However, despite this progress, significant disparities persist in the uptake of parental leave between mothers and fathers. Statistics reveal that mothers are more likely to take advantage of parental leave compared to fathers, reflecting deeply ingrained societal norms and expectations surrounding caregiving and gender roles. In many countries, cultural and structural barriers contribute to this gender disparity, including traditional notions of motherhood as the primary caregiver and workplace cultures that prioritize long hours and limited flexibility (Michel et al., 2011; Mills et al., 2014; Power, 2020). Consequently, mothers often bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities, which can have implications for their career progression, earning potential, and overall well-being (Allen et al. 2020; Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020).

Because care leave is one of the most important available resources for working parents, it is critical from a gender perspective. Indeed, parental leave represents a special form of childcare with decisive effects on one's career and parents' later sharing of domestic functions (Mundy, 2013; Pilkauskas & Schneider, 2020), so understanding the antecedents and components of fathers' paternity leave practices represents a particularly critical challenge for organizational research and gender equality (Gartzia et al., 2019; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Cormet, 2020). From a gender perspective, the parental component also broadens the scope of leaves, referring to leaves that can be shared between both parents -women and men. Advancing specific care leaves for men can have significant implications for fathers' involvement in caregiving and their overall well-being. Research suggests that fathers who take paternity leave are more likely to be actively involved in their children's lives, contributing to their cognitive and emotional development (Petts, Knoester, & Waldfogel, 2020). Moreover, fathers who are actively involved in caregiving report greater satisfaction with their family life and a stronger sense of connection with their children (Kramer et al., 2019). However, the fact that parental leaves can be shared between parents may still not be fostering fathers to become primary carers (Duvander et al. 2019; Gartzia, 2023).

Policymakers seem to play a vital role in driving these advancements by enacting legislation and implementing initiatives that promote fathers' uptake of care leaves and recognize their role as caregivers. In recent years, various countries have taken steps to advance specific care leaves for men, recognizing the importance of supporting fathers' involvement in caregiving and promoting gender equality. The European Union (EU), for instance, has been proactive in promoting policies that support work-family balance and gender equality in the workforce, recognizing the importance of enabling individuals to balance their professional and caregiving responsibilities. The European Directive on work-family balance, adopted in 2019, mandates minimum standards for parental leave and paternity leave across EU member states. It requires member states to provide at least ten days of paternity leave, fully compensated, within the first year of a child's birth or adoption. Additionally, the directive ensures the right to four months of parental leave, of which two months are non-transferable between parents and are compensated at a level that enables individuals to take leave without facing financial hardship.

In response to the EU regulations and broader societal shifts towards greater work-family balance and gender equality, many European countries have introduced or expanded their care leave policies (OECD, 2023). For example, Spain stands out as a leading example with its policy of equal maternity and paternity leave. Spanish law grants both parents' equal rights

to care leave, ensuring that fathers have the opportunity to take time off work to care for their children alongside mothers. This equal parental leave policy in Spain has had a profound impact on fostering greater gender equality in caregiving responsibilities. It encourages fathers to take an active role in childcare from the earliest stages of parenthood, contributing to more equitable division of parental responsibilities between men and women (Hupkau & Ruiz-Valenzuela, 2022). Moreover, research suggests that countries with more generous paternity leave policies tend to have higher levels of gender equality and greater female labour force participation rates (Hsiao, 2023). Overall, paternity leave therefore represents a critical component of work-family balance initiatives aimed at supporting employees in managing their caregiving responsibilities.

2.1.1. The Importance of Research around Paternity Leaves

As we just discussed, advancing specific care leaves for men is crucial for promoting gender equality, supporting fathers' involvement in caregiving, and challenging traditional gender norms that perpetuate inequality in the workplace and society. Yet, scholars have found that these parental leaves are not yet achieving the aim of facilitating work-family balance for all employees and advancing into a sustainable organization of care (Gartzia et al., 2018; van Engen & Gartzia, 2022; Kvande & Brandth, 2017; Kluve & Tamm, 2009). Because these leaves represent one of the longer formal absences from work particularly in European countries, new questions and challenges are emerging about how paid leaves of absence at work can improve families, children and gender equality goals. One of the primary reasons for advancing this specific area of care leaves for men is to address the gender disparities that persist in caregiving responsibilities. Indeed, despite progress towards greater gender equality in recent decades, women continue to bear the bulk of caregiving responsibilities, particularly concerning childcare and eldercare (Apak, 2022). This unequal distribution of caregiving duties not only perpetuates gender inequality but also reinforces stereotypes about women's roles as primary caregivers and men's roles as breadwinners (Gartzia et al., 2018; Haas & Hwang, 2019). By promoting specific care leaves for men, policymakers can help challenge these stereotypes and create a more equitable division of caregiving responsibilities between men and women.

Research around paternity leaves is also essential to assist this challenge, in part due to the current limited development of research in this field. Firstly, there is a significant imbalance in research focus between maternity leave and paternity leave (Canaan et al., 2022). While extensive research exists on the effects of maternity leave on women's careers, family dynamics, and societal roles, comparatively less attention has been given to paternity leave (Castellanos-Serrano et al., 2023). Understanding the impact of paternity leave on fathers' involvement in

childcare, their career trajectories, family dynamics, and overall gender equality in caregiving roles is crucial for addressing this gap in knowledge. Illustratively, we can observe these differences in the amount of research conducted around each of the concepts through a simple search in reference scientific databases (i.e., ISI Web of Science and Elsevier Scopus). If we look for the total number of articles, the results showed that these areas of study differ in the total number of investigations in each domain, with 2,344 papers for 'maternity leave', 689 papers for 'paternity leave' and 2,177 for 'parental leave'.

Secondly, promoting gender equality is a fundamental aspect that warrants further research into paternity leave. Paternity leave policies have the potential to encourage men to take on more caregiving responsibilities, thereby allowing women to pursue their careers more freely. Thus, research can provide insights into the barriers preventing men from taking paternity leave, as well as the societal attitudes and workplace cultures that influence men's caregiving involvement (Escot et al., 2012; Barcus et al., 2019). In general, studies suggest that fathers are less likely to take extended periods of parental leave compared to mothers, opting instead for shorter durations or foregoing leave altogether (Duvander et al. 2019; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Cormet, 2020). This phenomenon highlights the persistent gender bias in the workplace and societal perceptions of men's roles as breadwinners rather than caregivers (Yu & Hara, 2021; Glauber, 2008). Research also indicates that workplace policies and cultural attitudes play a significant role in shaping fathers' decisions regarding parental leave, with factors such as stigma, lack of support, and fear of career repercussions influencing their uptake of leave (Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Kossek et al., 2011). Improving our understanding of the complex and multilevel antecedents and effects of men's use of paternity leaves can inform policy changes and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in both the workplace and at home.

Research focused on antecedents and effects of paternity leaves can also shed light on how work-life balance practices that are more egalitarian can potentially impact workplace dynamics, which represents an under researched area of study in organizational behaviour literature (see Gartzia, 2023). By examining how these policies are implemented and perceived within different organizational contexts, researchers can identify best practices for promoting work-family balance and supporting not only employees' caregiving responsibilities (Grau et al. 2022; Kossek et al. 2011) but also more effective workplaces (see Gartzia, 2023). By providing employees with the opportunity to prioritize caregiving during times of need, care leaves support the conservation and replenishment of familial resources (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). This investment in family resources can have long-term benefits, such as enhanced family

cohesion, reduced stress, and improved mental health outcomes for both caregivers and their families (Gartzia & van Engen, 2023). Understanding the effects of paternity leave on organizational culture, employee morale, productivity, and retention may also be crucial for creating supportive work environments that cater to the diverse needs of employees (Las Heras et al., 2023; Erdogan et al., 2022).

In summary, research around paternity leave is still limited but essential for filling existing knowledge gaps and generating new insights into its impact on parents, families, workplaces, and society as a whole. Continued research efforts are needed to address remaining gaps and challenges and to inform the development and implementation of effective and inclusive leave policies to assist employees in managing the emotional and psychological challenges associated with caregiving. By identifying specific antecedents and effects of men's use of paternity leave and addressing their potential associations with several dimensions of employee welfare and corporate social responsibility outcomes, organizations may foster a more sustainable and inclusive workplace culture conducive to employee well-being and organizational success.

2.1.2. An Organizing Framework to Understand Paternity Leave

After exploring the importance and challenges of childcare leaves, this section now shifts its focus to a thorough examination of the primary objective within this field: to clarify the factors influencing the use of care leave and to uncover its subsequent effects. As previously discussed, initial investigations into work-family balance revealed its multi-level and multifaceted nature, emphasizing the necessity of integrating this complexity, particularly from a gender perspective. This section presents how factors from various levels could be pertinent in understanding care leaves. In particular, to make theoretical and analytical sense of this literature stream, we classify the areas of thematic analysis into the two common underlying dimensions of antecedents and effects of organizational behaviour that are typical in content-analytic reviews (Schilke, Hu, & Helfat, 2018; Hassan et al., 2022).

In relation to the analysis of the predictors of the use of childcare leaves, an intricate examination reveals distinct elements operating. As a first element of study, family leave and equal employment policies that promote participation in the workforce and offer support for caregiving responsibilities, frequently lead to employees returning to work much earlier after childbirth (Aisenbrey et al., 2009). Moreover, the cultural context regarding caregiving leave influences the accessibility and utilization of the leave, along with individual and work-related predictors that follow (Shuffleton, 2013).

Cultural values and norms regarding caregiving, pregnancy, parenthood, gender, and employment also seem to be relevant predictors of leave policies, influencing decisions on how, when, and to what extent family-friendly policies are utilized (Budig et al., 2012). Indeed, societies hold beliefs about what defines a good mother, which affects the perceived accessibility of leave and leave policies (Budig et al., 2012). These cultural values and expectations also influence the household division of labour and mothers' participation and earnings in the workforce (Budig et al., 2012). Embedded within these cultural values is sexism toward women, leading to discriminatory behaviours, thus exacerbating gender inequality (Aisenbrey et al., 2009; Budig & England, 2001).

Employment and organizational factors also seem to play a critical role in influencing access to a parental leave. Organizational policies, often termed family-friendly policies, encompass the additional leave options provided by organizations to their employees and may involve flexitime, on-site childcare, and the utilization of paid time off to supplement leave income (Brown et al., 2002; Budd & Mumford, 2006). In contrast, workplace or organizational culture refers to shared values, beliefs, and assumptions within a workplace, with work-family culture being an aspect that emphasizes employers' support for employees integrating their family and work lives (Lyness et al., 1999). Workplaces fostering family-friendly cultures are more likely to offer support in choosing the appropriate leave options, retain the new parents after their leave period, and cultivate higher organizational commitment (Houston & Marks, 2003; Lyness et al., 1999; Millward, 2006).

For instance, a supportive workplace culture may involve supervisors informing about organizational leave policies, benefits, and breastfeeding options; providing flexible work schedules or telecommuting opportunities; and supporting employees in utilizing these policies (Atkinson, 2016; Cabrera, 2009; Goodman, 2018). Conversely, some workplace cultures may lack support for caregiving roles, be unwilling to offer flexibility, and fail to provide adequate information about available benefits to employees. Unsupportive workplace cultures tend to foster negative perceptions among employers regarding leave use or delaying their return to work postnatally, potentially dissuading parents from taking the leave they require or returning to the organization (Buzzanell & Liu, 2005; Houston & Marks, 2003). These elements of workplace policies, cultures and provision of support can play significant roles in employees' use of work-family balance measures. The importance of these workplace policies is even higher in the case of countries without have national leave regulations, putting the responsibility of creating care leave rights on employers (Budd & Mumford, 2006).

Other work characteristics and factors associated to work design also tend to influence the access to and utilization of care leaves. Within this work design, scholars have highlighted among others the relevance of the absence of job security, inadequate benefits, irregular hours, limited flexibility, compromised safety standards, and low and inequitable wages. Those ensconced within such precarious work arrangements encounter formidable challenges for the use of maternity and paternity leaves and associated benefits (Bates, 2004). As a result of these remaining challenges and experiences, parents may feel less supported, take on additional work, refrain from requesting accommodations, or choose not to disclose their domestic situations, such as pregnancies (Major, 2004). However, when employees perceive a more supportive work-family culture, they are more likely to remain committed to the organization, return to work earlier after childbirth, and be less inclined to leave the organization (Fox & Quinn, 2015; Lyness et al., 1999; Millward, 2006).

Research has also pointed to several factors tied to personal characteristics in relation to use of parental leaves. In the field of access to resources, marital status, education, family income and social support emerge as significant predictors of leave access (Andres et al., 2016). The relationship between access to leave and their education level or skills is complex. Studies indicate that people with post-bachelor education are more than twice as likely as those with a high school education or less to receive paid childcare leave, with less-educated mothers and fathers being more prone to turnover (Boushey, 2008; Shepherd-Banigan & Bell, 2014). Furthermore, higher education or skills generally mean better access to both paid and unpaid leave, along with comprehensive benefits packages, and they are more inclined to utilize these opportunities (Boushey, 2008; Evans, 2007).

Income significantly influences experiences of leave due to its relevance to accessing resources, including childcare (Ulker & Guven, 2011). The dearth of available resources through paid benefits exacerbates the gap between high-income and low-income workers' access to leave (Ybarra, 2013). While paid leave may enhance return to work and income over time, welfare provisions may offer additional supports that paid leave does not, such as vouchers for necessities and food (Ybarra, 2013). Considering it from a family perspective, while earnings of both parents positively influenced the father's use of leave, with lower usage observed at higher earnings levels, the father's earnings exerted a stronger influence compared to the mother's. This suggests that families who are financially comfortable are more capable and inclined to bear the short-term cost of the father taking leave, which is typically higher than if the mother takes leave. However, these findings do not imply that families are indifferent to costs, as fathers

tend to take less leave when their earnings reach or surpass a certain threshold, and more leave when mothers' earnings are relatively high.

Parents' decisions regarding leave utilization are also influenced by their attitudes toward and perceptions of care leaves. These attitudes and perceptions encompass beliefs about parenthood, the accessibility of the leave, and its impact on career advancement. For instance, some cultural or professional groups may consider leave obligatory for new parents, while others may view it as optional or undesirable (Fox & Quinn, 2015; Lyness et al., 1999). Additionally, workers may perceive childcare leave as detrimental to their professional skills or fear job loss upon taking leave (Bencsik & Juhasz, 2010). Such concerns are substantiated by research showing that those utilizing family-friendly policies are often perceived as less competent or work-oriented (Cuddy et al., 2004).

Finally, attitudes towards leaves can also encompass perceived access to such leave, defined as employees' knowledge of family-friendly policies and their belief that they can utilize these policies (Budd & Mumford, 2006; Diamond et al., 2007). While the leave is available in some countries, its accessibility may be inadequate for those unable to access it, leading to perceptions of inaccessibility option. Additionally, the lack of mandated paid leave in some countries may result in mothers struggling to understand how they can receive wage replacement or organizationally provided leave, negotiate effectively, or locate relevant information sources (Diamond et al., 2007).

Once the various variables affecting the utilization of leave permissions have been analysed, we examine the effects that the use of these permissions entails, following the studies such as those conducted by Schilke, Hu, and Helfat (2018), Hassan et al. (2022) or French et al. (2018).

In relation to this domain of outcomes derived from use of parental leave, we focus in particular on distinguishing the most important potential effects of paternity leaves in relation to health, work, family and social dimensions, as current research seems to cover this wide range of effects. In the individual domain, securing leave may lead to different outcomes, such as general physical health and well-being, mental health (e.g. postpartum depression and stress) or identity and role integration, as leave plays a role in how parents integrate their identity and role as a mothers and fathers with their pre-existing roles and identities. Scholars have found that longer leaves, particularly when it is paid, correlate negatively with health symptoms and positively with stress management and exercise (Jou et al., 2018). Additionally, longer paid leave results in mothers experiencing less overall stress upon their return to work (Albagli & Rau,

2019). Moreover, workers who take longer leaves, whether paid or unpaid, and return to work 6 months postnatally report better self-rated overall health and fewer outpatient health visits compared to those who return to work sooner (Chatterji & Markowitz, 2012; Chatterji et al., 2013). Thus, childcare leave appears to contribute to several beneficial health outcomes.

Parents may also encounter a range of mental health challenges both before and after childbirth, and some may find their leave insufficient to cope with the stress and balancing of roles as both mother or father and employees (Chatterji & Markowitz, 2012; Dagher et al., 2014). Single parents, those with low income, and those with multiple children are particularly vulnerable to experiencing postnatal depressive symptoms, potentially due to the added stress of raising an infant with limited resources (Dagher et al., 2014). Generally, while longer leaves are associated with reduced depressive symptoms and overall psychological distress (Feldman et al., 2004; Whitehouse et al., 2013). Moreover, parenthood often triggers a significant shift in individual's sense of identity, influencing her decision-making processes and values, which may evolve over time, including decisions related to returning to work (Buzzanell et al., 2005; Hennekam et al., 2019; Millward, 2006). This transformation is shaped by various factors, including societal norms, family-friendly organizational policies, and workplace role models (Hennekam et al., 2019). However, people unable to take their desired length of leave has reported experiencing a sense of role overload and difficulty integrating these roles, along with lower self-esteem (Feldman et al., 2004; Spiteri & Xuereb, 2012). Care leave aids in a better integration and validation their complex constellation of identities (Buzzanell & Liu, 2005; Millward, 2006).

In the field of work, care leave significantly impacts emotional and financial experiences within employment. Predominant work-related outcomes identified in the literature include organizational commitment, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and career advancement prospects. Organizational commitment reflects the extent to which employees identify with and are dedicated to their organization (Bae & Yang, 2017). Research across various cultural contexts suggests that leave policies and other family-friendly initiatives foster a positive organizational commitment. These policies, including childcare leave and telecommuting options, create a sense of reciprocity where employees feel motivated to contribute back to their organization (Bae & Yang, 2017). While there's limited research specifically on organizational commitment care leave, studies indicate a positive correlation between increased workplace support and commitment to the organization, potentially influencing their decision to return to work after childbirth (Lyness et al., 1999).

Turnover intentions, indicating whether employees plan to remain with an organization, are significant predictors of actual turnover and can incur costs for both employees and employers (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999). Studies highlight that access to both paid and unpaid leaves correlate with higher job continuity, while delayed return to work postnatally is associated with fewer regrets about returning, which in turn predicts lower intentions to withdraw from employment (Baker & Milligan, 2008; Wiese & Ritter, 2012). Perceptions of family support within the organization, work environment, and supervision are also key determinants of job satisfaction, namely, the degree of enjoyment individuals derive from their work (Allen, 2001; Bae & Yang, 2017; Brown et al., 2002). Note that job satisfaction is closely linked to various outcomes for both employees and organizations, including withdrawal cognitions, and overall life satisfaction (Bae & Yang, 2017), so it is a very important job attitude. Interestingly, research suggests that satisfaction with leave policies also significantly influences overall job satisfaction (Brown et al., 2002).

Finally, studies point to the fact that joint care leaves, which were predominantly used by women, adversely affect gender-based labour division (Dearing, 2015; Tamm, 2019). These leaves contribute to women's detachment from the workforce, exacerbating occupational segregation and widening the wage gap. The negative impact intensifies as the disparity in leave-taking between women and men increases (Schober & Zoch, 2019; Corte Rodriguez, 2018).

All in all, existing research in the parental leave and specifically paternity leave domain reveal that this field of study is significantly fragmented, resulting in a lack of common theoretical and empirical foundations across studies. This fragmentation is evident in the wide variety of topics, references, samples, and methodological designs that have been covered in the literature without an overarching guiding approach. With a preliminary analysis of the literature, the complexity surrounding the topic of caregiving leaves, particularly paternity leaves, becomes evident. Responding to this concern, our purpose in relation to this field of analysis is to address and integrate previous gaps in this literature by providing a conceptual organizing framework and offering a systematic review of the current state of research looking back over the totality of paternity leave research across these different disciplines and areas. Understanding these antecedents and effects of working men's use of paternity leave is a particularly relevant and understudied research area (Gartzia et al., 2018; Gençten & Genc, 2020; Knoester et al., 2019; Tremblay, 2023).

Because men's limited use of domestic options seriously compromise gender equality at work, reducing the domestic division of labour depends on working men becoming more involved in

this form of leave. By acknowledging this complexity, a literature review would help better understanding the effects and implications of paternity leaves, providing a nuanced approach that considers various levels of analysis, such as individual, organizational, and societal factors. Just as work-family balance is intricate and multi-dimensional (Le et al., 2020; French et al., 2018), so too are caregiving leaves. This multi-level perspective is proposed as a framework for examining existing literature on paternity leaves, indicating an intention to delve deeper into the subject matter and explore its diverse dimensions. As shown in Figure 1, we propose a comprehensive overall conceptual organizing framework summarizing the most relevant antecedents and effects of men's use of paternity leave, which will be further described and analysed in the results section. To make theoretical and analytical sense of this literature stream, we classify the areas of thematic analysis into the two common underlying dimensions of antecedents and effects of organizational behaviour described at the beginning of the section, which are typical in content-analytic reviews (Schilke, Hu, & Helfat, 2018; Hassan et al., 2022). In Chapter 4 we will analyse whether and how these two building blocks are developed in actual paternity leave research using a systematic literature review, ultimately providing a comprehensive examination of antecedents and effects paternity leaves. By applying a multi-level and multi-faceted approach, we aim to gain a more holistic understanding of antecedents of men's use of paternity leave that takes all these involved factors into account and its implications for individuals, families, and organizations.

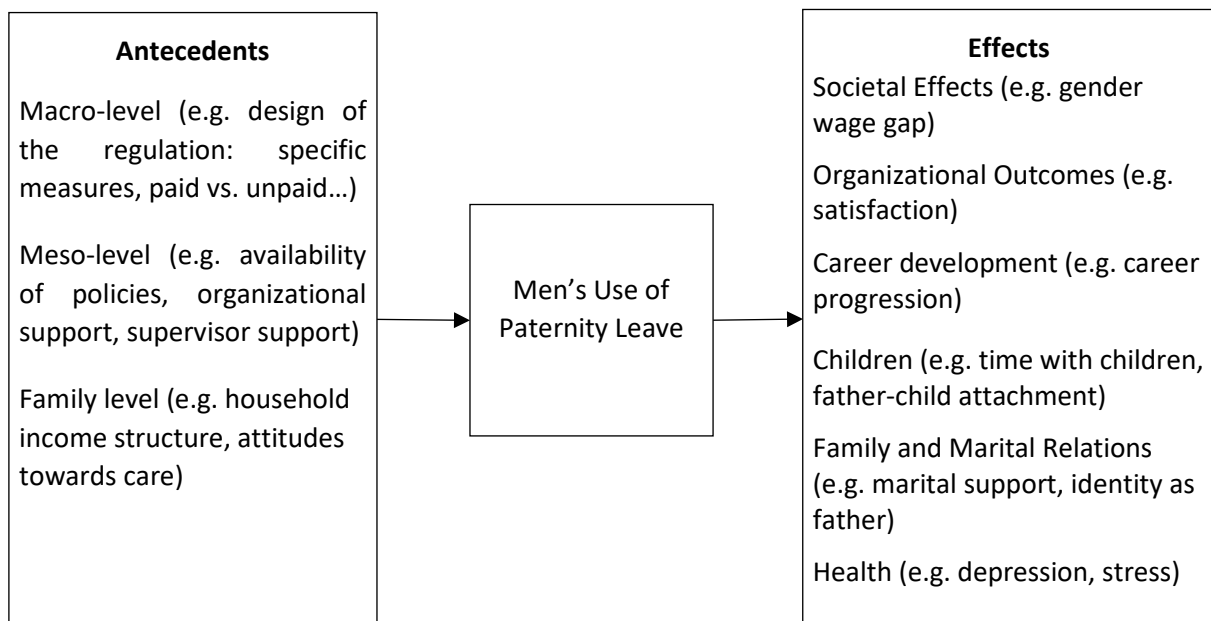


Figure 1. Proposed Organizing Framework (Study 1)

2.2. Bias Against Fathers' Work-Family Balance Needs

As we discussed in the introduction of this work, social and organizational factors are also critical factors influencing work-family balance experiences of men and have been identified as critical in how both female and male employees navigate and perceive these challenges. Thus, organizational biases about men's domestic needs of achieving work-family balance should also influence work-life balance experiences and related outcomes and experiences at work. For example, fathers often face challenges and scepticism from employers and colleagues when requesting flexible work arrangements or time off for caregiving (Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Wayne & Cordeiro, 2003). Such bias not only hinders men's involvement in caregiving by reinforcing the belief that their primary obligation is to their job rather than their family, but it also affects employees' attitudes towards their workplace. If employees perceive that their organisation does not support their familial and personal needs, it can negatively influence their overall job satisfaction and commitment (Wayne et al., 2006; Žnidaršič & Bernik, 2021). Given the notorious relevance of these organizational factors (meso-level) for organizational behaviour dynamics and outcomes, this second part of the thesis aims to understand these nuances in more depth.

To understand some of the potential challenges faced by fathers in this regard when navigating work-family balance in specific organizations imagine a large corporation where the majority of leadership positions are held by men, and there is a prevailing cultural expectation that these male leaders as well as their male employees should prioritize work above all else. This cultural bias is consistent with a large number of studies showing how expectations about the time that employees should work as well as commitment to the firm is stronger for men (Gartzia et al., 2018; Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Vandello, Bosson, & Cohen, 2008), in part because men have traditionally shouldered the breadwinner role and women are still perceived as having the primary responsibility for unpaid family care (Holt & Lewis, 2011; OECD, 2023; Block et al., 2024). Some of the contributing factors to these gender inequalities are the domestic division of labour and the time spent by women in caring and educating children, as well as caring for other dependent adults (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, these broad cultural gender inequalities regarding the domestic division of labour can permeate actual firms, shaping specific expectations and policies. Indeed, because of stereotypes regarding the gendered division of work, work-family balance initiatives are often biased towards women or even widely roll-out in organizations (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010).

Despite the relevance of this topic for both gender equality and organizational development, research has only begun to identify specific ways in which these biases can be overcome. However, cultural norms and biases about gender roles and expectations about caregiving roles may strongly influence organizational policies, not only in relation to paternity leave (i.e., which may be less emphasized or supported compared to maternity leave), but in relation to many related work-family balance variables and job outcomes. Interestingly, although there is evidence that family-related absences correlate negatively with performance for women (e.g., Judiesch & Lyness, 1999; Rudman & Menscher, 2013; Williams, 2001), due to cultural expectations about work-family balance being inherently gendered, there is evidence that men can face even more negative reactions from evaluators when requesting family policies such as parental leave compared to women (Allen & Russell, 1999; Butler & Skattebo, 2004; Wayne & Codeiro, 2003; Gartzia et al., 2018). Furthermore, male workers experiencing family conflicts tend to receive lower performance ratings and reward recommendations than female counterparts (Butler & Skattebo, 2004). These analyses suggest that both women and men may encounter stigma regarding work-family balance in the workplace, but it's expected particularly for men to prioritize work over family to be viewed as the ideal worker.

In general, when women request family-related measures, they conform more closely to gender norms compared to men making similar requests (Hill et al., 2003). However, because women are generally more likely to look for work-life balance arrangements, their leadership aspirations and career attainment are limited too (Barbulescu & Bidwell, 2013). Thus, both men and women seem to suffer from stereotyped views of work-family balance. Studies in this field have broadly depicted male employees as intrinsically connected to breadwinner ideals and thus more likely to suffer from work-family bias, generating a generally negative conception of organizational cultures and ideals in current workplaces. This negative view of organizational values from a gender perspective has likely contributed to a better understanding of gender stereotypes in the workplace. In the last decades, however, gender and feminist initiatives and action have played a pivotal role in improving the situation of women in the workplace, advocating for gender equality and challenging discriminatory work-family balance practices and attitudes (Adamson et al., 2024). Organizations worldwide are increasingly adopting more integrative perspectives of work-family balance, bringing attention to disparities in pay, opportunities for advancement, and work-family policies that disadvantage women (Baker et al., 2024). Additionally, feminist ideals have fostered cultural shifts within organizations, leading to greater awareness of gender bias and the adoption of inclusive practices regarding work-family benefits (Smith & Hatmaker, 2024).

Drawing on these foundations, we argue that these firms with less marked gender biases and implicit stereotypical conceptions about the role of men and women in the work-family domain can generate positive effects on work related outcomes for both men and women. In the work-family balance literature, the role of social support to respond to the work-family interface is widely recognized (Lee, et al., 2013; French et al., 2018; Kossek et al., 2011; Ford et al., 2007; Halbesleben, 2006; Lin et al., 2022). For instance, Kaufman & Almqvist (2017) argued that employers have a prominent role in the use by their employees of work-family friendly policies such as maternity and paternity leave, by being more or less in favour of the use of these leaves by parents. There is also evidence that implicit organizational norms providing support for work-family balance can influence perceptions of competence of female and male employees who decide to use available work-family measures (Gartzia et al., 2011). These implicit attitudes towards use of family-related measures can promote or restrain workers from using it (Duffy et al, 2020), and thus low (vs. high) biases in an organizational context about men's lower needs to balance work and family compared to women may also represent a positive form of social support with positive effects for employees.

Note that social support is generally conceived as "psychological or material resources provided through social relationships that can mitigate strains" (French et al., 2018, p. 288). Because supervisors yield significant influence over the success of work-family policies and initiatives (Perlow, 1995; Starrels, 1992; Thompson et al., 1999), managers who are less biased in their gendered assumptions about work-family balance should also generate positive reactions from both female and male employees by reducing their work-family balance constraints. However, when comparing these specific sources of social support (i.e., organizational culture vs. supervisor values), results are unclear. French and colleagues (2018) reported stronger positive effects of organizational level support than supervisor or co-worker support in reducing conflict. This line of research calls for more efforts to integrate different levels of analysis, contrasting in particular effects of culture and supervisors' support (Ostroff & Bowen, 2016). Improving our knowledge about the specific effects of different sources of support in organizations can help respond to these gaps and promote the necessary change in organizations to support both gender equality and work-family balance action and thus represents the focus of this second line of research addressed in the thesis. In the following sections the main theoretical aspects related to the influence of organizational culture, first, and supervisors, second, on work-family conflict and job satisfaction will be presented. For each of these aspects, the specific hypotheses that will be studied will be formulated.

2.2.1. The Influence of a Biased Organizational Culture in Job Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict

In the work-family literature, work-family culture is generally conceived as the “shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives” (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999; p .394). These beliefs have a strong effect on employees’ attitudes at work and involve expectations that are shared within a firm concerning time assumptions such as the number of hours that employees are expected to work as well as expectations about how these worked hours relate to employees’ commitment to work (i.e., participating in work-family programs or spending time with family is perceived to imply lower commitment to the organization and thus result in negative career consequences for career promotion and performance evaluations; Perlow, 1995; Simosi et al., 2022). In general, there is evidence that organizations that provide implicit organizational support and opportunities to employees (e.g., parental leave or flexible work arrangements) tend to foster higher job satisfaction (McIntyre et al, 2002).

Assumptions in one’s specific organizational culture appear to be a barrier that creates a gap between the theoretical rights at a policy level and the actual use of work-family measures. Belope-Nguema et al. (2018) explain the lack of use of work-family balance initiatives available by recurring to Sen’s Capability Approach (consistent with previous literature, see also Hobson, 2011 or Hobson & Fahlén, 2009). They argue that “being effectively able to balance work and family” is a “functioning” that can be achieved through the use of the work-family balance measures offered by companies. Therefore, it is suggested that an important factor to give the individual the capability of achieving that functioning is working in an environment where there is a no or little bias against employees’ use of work-family balance arrangements. If the corporate culture is sensitive to the need of using work-family balance measures, employees’ ability to choose will be higher. Moreover, if they have the feeling/perception that they can effectively use these work-family balance measures, the rate of use will increase.

Within the European Union (EU), Work-Family Balance Directive has pushed EU Member States forward to advance significantly in work-family balance measures, with the aim of supporting parents in organizations and encourage a more equal sharing of parental leave between women and men. These challenges to promote work-family balance in firms became even more relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the line between work and personal life became even more blurred and may have influenced shared assumptions and values regarding firm’s needs to support employees' family lives. Indeed, these changes in the

workplace, home environment, and social relationships may have led to more salient conflicts between work and family (Yildiz et al., 2022). In the post pandemic reality, with new ways of working, there is a need to further understand these cultural prescriptions as well as employees' experiences of work and family life integration, calling at studies that gain a better understanding of the role of work-family balance dynamics at work. Indeed, despite noteworthy advances in the overall relevance given to work-family balance in organizations, employees still face substantial disapproval and stigma for failing to embody the "ideal worker" image implicit in many organizational cultures of someone who is fully committed to work (Moller et al., 2024).

The perception of that substantial disapproval by the organization (i.e. feeling of unsupportive culture) due to work-family integrations different from what the "ideal worker" norm mandates is closely tied to how employees perceive equal treatment regarding work-family balance within the organization (Heikkinen et al., 2024). For instance, previous research found that perceived organizational unfairness (i.e. unequal distribution of resources) negatively affect workers, decreasing their job satisfaction (Sainz et al., 2021). This negative relationship between organizational support and job satisfaction is explained by Adam's Equity Theory (Adams et al., 1963), which posits that individuals strive for fairness in social exchanges, seeking to maintain a balance between their inputs and outcomes compared to those of others in their relational context. This perception can stem from policies that favour one group over another, a lack of support for work-family balance, or unequal access to parental leave and flexible work options, among others (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Drawing from this approach, we argue that biased organizational beliefs that needs to balance work and family responsibilities is something that concerns women but not men in the firm may hinder satisfaction of both women and men employees who struggle to find a balance between their work and family responsibilities. For men, biased assumptions about their lower work-family needs may result in lower opportunities to actually balance such needs and spend time at home, thereby decreasing their overall job satisfaction. For women, in contrast, biased assumptions about their higher work-family needs may result in lower opportunities to promote in their career and be perceived as a committed worker, thereby decreasing their overall job satisfaction too. This dissatisfaction may also be due to a lack of professional growth opportunities, perceived career stagnation, or feeling undervalued (Sainz et al., 2023). In the context of work-family balance, there is Ramos et al. (2022) found that perceptions of gender inequalities lead to lower perceived organizational justice, affecting job satisfaction and performance. Extending these studies, we expect that:

H1: For all employees, the perception of a biased culture that does not equally support work-family balance measures for mothers and fathers will have a negative effect on satisfaction at work.

Work-Family Conflict occurs when the demands of one's work role interfere with the demands of the family role, or vice versa (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In organizations where there is a lack of equality, particularly in terms of supporting the work-family balance of all employees regardless of gender, not only job satisfaction but also the actual experienced conflict between work and family roles is likely to be often exacerbated. For instance, if a company does not provide equal parental leave or flexible working arrangements for all parents (mothers and fathers), it can increase the pressure and stress on those who are juggling family responsibilities alongside their work. Traditionally, the burden of this conflict has often been more pronounced for women, particularly mothers (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). However, as societal norms shift and more fathers take on active parenting roles, they too may experience similar conflicts and stresses in environments that do not provide equal support (Coron and Garbe, 2023). While much of the focus on the effects of the ideal worker norm and flexibility bias has—with good reason— concentrated on women and mothers, growing evidence suggests that many men also suffer similar stigmatization and penalization when they take leave or use family-work arrangements (Allen and Russell 1999; Coltrane et al. 2013; Wayne and Cordeiro 2003).

Clearly, male workers who violate the ideal worker norm by signalling commitment to family or personal responsibilities are thought to be “bad” workers, and are subsequently seen as deserving fewer rewards or performance evaluations (Gartzia et al., 2016). Indeed, experimental studies suggest that men face more negative reactions from evaluators when requesting family leave compared to women (Wayne & Codeiro, 2003). For instance, men on family leave were rated lower on organizational commitment and perceived as less deserving of rewards than women in similar situations (Allen & Russell, 1999). Furthermore, male workers experiencing family conflicts received lower performance ratings and reward recommendations than female counterparts (Butler & Skattebo, 2004). These constraints may exacerbate the perception that they are not able to successfully respond to the conflicting demands of family and work, thereby increasing their experienced work-family conflict.

We expect that organizations that recognize and address these challenges by assuming that family-friendly policies (like flexible working hours, remote work options, and equitable parental leave) are something expected for both women and men can help reduce this conflict for all employees. For men, biased assumptions about their lower work-family needs may result

in lower actual use of work-family measures, thereby increasing their overall experienced level of conflict. For women, in contrast, biased assumptions about their higher work-family needs would result in lower actual levels of career development and thus increasing their overall experienced level of conflict too. All in all, organizational biased values about men's and women's differential work-family needs would ultimately be negative for all employees, regardless of their gender. It is suggested that:

H2: For all employees, the perception of a biased culture that does not equally support work-family balance measures for mothers and fathers will have a negative effect on work-family conflict (higher conflict).

2.2.2. The Influence of a Biased View of Work-Family Balance from Supervisors in Job Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict

The role of supervisors in promoting gender equality within organizations is widely acknowledged (Liff et al., 1997; Schein, 2010; Kelan and Wratil, 2018). For instance, research has shown that supervisors' attitudes towards gender equality have a positive impact on the effectiveness of gender equality actions (Konrad and Linnehan, 1995). To some extent, supervisors can set the tone for the work environment beyond broader organisational policies and norms because they often have direct and frequent interactions with their team members. Also, employees often view their supervisor as a representative of the organization. Their attitude and support can thus directly affect an employee's experience in managing work-family balance and related job attitudes. For instance, previous research showed how the perception of supervisor fairness affects job satisfaction (Adamovic, 2023).

In relation to work-family policies and programs, supervisors also play a pivotal role. For instance, supervisors can either encourage or discourage employee participation in these initiatives and may reinforce cultural norms that either support or undermine employees' efforts to integrate their work and family lives (Perlow, 1995; Starrels, 1992; Thompson et al., 1999). Managerial support and sensitivity to employees' family responsibilities are also crucial factors in fostering a supportive work environment. For instance, studies have demonstrated that employees who receive support from their supervisors in balancing work and family commitments are less likely to experience conflict between the two domains (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). This form of support received from supervisors can differ from broader norms in the organizational culture towards care, defined as a "pattern of shared basic assumptions

that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration" (Schein, 2010; p. 3).

Supervisors also play a crucial role in how organizational policies are interpreted and implemented (Maxwell, 2005). Importantly, they can act as "gatekeepers" in a process of change such as promoting a more egalitarian work-family balance culture, serving either to exclude or include individuals that are legitimized to use work-family balance measures. These gatekeeping processes can occur at both the individual level, through homophily, and at the collective level, through the process of "affiliating masculinities" (Martin, 2001). For example, van den Brink and Benschop (2014) found that academic supervisors tend to coach younger men who they perceived as younger versions of themselves and dismiss women due to assumptions about their family obligations. This is because powerful men tend to connect and socialize with other men who are similar to them (Stafsudd, 2006), often preferring to work with similar men. Also, because managers are often responsible for driving change, their resistances may hinder progress and make organizations implement gender equality policies merely to display "good faith" rather than to effect real change (Konrad and Linnehan, 1995).

Biased attitudes of supervisors can contribute to a perception of organizational injustice where employees feel that policies and support are not applied equitably. Employees who do not receive support or understanding from their supervisors regarding their work-family balance may also experience higher levels of stress and burnout, especially if they feel unfairly treated compared to their colleagues. These perceptions can negatively impact their overall satisfaction within the organization (Qin and Zhang, 2022). For instance, for men feeling unsupported in balancing work and family responsibilities by their supervisors may lead to actual hindrance in their options to use work-family policies and be with their families compared to their female counterparts, thereby decreasing their overall satisfaction at work. For women, biased attitudes of supervisors about their greater work-family balance needs compared to their male counterparts may limit their promotion potential and perception that they are competent employees, thereby resulting in worst career prospects and lower job satisfaction. Bearing in mind the central role given in the literature to managers and their influence in employees' job attitudes, we suggest that:

H3: A perception of a biased attitude of supervisor towards the use of work-family balance measures will have a negative effect on satisfaction at work

As we have argued, a supervisor's biased attitude towards work-family balance may influence an employee's perception of the organization's support in a relevant domain (i.e.,

work-family balance) and have effects on these employees' job attitudes. Likewise, a supervisor's attitude towards work-family balance may significantly influence how employees perceive and experience work-family conflict. Because supervisors can have critical effects on their employees' work-family conflict (Wang, 2022), it can be expected that supervisors who understand and empathize with the work-family challenges faced by both men and women can help reduce Work-Family Conflict. This support can manifest in providing flexible scheduling, understanding in emergencies, and respecting the non-work time of employees for all employees, regardless of their gender. However, if a supervisor is biased from a gender perspective, showing less understanding or support for male than female employees, this can result in more conflict for both men and women – for women by reinforcing gender stereotypes and thus implicitly reproducing their conflicting gender roles, and for men, by directly preventing them from becoming more involved parents. It is suggested that:

H4: The perception of a biased attitude of supervisor towards the use of work-family balance will have a positive effect on work-family conflict.

2.2.3. Work-Family Conflict as a Major Barrier of Job Satisfaction

In the previous, we argued that supervisors' attitudes towards gender roles and work-family balance can contribute to a particular subculture of egalitarian support for their employees that is either inclusive or exclusive of men and women in work-family balance and subsequently improve these employees' positive job attitudes. The correlation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction can be elucidated through conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), which posits that individuals juggling multiple identities are prone to heightened conflict due to an imbalance between these identities. This conflict, in turn, stems from lower levels of job satisfaction. Rathi & Barath (2013) also suggest that job duties will continue to be unsatisfied and missed work tasks, which can have a detrimental impact on work attitudes, thereby reducing job satisfaction. Therefore, work-family conflict is a potential predictor of job satisfaction, and studies have shown that it can significantly reduce employee job satisfaction.

Dorenkamp & Ruhle (2019) found that work-family conflict has a significant effect on job satisfaction of academic workers. This is because young academics face a long period of insecure employment conditions after graduation, which overlaps significantly with the time in life when people tend to start families. A recent study focused on the impact of work-family conflict in reducing job satisfaction (Vickovic & Morrow, 2020) agrees that work-family clashes can decrease work fulfilment. Additionally, work-family conflict can reduce the positive impact

of job autonomy on job satisfaction through a negative mediating effect. Finally, work-family conflict was found to exacerbate the negative effects of biased or perfectionist cultures on job satisfaction (Valcour & van Dijke, 2021). Drawing from these associations, we argue that organizational and supervisors' egalitarian support can enhance job satisfaction by allowing these employees experience less conflict between their work and family responsibilities. Applying this to the present study, we propose that:

H5: The negative effect of the perception of a biased culture/attitude of supervisor towards the use of work-family balance on satisfaction is higher for those employees perceiving that they are experiencing work-family conflict.

Taken together, the primary aim of this section of the study is to determine the effects of both organizational cultures and supervisors biased towards work-family balance issues on job satisfaction, as well as to understand the role of work-family conflict in this relationship. Moreover, we explore whether the effects are different with biased organizational culture or biased attitude of supervisor as independent variables. In relation to work and organizational support, we have argued that support can be experienced through perceptions of a supportive organizational culture, or more specifically, through support received from a supervisor or a co-worker. However, the organizational culture literature suggests that supervisors can only have a limited effect on employees' outcomes compared to the broader organizational culture in a firm, such that even if a particular supervisor espouses different values employees may more strongly be influenced by the consistent culture of the organization as a whole (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hofstede, 1984). For instance, research has shown the long-term impact of organizational cultures on organizational effectiveness, highlighting how culture shapes employee experiences and outcomes over time, regardless of changes in particular managers (Denison, 1990). This field of study has also underscored the role of the organizational culture as a form of social control, influencing employee's decisions and commitment by embedding individuals into the organization's cultural norms (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). The notion of cultural consistency provided by Schein (2010) also highlights how the organizational culture emphasizes the importance of consistency and influences managerial behaviour to make it more aligned with the culture. Drawing from this literature, we can expect that the organizational culture plays a higher role than supervisor's attitudes in shaping job satisfaction. These relative effects of supervisory vs. organizational culture biases will be examined in our models:

H6: The effect of the perception of a biased culture towards the use of work-family balance on satisfaction is higher than the effect of the perception of a biased attitude of supervisor towards the use of work-family balance.

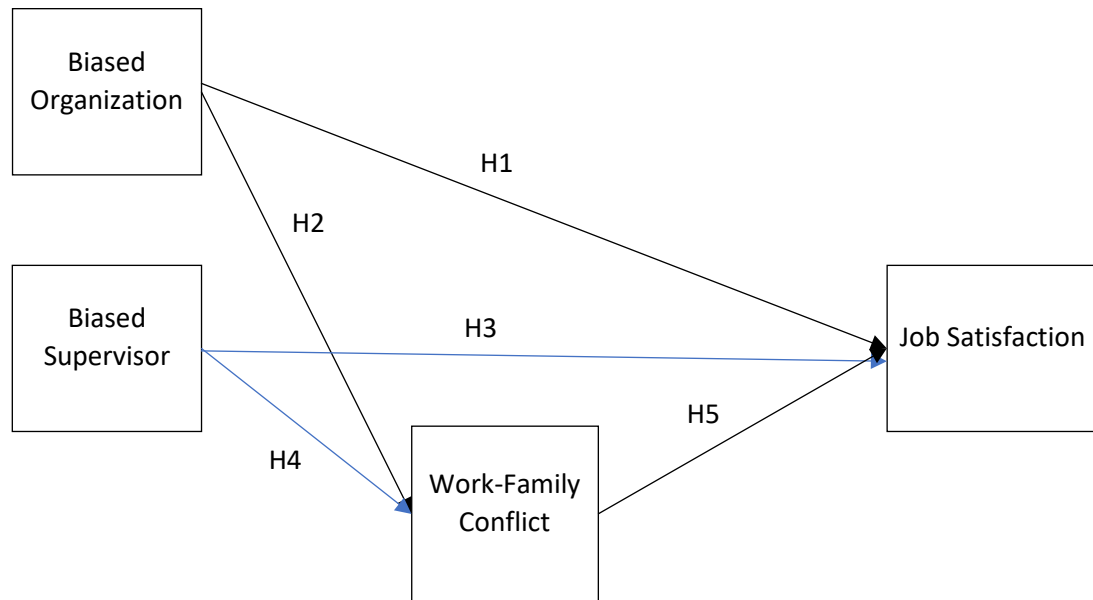


Figure 2. Research model (Study 2)

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodological Research Approach

In this chapter, the methodology used to address the objectives and research questions posed in this doctoral thesis is presented. As highlighted both in the introduction and the literature review, the purpose of the present research focuses on analysing two specific areas of interest regarding men's work-family balance, the subject of study of the doctoral thesis.

Within the research, the first field analysed is paternity leave. As explained in the previous chapter, this is an area with limited development and a small number of studies that specifically focus on analysing this particular phenomenon. In this sense, it is noteworthy how these studies use very diverse methodologies (i.e., quantitative versus qualitative; empirical versus theoretical), focus on different geographical areas and realities, and draw from different academic disciplines in their analyses. Therefore, the objective set around this area is to develop a conceptual organizing framework that analyses existing research and groups it around its various thematic areas. The ultimate goal is to gain a deep understanding of research on paternity leave, the various subtopics that have already been analysed, and the identification of areas with limited or no development, which will serve as lines of future research.

Since this is an area with limited development, the most effective method to identify the research already conducted, describe it, organize it, and analyse it from a conceptual standpoint is the development of a Systematic Literature Review. This literature review method allows us to obtain, through an objective, replicable, and systematic method, all the research conducted and indexed in reference databases. In our study, furthermore, we harness the full power of this method by combining descriptive analysis of the sample analysed (i.e., geographical, temporal, methodological distribution of studies) with a conceptual analysis of each study, extracting thematic categories and identifying areas that are less studied compared to other caregiving leaves (i.e., maternity and parenthood).

Responding to these goals, an exhaustive review was carried out for the period 1985 - 2020 of those scientific articles indexed in the Web of Science, Scopus or PsycINFO databases. In order to carry out the search, several criteria are established for the selection of articles: the presence of certain keywords, the type of article (peer-review and not a review) and the language. In this way, 154 articles were analysed that were directly related to the objective of the thesis, making it possible to identify the antecedents and effects of paternity leave, creating an organisational framework in which areas (and variables) little studied in the specific case of

paternity leave are identified, in comparison with other care leave (maternity leave and parental leave).

The second field analysed is bias against men's work-family balance. Research development in this area is comparatively more advanced than paternity leave research, at least in relation to gender differences in work-family conflict and job outcomes, traditionally studied in work-family balance research. Therefore, our objective in this second study is much more specific. We will not attempt to obtain a comprehensive and detailed understanding of a specific knowledge area, but rather we have focused on studying the effect of very specific variables on several dimensions of work-family balance. Specifically, our study aims to understand the effect of meso-level (organizational) variables related to balance on work outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction; work-family conflict). To analyse the latter part, the second study of this doctoral thesis will examine possible relationships between variables through the collection of primary data in a sample of European organizations. To do this, a questionnaire has been implemented targeting all employees of these organizations, followed by the development of a regression model to clarify the relationship between the variables under study.

In this way, Table 1 visually summarizes the different methodologies employed in the various studies comprising this doctoral thesis:

Study	Area of Study	Objective	Methodology	Data Source
1	Paternity leave	Develop an <i>organizing conceptual framework</i> on paternity leave research	Systematic Review of the Literature	Scientific articles indexed in selected databases
2	Bias towards men's work-family balance	To analyse the effect of meso-level (organizational) variables related to work-family balance on work outcomes	Quantitative: Regression Analysis	Primary data obtained through questionnaires

Table 1. Overview of methodological techniques

Following the identification of the diverse methodologies utilized, the subsequent sections of this chapter will delve into a comprehensive analysis of their implementation. Each methodology will be scrutinized in detail, elucidating the specific steps comprising them and elucidating the strategies employed for data collection and analysis. Moreover, a final segment

in each area of study will be dedicated to examining the ethical considerations inherent in these methodologies and evaluating how they have been integrated into the various studies conducted. This holistic examination will provide a nuanced understanding of the research process and the ethical framework within which it operates.

3.2. Systematic Review of Paternity Leave Work

For the first area of study, we conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) to inform our conceptual model and identify the topics and articles that address the study of paternity leave. Although there are different literature review methods to identify and analyse the most relevant results on a topic, SLR is often contrasted with traditional literature reviews because systematic reviews represent an objective, replicable, systematic and comprehensive method in which the process is reported in the same manner as for reporting empirical research (Weed 2005; Ayala, Cuenca-Amigo & Cuenca, 2020). Klassen et al (1998) define SLR as ‘a review in which there is a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic, and those identified are then appraised and synthesized according to a pre-determined explicit method’. The method needs to be reflected into a protocol (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008), with different phases that will be followed, from the initial selection of keywords, to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the subsequent analysis of categories and content.

The origin of SLRs is in the medical, health care, and policy fields, where it has been used to assemble the best evidence to make clinical and policy decisions (Cook et al. 1997). This method has been implemented in other areas of research, such as social sciences (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008) or psychology (Williamson, 2008). In general, SLRs in research around management and organizations are used to provide transparency, clarity, accessibility, and impartial inclusive coverage on a particular area (Thorpe et al. 2006). Extending this field, in the current study we use SLR specifically to explore research studies that have examined paternity leave with the aim of gaining insight about the areas that have been covered in this field and providing an overarching organizing framework that helps identify the potential elements that need to be explored in further research.

The organizing theoretical framework for the review is based on two fundamental building blocks that are typical in content-analytic reviews in organizational behaviour research (e.g., Schilke, Hu, & Helfat, 2018; Hassan et al., 2022): antecedents and effects. These underlying dimensions allow analysing the most important building blocks of a given phenomenon and their underlying conceptual trends in more detail. By identifying relevant areas in these two

dimensions we provide a conceptual lens for understanding current knowledge in the field and identifying areas of influence that involve future research and action, showing that paternity leaves have critical positive effects in several dimensions of analysis and the domestic division of labour. The analysis consisted on developing different searches in the title, keyword and abstract sections in academic databases (see next section).

3.2.1. Description of the Search Methods

Following the SLR structure defined above, we carried out our searches in the following databases, available on the university library services of the authors: ISI Web of Knowledge, including its related databases (Main Collection of Web of Science, Current Contents Connect, Derwent Innovations Index, KCI-Korean Journal Database, MEDLINE, Russian Science Citation Index and SciELO Citation Index) Scopus and PsycInfo. Scopus and ISI Web of Knowledge are the most comprehensive databases of peer-reviewed journals in social sciences, and PsycInfo is a referent database in the field of behavioural and social sciences research, and recurrently used on research involving organizational psychology and human resource management.

3.2.2. Description of the Inclusion Criteria

The search was restricted using the following criteria: (i) the article should contain the word “paternity leave”, either in the title, abstract or author keyword section. (ii) the language is English or Spanish, as they are the working languages of the authors. (iii) the paper is peer-reviewed. In previous stages of the analysis, we conducted a preliminary comparative analysis about the degree of development of research on the different forms of care leaves: available to mothers (maternity leaves), fathers (paternity leaves) and share between both parents (parental leaves). The results showed that these areas of study differ in the total number of investigations in each domain, with 2,246 papers for ‘maternity leave’, 502 papers for ‘paternity leave’ and 2,078 for ‘parental leave’. Because the aim of the present study is to analyse leaves available only to men, the number of articles containing the keyword “paternity leave” retrieved from each database was recorded. No restriction was placed on year of publication, performing the searches on June 12, 2020. Next, we examined if there were any external duplicates from the current database being searched and the previous databases that had already been searched. We recorded the number of external duplicates, and then deleted the duplicated journal articles from the last database searched while keeping a running total of new articles found.

Once all possible studies had been identified, we conducted a second screening to assess eligibility against inclusion criteria and then full text articles were retrieved for those that met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for the second screening required that the published

peer-reviewed article meet all of the following three specifications: (i) be in the English or Spanish language; (ii) be an empirical study (i.e., not a literature review, an essay, book review, letter, editorial, opinion, journalistic article); and (iii) discuss paternity leaves as the central element. Articles were excluded if any of these components was not addressed in the abstract, results, or discussion sections of the respective study.

3.2.3. Description of the Sample Analysis

Figure 3 contains a visual summary of the sampling process. Following the procedure described in the previous section, the initial search in all three databases delivered a total of 497 records. After checking for duplicated and limiting the sample to the available articles, the sample was reduced to 271 records. A subsequent screening process was conducted, in order to test whether the abstract, title and keyword are linked with the initial search (i.e. some of the articles refer to maternity leave, although the keyword paternity leave was present). Finally, the selected references were carefully read and analysed, an those not fulfilling the eligibility criteria (mainly, not addressing the paternity leaves as a central element of the paper) were discarded. After all the process, the final sample was composed of 154 records.

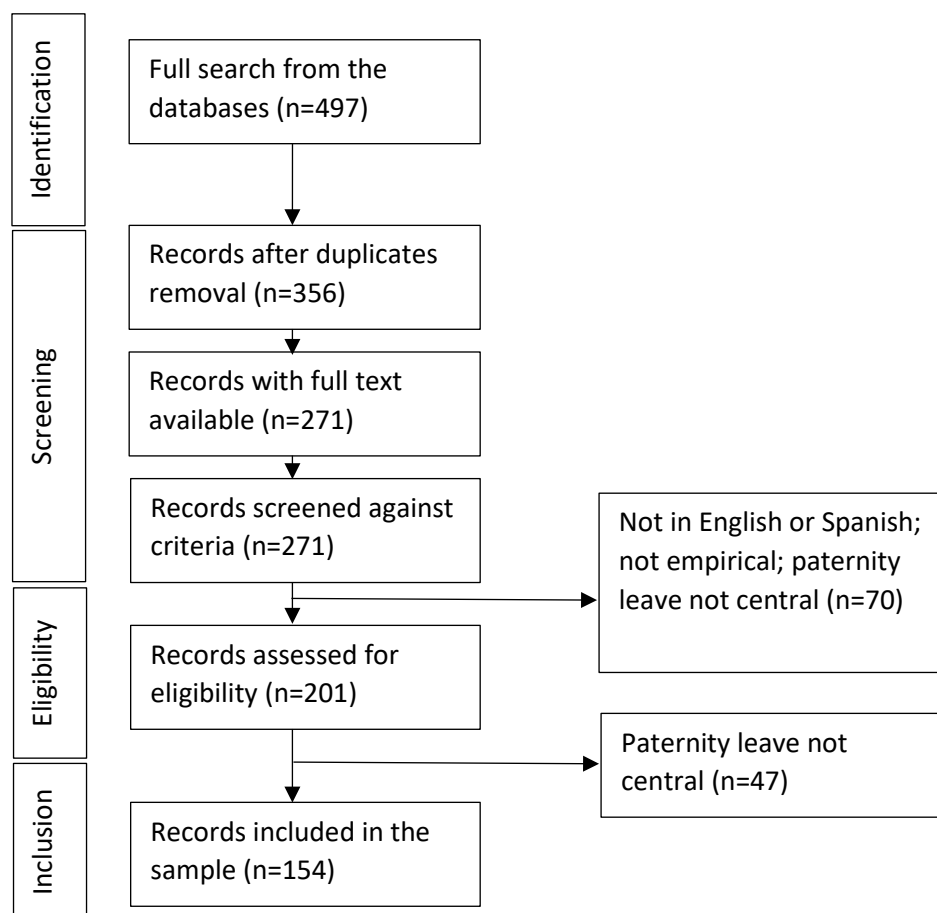


Figure 3. Methodological Steps Followed in the SLR

3.2.4. Ethical considerations

This study analyses the existing literature in the area of paternity leave through the Systematic Literature Review technique. Similar to primary researchers, systematic reviewers must conscientiously address a plethora of ethical considerations, encompassing potential conflicts of interest and issues surrounding voice and representation. Given that systematic reviews are frequently consulted and referenced in documents shaping policy and practice, the ethical dimensions of how these reviews are conducted and utilized carry significant weight. It is imperative for systematic reviewers to meticulously consider how the perspectives of both authors and participants in the original studies are portrayed, ensuring that all viewpoints are adequately represented, including those that may have been overlooked.

Moreover, the domain of applicability of systematic reviews warrants careful examination to prevent inadvertent extrapolation of review findings to contexts where they may not be applicable. This entails a systematic reflection on how various publication biases and search biases might impact the synthesis of findings. Throughout the review process, reviewers must maintain reflexivity regarding how their own subjective standpoint influences, and is influenced by, the findings of the review.

Deliberate and informed selective inclusivity should guide critical decisions made during the review process, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered and represented. When communicating the insights derived from the review, reviewers must prioritize audience-appropriate transparency to enhance the ethical impact of the review findings. By adhering to these ethical principles, systematic reviewers uphold the integrity of their work and contribute to the responsible dissemination of knowledge in the academic community.

3.3. Firm vs. Supervisor Work-Family Bias

For the second area of study, namely effects of organizational biases about men's domestic needs on several work-related outcomes, the present study employs quantitative methods, specifically a questionnaire, to gather data on the topic at hand. The questionnaire was designed to elicit specific information from a large sample of participants in a structured and standardized manner. The questions were carefully crafted to ensure that they were clear, concise, and easy to understand, while also capturing the desired information. The use of a questionnaire allowed for the collection of a large amount of data quickly and efficiently, enabling the researchers to analyse the results and draw meaningful conclusions. Overall, the use of this quantitative method adds rigor and validity to the findings presented.

3.3.1. Description of the Survey

The questionnaire is composed four different sections, each of them aiming at a different area directly or indirectly connected to the promotion of work-family balance in organizations: (i) Demographics (ii) General Values (iii) Work-family Balance and (iv) About your Supervisor.

The questionnaire was administered to all the staff of five Higher Education Institutions and one Research Funding Organization, all of them based in Europe. The survey was delivered, and responses collected, using online methods, in particular the software Qualtrics.

3.3.2. Measures

Bias against fathers' work-family balance. This is measured by using the Reconciliation Bias scale developed by Belope-Nguema et al (2018), that measures to what extent an employee perceives a bias against fathers' work-family balance measures in the company. This scale was applied twice in the questionnaire, once for the company and another time for the supervisor. It is composed of five items, measured in a five-point scale (not at all true/totally true). In both cases, reliability is high (Cronbach's alpha 0.922 and 0.902 respectively). An example item of this scale is: "The need to balance work and family life is conceived as something that concerns mainly the female staff of the company, and not so much the masculine one."

Work-Family Conflict. Individual work-family conflict was also assessed by means of the Netemeyer et al (1990) scale (Cronbach's alpha 0.939). Composed of five items, each item is rated from 1=totally disagree to 7=totally agree, capturing the extent to which each of the statements are true or not for the participant. An example item of this scale is: "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life"

Job Satisfaction. Overall satisfaction at work was measured by means of the Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction (Thompson and Phua, 2012), rating its four items from 1=not at all true to 5=totally true. The scale shows high reliability (Cronbach's alpha 0.769). An example item of this scale is: "I find real enjoyment in my job"

Apart from these scales, the control variables listed in Table 2 have been included in the analysis.

Variable	Explanation	Values
Institution	Which institution do you belong to?	1 to 6
Gender	Are you:	1=Men 2=Women 3=Non-binary
Age	What is your age?	1=< 30 2=31-40 3=41-50 4=51-60 5=61-70
Live Couple	Domestic structure: I live with my partner	0=No 1=Yes
Live Children	Domestic structure: I live with my dependant children	0=No 1=Yes
Live Elder	Domestic structure: I live with elder dependant relatives	0=No 1=Yes
Hours Domestic Work	Hours per day dedicated to: - Domestic work (excluding childcare)	Numerical
Hours Children	Hours per day dedicated to: - Childcare	Numerical
Hours Other activities	Hours per day dedicated to: - Other activities (e.g. leisure)	Numerical
Hours Elderly care	Hours per day dedicated to: - Elderly care	Numerical
WLB	Have you used any of these work-family balance arrangements?	0=No 1=Yes
Group	To which professional group do you belong?	1=Academic Staff 2=Administrative Staff
CategoryMM	Professional category: Middle Management	0=No 1=Yes
CategoryTL	Professional category: Top Leadership	
Year Position	How long have you been in this category (years)?	Numerical
Years Institution	How long have you been in the institution (years)?	Numerical

Table 2. List of Control Variables

3.3.3. Analytical Approach

Multi-level modelling is used to account for possible non-independence of observations within each of the institutions represented in the survey (Steele, 2008). The models are fitted using MLwiN within Stata v18 through the external software package 'runmlwin' (Leckie & Charlton, 2013).

The analysis relies on the mediation analysis steps originally described by Baron and Kenny (1986). There are three steps involved: first, establishing whether Work-Family Conflict is associated with Bias of the Organization (path a1) and Bias of the Supervisor (path a2); second, testing whether Work-Family Conflict is associated with Satisfaction (path b); and third, determining if the direct effect of Bias of the Organization and Bias of the Supervisor on Satisfaction remains statistically significant once Work-Family Conflict is included in the model (path c'1 c'2). If paths a1 or a2, b, c'1 and c'2 are all statistically significant, there is evidence of partial mediation. If only paths a1 or a2 and b are statistically significant, there is then evidence of a full mediation. The results present both direct effects and indirect effects. The statistical significance of the indirect effect is estimated via bootstrapping with 1,000 repetitions. All models include the set of control variables described above.

3.3.3. Ethical considerations

Quantitative approaches are not an exception in raising ethical issues. Although it may seem that the connection with the participants (and in particular with personal data of the individuals) is lower than in qualitative approaches, there are still several points that must be accomplished in order to ensure the ethical dimension of the methodology since the conception of the project.

At this point, it is important to note that the collection of information for this second study has been carried out within the framework of the GEARING-Roles research project, funded by the European Commission within the framework of the Horizon 2020 programme. As part of the activities of this project, the questionnaire that serves as the basis for our research has been implemented, which has been distributed among the workers in the institutions participating in the project.

Starting from the research question that is it going to be tested in the study, a balance between the research aims and what is feasible (and in this context, ethical) to obtain from the individual is needed. The correct definition of the research question will lead us to the correct

definition of the specific questions that can be included in the survey tool. In the context of my research field, in which we are trying to understand leadership profiles and behavioural patterns towards the effect of a norm, several questions regarding the composition of the family, or about the attitude the individual has towards particular themes (e.g. gender equality and division of domestic work) are useful to understand people's background. However, in order to ensure the balance between the respondents' privacy and the research that is being made, the degree in which some of the topics was of a lesser intensity.

This reasoning has its basis in the data protection regulation (i.e. General Data Protection Regulation), that conceptualizes data about individual perceptions regarding personal issues (sexual orientation, political opinions...) as highly protected data. This classification means that the use of this type of questions needs to be fully justified, and strict measures for data storage and for the assurance of anonymity need to be taken.

Once the tool for data gathering was designed, the distribution of the questionnaire also raised ethical concerns. In any case, anyone involved in collecting data from individuals has an ethical duty to respect each individual participant's autonomy to participate. The partners were aware (and collaborators in the design of) the questionnaire and the aims of the research, when all agreed to participate. The questionnaire was implemented through the platform Qualtrics. This platform generates an anonymous link to share with all the intended audience of the survey. Moreover, the advice of an Ethical Independent Advisor covered all the ethical domain of questionnaire creation, distribution and data protection.

Regarding the grant of consent, the questionnaire started with a description of the project and the questionnaire, with a link to the Informed Consent of the GEARING-Roles Project. Once all this information was presented, the participant was asked to either grant its consent or deny it and, consequently, end the survey. The content of the informed consent (that can be found under Appendix 1), described the general aim of the project, as well as the kind of questions that will be asked, the manner in which data will be analysed (anonymously and aggregated) and stored (place and duration). Furthermore, it will state clearly the possibility of not answering some of the questions and of ceasing the participation at any moment (without keeping track of the information that has been already given).

Once the data was gathered, the project itself implemented a Data Management Plan to protect all the data gathered with the questionnaire. Personal data was protected with a particular emphasis: the supporting partners do not have access to individual data of respondents (names and addresses) and the implementation of the survey meet all international

and national standards with regard to data security or data protection. Among others, the information gathered was not be traceable to specific individuals (it is anonymous) and data will only be presented in aggregate form.

The databases available at each GEP implementing institution were used safeguarding the anonymity of the participants. At all times, the interpretation of the data was executed according to demographic, academic, socio-economic profiles, etc. Regarding the online questionnaire, the anonymity of those who answer will be ensured by only identifying a sociodemographic profile.

With regard to the storage of raw data, all data was stored on password protected computers, in a secure location at the University of Deusto, and the Qualtrics servers. With regard to Qualtrics security, its statement says that:

Our servers are protected by high-end firewall systems and scans are performed regularly to ensure that any vulnerabilities are quickly found and patched. Application penetration tests are performed annually by an independent third-party. All services have quick failover points and redundant hardware, with backups performed daily. Access to systems is restricted to specific individuals who have a need-to-know such information and who are bound by confidentiality obligations. Access is monitored and audited for compliance.

All in all, great efforts were taken to protect participants identity, including non-identification in any report or publication arising from this questionnaire or its results. We also guaranteed the right to access, update, correct and erase all personal data at any time during or after project life

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

4.1. Antecedents and Effects of Paternity Leave¹

With the theoretical approach of antecedents and effects described in the previous chapters addressing antecedents and effects in paternity leave, we hereby aim to accommodate different disciplinary approaches and outcomes, synthesizing the findings in prior work and family research generally focused on women in coherence to the extant broader body of knowledge and insights in different fields and disciplines. In particular, this analysis extends our theoretical knowledge to the growing fields of work-family balance (Michel et al., 2011; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Allen et al., 2020), institutional policy (Bartel et al., 2018; Escot et al., 2014) and gender roles and analyses at work (Gartzia, 2021; Gartzia et al., 2018; Eagly, 2013; Valarino, 2018). The approach adopted in this area of study in the thesis, which resulted in a comprehensive overall conceptual organizing framework in the theoretical section, summarizes the most relevant antecedents and effects of men's use of paternity leave (see Figure 4). In the current section, we address how these several specific subdimensions represent frequently studied topics or are still relatively uncovered in the actual literature, providing a clearer understanding and overarching framework of existing research and conclusions in this field. Given the critical role that organizational and work life plays in this gendered form of absence from work, our organizing framework also revisits the antecedents and effects of paternity leave in organizational contexts in light of what we know about behaviour in the context of work.

¹ This section is an adaptation of the results published in: Pizarro, J., & Gartzia, L. (2024). Paternity leave: A systematic review and directions for research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 34, 101001. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2023.101001>. See this paper under Appendix 2.

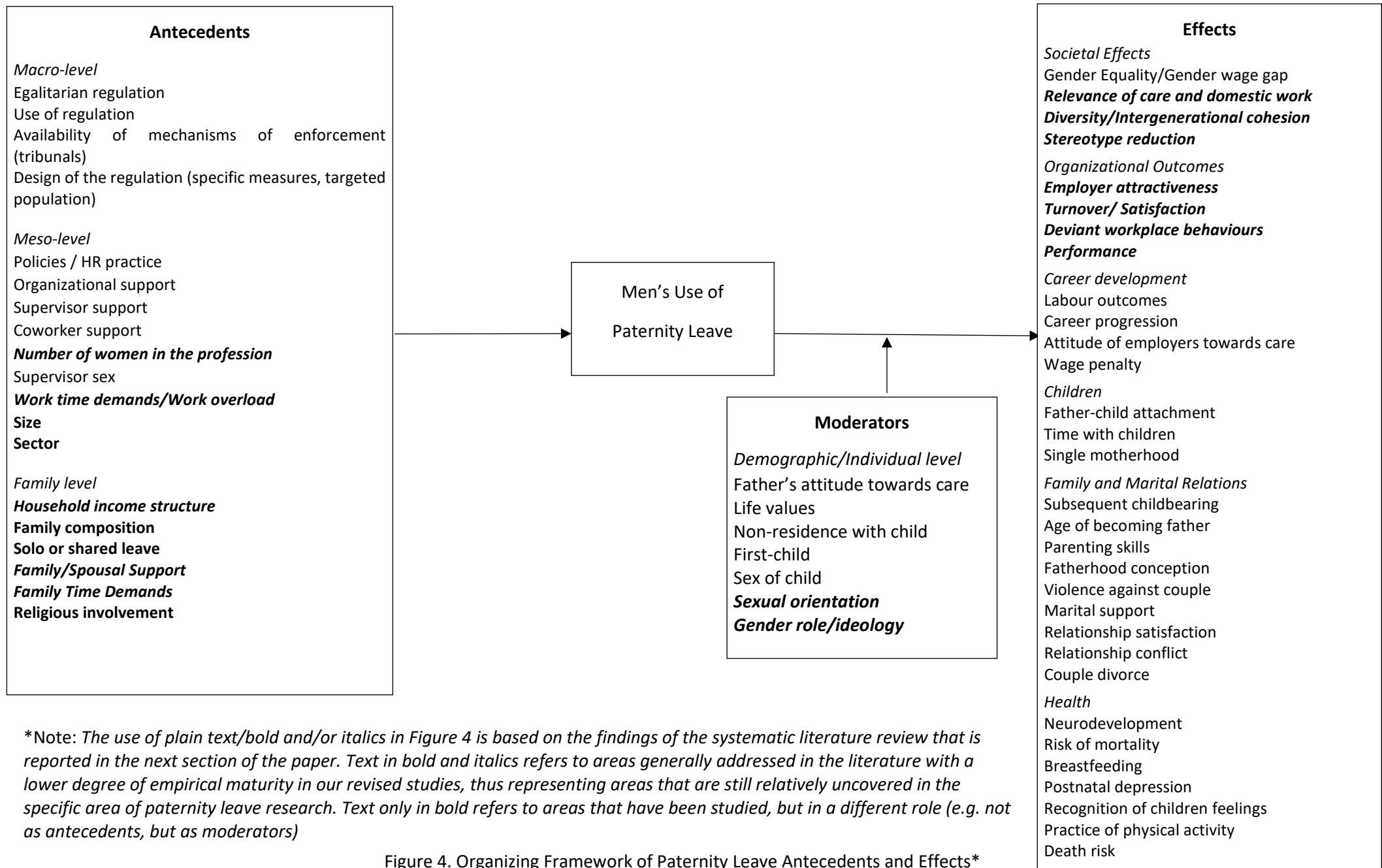


Figure 4. Organizing Framework of Paternity Leave Antecedents and Effects*

4.1.1. Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

The literature reviewed comprised an in-depth analysis of the articles retrieved from the abovementioned process. The articles were published on a total of 117 journals, mainly related to health (44 journals); the social policies areas of knowledge (43 journals); and, to a lesser extent, management (30 journals). Figure 5 shows the distribution of these publications over time. The trend is positive, meaning that the topic has been growingly capturing the interest of the research community, with more than 53 percent of the research carried out from 2016 onwards.

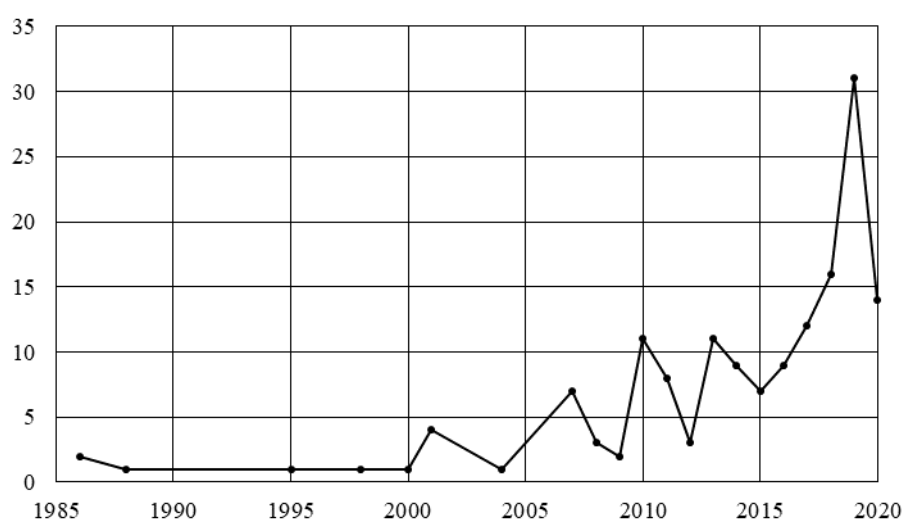


Figure 5. Number of Paternity Leave Publications per Year, 1986-2020

Looking at the geographical distribution of the samples, the review shows that paternity leave studies are not consistently spread across different countries as depicted in Table 3. Europe's unique interest on men's paternity leave is represented by the higher number of studies (74) on the topic, followed by America (58), Asia (5), Australia (4) and Africa (3). This is consistent with the fact that European countries are the ones with more advanced paternity leave schemes (i.e. with more duration and wage replacement percentage), in particular Nordic countries (EIGE, 2021). These trends contrast the distribution of research articles by location in reviews examining other research topics in which American research is typically more prevalent (e.g., Atatsi, Stoffers & Kil, 2019; Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020), pointing to the particular salience of the topic in Europe. The more limited development of this literature on Africa, Australia and Asia may be due to the greater absence of specific policies in the topic in these cultural settings and their lower engagement in gender equality action more broadly, as evidenced in their generally lower position in gender equality indexes (World

Economic Forum, 2021). According to Darko-Asumadu (2020), men's use of paternity leave is generally low in countries in these locations, with only a few working men engaging in longer paternity leaves. Note, however, that these differences may also be influenced by the vast scientific knowledge gap between economically developing countries and the more industrialized economies of North American and European countries, which limit the number of scientific papers that are produced as a whole (Zoogah et al., 2015; World Bank, 2014). As it can be inferred, North America and Europe comprise most of the research in total.

Gender of corresponding author		
Female	107	69.48%
Male	47	30.52%
Continent		
Africa	3	1.95%
America	58	37.66%
Asia	5	3.25%
Europe	74	48.05%
Global	10	6.49%
Australia	4	2.60%
Source of data		
Self-reported questionnaire	41	39.81%
Administrative data	28	27.18%
National or International Survey	34	33.01%
Methodology		
Cross-sectional	75	48.70%
Experimental	1	0.65%
Experimental and Cross-Sectional	1	0.65%
Longitudinal	26	16.88%
Qualitative	51	33.12%
Sample		
Fathers	27	26.21%
Both parents	54	52.43%
Parents and Children	5	4.85%
Others (Academics, Employers, Companies and Students)	17	16.50%

Table 3. Description of SLR Sample Characteristics

Work-family balance research, as part of research including a broader gender perspective that calls for organizational change and a greater acknowledgement of domestic responsibilities, is often seen as a “women's issue” (Huang, 2020). Consistent with this view, Table 3 confirms how the pattern applies within the field of paternity leaves. Thus, the review revealed that the papers around this topic are to a greater extent signed by a woman (69.48%) as the first corresponding author. Two different procedures were followed for sex identification (Mauleón et al, 2013): (a) sex was inferred from the name of the authors when

they had names whose sex assignment was clear, or (b) search of their academic or institutional webpages.

Table 3 shows the main characteristics of paternity leave studies. Interestingly, the review revealed that 52.43% of the articles reviewed used samples composed of couples of parents. For instance, Petts & Knoester (2019), Romero-Balsas (2015) and Wray (2020) examined paternity leave use in the context of married or cohabiting couples. 26.21% of the articles reviewed used samples of only men (fathers; e.g., Bartel et al., 2018; Dahl et al., 2018) and 4.85% focused on families as a whole (i.e. parents and their children). Only a relatively small amount of studies (16.5%) focused more specifically on other samples such as students, academics or managers (e.g., Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007; Barcus et al., 2019). Given that work-family balance is a relevant topic of interest from an organizational research perspective, the small number of studies looking specifically at paternity leaves from the perspective of the organization and their implications for companies is surprising.

The sample comprised papers using both quantitative (64% of the sample) and qualitative (33.12%) methods. Of those studies based on quantitative data, 72% were based on cross-sectional data. For example, Wray (2020) acknowledged the establishment of causality between the implementation of paternity leaves and father's involvement as a challenge for the future, given that the majority of papers do not go beyond cross-national analysis. Among the articles using a qualitative approach, Aunkofer et al. (2018) used in-depth interviews to explore negotiations within the couple members and employer-employee negotiations to take leave by men. Longitudinal studies were scarce (16.88%) and only 1.3% of the articles used experimental designs to support their research, suggesting that causality is rarely addressed in paternity leave research. The vast majority of studies (60.19%) used administrative (28 articles) and panel data (34 articles) based on national surveys about domestic time use and use of work-family balance initiatives, with a lower number of studies (41 articles) asking participants more directly through self-reported surveys.

4.1.2. Conceptual Analysis and Organizing Framework

To identify conceptual trends in the study of paternity leave and provide an organizing theoretical framework, a specific conceptual analysis was performed using a process of analysis and synthesis based on keywords and following recommendations of previous SLRs in other domains of research (Voegtlin & Greenwood, 2016). Keywords of the reviewed articles were used as a reference and uploaded into an *ad-hoc* database. Following recommendations of previous reviews (Ayala et al., 2020), the first step was to analyse and complete the

keywords in a limited number of articles in which these were not included. In such cases, keywords were generated from the articles that best matched in terms of content. The keywords were then categorised into thematic groups. This inductive process was iterated three times, resulting in 48 groups of keywords (first iteration), 23 groups of keywords (second iteration), and 8 groups of keywords (third iteration), respectively. The reason for grouping articles together on each iteration is the thematic closeness of the keywords or group of keywords, which allowed different sets of papers to be analysed jointly.

Following the organizing framework described in the introductory section, (Schilke, Hu, & Helfat, 2018), we accommodated the emergent thematic areas into the antecedents and effects building blocks. In particular, in an attempt to categorise the different predictors of the use of paternity leaves integrating the previous conceptual frameworks in the work-family balance domain (e.g., Michel et al, 2011) and social organizational gender research (Gartzia, 2021), we included not only regulatory (macro-level) and organizational (meso-level) factors, but also family level variables as potential antecedents of paternity leave. Following these previous conceptual approaches and in particular studies in work-family balance research (Michel et al, 2011; Le et al, 2020), individual factors are represented as moderators in our organizing framework (Figure 4). Note that, although family and individual level variables were included in our theoretical organizing framework following this conceptual rationale, these variables were in most cases not addressed as antecedents/moderators in the actual studies located in our searches. For instance, the religious participation of the couple (Petts, 2018), the use of solo or shared leave (Bünning, 2015) or the household income structure (Berrigan et al, 2015) were analysed in studies mainly as moderators but conceptualized in our broader framework as family predictors. Similarly, sector or size of the company are studied as moderators in our sample, but conceptualized in the theoretical framework as meso-level predictor. Other individual-level dimensions such as sexual orientation of the father, gender ideology or cultural values were generally not addressed in research but included in our organizing framework because they represent common moderators in work-family research (Allen et al, 2020, Michel et al, 2011).

Following this process, the resulting classification of papers based on their content was: a) 24 articles focused on the importance of policy/regulation for use of paternity leave (*macro-level* category); b) 27 articles focused on how organizational variables and cultures shape the use of leaves (*meso-level* category); c) 17 articles focused in the effects of paternity leaves on relationships with children (*children* category); d) 16 articles focused on effects of paternity leaves on the couple (*family and marital relations*); e) 16 articles focused on effects

of paternity leaves on professional life and career development (*career development* category); f) 15 articles focused on effects of paternity leave on health (*health* category); g) 5 articles focused on effects of paternity leave on the domestic division of work (*gender equality* category); and h) 33 articles addressing paternity leaves in specific sectors (such as medical, law, or managerial levels). All the references were included at least in one of these categories. Areas a, b and h were subsumed into the antecedents block, and areas c to g into the effects domain. All the moderators identified in all the a to h areas were collected in a separate block in Figure 4, to acknowledge their moderating role. In the following section, we provide an overview of the current state of the art in each area.

4.1.2.1. Antecedents of Paternity Leaves

This section includes the *macro-level forces* and *meso-level forces* categories.

Effects of Policy/Regulation (Macro-level Forces). One of the areas in which the literature has shown greater interest is in relation to the evaluation of the effect of current regulations regarding leaves. Leave regulations are politically controversial, due to the different political debates that evidence the tension between a hyper-maternalised traditional model and men's growing willingness to use care leaves provided to them (Doucet & McKay, 2020; Drew & Watters, 2014; Milner & Gregory, 2015). In relation to this, there is general agreement that regulations regarding leaves have a different effect on men and women. In particular, there is general agreement that reforms towards more egalitarian leaves make the proportion of men asking for leaves rise (Bartel et al., 2018; Escot et al., 2014; Zagorsky, 2017) and reduce possible discrimination from employers that identify parenting as a women's issue (Arnarson & Mitra, 2010). In contrast, some authors claim that the availability and use of leaves should be explicitly separated in these analyses of the topic, given that in contexts where both maternity and paternity leaves are available, women still make more use of them (Amin et al., 2016; Bueno & Grau-Grau, 2020; Whitehouse, Baird, et al., 2007).

In general, studies on the paternity leave literature identified public policies as an effective tool either to remove barriers in the use of leaves by men, or to avoid reproducing existing patterns of inequalities in this field (Alio et al., 2011; Dobrotić & Stropnik, 2020; Fernández-Cornejo, Pozo-García, et al., 2018; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2020; Petts, Knoester, & Li, 2020; Tsai, 2012). However, in order to be effective, it has been suggested that these policies should create individual rights to fathers, such as reserved weeks in parental

leaves (Duvander & Johansson, 2019; Farré, 2016; O'Brien, 2009) rather than general childcare measures (Chau et al., 2017; Gregory & Milner, 2011a; Weldon-Johns, 2011). McClelland (2018) also acknowledged the relevant role of judges and tribunals in evaluating existing policies, underscoring the need to ensure organizations' adherence to laws and regulations with legal punishment if necessary.

Effects of Organizational Variables (Meso-level Forces). Organizations have also been studied as a relevant antecedent and domain of influence in domestic life and the way work-family balance policies can be successfully implemented (e.g., Haas & Hwang, 2019). Some studies have addressed how the way in which organizations incorporate policies into human resources processes and culture can have an impact both in the use of leaves and organizational performance (Duffy et al., 2020; O'Brien, 2013; Burke, 1986; Burke et al., 2006).

A set of studies have tried to understand the role of that cultural norms of the organization (e.g., shared values) in the use of leaves, as well as their outcomes. The vast majority of the literature agrees to underscore the role of the workplace as a reinforcer of social norms present in the society and/or within the couple (Flaquer & Escobedo, 2014; McKay & Doucet, 2010), perpetuating the gendered division of work (Aunkofer et al., 2018; Romero-Balsas et al., 2013; Valarino, 2018). The outcomes examined include the effects of traditional organizational norms on incongruity between availability and use of family arrangements (Thébaud & Halcomb, 2019; Waner et al., 2007), and the negative impact on men's evaluations and promotions, especially when the leave is long (longer than five weeks for Canadian data, Harvey & Tremblay, 2020, and up to three months with European data, Gartzia et al., 2018).

Other research studies focus on understanding the impact of organizational support on individual responses regarding parental leave, underscoring how subjective perceptions of support by the organization is one of the most important factors that determine the use of leaves by men (Barcus et al., 2019; Eerola et al., 2019; Gordon & Szram, 2013; Kaufman, 2018; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Pavicevic & Herrera, 2019; Tremblay & Genin, 2010; Valarino & Gauthier, 2016; Whitehouse, Diamond, et al., 2007). Together with this organizational support approach, co-workers also play a key role in fostering the use of leaves (Dahl et al., 2014; Miyajima & Yamaguchi, 2017). Finally, the salience of gender stereotypes in a profession is also understood as a factor that can facilitate a more equal use of family leaves. In particular, there is evidence that working in female-dominated professions is associated with an expansion of the gender-neutral leave (share of leave beyond reserved days for fathers) taken by men (Naz, 2010). In male-dominated professions such as the banking sector, challenges are more marked

and thus there is a call for human resource practitioners and social workers to educate people in these sectors to ease the shift process towards a higher use of paternity leaves (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018).

4.1.2.2. Effects of Paternity Leaves

This section comprises findings related to four categories: effects on relationship with children; effects on health; effects on family and marital relations; and career development effects.

Effects on Relationship with Children. The most studied topic related to effects of paternity leave is in relation to the relationship between fathers and their children. For instance, researchers have focused on positive associations between the provision of paternity leaves and father-child attachment. Cygan-Rehm et al. (2018) showed how paternity leave improved father-child attachment and a subsequent reduction on single motherhood (i.e. without a spouse or live-in partner). Children's perception of father involvement has shown to be higher when using paternity leave, improving also father-child closeness and communication (Petts, Knoester, & Waldfogel, 2020).

Research examining moderating factors in these associations have found that the positive effects that parental leave can bring to relationships with children are higher under several conditions: positive attitudes towards care (Fernández-Cornejo et al., 2016; Petts & Knoester, 2018); non-residence with the child (Knoester et al., 2019; Pilkauskas & Schneider, 2020); more religious participation of parents (Petts, 2018); or being the first child (Miller, 2011; Romero-Balsas, 2015). A large number of papers also found that father general involvement in caretaking increases when they spend time at home after birth, which is typical in paternity leave (Meil, 2013; Nkwake, 2009). For instance, research looking at time with children has shown that paternity leaves increased solo time of fathers with children, irrespective of the duration of the leave (Hosking et al., 2010; Wray, 2020). Interestingly, research in this field has also shown that this effect persists once the father gets back to work (Meil, 2017; Tamm, 2019) and is durable over the first 28 months of life of the child, decreasing when entering preschool and school (Lamb et al., 1988; Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007).

Effects on Family and Marital Relations. A notable set of articles focused on the effects of paternity leaves on family and marital relations. The majority of studies in this field fall predominantly in the family subcategory, with the general finding that the use of paternity leaves by fathers is positively associated with future involvement in fathering, including higher

subsequent childbearing in the couple (Duvander et al., 2019; Farré & González, 2019). In terms of marital relations, higher levels of marital support and relationship satisfaction have also been repeatedly reported when using paternity leaves (Feldman & Gran, 2016; McClain & Brown, 2017; Petts & Knoester, 2019a, 2019b). Conversely, some authors found a positive association between the provision of paternity leaves and the probability of couple separation (Avdic & Karimi, 2018) as well as relationship conflict in contexts where the mother is not working in a paid job (Petts & Knoester, 2019a).

A lower number of studies focused specifically on violence among heterosexual couples, finding a negative association between the use of leaves and violence against one's partner (e.g., Chan et al., 2017). Interestingly, some studies have reported an identity change by fathers as a consequence of paternity leaves, such that experiences of being at home with a leave make fathers see themselves with a principal role in parenting alongside mothers that goes beyond the traditional breadwinner ideal where men is an occasional collaborator in care duties (Johansson, 2011; Klinth, 2008; Lim, 2019; Xiangxian, 2020). This can be explained in part because taking a leave allows fathers to be immerse into daily realities of childcare, which leads to develop parenting skills and a sense of responsibility (Beglaubter, 2019; Rehel, 2014).

Effects on Career Development. This category focuses on the potential effects of paternity leaves for career development, capturing effects for both men and women. Specific research around men's career development suggests that the use of paternity leaves within the company increased the level of acceptance of these leaves by employers (Duvander et al., 2019; Feldman et al., 2004). On a negative point, Cools & Strøm (2016) and Rege & Solli (2013) identified an increase in their wage penalty for males making use of paternity leaves. Also, Gartzia and colleagues (2018) showed that longer paternity leaves can have negative effects for male leaders' careers by decreasing perceptions of their effectiveness as leaders. In particular, they showed that male leaders taking a longer paternity leave (from 2 weeks to 3 months, which went beyond the standard in their particular work context) received more negative evaluations than both other male leaders with a shorter statutory leave (from 2 days to 2 weeks) and female leaders (Gartzia et al., 2018).

In the case of women, there is general agreement that the provision of paternity leaves for fathers has positive effects for women in terms of career development outcomes. These outcomes include general benefits such as a reduced household gender wage gap (Andersen, 2018; Druedahl et al., 2019) or an enhanced probability that women are employed in paid work (Andysz et al., 2016; Corte Rodríguez, 2018; for an opposing view, see Cools et al., 2015). These

general trends are connected to the idea that improvements in women's career progression is higher when men (their partners) use paternity leaves. For instance, research in this field found a decrease in the motherhood wage penalty of mothers when their male couples use paternity leaves (Farré & González, 2019; Hardoy et al., 2017; Motaung et al., 2017; Naldi et al., 2019). Finally, the effects of paternity leaves on their female couple's use of sick leave (different to maternity leave) have been explored, with authors finding no direct relationship between them (Ugreninov, 2013) except when fathers take more time than just the time reserved for them (Bratberg & Naz, 2014).

Effects on Health. The effects of use of paternity leaves on several dimensions of health have also been a topic of analysis. A first group of studies have focused on health outcomes generally. For instance, men using paternity leave experience a lower death risk (Månsdotter et al., 2007, 2008) and an increase in the practice of physical activity (Johansson et al., 2014). Furthermore, several studies have evaluated psychological effects of paternity leave for fathers, finding several effects for fathers: increased their life satisfaction (Kramer et al., 2019), lower postnatal depression of mothers when paternity leave is adopted (Philpott & Corcoran, 2018; Redshaw & Henderson, 2013; Séjourné et al., 2012), and higher ability to recognize the independent thoughts and feelings of children (Tharner et al., 2016). A second group of studies have focused on children's health more specifically. In particular, the provision of paternity leaves has been associated with higher neurodevelopment of children at an early age (Bjarnadóttir et al., 2019; Burtle & Bezruchka, 2016; Earle et al., 2011), less risk of mortality (Heymann et al., 2017; Månsdotter & Lundin, 2010) and less likelihood to be breastfed (Flacking et al., 2010). An increase in the use of leaves by fathers does not have an effect on children risk for physical injuries (Laflamme et al., 2012). Other studies have addressed specific effects such as use of contraceptive pills by daughters, with evidence of a mild positive association between the use of paternity leaves shorter than 30 days and daughters' use of these pills (Rashid & Kader, 2014).

Effects on Gender Equality and the Domestic Division of Labour. Connected to concerns about career development and women's professional advancement, a set of studies explored specifically the effects of paternity leaves on the domestic division of labour and the assumption of domestic responsibilities at home, with mixed findings. Some studies have found nule associations between the provision of leaves and the sharing between men and women of domestic duties (McKie et al., 2001). In contrast, other articles found a positive effect of fathers' use of leaves on a more equal division of work in the couple in the medium term in terms of both involvement in childcare and housework (Bünning, 2015; Kotsadam &

Finseraas, 2011; Patnaik, 2019; Schober & Zoch, 2019). In an effort to understand these complexities, some studies suggest that the effects that use of paternity leaves by fathers can generate for gender equality outcomes are limited to situations in which paternity leaves are long or situations of solo leaves – not simultaneously with the couple (Bünning, 2015).

4.1.2.3. Paternity Leaves in Specific Sectors

A final number of studies have focused on specific sectors when analysing how paternity leave policies are shaped. Surprisingly, the vast majority of studies in this category analysed the medical sector, given that some specificities of this occupation (e.g., long work hours, overall stress, specialisation requirements) contribute to a discouragement of family planning (Tang et al., 2019). Within the medical field, some studies examine whether availability of paternity leaves are a determinant factor when choosing certain residency specialities, in particular Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Alston et al., 2017; Davis et al., 2001), Orthopaedics (Clement et al., 2016), Paediatrics (Berkowitz et al., 2010), Radiology (Heilbrun et al., 2013), or Surgery (Bourne et al., 2019; Garza et al., 2017; Giantini Larsen et al., 2019; Gong et al., 2019; Humphries et al., 2017; Kwong et al., 2014; Mayer et al., 2001; Wijnhoven et al., 2008). The most common conclusion is that the existence of paternity leaves is a valued resource either when choosing the residency speciality or when currently exercising the profession, not only among female but also among male prospective employees.

Analyses in medical schools also revealed the remarkable commitment in this field to help medical faculty achieve work-family balance, with generally similar maternity and paternity leave policies (Bristol et al., 2008; Socolar et al., 2000; Tang et al., 2019; Welch et al., 2011; Wendling et al., 2019). Some authors expect even higher development of work-family balance initiatives in this organizational context in the future (Baldwin et al., 1995; Gold et al., 2019; Gropper et al., 2010; Itum et al., 2019; McPhillips et al., 2007; Mohan et al., 2019), being especially relevant in cases of double physician couples (Herath & Herath, 2019). Some studies such as the one by Weiss and colleagues (1998) suggested that leave policies offered at hospitals do not differ significantly to the ones of big private listed companies, but they offer better support systems for parents returning to work after the birth of a child.

In the case of other sectors, research examining the specificities of the law profession has pointed to the particular limitations of implementing paternity leaves in this field, concluding that those who do take leaves have lower career opportunities. Given that women are still the ones applying for leaves in the law sector and beyond, they are seen as second-level lawyers (Cunningham, 2001; Tremblay, 2013). Looking to research in the specific role of

management, research has generally concluded that paternity leave policies in organizations strongly punish men, reducing their promotion potential (Smith et al., 2013) and worsening general evaluations of leadership effectiveness (Gartzia et al., 2018). In the case of police departments (Rabe-Hemp & Humiston, 2015; Tremblay & Genin, 2010), paternity leave-taking increases are related with maternity leave-taking rates. Finally, research conducted with male members of parliaments also show that men in these contexts are not likely to make use of leaves, due to the fact that they cannot be easily substituted and the commitment culture in parliaments, where people are expected to be always present (Kantola & Rolandsen Agustín, 2019).

4.2. Firm vs. Supervisor Work-Family Bias and Effects of Satisfaction

This second section presents the results of the empirical analysis conducted using data from various organizations. As previously mentioned, the general objective of this study is to analyse the effects of organizations' work-family biased culture and supervisors on job satisfaction (hypotheses 1 and 3, respectively). In addition to examining the direct relationship between these variables, the study also investigates the role of work-family conflict as a potential mediator. Specifically, it analyses the effect of a culture and a supervisor biased towards work-family balance on work-family conflict (hypotheses 2 and 4), as well as the effect of work-family conflict on job satisfaction (hypothesis 5). Finally, the study will determine whether the influence of organizational culture is greater or lesser than that of the supervisor (hypothesis 6).

4.2.1. Descriptive Analysis

In total, the sample size included 445 individuals (65% women, 32% men and 1% non-binary). Of these 61% were Teaching and Research Staff, while 39% were Administrative Staff and Professional Services. The questionnaire reached a minimum sample size of 30 participants per institution. For one partner, due to their small size, they reached 20% of their employees with less than 30 responses. The highest number of respondents coming from the same institution was 283 respondents.

The most frequent age range in the sample is 41-50 years, with an average of 8.19 years ($SD=7.61$) in their actual professional category and 12.45 ($SD=9.91$) years at the institution. Slightly more than half of the sample is composed of employees without management responsibilities, and a further third from middle management. Top management was the category least represented, yet still represent over one in ten of survey respondents.

Finally, regarding their domestic structure, more than a half of the sample lived with her or his partner and/or dependent children. The average number of dependent children (i.e., less than 18 years) for the employees in the sample is 1.12 (SD=0.96), and the average number of non-dependent children is 0.49 (SD=0.78).

Age	<30	5.75%
	31-40	28.76%
	41-50	33.85%
	51-60	28.98%
	61+	2.65%
Category	Employee without management responsibilities	53.98%
	Middle Management	34.96%
	Top Management	11.06%
Group	Academic Staff	61.42%
	Administrative and Professional Services Staff	38.58%
Gender	Woman	66.52%
	Man	32.81%
	Non-binary	0.67%
Domestic Structure	Live Alone	12.8%
	Live with partner	60%
	Live with dependent children	52.2%
	Live with elder dependent relatives	6.4%
	Share living space with other people (none of the above)	4.9%

Table 4. Individual level demographic variables

4.2.2. Multivariate Analysis

In Table 5, we lay out the findings from the regression model in detail, providing a clear overview of the analysis results. In this table, the results of the Baron & Kenny's three-step process described in the methodological section are presented. Apart from the dependent and independent variables for each regression model, we included the paths coefficients and the statistical significance (p-values) of the different control variables.

All the variables were mean-centred for ease of interpretation and, in the case the cases of Age and Category – the only two categorial control variables that have more than two possible values – dummy variables were created, allowing for the inclusion of categorical variables in predictive analyses and providing insights into the relationships between categorical variables and the outcome of interest on each regression. These dummy variables

are identified in the table by adding either a number to the name of the original categorical variable (for the case of Age: age2, age3, age4 and age5) or a letter representing the category (in the case of Category: CategoryMM represents being part of the middle management, whereas CategoryTL represents being part of top leadership).

We do find support for hypothesis 1, which proposed that perceiving a biased culture towards the use of work-family balance initiatives has a negative effect on satisfaction at work. In Table 5, the estimate is significant (-0.1003259, $p = 0.015$). In the same sense, hypothesis 3 is supported, meaning that perceiving a biased attitude towards care in the supervisor leads to negative effects in satisfaction (-0.0816009, $p = 0.036$).

Hypothesis 2 and 4 proposed that perceiving a biased culture (for h2) and a biased attitude of the supervisor (for 4) leads to higher levels of work-family conflict. Both hypothesis 2 (0.2641178, $p = 0.008$) and 4 (0.2358205, $p = 0.013$) are supported. We finally also find support for hypothesis 3, which proposed that work-family conflict leads to lower job satisfaction (-0.0624959, $p = 0.003$).

Regarding the impact of the control variables, it is notable that virtually none of them exhibit a statistically significant effect across any of the models examined. Notably, the sole variables demonstrating a discernibly significant effect are the professional group (evident across all scrutinized relationships) and the category, as well as cohabitation with older individuals (pertaining to the relationship between bias and work-family conflict).

Variable	Original Equation (BiasOrg+BiasSup on Satisf)		Equation 1 (BiasOrg+BiasSup on WFC)		Equation 2 (WFC & BiasOrg+BiasSup on Satisf)	
	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value
BiasSup	-0.0816009	0.036	0.2358205	0.013	-0.067855	0.081
BiasOrg	-0.1003259	0.015	0.2641178	0.008	-0.0864816	0.035
WFC					-0.0624959	0.003
Gender	-0.0833463	0.282	0.0015736	0.993	-0.08906	0.247
age2	-0.0298598	0.854	0.1822948	0.653	-0.0498092	0.761
age3	0.0651298	0.698	-0.0512053	0.903	0.0202629	0.905
age4	0.0816984	0.658	-0.2777571	0.545	0.0213288	0.909
age5	-0.1267829	0.672	-0.5644545	0.444	-0.2019223	0.498
LivCouple	-0.0267666	0.700	0.2068943	0.223	-0.0155581	0.822
LivChild	-0.0116539	0.895	-0.1381242	0.520	-0.0206542	0.813
LivEld	0.1001392	0.507	-0.917802	0.013	0.0373447	0.804
HourDomMe	0.0129944	0.596	0.0364516	0.544	0.0155376	0.522
HourChilMe	-0.0222852	0.138	0.0415727	0.258	-0.0199954	0.179
HourElderMe	-0.0743189	0.066	0.0425271	0.667	-0.0683943	0.088
HourOtherMe	-0.0313452	0.160	-0.1099661	0.044	-0.0378336	0.088

Variable	Original Equation (BiasOrg+BiasSup on Satisf)		Equation 1 (BiasOrg+BiasSup on WFC)		Equation 2 (WFC & BiasOrg+BiasSup on Satisf)	
	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value
WLB	-0.1491949	0.387	0.3636872	0.389	-0.1367102	0.424
Group	-0.4162695	0.000	-0.7014842	0.000	-0.4635638	0.000
CategoryMM	0.0326862	0.673	0.3240002	0.090	0.0581475	0.452
CategoryTL	0.0858689	0.511	1.034081	0.001	0.1578289	0.229
YearPos	-0.0107643	0.088	0.0094718	0.535	-0.0091831	0.143
YearsInst	0.0065232	0.245	0.0181111	0.182	0.0071292	0.200
cons	5.071331	0.000	0.1230714	0.862	513.619	0.000

Table 5. Full Regression model

Once each of the hypotheses has been analysed independently, Table 6 gathers the necessary paths to determine whether we are facing a case of mediation, and if so, whether the mediation is total or partial. Recalling the Baron & Kenny process, if paths a1 or a2, b, c'1, and c'2 are all statistically significant, there is evidence of partial mediation. If only paths a1 or a2 and b are statistically significant, then there is evidence of full mediation.

In this particular analysis, the statistical significance of all path coefficients within the full model suggests a scenario of partial mediation. This implies that the mediator variable, namely Work-Family Conflict, plays a significant role in elucidating the relationship between the independent variables—Bias of the organization and Bias of the supervisor against fathers' work-family balance—and the dependent variable, Job Satisfaction. However, it's important to note that despite its significant contribution, the mediator variable does not entirely account for the observed relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Other factors or pathways may also be at play, indicating that while Work-Family Conflict provides valuable insight into the connection between organizational biases and job satisfaction, additional variables or mechanisms likely influence this relationship as well.

	Full Model	Model with RecOrg	Model with RecSup
Path c1	-0.1003259**	-0.1447491***	
Path c2	-0.0816009**		-0.1432796***
Path a1	0.2641178***	0.3977314***	
Path a2	0.2358205**		0.3865812***
Path b	-0.0624959***	-0.0705779***	-0.0650076***
Path c'1 (Direct effect)	-0.0864816**	-0.1195615***	
Path c'2 (Direct effect)	-0.067855*		-0.120400***
Indirect effect 1	-0.01650628		
Indirect effect 2	-0.01473781	-0.028071046	-0.025130716

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table 6. Mediation analysis

Up to this point, the so-called full model has been analysed, in which two independent variables have been included: Organization Bias against fathers' work-family balance and Supervisor Bias against fathers' work-family balance. Hypotheses 1-5 have demonstrated that both are statistically significant and related to job satisfaction, both directly and through their effect on work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 6 aims to go one step further, seeking to determine whether the effect that each of these independent variables has on job satisfaction is the same as it would be in a model where we only had a single independent variable.

For this purpose, two complementary regression analyses have been conducted, following the same technique described for the main (and full) model. In these models, only one independent variable will be included: either Organization Bias against fathers' work-family balance or Supervisor Bias against fathers' work-family balance. These models are presented in Tables 7 and 8, respectively. The mediation analysis is displayed in the same table as the full model (Table 6).

Once each of these complementary models was conducted, an analysis was carried out to determine if the results obtained with the full model are similar or if there are any relevant differences. Thus, the outcome of hypotheses 1-5 remained unchanged for each of the complementary models. That is, both for the model where only the organization is analysed as the independent variable and for the one where the explanatory variable is the supervisor, we encountered a model of partial mediation, wherein the different paths were statistically significant.

Additionally, the control variables yield similar results to those of the full model: only the effect of certain job-related variables (e.g., category, professional group, or years in the position) is significant. To provide a comprehensive answer to hypothesis 6, we must compare the coefficients of the aforementioned independent variables in each of the models (full vs. complementary). Thus, we can observe that the variable Bias of the Organization against fathers' work-family balance shows a coefficient of -0.1003259 in the full model and -0.1447491 in its specific (complementary) model. As for the Bias of the Supervisor against fathers' work-family balance, it exhibits a coefficient of -0.0816009 in the full model, while its value in the complementary model is -0.1432796.

These data lead us to three main conclusions: firstly, when analysed independently, both the bias of the organization and that of the supervisor have an effect on job satisfaction, with this effect being very similar. Secondly, when these elements are analysed together, we

can observe that the perception of the organization is more relevant (i.e., its coefficient is larger) than the perception of the supervisor, although both are statistically significant. Finally, the joint analysis of both variables reveals a greater effect (the sum of their coefficients is -0.1819) than the study of each of them separately (coefficients of -0.1447 and -0.1432 respectively).

Variable	Original Equation (BiasOrg on Satisf)		Equation 1 (BiasOrg on WFC)		Equation 2 (WFC & BiasOrg on Satisf)	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>
BiasOrg	-0.1447491	0.000	0.3977314	0.000	-0.1195615	0.000
WFC					-0.0705779	0.001
Gender	-0.0792693	0.296	-0.0474341	0.796	-0.0875245	0.243
age2	-0.0698298	0.669	0.257288	0.524	-0.080831	0.623
age3	0.0286071	0.866	0.084217	0.840	-0.0042418	0.980
age4	0.0375826	0.839	-0.2893919	0.526	-0.0220377	0.906
age5	-0.1557405	0.597	-0.3791375	0.591	-0.2235765	0.445
LivCouple	0.0080596	0.906	0.1515899	0.357	0.0174348	0.796
LivChild	-0.0101196	0.908	-0.2161368	0.306	-0.026039	0.764
LivEld	0.1371251	0.350	-0.948803	0.008	0.0661585	0.651
HourDomMe	0.0045222	0.852	0.0290787	0.622	0.0069843	0.771
HourChilMe	-0.0138378	0.350	0.0414409	0.248	-0.0112676	0.441
HourElderMe	-0.0666936	0.098	0.0309682	0.751	-0.0615675	0.122
HourOtherMe	-0.0312697	0.159	-0.0931336	0.084	-0.0373178	0.090
WLB	-0.0454876	0.789	0.2660218	0.520	-0.0337749	0.841
Group	-0.4332031	0.000	-0.7826043	0.000	-0.4923207	0.000
CategoryMM	0.0612192	0.424	0.4095245	0.029	0.0946812	0.215
CategoryTL	0.1045495	0.424	1.087587	0.001	0.1879471	0.152
YearPos	-0.0135985	0.028	0.0087265	0.556	-0.0121109	0.049
YearsInst	0.0065483	0.240	0.0181182	0.174	0.0073284	0.184
cons	4.975636	0.000	0.3996793	0.569	5.052636	0.000

Table 7. Complementary regression model with Organizational Bias

Variable	Original Equation (BiasSup on Satisf)		Equation 1 (BiasSup on WFC)		Equation 2 (WFC & BiasbSup on Satisf)	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>
BiasSup	-0.1432796	0.000	0.3865812	0.000	-0.1204003	0.000
WFC					-0.0650076	0.002
Gender	-0.050629	0.513	-0.043154	0.820	-0.0578454	0.450
age2	-0.0677674	0.678	0.2804379	0.493	-0.0815535	0.620
age3	0.0438636	0.795	0.0022657	0.996	0.0034109	0.984
age4	0.069935	0.707	-0.1945504	0.676	0.0150654	0.936
age5	-0.101115	0.738	-0.6782449	0.364	-0.1831347	0.542
LivCouple	-0.0408295	0.559	0.2601469	0.128	-0.0262427	0.705
LivChild	-0.0286976	0.746	-0.1648422	0.447	-0.0391898	0.656

Variable	Original Equation (BiasSup on Satisf)		Equation 1 (BiasSup on WFC)		Equation 2 (WFC & BiasbSup on Satisf)	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>
LivEld	0.1090151	0.474	-0.9466461	0.012	0.0431715	0.777
HourDomMe	0.0071672	0.771	0.0501541	0.408	0.0106101	0.664
HourChilMe	-0.0202751	0.180	0.0388039	0.297	-0.0179906	0.230
HourElderMe	-0.0805188	0.048	0.0414523	0.678	-0.0745117	0.065
HourOtherMe	-0.0322578	0.152	-0.1077152	0.051	-0.0389923	0.081
WLB	-0.1564303	0.368	0.4573129	0.284	-0.1360971	0.430
Group	-0.4173072	0.000	-0.6630431	0.001	-0.4638562	0.000
CategoryMM	0.0493854	0.527	0.2808421	0.145	0.0729104	0.348
CategoryTL	0.1371067	0.292	1.066193	0.001	0.2136144	0.102
YearPos	-0.0103656	0.103	0.0136901	0.374	-0.0085931	0.173
YearsInst	0.0054818	0.332	0.018572	0.175	0.0061996	0.269
cons	5.089734	0.000	-0.1390861	0.846	5.136401	0.000

Table 8. Complementary regression model with Supervisor Bias

As a final step, multilevel analysis aims to account for the nested structure of the data and understand how individual-level and group-level factors simultaneously influence the outcome of interest. In this case, the goal is to determine if the institution (and consequently, the country, since all institutions belong to different countries) plays a significant role in the observed relationships. In Table 9, we can observe the results of the multilevel analysis for the case of the full model. These results lead us to the conclusion that the higher level (i.e., institution) does not significantly influence the results of the regression model.

Variable	Original Equation (BiasSup on Satisf)		Equation 1 (BiasSup on WFC)		Equation 2 (WFC & BiasbSup on Satisf)	
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>
Level 2: Inst	0	0	0.0084201	0.0233605	0	0
Level 1: case_id	0.414506	0.0296076	2.439292	0.1742833	0.414506	0.0296076

Table 9. Complementary regression model with Supervisor Bias

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Rooted in the recognized necessity for a more nuanced and contextually grounded investigation of work-family balance, particularly in relation to working men, in the inaugural chapter of this thesis we explored the relevance of work-family balance in organizations, with a focus on challenges regarding men's involvement in caring and domestic work. We addressed how work-family balance constitutes a multifaceted and multilevel construct, comprising antecedents and effects at different levels of analysis – individual, organizational and societal. From a gender perspective, we understood the relevance of developing a change in societal and organizational attitudes towards new forms of masculinity that are more inclusive of men's domestic responsibilities, along with proactive initiatives by employers to foster more egalitarian work-family balance for all employees. This approach filled a gap in previous organizational research that mainly focused on women's experiences at work and has generally neglected the many multi-level explanations behind men's decisions and responses. It sought to unravel the intricate dynamics surrounding men's growing role in work-family dimensions and needs at work.

Chapter 2 provided the theoretical framework and hypotheses to understand two relevant areas of study in this domain. Firstly, it examined men's use of paternity leaves as a special form of work-family balance with critical implications for family and work life. Regarding this field of paternity leave, our aspiration was to shed light on the intricate interplay between organizational structures, cultural norms, and individual experiences, elucidating the macro, meso, and micro mechanisms that underpin paternity leave decisions in contemporary workplaces. A systematic analysis of the literature was performed to provide an overarching conceptual framework to understand this unresearched area of study, providing an overarching framework to understand antecedents and effects of men's use of paternity leave at different levels.

In relation to organizational biases, a more conventional field study and empirical approach was used to understand how supervisor versus cultural biases in relation to men's needs to balance their family and work responsibilities shape both men's and women's responses. This section explored organizational biases towards men's need to balance work and family life, incorporating a multi-level approach. The aim was to determine whether organizational perceptions that work-family balance concerns mainly women employees but not men (in terms of both cultural values and perceptions of one's direct supervisor) influence experiences of work-family conflict and subsequent work attitudes. We found that, in general, both organizational and supervisor gendered biases have a negative effect in job satisfaction for all employees. When analysing the effect of work-family conflict, we found evidence for

partial mediation in the relationship between biased culture and biased supervisor and job satisfaction. Finally, comparing the effects of culture and supervisor bias, we found that organizational culture has a higher effect in job satisfaction than supervisors' biased attitudes.

By focusing on paternity leave and both its antecedents and consequences, our inquiry aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of this pivotal aspect of contemporary work arrangements. Simultaneously, we endeavoured to discern the influential role played by several organizational elements in shaping employees' responses to work-family biases in the organization, such as implicit biases from one's direct supervisor versus broader organizational biases, confirming our prediction that both play a critical role in subsequent job attitudes for both women and men employees, mediated by experienced levels of work-family conflict. This aimed to elucidate the broader implications of gendered bias against work-family needs for organizational practices and action.

By grounding our inquiry in both empirical data and theoretical frameworks focused on men and work-family balance, we contribute to the existing body of literature in these fields. Through rigorous analysis, we attempted to offer insights that resonated with both academic rigor and practical relevance, fostering a deeper understanding of work-family balance dynamics from a gender perspective and paving the way for organizational change. In the sections below, we provide a more detailed discussion of these findings, focusing on theoretical and practical implications.

5.1. Contributions to the Field of Paternity Leaves

Our findings in this first area of study overall showed that existing research on paternity leave is growing rapidly especially among European female researchers, covering a wide range of topics that are important to improve our theoretical understanding of the factors that promote gender equality, work-family balance and family health and relations. However, with a substantial fragmentation of research topics, our findings show that there is a clear lack of common theoretical and empirical grounding across studies, with diverse topics, references, samples and methodological designs. The novelty of the topic may underlie these disperse configurations and analyses. For instance, in spite of evidence that paternity leave policy plays a critical role in men's use of leave options at work, a full understanding on the interactive ways in which regulatory and organizational antecedents influence leave decisions in different organizational contexts has not been achieved. The heterogeneous and interdisciplinary

nature of studies likely explains the under-development of theorization around the topic, with few theoretical articles that address the phenomenon integrally.

Our conceptual organizing framework and analysis of areas covered in research help to address these concerns, providing a comprehensive analysis on the research that has been performed in these fields overall, and identifying current trends and future directions for research. In general terms, consistent with content-analytic reviews in other areas of organizational behaviour research (e.g., Schilke, Hu, & Helfat, 2018; Hassan et al., 2022), we identified two clear blocks of studies focused on antecedents and effects in men's use of paternity leave research. Extending previous approaches in work-family balance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Michel et al, 2011; Poelmans, 2012) and social organizational research with a gender perspective (Gartzia, 2021), we identified two fundamental antecedents of men's use of paternity leaves: macro-level forces (policy/ regulation) and meso-level forces (organizational culture and practices). Our conceptual scheme also illustrates how paternity leave provision has multi-dimensional effects in a varied range of domains including relationships with children, family and marital relations, health, and career development. We identified areas with a lower empirical maturity, such as family-level antecedents, which are described below.

5.1.1. Underdeveloped Areas and Future Directions for Paternity Leave Research

A clear learning from our analysis was the confirmation that the existence of formal regulations creating paid and men-directed paternity leaves plays an essential role. First, the way in which the leave is designed in the norm can act as a reinforcer of traditional assumptions regarding care, or instead act as a drive for change (Gartzia, 2021; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2020). Second, because of its mandatory nature, formal regulations make it easier for men to use a leave, while informal measures depend on the willingness of the employer (Romero-Balsas et al., 2013). Our analysis also suggested that male-targeted regulations at the macro-level should be fully paid but include specific mechanisms to oversee the actual implementation in the organizational practice. To do so, research should also more clearly distinguish between levels and categories of paternity leave use (e.g., shorter vs. longer, statutory vs. extended, part-time vs. full-time, organizationally vs. legally provided, etc.) as well as interactive antecedents and effects for example by not limiting the scope of research to a particular discipline, further examining interrelated connections and embracing several theoretical perspectives that integrate family, regulatory and organizational research. For instance, attention could be given to more integrally developing the topic by extending

connections between policy/regulatory research (Weimer & Vining, 2017), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and social/organizational research (Neuman & Robson, 2014).

Regarding meso-level (organizational forces), a number of studies evaluated the organizational and cultural antecedents of male employees' use of paternity leave, including variables that are common in the organizational behaviour literature such as organizational culture and structure, HR policies or leadership processes (Barcus et al., 2019; Dahl et al., 2014). Our analysis of these studies altogether showed that meso-level organizational forces such as HR policies and practices that are sensitive to work-family balance, perceived organizational support, supervisor support, co-worker support and gender equality policies help increase men's use of paternity leave. However, in spite of a relatively high representation of studies in the work and organizational field, we note that important organizational variables and outcomes have been surprisingly ignored. For instance, whereas management research is largely common in the organizational behaviour literature (e.g., Kalwani, 2020), studies looking at the effects of paternity leaves and domestic life more generally on career promotion and effectiveness were virtually absent (see Gartzia et al., 2018). Given the particular challenges that male employees face in managerial positions when asking for a leave and the role modelling effects that male leaders can generate in firms (Gartzia & van Knippenberg, 2016), fully supporting paternity leave for men in managerial positions is a particularly relevant future research area.

It was also surprising the scarce number of studies and theoretical development considering effects of paternity leaves on male employees' responses at work, such as work satisfaction, motivation, commitment or related work attitudes. Based on the principles of work-family enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), to the extent that leaves have a positive impact in different facets of men's lives it may also be beneficial at work. There is evidence that a family-friendly organizational culture can boost the take-up rate of leave (Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Gartzia et al., 2018). Therefore, the way in which the organization is positioned regarding paternity leaves both explicitly (through organizational policies) and implicitly (through shared values, implicit norms, and managerial support) seems to be a determinant factor for men to decide whether or not they actually are able to ask for a leave.

The ways in which these organizational processes influence gender equality outcomes at work also represents a fruitful area of research. In the professional sphere, paternity leaves appear to be a factor that reduces gender inequalities, decreasing the motherhood wage penalty and improving women's labour outcomes and career progression (Farré & González,

2019). However, analyses in this area focused mostly on how men's use of leaves influence their female partners' career development, with a general lack of research examining more specifically effects at work (e.g., whether and how parental policies directed explicitly to men help improve their female colleagues' career development in the same firm). Our analysis showed that work-family balance research has traditionally been directed to women being only more recently (in the last few years) specifically targeted to men, so directing attention to men to address these gender equality gaps is needed.

Although work-family balance research highlights a range of family-level variables that may influence use of domestic options available to employees (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011), the role played by family factors as antecedents of men's use of paternity leave remains uncovered in current research. For instance, although variables such as the household income structure, family time demands or family/spousal support were consistently studied in the work-family literature (e.g., Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Michel et al, 2011), they were generally omitted as antecedents of men's paternity leave decisions. Given that these family-level predictors are fundamental for understanding work-family balance, this is a clear gap to be addressed in future studies. Likewise, father's sexual orientation or gender ideology/values are uncovered areas. Our analysis overall revealed that research on paternity leaves has been carried out considering conventional family models (e.g., traditional, heterosexual couples). As the diversity of family compositions and structures continues to grow (same-sex parents, single-parent households, blended families, and families with non-traditional caregiving arrangements), it is necessary to understand the factors that influence work-family balance and the use of leaves in these diverse family compositions, as well as their specific dynamics. Future studies identifying non-traditional family compositions involving men specifically (e.g., male-male, single father, father with female/male family members to provide support) are also needed.

In terms of research methods, our analysis indicated that a broader set of quantitative designs that more precisely analyse cause-and-effect relationships would allow for theory development and hypothesis testing. In our review, the majority of the studies were cross-sectional, which are limited in their potential to make causal claims and providing deeper insight into the specific directions and underlying mechanisms among the variables affecting or affected by paternity leave use. Longitudinal and experimental designs have not yet been adopted. Although these designs are difficult to implement in the context of paternity leave, future research should consider applying related methods. For instance, in contexts in which paternity leave regulations are anticipated with a sufficient timeframe, it may be feasible to

collect several waves of data in line with studies in which regulatory changes are compared ex ante and ex post situations, as with state-sanctioned care leaves (D'Addio et al, 2013).

5.1.2. Practical Implications for Parental Leave Policies

Our review showed that both macro-level and meso-level forces can move paternity leave decisions significantly forward. Consequently, our findings invite policy makers and practitioners to fully appreciate the value that regulatory perspectives of parental leave can have for gender equality in organizations, and critically assess their contribution in shaping individual decision making. In general, there is agreement that greater use of paternity leaves can help reduce the division of domestic work: when men make use of longer paternity leaves (i.e. more than the statutory norm; e.g., Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007), positive and persistent effects towards a more gender-equal housework emerges. Thus, paternity leaves have the potential to contribute to the attainment of better gender equality levels, by closing the gap in the domestic division of work and by contributing to the advancement of women's career.

The European Union has set the pace for ensuring men's leave right, with the introduction of a minimum 10-day paternity leave. Of particular relevance are the Spanish 16-week fully compensated leave for each of the parents, Finnish 160-day leave also for each of the parents, as well as the 64-day paternity leave of Lithuania compensated at a 77 percent rate (EIGE, 2022). These EU policies may serve as inspiring practices for the advancement in the provision of leaves targeting specifically men in other geographical areas. Because our findings overall suggest that there are several positive outcomes that can be achieved in terms of health, family, and organizational outcomes, men's use of paternity leave has multiple benefits that policy makers should more ambitiously manage. Ambitious domestic policies and regulatory action that challenge traditional gender norms and are more specifically targeted to men may move societies and organizations closer to gender equality and a healthier implementation of work-family balance policies. Managers and human resource practitioners in firms also need to more fully understand the role they can play in individual decision making for male employees in organizations, and how their role interact with other individual and family level variables (e.g. some HR policies might be ineffective to certain family structures). It is thus important that HR policies consider not only firm variables but also individual and family needs of employees, in order to achieve good fit between paternity leave policies and the employee's reality.

Because the experiences and outcomes that an individual can develop in a given life domain can transfer to outcomes and experiences in other domains, particularly those related to work and family (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), life experiences and outcomes acquired through paternity leave practices should be understood in interaction. Note for instance that, from the organizational perspective, generating a culture of line manager and co-worker support to paternity leave will contribute to the development of a more family-friendly culture that is key for the success of human resource management and, in particular, employee retention (Lamane-Harim et al., 2021; van Engen & Gartzia, 2022). Although some attempts have been made to increase the number of men who take paternity leaves in the workplace (e.g., Deloitte, Behson, 2014; Dove Men+Care, Dove, 2022; Mutualia, Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades, 2016), more efforts are needed so that families, firms and societies can benefit from the many positive outcomes that paternity leaves can bring. As illustrated in our review, these positive outcomes include multifaceted benefits not only for working fathers but also for their partners and children, fostering enhanced family bonding and leading fathers to actively engage in the nurturing and care of their new-borns. Moreover, it contributes to dismantling traditional gender norms, promoting equitable distribution of childcare responsibilities between partners. Investment in early father-child interaction can bolster the child's cognitive and emotional development, while simultaneously help cultivating a more supportive and egalitarian family environment.

5.1.3. Limitations of the Study

Although this review was conducted in a structured manner, it is not devoid of the constraints that are commonly observed in other literature reviews of this nature (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The primary limitation pertains to the predefined criteria, necessary for the inclusion of studies in this review. Specifically, papers were selected based on well-defined terms within their abstracts through references available online, and corresponding to scientific articles indexed in the abovementioned databases. Consequently, this approach led to the exclusion of articles published in journals not featured in these databases, along with books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and any references not accessible online. The second limitation revolves around a bias that disfavours languages beyond English. Although this issue has been partially addressed by the inclusion of Spanish references, other languages have not been included. Concerning the geographical origin of the references, a bias persists towards studies developed in North America and Europe, potentially leading to an imbalance in perspectives from other geographical contexts.

In light of these limitations, the potential exists for crucial research work or papers to have been inadvertently omitted. To mitigate these concerns, a possible avenue for future research expanding the scope of this review could encompass additional databases in other contexts and cultures, a comprehensive review of meta-analyses and reviews, as well as the inclusion of articles published in languages other than English. Such extensions would undoubtedly uncover captivating areas for exploration. Note that absence leave policies for parents vary considerable among countries on duration, flexibility and payments (Koslowski et al, 2019), which makes it difficult to identify general conclusions that can be applied universally and across firms in different locations.

All in all, our study contributed to a more holistic and multidisciplinary picture of men's use of paternity leaves. We reviewed all studies in this field to provide a comprehensive overarching model about the various dimensions, antecedents, and effects of paternity leaves for men, women, families and organizations. We highlighted the growing interest in paternity leave in recent years, suggesting that scholars (particularly female, and European) are reorienting the study of work-family dynamics to more specifically account for men's experiences. The growing interest in the topic strongly supports the theoretical and applied value of paternity leave research and suggests that additional research is required to more fully understand the complexities and interdisciplinary nature of paternity leave action and research. However, given the multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature of the topic involving theories and variables from different disciplines (e.g., law, social policy, organizational behaviour, gender theory, social psychology), we pointed to an unresolved disconnection between disciplines that requires additional efforts toward further unifying the field and more integrally understanding the multidimensional nature of men's decision making. Responding to this concern and broadening our knowledge in this field, we provided an organizing framework that synthesizes current interactive challenges into three main areas of action: regulation/law, organizational norms (explicit and implicit), and family options that more equally distribute family-work demands. Our review also points to a wide variety of family, health, and organizational outcomes to justify these efforts. We hope that our findings help provide further convergence in this field, pointing to boundary conditions and contingencies that shape men's use of paternity leaves, and help advancing this fruitful area of research.

5.2. Contributions to the Field of Bias Against Fathers' Work-Family Balance

In our second study we highlighted how work satisfaction is affected by the degree to which an organization as well as one's direct supervisor, is biased regarding work-family balance policies. In particular, our study showed how both biased organizational culture and biased supervisors' attitude are negatively related to work satisfaction for all employees. When incorporating both variables together in the analysis, supervisors' attitude becomes weaker comparatively.

Looking at the results in detail, these indicate that overall biases at both the organizational and supervisor levels negatively impact job satisfaction. Specifically, when employees perceive a biased culture within their organization or from their supervisors, their job satisfaction tends to decrease. Upon examining the role of work-family conflict, our findings showed that employee's psychological experiences of not being able to properly respond to both domestic and career roles partially mediates the relationship between these biases and job satisfaction. This means that a biased organizational culture and biased supervisors contribute to higher work-family conflict, which in turn further reduces job satisfaction. Lastly, when comparing the influences of cultural and supervisory biases, our results show that the impact of organizational culture on job satisfaction is more significant than that of supervisor biases. In other words, the general atmosphere and practices of the organization as a whole play a larger role in shaping employees' job satisfaction than the attitudes and behaviours of individual supervisors. Overall, this idea highlights the complex interplay between organizational culture and individual supervisor attitudes in shaping employees' perceptions of work-family balance and their overall work satisfaction.

5.2.1. Theoretical Contributions

Traditionally, research on the motherhood penalty has shown how working mothers encounter systematic disadvantages in pay, perceived competence, and benefits (Fernández-Cornejo et al., 2018). Thus, mothers have generally faced more challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities, including career progression and satisfaction (Budig & England, 2001, Apak, 2022). However, there is also evidence that men who use work-family balance measures are also penalized, particularly in organizational cultures in which work-family support is not provided (Gartzia et al., 2018). Extending this area of research, our findings show that non-supportive organizational environments and cultures can potentially have negative effects for all employees – women and men. As societal norms evolve, fathers are increasingly seeking active parenting roles, and similar challenges and expectations are

emerging for them. Therefore, organizations with gender biases in their cultures can be a significant factor contributing to decreased job satisfaction, signalling that work-family balance is not an option for them. If they are not involved fathers due to work duties, they may ultimately perceive that they are not fully satisfied with their work. For working mothers, the perception of a biased culture linking work-family balance exclusively to women can also lead to a decrease in job satisfaction by reinforcing gender roles that prevent them from advancing in their careers. These female and male employees would anticipate problems to balance their work and family commitments and may feel overwhelmed, undervalued, or unsupported by their employer. This would lead to a negative perception of their job and employer, reducing job satisfaction.

Social exchange theory (Cook et al., 2013) can serve to understand some of the dynamics of work satisfaction found in the current study in relation to organizational and supervisor biases regarding work-family balance. According to social exchange theory, individuals engage in reciprocal relationships where they expect equitable treatment and the provision of valued resources in return for their contributions (Bagger & Li, 2014; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Extending these foundations, the current study found that biased organizational cultures and supervisors' attitudes adversely affect employees' perceptions of work-family support within the workplace and subsequently reduce their job satisfaction. Despite investing considerable effort in balancing work and personal lives, employees may feel undervalued or unfairly treated if organizational cultures prioritize work over personal time or if supervisors fail to acknowledge and support their efforts to achieve work-family balance. Consequently, employees may experience decreased work satisfaction as they perceive the organization or their supervisors failing to fulfil their end of the reciprocal exchange.

This is also consistent with Adam's Equity Theory, which underscores social comparison processes, where individuals evaluate their outcomes (rewards) relative to their inputs (effort) and compare them to those of others. When individuals perceive a dissonance between their inputs and outputs compared to others, feelings of inequity may arise, leading to various reactions such as dissatisfaction or attempts to restore equity (Sainz et al., 2023). Within the purview of our study's findings, biased attitudes towards men's work-family balance may contribute to employees' perceptions of inequity and thus reduce their overall satisfaction in the firm. In a way, biased organizational practices and supervisors' attitudes that neglect or undermine work-family balance policies for all employees may represent a breach of employees' psychological contract.

This study also contributes to the stream of literature on organizational culture, particularly in how subcultures within an organization can influence employees' experiences. Cultural studies, such as Schein's work on the levels of organizational culture (Schein, 2010) and Hofstede's analysis of cultural dimensions, highlight how shared beliefs and values within an organization can be pervasive and shape the behaviour and attitudes of its members (Denison, 1990). This study aligns with these theoretical approaches by demonstrating that subcultures like those formed by individual supervisors can significantly impact employees' perceptions of work-family balance (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hofstede, 1984). Extending these foundations, the current study furthermore underscores the interconnectedness of organizational culture and supervisor attitudes in shaping employees' experiences of work-family balance. Indeed, the finding that supervisors' attitudes lose significance when considered alongside biased organizational cultures suggests that the broader organizational context heavily influences employee perceptions and satisfaction levels.

Even if individual supervisors advocate for work-family balance, their influence may be constrained or undermined by the broader organizational context. This underscores the imperative of fostering a supportive work-family culture at the organizational level to cultivate an environment where employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to effectively manage their work and personal responsibilities. Work-family culture theories accentuate the pivotal role of organizational norms, values, and practices in shaping employees' experiences of balancing work and family responsibilities (Haas & Hwang, 2019; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017). These theories posit that organizational culture crucially influences employees' perceptions of work-family balance and their ability to seamlessly integrate their professional and personal lives (Lee & Shin, 2023). Within our study's context, biased organizational cultures that prioritize work over personal life may also engender tension and conflict for employees valuing personal time and seeking a better balance between work and family roles. Thus, when employees perceive organizational cultures as unsupportive or unaccommodating of their efforts to achieve work-family balance, they may experience heightened stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction with their work (Memili et al., 2023).

Women, traditionally burdened with a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities, may be particularly attuned to biased organizational cultures and supervisors' attitudes hindering their ability to effectively balance work and family roles. Perceiving organizational policies and practices as unsupportive of work-family balance or supervisors as indifferent or dismissive of their caregiving responsibilities, women may encounter heightened strain and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Moreover, the interplay between organizational

bias and supervisor attitudes may exacerbate gender disparities in work satisfaction. If women perceive supervisors' supportive attitudes towards work-family balance as overshadowed or undermined by the broader organizational culture, they may feel marginalized or undervalued in the workplace. This underscores the necessity of integrating gender dynamics into the design and implementation of work-family balance policies and practices to ensure inclusivity and support for all employees, irrespective of gender (Bowles et al, 2022).

Overall, our findings offer a multifaceted conceptual framework to understand how organizational policies and leadership attitudes shape employee experiences and satisfaction in the workplace, highlighting the importance of non-biased treatment for men and women and supportive environments of work-family balance in fostering positive work outcomes at the organizational level. Thus, the study's findings contributed to theoretical understandings of equity, work-family culture, and gender by spotlighting the intricate interplay between organizational factors, supervisor attitudes, and employee experiences of work-family balance and satisfaction. These findings underscored the importance of cultivating supportive work environments prioritizing work-family balance and equity to foster well-being and gender equality in contemporary workplaces.

5.2.2. Practical Implications for Work-Family Policies and Gender Equality

Companies are still facing significant resistance to change with regards to the ideal worker. Work is designed for individuals who traditionally delegated care responsibilities to a stay-at-home wife when faced with family responsibilities. Moreover, the profile of workers has undergone a significant transformation. Nearly half of them (female employees) require a balance between work and family life when they become mothers, while the other half (male employees) require something very similar to what women need when they become fathers. However, for mothers, achieving a work-family balance and utilizing work-family balance measures is still viewed as mandatory, while for fathers, it is seen as optional. Due to the pressure of the ideal worker, women mostly use these measures, and as a result, they are the ones who suffer from the motherhood penalty (Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007). Conversely, there is a growing sense of work-family conflict among fathers because they do not utilize such work-family balance measures. The unequal treatment between genders in terms of requesting and utilizing work-family balance measures has become an implicit norm within the organizational culture of companies. This inequality creates a barrier that restricts the agency of many fathers to request these measures, despite having access to them in theory. It is crucial

to consider the variability that exists among companies in terms of their support for work-family balance culture within this context.

How can the agency gap be reduced? According to Correll (2013), family-friendly policies offered by companies may intensify the negative consequences of ideal worker norms if there are no family-friendly laws and no corporate culture of support for the work-family balance of mothers and fathers. Instead of changing norms, these policies can reinforce ideal worker norms and gender norms by signalling who is not an ideal worker, in this case, a father using work-family balance measures. In this sense, the equalization of parental leave (equal and non-transferable parental leave for both the father and mother) could be an essential public policy measure to challenge the gender order (see also Gartzia et al., 2018). Adding to this, we demonstrated that this redefinition has to be done with a critical gender perspective that acknowledges men's growing needs to find a balance between their work and family responsibilities.

Another practical implication is that supervisors need to be aware of and actively mitigate any unconscious biases that might affect their attitudes towards work-family balance for different genders. Equal support for all employees regardless of gender in accessing work-family balance measures is crucial (Munsch et al, 2014). According to Haas and Hwang (2009), the equalization of parental leaves is likely to increase men's sense of entitlement to support for balancing work and family responsibilities, including parental leave and other family-friendly measures. However, while individuals' attitudes and values have progressed towards gender equality, the institutional framework supporting dual-earner families has not kept up (Moreno, Ortega, and Gamero-Burón, 2017). There is much room for improvement in this area, and companies must go beyond offering individual accommodation measures and embrace a culture change that challenges traditional gender norms and the ideal worker stereotype (Adler and Lenz 2017; Holter 2007). The workplace needs to recognize that all workers have needs outside of work, regardless of gender, and redefine what it means to be a productive worker. This change in organizational culture is a strategic aspect for the performance and development of the company. Awareness-raising among companies is necessary to achieve this organizational advance, as it would help shrink the agency gap and reduce work-family conflict experienced by many fathers. This, in turn, would increase the job satisfaction of working fathers (Grandey, Cordeiro, and Michael 2007), with positive implications for the company as a whole.

When making recommendations to companies, Adler and Lenz (2017) highlighted the importance of the fact that the offering work-family balance measures must not simply be an offer of individual measures to employees, but it must be accompanied by a culture change in which the workplace must not be structured by ideas about organizational masculinity and traditional breadwinner norms (Adler & Lenz 2017; Holter 2007). We add to this debate by demonstrating how this is also necessary to change both experiences of a work-family conflict and subsequent job attitudes, pointing furthermore to the particularly strong effect of cultural biases in contrast to more specific supervisory biases. Overcoming an outdated approach of gender roles in domestic functions requires redefining the cultural concept of a good and productive worker and recognizing that all workers, regardless of sex/gender, have responsibilities outside work and thus need to balance them with work life.

Finally, there is good reason to expect that recognizing flexibility gender bias in one's workplace culture matters above and beyond personal experiences with discrimination on the basis of caregiving responsibilities or flexible work arrangements use. The current study showed how the effect of gender bias in job satisfaction is significant for all workers, not only for those suffering from work-family conflict. This suggests that organizations should prioritize efforts to identify and address flexibility bias within their cultures, as doing so could significantly influence employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment beyond the scope of individual discriminatory experiences or interactions.

5.2.3. Limitations

This research also has several limitations. Firstly, regarding the generalization of the results, it is necessary to consider that the sample was collected from a series of European organizations belonging to the same professional sector, so generalizing to other contexts may be limited, and caution should be exercised when applying results to populations beyond those included in the study sample.

Furthermore, concerning the analysis technique employed, it's important to acknowledge that regression models, by their very nature, are correlational rather than causal. This means that while regression analysis can identify associations between variables and quantify the strength and direction of these relationships, it cannot determine causality. In other words, just because two variables are found to be correlated in a regression model, it does not mean that one variable causes the other to change. Instead, there may be other unmeasured variables, confounding factors, or reverse causality at play. Therefore, while regression analysis is a valuable tool for exploring relationships between variables, we must

interpret the results cautiously and refrain from making causal claims based solely on correlational evidence.

Finally, concerning the measurement instruments, all scales used have been validated and have been employed in a large number of studies. However, the tests conducted show acceptable levels of reliability. Nevertheless, when responding to the questionnaire, we cannot ignore the possible existence of social desirability bias and response bias. These biases are significant limitations in variable measurement that researchers must address to ensure the integrity of their study findings. Social desirability bias occurs when respondents provide responses that they perceive as socially acceptable or desirable, rather than reflecting their true thoughts or behaviours. This can lead to inflated or distorted measurements, particularly for sensitive topics where individuals may feel pressure to conform to societal norms. Response bias, on the other hand, occurs when respondents systematically provide inaccurate or biased responses, leading to measurement error. To mitigate these biases, we ensured confidentiality and anonymity in survey responses, using randomized response techniques.

5.3. Concluding Remarks

There is significant discourse addressing the complex balancing act women undertake in managing family responsibilities alongside full-time employment, a recognized challenge. Yet, it is crucial not to diminish the distinct challenges men face in this realm, albeit of a different nature. This doctoral thesis seeks to enhance our comprehension of how men negotiate the equilibrium between work and family obligations through two distinct studies. By introducing novel perspectives and insights, this research makes a substantial contribution to ongoing scholarly conversations. Through meticulous analysis, it not only stimulates further investigation but also establishes a groundwork for future research endeavours in this critical domain.

The results of the first study shed light on the fragmented nature of research concerning paternity leave, spanning topics, methodologies, countries, and samples. Our organizing framework consolidates existing research into two primary categories: the antecedents and outcomes of paternity leave utilization. Within each category, we identify three levels of influence: individual, organizational, and societal. This synthesis underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the complexities of work-family balance for men.

The second study revealed how biases towards the use of work-family balance measures by men have negative effects not only on those who actually utilize these measures but also on all employees. It highlights how both organizational bias and supervisor bias significantly impact job satisfaction and the generation of work-family conflict. Therefore, we urge organizations to tackle and reduce supervisor biases. This can be achieved through training, fostering an inclusive and equitable culture, and implementing transparent policies that prioritize work-family balance for everyone. Additionally, leadership and organizational policies are pivotal in shaping supervisor attitudes. Promoting a top-down approach to support work-family balance and address biases can foster a more positive and fairer workplace environment.

In conclusion, from both analyses, we contributed to the need for investigation into work-family balance from a critical gender perspective that is also specifically focused on men, comprehending some distinguishing factors regarding men's work-family compared to women's. Recognizing this as a complex, multifaceted, and multilevel phenomenon, it is imperative to approach it with a comprehensive understanding that acknowledges its intricacies and interconnectedness across various societal layers. Only through this nuanced approach can public policies and organizational actions be designed effectively to achieve equal participation in caregiving tasks by both men and women.

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APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE²

² This is a reduced version of the questionnaire administered in the context of the GEARING-Roles project. This includes includes only the questions that refer to variables included in this thesis. For information about the full version of the questionnaire, follow this [link](#).

Thanks for participating in this survey, which is part of a EU-funded project (GEARING-Roles) of 10 European academic and non-academic partners implementing Gender Equality Plans, led by University of Deusto (Spain). Your collaboration requires responding to the questionnaire, which is usually no longer than 15 minutes.

There are no known risks to you from taking part in this research. However, it is hoped that the research will benefit others (or science) who wish to understand and improve leadership outcomes.

Data will be confidential and your responses will only be used for research purposes, in an aggregate matter, without containing your name or any identifying information. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You can choose at any time to cease participating in this research without any consequences. You may refuse to answer any questions and may stop taking part in the study at any time. Further information about the aim of the project and how data will be handled can be found [here](#). If you have any questions about this research, you may contact by email: jonpizarro@deusto.es

Thanks in advance for your participation.

- ☐ I consent to participate
- ☐ I do not want to participate

FIRST SECTION: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

We will start with some demographic questions, to understand better the answers of the rest of the questionnaire:

1. Which institution do you belong to?

2. What is your age?

< 30

31-35

36-40

41-45

46-50

51-55

56-60

61 - 65

> 65

3. Are you:

A woman

A man

Other (please specify)

4. To which professional group do you belong?

Academic (Teaching and Research) Staff

Administrative and Professional Services Staff

5. Which is your professional category

Employee without specific responsibility

Middle Management

Top Management (Member of the Board of Directors...)

6. How long have you been in this category?

7. How long have you been in the institution?

8. Which domestic structure applies to you? Choose as many options as applicable:

I live alone

live with my partner

I live with my dependant children

I live with elder dependant relatives

9. Do you have children?

Number of dependant children

Number of independant children

SECOND SECTION: GENERAL VALUES

In this section you will find several questions regarding your own values and beliefs

4. Now, please tell us your overall satisfaction with your professional career: [Likert 1-5]

I find real enjoyment in my job,

I definitely dislike my job

I am fairly well satisfied with my job

I feel dissatisfied with my present job

SECTION THREE: WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE

In this section, you will find statements about the work-family interface. Remember, once again, that your answers are completely confidential. For the questions concerning your country or region, if there are different policies in different regions of the country, please answer for the region in which you are based.

8. First, we will refer to general issues related to the reconciliation of personal and work life. In relation to your family issues, to what extent do you agree with the following? [Likert 1-7]

The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life

The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities

Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me

My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties

Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities

10. To what extent do you agree that each of the following statements represent the philosophy or beliefs of your organization (remember, these are not your own personal beliefs, but pertain to what you believe is the philosophy of your organization). [Likert 1-5]

1. Work should be the primary priority in a person's life
2. Long hours inside the office are the way to achieve advancement
3. It is best to keep family matters separate from work
4. It is considered taboo to talk about life outside of work
5. Expressing involvement and interest in nonwork matters is viewed as healthy
6. Employees who are highly committed to their personal lives cannot be highly committed to their work
7. Attending to personal needs, such as taking time off for sick children, is frowned upon
8. Employees should keep their personal problems at home
9. The way to advance in this company is to keep nonwork matters out of the workplace
10. Individuals who take time off to attend to personal matters are not committed to their work
11. It is assumed that the most productive employees are those who put their work before their family life
12. Employees are given ample opportunity to perform both their job and their personal responsibilities well
13. Offering employees flexibility in completing their work is viewed as a strategic way of doing business
14. The ideal employee is the one who is available 24 hours a day

**16. Please indicate the number of hours per day that, on average, are dedicated to:
[ME/MY PARTNER, NUMBER]**

Domestic work (excluding childcare)

Childcare

Other activities (e.g. leisure)

17. Indicate if you have used any of the following work-family balance measures in the last year [YES/NO]

Workday reduction with salary reduction above the legal minimum

Compressed week (e.g. work more hours to have free half-day or a whole day a week)

Intensive day (at any time of the year or day of the week)

Maternity / paternity leave above the legal minimum

Leave to care for sick family members or dependents above the legal ones

Absences for the care of sick or dependent children

SECTION FOUR: ABOUT SUPERVISOR

In this section, we want to learn more about the general management profiles of people with positions of responsibility in your organization. To do this, we want to know your opinion about the person responsible for the direction and supervision of your work (if you have several direct managers, think of the person who is really responsible for making decisions about the issues that affect you in your daily work). First, please answer these general questions about your direct supervisor (remember that your data is completely confidential and anonymous):

8. To what extent do you agree that each of the following statements represent the beliefs of your direct supervisor (remember, these are not your own personal beliefs, but pertain to what you believe is the philosophy of your direct supervisor)? [Likert 1-7]

For my supervisor, the need to balance work and family life is conceived as something that concerns mainly the female staff of the company, and not so much the masculine one.

For my supervisor, it is considered more 'natural' for a mother to apply for a paid leave, unpaid leave or a reduction of working hours to care for small children, than for the father to apply for it.

A father who uses the work-family balance measures available in the company (working hours reduction, etc.) is seen as an uncompetitive and unambitious worker.

A father who uses the work-family balance measures available in the company (working hours reduction, etc.) is seen as a rather weak and insecure worker.

A father who uses the work-family balance measures available in the company (working hours reduction, etc.) is often seen as someone who 'sneaks off' from work for some other purpose.

APPENDIX 2. PUBLICATION

Pizarro J. & Gartzia, L.

Paternity leave: A systematic review and directions for research

Human Resource Management Review

Volume 34, Issue 1, 101001, 2024.

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Paternity leave: A systematic review and directions for research

Jon Pizarro ^{*,1}, Leire Gartzia ¹

Department of Management, Deusto Business School, University of Deusto, Bilbao, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Paternity leaves
Systematic literature review
Domestic work

ABSTRACT

Public debate and research on absence care leaves of men (paternity leaves) is growing in the last years. Practitioners and scholars alike are seeking evidence-informed answers on whether and how paternity leave can help overcome the domestic division of labor, with growing interest in identifying factors that facilitate men's use of this leave. To assess and synthesize this field of study from a theoretical and empirical perspective, we carried out a systematic literature review putting together existing knowledge into a common framework that can inform future research in the field. We analyse trends of paternity leave research over time and its main thematic areas. Findings from this systematic process of synthesis evidence the growing interest of academics (mostly women, and European) in the topic. An organizing framework is presented for understanding male involvement in parenting work suggesting that men's use of paternity leaves is determined by both political/regulatory forces (legislation) and organizational forces (firm's culture and practices), with an impact in a varied range of organizational, psychological and family-related areas including career development, health, and relations with children. We invite future practices and lines of research that more interactively cover regulatory, organizational and family forces that hinder men's use of paternity leave and organizational development, and outline how male-focused practices such as those implemented in European policy should help pursue these goals.

With important changes in the division of labor and more dual-earner families, working parents' challenges to combine household and work responsibilities are growing dramatically (Aunkofer, Meuser, & Neumann, 2018). These difficulties to combine domestic and career work have persisted in contemporary organizations and economy and become even more exacerbated after the pandemic (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2021; Power, 2020), with particularly negative effects for women's career (Alon, Doepke, Olmstead-Rumsey, & Tertilt, 2020; Kmec & Gorman, 2010). In this context, parental leave is one of the most important available resources for working parents, providing them with a formally supported period of absence from work after a child is born (ILO, 2014). Yet, scholars have found that these parental leaves are not yet achieving the aim of facilitating work-family balance for all employees and advancing into a sustainable organization of care (Gartzia, Sánchez-Vidal, & Cegarra-Leiva, 2018; Van Engen and Gartzia, 2022; Kvande & Brandth, 2017; Kluge & Tamm, 2013). Because these leaves represent one of the longer formal absences from work particularly in European countries, new questions and challenges are emerging about how paid leaves of absence at work can improve families, children and gender equality goals.

From a gender perspective, the parental component broadens the scope of leaves, referring to leaves that can be shared between both parents -women and men. However, the fact that parental leaves can be shared between parents is still not fostering fathers to

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: jonpizarro@deusto.es (J. Pizarro), leire.gartzia@deusto.es (L. Gartzia).

¹ Address: Hermanos Aguirre 2, 48014 – Bilbao (Spain).

become primary carers (Duvander et al., 2019; Gartzia, 2023). Compared to other forms of domestic and family work such as housework, childcare work is a particularly distinctive component of domestic life with critical negative effects for both women's career and work-life balance (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, et al., 2018; Flood and Gräsjö, 1998). For instance, in EU Member States gender inequalities in childcare work range from 13 hours in Nordic countries to over 18 hours in Southern European countries (EIGE, 2021). Therefore, within the many domains and organizational practices that are available to facilitate work-family balance of working adults, organizational practices and measures that facilitate men's childcare work are particularly relevant. In particular, because parental leave represents a special form of childcare with decisive effects on one's career and parents' later sharing of domestic functions (Mundy, 2013; Pilkauskas & Schneider, 2020), understanding the antecedents and components of fathers' paternity leave practices represents a particularly critical challenge for organizational research and gender equality (Gartzia et al., 2018; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2020).

Responding to these gaps and challenges, in the current paper we seek to both review the existing research on men's use of paternity leave across different disciplines, research methods, and fields of research, and to formulate an organizing framework to understand the relevance, antecedents and effects of men's paternity leave at different levels. We provide information about how much research has been concentrated in different conceptual areas and topics, with the aim of understanding current gaps and challenges for future research. In an attempt to serve applied action for policy makers and organizations, potential differences in scholarly work about paternity leave between countries are also examined, with a particular focus on Europe and its unique approach to gender action, addressing the topic with cultural and conceptual specificities. With this approach we broaden our current understanding of paternity leave action as a key measure to reduce the domestic division of labor and provide a comprehensive review on determining causes, dimensions, and consequences in how the topic is currently covered in research.

In the forthcoming sections, the structure of the paper is as follows. First, we describe the most relevant theoretical foundations for the analysis of paternity leave and men's engagement in domestic work. Second, we describe the methodological aspects of the SLR (Systematic Literature Review) that we followed to conduct our systematic analysis of current research. In relation to this, the search methods, the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the composition of the final sample are outlined. The third section provides an organizing conceptual analysis of the topics that are covered in paternity leave research, grouped into several relevant streams based on the specific topic and keywords addressed. Finally, the most relevant conclusions for each category are presented, discussing implications for the theory and practice of work-life balance, organizational behaviour, and gender and policy research.

1.1. The gender division of labor and remaining challenges involving men

A critical challenge in most if not all countries around the globe is to reduce the domestic division of labor (Mills et al., 2014). The reality shows that inequalities and limitations to successfully implement actions to effectively promote gender equality still exist. Some factors contributing to these limitations are the domestic division of labour and the stronger dedication of women to care and education of underage children, as well as care for people who are in situation of dependency (Angelov, Johansson, & Lindahl, 2016). For instance, in EU Member States gender inequalities in domestic work range from 2/3 hours in Nordic countries to over 13 hours in Southern European countries (Eurofound, 2020). Also, women are generally more likely to make decisions that prioritize a work-family equilibrium and look for work-life balance arrangements (Barbulescu & Bidwell, 2013). These inequalities result in negative effects for women's career, including lower income, limited access to managerial roles, and selection and evaluation biases (Budig & England, 2001). As a result, the situation of discrimination against women in a wide range of organizational dimensions remains. Work-life balance challenges are thus one of the most critical elements for the broader goal of achieving gender equality (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Fernández-Cornejo, Del Pozo-García, Escot, & Castellanos-Serrano, 2018).

Because the bulk of domestic work continues to rest on women, difficulties to achieve work-life balance result in negative consequences for women's career including lower income, limited access to managerial roles, and selection and evaluation biases (Budig & England, 2001), but also in more limited achievements of work-life balance overall (Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011; Mills et al., 2014; Power, 2020). These trends seriously compromise family life, gender equality and organizational development, so a critical goal is to increase specifically men's engagement in domestic work (Gartzia et al., 2018; Haas & Hwang, 2019). Contrasting these challenges, little is known about how men engage in domestic functions. Still today, women are widely perceived as being the primary agents for domestic work and family care (Apak, 2022), with a limited understanding of the factors that can increase men's engagement in domestic work and whether and how the adoption of family-related organizational and legislative policies can help improve these trends.

Connected to changes in domestic and family structures, the literature is moving from a markedly women-focused gender perspective to a broader approach that includes broader organizational issues and work-life benefits as a critical dimension in work dynamics (Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020; Muse, Harris, Giles, & Feild, 2008). This emerging tradition is also connected to a growing literature on work-life balance, which captures the challenges that working adults face to combine family and work responsibilities and can result in low levels of family, job and life satisfaction (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2020; Van Engen and Gartzia, 2022).

1.2. Paternity leave as a special form of domestic work

Consistent with the relevance of work-life balance in contemporary life where dual-earner families are the norm (O'Brien, Brandth, & Kvande, 2007), many policies and regulations have been emerging in the last few decades worldwide covering men's use of leaves. This form of leave involving care work is necessary for working parents during the critical initial stages of child-rearing after a child is born and thus understanding how working men's paternity leaves operate is critical to understand organizational behaviour in the

current context of work-family balance demands. Traditionally, research and action around maternity leaves have been widely implemented, with a vast number of academic papers examining their effects for women's career (Schultheiss, 2021; Xu, Yang, Wu, Ma, & Wang, 2021). More recently, the notion of "parentality" has captured more attention in academia in view of a majority number of countries advancing into care leave regulations (ILO, 2014).

Note that men's use of paternity leaves remains particularly limited compared to other work-life balance domains with men representing in general only 10–20% of parental leave users (EIGE, 2021; OECD, 2019). This limited use of paternity leave is particularly marked in contexts in which parents cannot afford it (e.g., unpaid leaves that are typical in the USA compared to paid leave in Nordic countries; OECD, 2019) and also when there is only one leave per family that is available to all parents (EIGE, 2021). Also, in heterosexual couples in which only the mother is birthing (which often requires medical recovery time) and/or breastfeeding, fathers are generally less likely to take leaves. Acknowledging these concerns, in recent times countries are creating specific leaves only for men (i.e. paternity leaves) and with longer duration, consistent with recommendations of international policy and regulations (EIGE, 2021; ILO, 2014). These leaves specifically directed to men attempt to reduce inequalities both at work and in care between working men and women (EIGE, 2021). However, our understanding of the antecedents and effects of paternity leave in organizations and beyond is limited.

Contrasting the relevance of paternity leaves in the political and organizational agenda, only a limited amount of academic research has developed overall. Foegen referred to the term 'paternity leave' for the first time in 1980, when acknowledging the need of new benefits for male employees. Yet, little is known about how this domain has evolved in scientific research and organizational practices, calling for a systematic analysis of how this field is evolving in academic research as well as comprehensively addressing its implications for families and the organizational practice. A recent literature review conducted on paternity leaves in the field of education and psychology (Gençten & Genc, 2020) confirmed that research in paid leave of fathers has been growing over time. However, current research does not provide a framework for a broader understanding of antecedents and effects of paternity leave, with a limited understanding of how specific problems and opportunities that occur across different domains could allow researchers more comprehensively understand the field and bridge knowledge from one domain to another.

Because men's limited use of domestic options seriously compromise gender equality at work, reducing the domestic division of

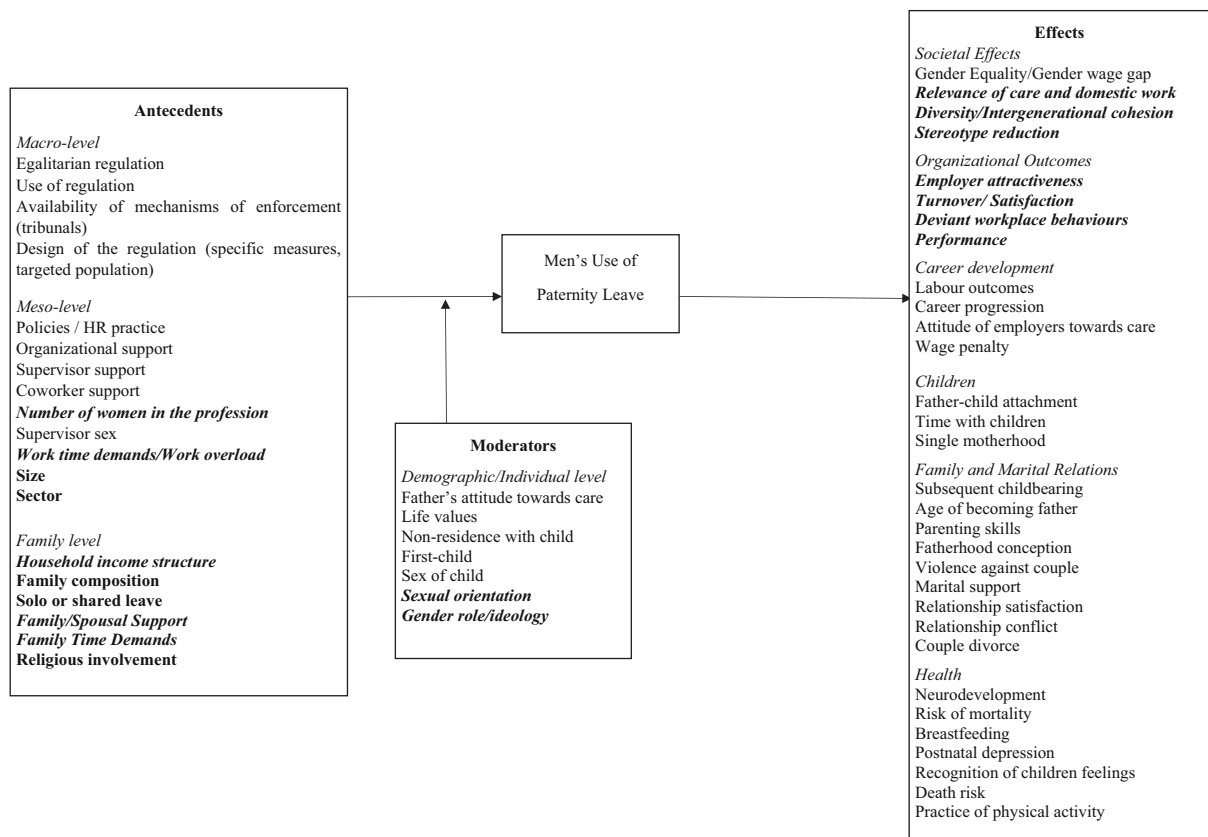


Fig. 1. Organizing Framework of Paternity Leave Antecedents and Effects*.

*Note: The use of plain text/bold and/or italics in Fig. 1 is based on the findings of the systematic literature review that is reported in the next section of the paper. Text in bold and italics refers to areas generally addressed in the literature with a lower degree of empirical maturity in our revised studies, thus representing areas that are still relatively uncovered in the specific area of paternity leave research. Text only in bold refers to areas that have been studied, but in a different role (e.g. not as antecedents, but as moderators).

labor depends on working men becoming more involved in this form of leave (Gartzia et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding the antecedents and effects of working men's use of paternity leave is a particularly relevant and understudied research area. In particular, our purpose in this study is to address and integrate previous gaps in this field by providing a conceptual organizing framework and offering a systematic review of the current state of research looking back over the totality of paternity leave research across different disciplines and areas. To make theoretical and analytical sense of this literature stream, we classify the areas of thematic analysis into the two common underlying dimensions of antecedents and effects of organizational behaviour that are typical in content-analytic reviews (Hassan et al., 2022; Schilke, Hu, & Helfat, 2018). Consistent with previous approaches addressing antecedents and effects in areas associated with work-family balance (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Michel et al., 2011) and social organizational research with a multilevel gender perspective (Gartzia, 2021; Poelmans, 2012), we identified three fundamental antecedents of paternity leaves: macro-level forces (policy/ regulation), meso-level forces (organizational culture and practices) and family-level forces (family structure and demands). Additionally, following the conceptual models developed by Greenhaus and Allen (2011) and Michel et al. (2011), we address the role of individual/demographic factors as potential moderators. For outcomes, we focus on distinguishing the most important categories of potential effects of paternity leaves in relation to health, work, family and social dimensions.

With this approach, we aim to accommodate different disciplinary approaches and outcomes, synthesizing the findings in prior work and family research generally focused on women in coherence to the extant broader body of knowledge and insights in different fields and disciplines. In particular, this analysis extends our theoretical knowledge to the growing fields of work-life balance (Allen et al., 2020; Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Michel et al., 2011), institutional policy (Bartel, Rossin-Slater, Ruhm, Stearns, & Waldfogel, 2018; Escot, Fernández-Cornejo, & Poza, 2014) and gender roles and analyses at work (Eagly, 2013; Gartzia, 2021; Gartzia et al., 2018; Valarino, 2018). This approach results in a comprehensive overall conceptual organizing framework (see Fig. 1) summarizing the most relevant antecedents and effects of men's use of paternity leave, addressing how several specific subdimension represent frequently studied topics or are still relatively uncovered. Given the critical role that organizational and work life plays in this gendered form of absence from work, our organizing framework also revisits the antecedents and effects of paternity leave in organizational contexts in light of what we know about behaviour in the context of work.

2. Systematic review of paternity leave work

We conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) to inform our conceptual model and identify the topics and articles that address the study of paternity leave. Although there are different literature review methods to identify and analyse the most relevant results on a topic, SLR is often contrasted with traditional literature reviews because systematic reviews represent an objective, replicable, systematic and comprehensive method in which the process is reported in the same manner as for reporting empirical research (Ayala, Cuenca-Amigo, & Cuenca, 2020; Weed, 2005). Klassen, Jadad, & Moher (1998) define SLR as 'a review in which there is a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic, and those identified are then appraised and synthesized according to a pre-determined explicit method'. The method needs to be reflected into a protocol (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008), with different phases that will be followed, from the initial selection of keywords, to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the subsequent analysis of categories and content.

The origin of SLRs is in the medical, health care, and policy fields, where it has been used to assemble the best evidence to make clinical and policy decisions (Cook, Mulrow, & Haynes, 1997). This method has been implemented in other areas of research, such as social sciences (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008) or psychology (Williamson, Williams, Gates, & Lamb, 2008). In general, SLRs in research around management and organizations are used to provide transparency, clarity, accessibility, and impartial inclusive coverage on a particular area (Thorpe, Holt, Macpherson, & Pittaway, 2006). Extending this field, in the current paper we use SLR specifically to explore research studies that have examined paternity leave with the aim of gaining insight about the areas that have been covered in this field and providing an overarching organizing framework that helps identify the potential elements that need to be explored in further research.

The organizing theoretical framework for the review is based on two fundamental building blocks that are typical in content-analytic reviews in organizational behaviour research (e.g., Hassan et al., 2022; Schilke et al., 2018): antecedents and effects. These underlying dimensions allow analysing the most important building blocks of a given phenomenon and their underlying conceptual trends in more detail. By identifying relevant areas in these two dimensions we provide a conceptual lens for understanding current knowledge in the field and identifying areas of influence that involve future research and action, showing that paternity leaves have critical positive effects in several dimensions of analysis and the domestic division of labour. The analysis consisted on developing different searches in the title, keyword and abstract sections in academic databases (see next section).

2.1. Description of the search methods

Following the SLR structure defined above, we carried out our searches in the following databases, available on the university library services of the authors: ISI Web of Knowledge, including its related databases (Main Collection of Web of Science, Current Contents Connect, Derwent Innovations Index, KCI-Korean Journal Database, MEDLINE, Russian Science Citation Index and ScieLO Citation Index) Scopus and PsycInfo. Scopus and ISI Web of Knowledge are the most comprehensive databases of peer-reviewed journals in social sciences, and PsycInfo is a referent database in the field of behavioural and social sciences research, and recurrently used on research involving organizational psychology and human resource management.

2.2. Description of the inclusion criteria

The search was restricted using the following criteria: (i) the article should contain the word “paternity leave”, either in the title, abstract or author keyword section. (ii) the language is English or Spanish, as they are the working languages of the authors. (iii) the paper is peer-reviewed. In previous stages of the analysis, we conducted a preliminary comparative analysis about the degree of development of research on the different forms of care leaves: available to mothers (maternity leaves), fathers (paternity leaves) and share between both parents (parental leaves). The results showed that these areas of study differ in the total number of investigations in each domain, with 2246 papers for ‘maternity leave’, 502 papers for ‘paternity leave’ and 2078 for ‘parental leave’. Because the aim of the present study is to analyse leaves available only to men, the number of articles containing the keyword “paternity leave” retrieved from each database was recorded. No restriction was placed on year of publication, performing the searches on June 12, 2020. Next, we examined if there were any external duplicates from the current database being searched and the previous databases that had already been searched. We recorded the number of external duplicates, and then deleted the duplicated journal articles from the last database searched while keeping a running total of new articles found.

Once all possible studies had been identified, we conducted a second screening to assess eligibility against inclusion criteria and then full text articles were retrieved for those that met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for the second screening required that the published peer-reviewed article meet all of the following three specifications: (i) be in the English or Spanish language; (ii) be an empirical study (i.e., not a literature review, an essay, book review, letter, editorial, opinion, journalistic article); and (iii) discuss paternity leaves as the central element. Articles were excluded if any of these components was not addressed in the abstract, results, or discussion sections of the respective study.

2.3. Description of the sample analysis

Fig. 2 contains a visual summary of the sampling process. Following the procedure described in the previous section, the initial search in all three databases delivered a total of 497 records. After checking for duplicated and limiting the sample to the available articles, the sample was reduced to 271 records. A subsequent screening process was conducted, in order to test whether the abstract, title and keyword are linked with the initial search (i.e. some of the articles refer to maternity leave, although the keyword paternity leave was present). Finally, the selected references were carefully read and analysed, and those not fulfilling the eligibility criteria (mainly, not addressing the paternity leaves as a central element of the paper) were discarded. After all the process, the final sample was composed of 154 records.

3. Results

The literature reviewed comprised an in-depth analysis of the articles retrieved from the abovementioned process. The articles were published on a total of 117 journals, mainly related to health (44 journals); the social policies areas of knowledge (43 journals);

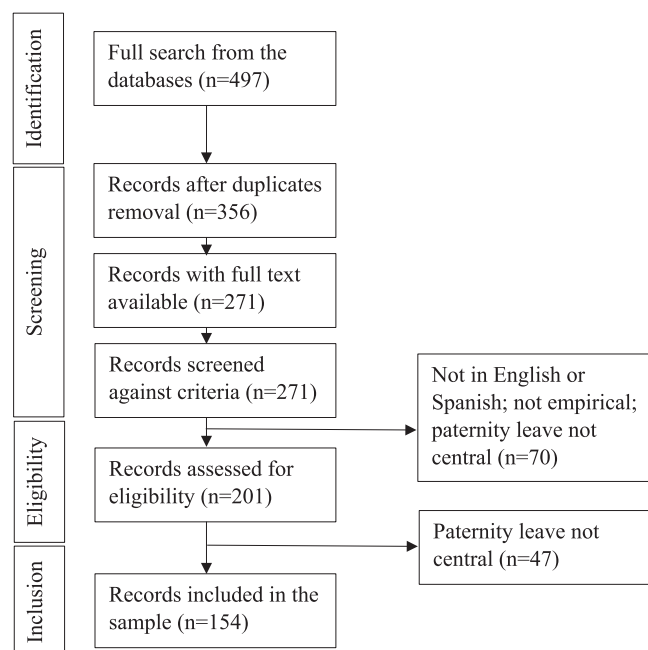


Fig. 2. Methodological Steps Followed in the SLR.

and, to a lesser extent, management (30 journals). Fig. 3 shows the distribution of these publications over time. The trend is positive, meaning that the topic has been growingly capturing the interest of the research community, with more than 53% of the research carried out from 2016 onwards.

3.1. Location of studies

Looking at the geographical distribution of the samples, the review shows that paternity leave studies are not consistently spread across different countries as depicted in Table 1. Europe's unique interest on men's paternity leave is represented by the higher number of studies (74) on the topic, followed by America (58), Asia (5), Australia (4) and Africa (3). This is consistent with the fact that European countries are the ones with more advanced paternity leave schemes (i.e. with more duration and wage replacement percentage), in particular Nordic countries (EIGE, 2021). These trends contrast the distribution of research articles by location in reviews examining other research topics in which American research is typically more prevalent (e.g., Atatsi, Stoffers, & Kil, 2019; Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020), pointing to the particular salience of the topic in Europe. The more limited development of this literature on Africa, Australia and Asia may be due to the greater absence of specific policies in the topic in these cultural settings and their lower engagement in gender equality action more broadly, as evidenced in their generally lower position in gender equality indexes (World Economic Forum, 2021). According to Darko-Asumadu, Sika-Bright and Osei-Tutu (2018), men's use of paternity leave is generally low in countries in these locations, with only a few working men engaging in longer paternity leaves. Note, however, that these differences may also be influenced by the vast scientific knowledge gap between economically developing countries and the more industrialized economies of North American and European countries, which limit the number of scientific papers that are produced as a whole (Zoogah, Peng, & Woldu, 2015; World Bank, 2014). As it can be inferred, North America and Europe comprise most of the research in total.

3.2. Sex in authorship of corresponding author

Work-life balance research, as part of research including a broader gender perspective that calls for organizational change and a greater acknowledgement of domestic responsibilities, is often seen as a "women's issue" (Huang, Gates, Sinatra, & Barabási, 2020). Consistent with this view, Table 1 confirms how the pattern applies within the field of paternity leaves. Thus, the review revealed that the papers around this topic are to a greater extent signed by a woman (69.48%) as the first corresponding author. Two different procedures were followed for sex identification (Mauleón, Hillán, & Moreno, 2013): (a) sex was inferred from the name of the authors when they had names whose sex assignment was clear, or (b) search of their academic or institutional webpages.

3.3. Type of sample

Table 1 shows the main characteristics of paternity leave studies. Interestingly, the review revealed that 52.43% of the articles reviewed used samples composed of couples of parents. For instance, Petts & Knoester, (2019a, 2019b), Romero-Balsas (2015) and Wray (2020) examined paternity leave use in the context of married or cohabiting couples. 26.21% of the articles reviewed used samples of only men (fathers; e.g., Bartel et al., 2018; Dahl, Løken and Mogstad, 2014) and 4.85% focused on families as a whole (i.e. parents and their children). Only a relatively small amount of studies (16.5%) focused more specifically on other samples such as students, academics or managers (e.g., Barcus, Tigges, & Kim, 2019; Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007). Given that work-life balance

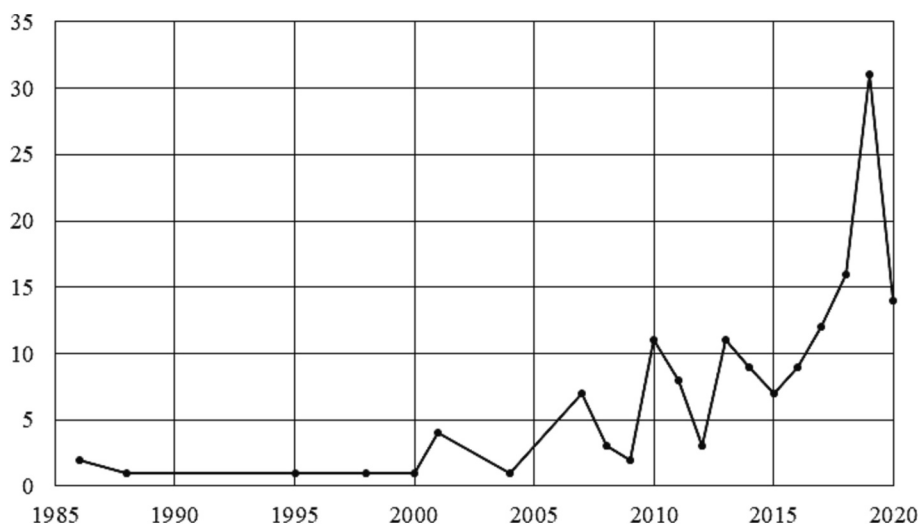


Fig. 3. Number of Paternity Leave Publications per Year, 1986–2020.

Table 1
Description of Sample Characteristics.

Gender of the corresponding author		
Female	107	69.48%
Male	47	30.52%
Continent		
Africa	3	1.95%
America	58	37.66%
Asia	5	3.25%
Europe	74	48.05%
Global	10	6.49%
Australia	4	2.60%
Source of data		
Self-reported questionnaire	41	39.81%
Administrative data	28	27.18%
National or International Survey	34	33.01%
Methodology		
Cross-sectional	75	48.70%
Experimental	1	0.65%
Experimental and Cross-Sectional	1	0.65%
Longitudinal	26	16.88%
Qualitative	51	33.12%
Sample		
Fathers	27	26.21%
Both parents	54	52.43%
Parents and Children	5	4.85%
Others (Academics, Employers, Companies and Students)	17	16.50%

is a relevant topic of interest from an organizational research perspective, the small number of studies looking specifically at paternity leaves from the perspective of the organization and their implications for companies is surprising.

3.4. Research designs and methodology

The sample comprised papers using both quantitative (64% of the sample) and qualitative (33.12%) methods. Of those studies based on quantitative data, 72% were based on cross-sectional data. For example, [Wray \(2020\)](#) acknowledged the establishment of causality between the implementation of paternity leaves and father's involvement as a challenge for the future, given that the majority of papers do not go beyond cross-national analysis. Among the articles using a qualitative approach, [Aunkofer et al. \(2018\)](#) used in-depth interviews to explore negotiations within the couple members and employer-employee negotiations to take leave by men. Longitudinal studies were scarce (16.88%) and only 1.3% of the articles used experimental designs to support their research, suggesting that causality is rarely addressed in paternity leave research. The vast majority of studies (60.19%) used administrative (28 articles) and panel data (34 articles) based on national surveys about domestic time use and use of work-life balance initiatives, with a lower number of studies (41 articles) asking participants more directly through self-reported surveys.

3.5. Conceptual analysis and organizing framework

To identify conceptual trends in the study of paternity leave and provide an organizing theoretical framework, a specific conceptual analysis was performed using a process of analysis and synthesis based on keywords and following recommendations of previous SLRs in other domains of research ([Voegtlin & Greenwood, 2016](#)). Keywords of the reviewed articles were used as a reference and uploaded into an ad-hoc database. Following recommendations of previous reviews ([Ayala et al., 2020](#)), the first step was to analyse and complete the keywords in a limited number of articles in which these were not included. In such cases, keywords were generated from the articles that best matched in terms of content. The keywords were then categorised into thematic groups. This inductive process was iterated three times, resulting in 48 groups of keywords (first iteration), 23 groups of keywords (second iteration), and 8 groups of keywords (third iteration), respectively. The reason for grouping articles together on each iteration is the thematic closeness of the keywords or group of keywords, which allowed different sets of papers to be analysed jointly.

Following the organizing framework described in the introductory section, ([Schilke et al., 2018](#)), we accommodated the emergent thematic areas into the antecedents and effects building blocks. In particular, in an attempt to categorise the different predictors of the use of paternity leaves integrating the previous conceptual frameworks in the work-family balance domain (e.g., [Michel et al., 2011](#)) and social organizational gender research ([Gartzia, 2021](#)), we included not only regulatory (macro-level) and organizational (meso-level) factors, but also family level variables as potential antecedents of paternity leave. Following these previous conceptual approaches an in particular studies in work-life balance research ([Le, Newman, Menzies, Zheng, & Fermelis, 2020](#); [Michel et al., 2011](#)), individual factors are represented as moderators in our organizing framework ([Fig. 1](#)). Note that, although family and individual level variables were included in our theoretical organizing framework following this conceptual rationale, these variables were in most cases not addressed as antecedents/moderators in the actual studies located in our searches. For instance, the religious participation of the couple ([Petts, 2018](#)), the use of solo or shared leave ([Bünning, 2015](#)) or the household income structure ([Berrigan, Schoppe-](#)

Sullivan, & Kamp Dush, 2020) were analysed in studies mainly as moderators but conceptualized in our broader framework as family predictors. Similarly, sector or size of the company are studied as moderators in our sample, but conceptualized in the theoretical framework as meso-level predictors. Other individual-level dimensions such as sexual orientation of the father, gender ideology or cultural values were generally not addressed in research but included in our organizing framework because they represent common moderators in work-family research (Allen et al., 2020; Michel et al., 2011).

Following this process, the resulting classification of papers based on their content was: a) 24 articles focused on the importance of policy/regulation for use of paternity leave (*macro-level* category); b) 27 articles focused on how organizational variables and cultures shape the use of leaves (*meso-level* category); c) 17 articles focused in the effects of paternity leaves on relationships with children (*children* category); d) 16 articles focused on effects of paternity leaves on the couple (*family and marital relations*); e) 16 articles focused on effects of paternity leaves on professional life and career development (*career development* category); f) 15 articles focused on effects of paternity leave on health (*health* category); g) 5 articles focused on effects of paternity leave on the domestic division of work (*gender equality* category); and h) 33 articles addressing paternity leaves in specific sectors (such as medical, law, or managerial levels). All the references were included at least in one of these categories. Areas a, b and h were subsumed into the antecedents block, and areas c to g into the effects domain. All the moderators identified in all the a to h areas were collected in a separate block in the figure, to acknowledge their moderating role. In the following section, we provide an overview of the current state of the art in each area.

3.5.1. Antecedents of paternity leaves

This section includes the *macro-level forces* and *meso-level forces* categories.

Effects of Policy/Regulation (Macro-level Forces). One of the areas in which the literature has shown greater interest is in relation to the evaluation of the effect of current regulations regarding leaves. Leave regulations are politically controversial, due to the different political debates that evidence the tension between a hyper-maternalised traditional model and men's growing willingness to use care leaves provided to them (Doucet & McKay, 2020; Drew & Watters, 2014; Milner & Gregory, 2015). In relation to this, there is general agreement that regulations regarding leaves have a different effect on men and women. In particular, there is general agreement that reforms towards more egalitarian leaves make the proportion of men asking for leaves rise (Bartel et al., 2018; Escot et al., 2014; Zagorsky, 2017) and reduce possible discrimination from employers that identify parenting as a women's issue (Arnanson & Mitra, 2010). In contrast, some authors claim that the availability and use of leaves should be explicitly separated, given that in contexts where both maternity and paternity leaves are available, women still make more use of them (Amin, Islam, & Sakhonchik, 2016; Bueno & Grau-Grau, 2020; Whitehouse, Baird, Diamond, & Soloff, 2007).

In general, studies on the paternity leave literature identified public policies as an effective tool either to remove barriers in the use of leaves by men, or to avoid reproducing existing patterns of inequalities in this field (Alio et al., 2011; Dobrotić & Stropnik, 2020; Fernández-Cornejo et al., 2018; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2020; Petts, Knoester, & Li, 2020; Tsai, 2012). However, in order to be effective, it has been suggested that these policies should create individual rights to fathers, such as reserved weeks in parental leaves (Duvander & Johansson, 2019; Farré, 2016; O'Brien, 2009) rather than general childcare measures (Chau, Foster, & Yu, 2017; Gregory & Milner, 2011; Weldon-Johns, 2011). McClellan (2018) also acknowledged the relevant role of judges and tribunals in evaluating existing policies, underscoring the need to ensure organizations' adherence to laws and regulations with legal punishment if necessary.

Effects of Organizational Variables (Meso-level Forces). Organizations have also been studied as a relevant antecedent and domain of influence in domestic life and the way work-life balance policies can be successfully implemented (e.g., Haas & Hwang, 2019). Some studies have addressed how the way in which organizations incorporate policies into human resources processes and culture can have an impact both in the use of leaves and organizational performance (Duffy, van Esch, & Yousef, 2020; O'Brien, 2013; Burke, 1986; Burke, Stagl, Salas, Pierce, & Kendall, 2006).

A set of studies have tried to understand the role of cultural norms of the organization (e.g., shared values) in the use of leaves, as well as their outcomes. The vast majority of the literature agrees to underscore the role of the workplace as a reinforcer of social norms present in the society and/or within the couple (Flaquer & Escobedo, 2014; McKay & Doucet, 2010), perpetuating the gendered division of work (Aunkofer et al., 2018; Romero-Balsas, Muntanyola-Saura, & Rogero-García, 2013; Valarino, 2018). The outcomes examined include the effects of traditional organizational norms on incongruity between availability and use of family arrangements (Thébaud & Halcomb, 2019; Waner, Winter, & Mansfield, 2007), and the negative impact on men's evaluations and promotions, especially when the leave is long (longer than five weeks for Canadian data, Harvey & Tremblay, 2020, and up to three months with European data, Gartzia et al., 2018).

Other research studies focus on understanding the impact of organizational support on individual responses regarding parental leave, underscoring how subjective perceptions of support by the organization is one of the most important factors that determine the use of leaves by men (Barcus et al., 2019; Eerola, Lammi-Taskula, O'Brien, Hietamäki, & Räikkönen, 2019; Gordon and Szram, 2013; Kaufman, 2018; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Pavicevic & Herrera, 2019; Tremblay & Genin, 2010; Valarino & Gauthier, 2016; Whitehouse, Diamond, & Baird, 2007). Together with this organizational support approach, coworkers also play a key role in fostering the use of leaves (Dahl et al., 2014; Miyajima & Yamaguchi, 2017). Finally, the salience of gender stereotypes in a profession is also understood as a factor that can facilitate a more equal use of family leaves. In particular, there is evidence that working in female-dominated professions is associated with an expansion of the gender-neutral leave (share of leave beyond reserved days for fathers) taken by men (Naz, 2010). In male-dominated professions such as the banking sector, challenges are more marked and thus there is a call for human resource practitioners and social workers to educate people in these sectors to ease the shift process towards a higher use of paternity leaves (Darko-Asumadu, Sika-Bright, & Osei-Tutu, 2018).

3.5.2. Effects of paternity leaves

This section comprises findings related to four categories: effects on relationship with children; effects on health; effects on family and marital relations; and career development effects.

Effects on Relationship with Children. The most studied topic related to effects of paternity leave is in relation to the relationship between fathers and their children. For instance, researchers have focused on positive associations between the provision of paternity leaves and father-child attachment. [Cygan-Rehm, Kuehnle, and Riphahn \(2018\)](#) showed how paternity leave improved father-child attachment and a subsequent reduction on single motherhood (i.e. without a spouse or live-in partner). Children's perception of father involvement has shown to be higher when using paternity leave, improving also father-child closeness and communication ([Petts, Knoester, & Waldfogel, 2020](#)).

Research examining moderating factors in these associations have found that the positive effects that parental leave can bring to relationships with children are higher under several conditions: positive attitudes towards care ([Fernández-Cornejo, Escot, Del-Pozo, & Castellanos-Serrano, 2016](#); [Petts & Knoester, 2018](#)); non-residence with the child ([Knoester, Petts, & Pragg, 2019](#); [Pilkaukas & Schneider, 2020](#)); more religious participation of parents ([Petts, 2018](#)); or being the first child ([Miller, 2011](#); [Romero-Balsas, 2015](#)). A large number of papers also found that father general involvement in caretaking increases when they spend time at home after birth, which is typical in paternity leave ([Meil, 2013](#); [Nkwake, 2009](#)). For instance, research looking at time with children has shown that paternity leaves increased solo time of fathers with children, irrespective of the duration of the leave ([Hosking, Whitehouse, & Baxter, 2010](#); [Wray, 2020](#)). Interestingly, research in this field has also shown that this effect persists once the father gets back to work ([Meil, 2017](#); [Tamm, 2019](#)) and is durable over the first 28 months of life of the child, decreasing when entering preschool and school ([Lamb et al., 1988](#); [Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007](#)).

Effects on Family and Marital Relations. A notable set of articles focused on the effects of paternity leaves on family and marital relations. The majority of studies in this field fall predominantly in the family subcategory, with the general finding that the use of paternity leaves by fathers is positively associated with future involvement in fathering, including higher subsequent childbearing in the couple ([Duvander, Lappegard and Johansson, 2020](#); [Farré & González, 2019](#)). In terms of marital relations, higher levels of marital support and relationship satisfaction have also been repeatedly reported when using paternity leaves ([McClain & Brown, 2017](#); [Petts & Knoester, 2019a, 2019b](#)). Conversely, some authors found a positive association between the provision of paternity leaves and the probability of couple separation ([Avdic & Karimi, 2018](#)) as well as relationship conflict in contexts where the mother is not working in a paid job ([Petts & Knoester, 2019a](#)).

A lower number of studies focused specifically on violence among heterosexual couples, finding a negative association between the use of leaves and violence against one's partner (e.g., [Chan, Emery, Fulu, Tolman, & Ip, 2017](#)). Interestingly, some studies have reported an identity change by fathers as a consequence of paternity leaves, such that experiences of being at home with a leave make fathers see themselves with a principal role in parenting alongside mothers that goes beyond the traditional breadwinner ideal where men is an occasional collaborator in care duties ([Johansson, 2011](#); [Klinth, 2008](#); [Lim, 2019](#); [Xiangxian, 2020](#)). This can be explained in part because taking a leave allows fathers to be immerse into daily realities of childcare, which leads to develop parenting skills and a sense of responsibility ([Beglauber, 2019](#); [Rehel, 2014](#)).

Effects on Career Development. This category focuses on the potential effects of paternity leaves for career development, capturing effects for both men and women. Specific research around men's career development suggests that the use of paternity leaves within the company increased the level of acceptance of these leaves by employers ([Duvander et al., 2019](#); [Feldman, Sussman, & Zigler, 2004](#)). On a negative side, [Cools and Strøm \(2016\)](#) and [Rege and Solli \(2013\)](#) identified an increase in their wage penalty for males making use of paternity leaves. Also, [Gartzia et al. \(2018\)](#) showed that longer paternity leaves can have negative effects for male leaders' careers by decreasing perceptions of their effectiveness as leaders. In particular, they showed that male leaders taking a longer paternity leave (from 2 weeks to 3 months, which went beyond the standard in their particular work context) received more negative evaluations than both other male leaders with a shorter statutory leave (from 2 days to 2 weeks) and female leaders ([Gartzia et al., 2018](#)).

In the case of women, there is general agreement that the provision of paternity leaves for fathers has positive effects for women in terms of career development outcomes. These outcomes include general benefits such as a reduced household gender wage gap ([Andersen, 2018](#); [Druedahl, Ejrnæs, & Jørgensen, 2019](#)) or an enhanced probability that women are employed in paid work ([Andysz, Jacukowicz, Stańczak, & Drabek, 2016](#); [de la Corte Rodríguez, 2018](#); for an opposing view, see [Cools, Fiva, & Kirkeboen, 2015](#)). These general trends are connected to the idea that improvements in women's career progression is higher when men (their partners) use paternity leaves. For instance, research in this field found a decrease in the motherhood wage penalty of mothers when their male couples use paternity leaves ([Farré & González, 2019](#); [Hardoy, Schøne, & Østbakken, 2017](#); [Motaung, Bussin, & Joseph, 2017](#); [Naldi, Baù, Ahl, & Markowska, 2019](#)). Finally, the effects of paternity leaves on their female couple's use of sick leave (different to maternity leave) have been explored, with authors finding no direct relationship between them ([Ugreninov, 2013](#)) except when fathers take more time than just the time reserved for them ([Bratberg & Naz, 2014](#)).

Effects on Health. The effects of use of paternity leaves on several dimensions of health have also been a topic of analysis. A first group of studies have focused on health outcomes generally. For instance, men using paternity leave experience a lower death risk ([Månsdotter, Backhans, & Hallqvist, 2008](#); [Månsdotter, Lindholm, & Winkvist, 2007](#)) and an increase in the practice of physical activity ([Johansson, Wennberg, & Hammarström, 2014](#)). Furthermore, several studies have evaluated psychological effects of paternity leave for fathers, finding several effects for fathers: increased their life satisfaction ([Kramer, Bae, Huh, & Pak, 2019](#)), lower postnatal depression of mothers when paternity leave is adopted ([Philpott & Corcoran, 2018](#); [Redshaw & Henderson, 2013](#); [Séjourné, Vaslot, Beaumé, Goutaudier, & Chabrol, 2012](#)), and higher ability to recognize the independent thoughts and feelings of children ([Tharner, Altman, & Væver, 2016](#)). A second group of studies have focused on children's health more specifically. In particular, the provision of

paternity leaves has been associated with higher neurodevelopment of children at an early age (Bjarnadóttir et al., 2019; Burtle & Bezruchka, 2016; Earle, Mokomane, & Heymann, 2011), less risk of mortality (Heymann et al., 2017; Månsdotter & Lundin, 2010) and less likelihood to be breastfed (Flacking, Dykes, & Ewald, 2010). An increase in the use of leaves by fathers does not have an effect on children risk for physical injuries (Laflamme, Månsdotter, Lundberg, & Magnusson, 2012). Other studies have addressed specific effects such as use of contraceptive pills by daughters, with evidence of a mild positive association between the use of paternity leaves shorter than 30 days and daughters' use of these pills (Rashid & Kader, 2014).

Effects on Gender Equality and the Domestic Division of Labour. Connected to concerns about career development and women's professional advancement, a set of studies explored specifically the effects of paternity leaves on the domestic division of labour and the assumption of domestic responsibilities at home, with mixed findings. Some studies have found no associations between the provision of leaves and the sharing between men and women of domestic duties (McKie, Bowlby, & Gregory, 2001). In contrast, other articles found a positive effect of fathers' use of leaves on a more equal division of work in the couple in the medium term in terms of both involvement in childcare and housework (Bünning, 2015; Kotsadam & Finseraas, 2011; Patnaik, 2019; Schober & Zoch, 2019). In an effort to understand these complexities, some studies suggest that the effects that use of paternity leaves by fathers can generate for gender equality outcomes are limited to situations in which paternity leaves are long or situations of solo leaves – not simultaneously with the couple (Bünning, 2015).

3.5.3. Paternity leaves in specific sectors

A final number of studies have focused on specific sectors when analysing how paternity leave policies are shaped. Surprisingly, the vast majority of studies in this category analysed the medical sector, given that some specificities of this occupation (e.g., long work hours, overall stress, specialisation requirements) contribute to a discouragement of family planning (Tang et al., 2019). Within the medical field, some studies examine whether availability of paternity leaves are a determinant factor when choosing certain residency specialties, in particular Obstetrics and Gynecology (Alston et al., 2017; Davis, Baillie, Hodgson, Vontver, & Platt, 2001), Orthopedics (Clement, Olsson, Katti, & Esther, 2016), Pediatrics (Berkowitz, Frintner, & Cull, 2010), Radiology (Heilbrun, Bender, Truong, & Bluth, 2013), or Surgery (Bourne et al., 2019; Garza, Weston, & Furnas, 2017; Giantini Larsen, Pories, Parangi, & Robertson, 2019; Gong et al., 2019; Humphries et al., 2017; Kwong, Chau, & Kawase, 2014; Mayer, Ho, & Goodnight, 2001; Wijnhoven, Watson, & Van Den Ende, 2008). The most common conclusion is that the existence of paternity leaves is a valued resource either when choosing the residency speciality or when currently exercising the profession, not only among female but also among male prospective employees.

Analyses in medical schools also revealed the remarkable commitment in this field to help medical faculty achieve work-life balance, with generally similar maternity and paternity leave policies (Bristol, Abbuhl, Cappola, & Sonnad, 2008; Socolar, Kelman, Lannon, & Lohr, 2000; Tang et al., 2019; Welch, Wiehe, Palmer-Smith, & Dankoski, 2011; Wendling et al., 2019). Some authors expect even higher development of work-life balance initiatives in this organizational context in the future (Baldwin, Rowley, Daugherty, & Bay, 1995; Gold, Allan, Ralston, Fromme, & Desai, 2019; Gropper, Gartke, & MacLaren, 2010; Itum, Oltmann, Choti, & Piper, 2019; McPhillips et al., 2007; Mohan et al., 2019), being especially relevant in cases of double physician couples (Herath & Herath, 2019). Some studies such as the one by Weiss, Gordon, and O'Connor (1998) suggested that leave policies offered at hospitals do not differ significantly to the ones of big private listed companies, but they offer better support systems for parents returning to work after the birth of a child.

In the case of other sectors, research examining the specificities of the law profession has pointed to the particular limitations of implementing paternity leaves in this field, concluding that those who do take leaves have lower career opportunities. Given that women are still the ones applying for leaves in the law sector and beyond, they are seen as second-level lawyers (Cunningham, 2001; Tremblay, 2013). Looking to research in the specific role of management, research has generally concluded that paternity leave policies in organizations strongly punish men, reducing their promotion potential (Smith, Smith, & Verner, 2013) and worsening general evaluations of leadership effectiveness (Gartzia et al., 2018). In the case of police departments (Rabe-Hemp & Humiston, 2015; Tremblay & Genin, 2010), paternity leave-taking increases are related with maternity leave-taking rates. Finally, research conducted with male members of parliaments also show that men in these contexts are not likely to make use of leaves, due to the fact that they cannot be easily substituted and the commitment culture in parliaments, where people are expected to be always present (Kantola & Rolandsen Agustín, 2019).

4. Discussion

As shown in our analysis, existing research on paternity leave is growing rapidly especially among European female researchers and covering a wide range of topics that are important to improve our theoretical understanding of the factors that promote gender equality (Eagly, 2013; Valarino, 2018), work-life balance (Allen et al., 2020; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and family health and relations (Duvander et al., 2019; Petts & Knoester, 2019a). However, with a substantial fragmentation of research topics, there is a clear lack of common theoretical and empirical grounding across studies, with diverse topics, references, samples and methodological designs. The novelty of the topic may underlie these diverse configurations and analyses. For instance, in spite of evidence that paternity leave policy plays a critical role in men's use of leave options at work, a full understanding on the interactive ways in which regulatory and organizational antecedents influence leave decisions in different organizational contexts has not been achieved. The heterogeneous and interdisciplinary nature of studies likely explains the under-development of theorization around the topic, with few theoretical articles that address the phenomenon integrally.

Our conceptual organizing framework and analysis of areas covered in research help address these concerns, providing a comprehensive analysis on the research that has been performed in these fields overall, and identifying current trends and future

directions for research. In general terms, consistent with content-analytic reviews in other areas of organizational behaviour research (e.g., Hassan et al., 2022; Schilke et al., 2018), we identified two clear blocks of studies focused on antecedents and effects in men's use of paternity leave research. Extending previous approaches in work-family balance (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Michel et al., 2011; Poelmans, 2012) and social organizational research with a gender perspective (Gartzia, 2021), we identified two fundamental antecedents of men's use of paternity leaves: macro-level forces (policy/ regulation) and meso-level forces (organizational culture and practices). Our conceptual scheme also illustrates how paternity leave provision has multi-dimensional effects in a varied range of domains including relationships with children, family and marital relations, health, and career development. We identified areas with a lower empirical maturity, such as family-level antecedents, which are described below.

4.1. Underdeveloped areas and future directions for paternity leave research

A clear learning from our analysis is the confirmation that the existence of formal regulations creating paid and men-directed paternity leaves plays an essential role. First, the way in which the leave is designed in the norm can act as a reinforcer of traditional assumptions regarding care, or instead act as a drive for change (Gartzia, 2021; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2020). Second, because of its mandatory nature, formal regulations make it easier for men to use a leave, while informal measures depend on the willingness of the employer (Romero-Balsas et al., 2013). Our analysis also suggests that male-targeted regulations at the macro-level should be fully paid but include specific mechanisms to oversee the actual implementation in the organizational practice. To do so, research should also more clearly distinguish between levels and categories of paternity leave use (e.g., shorter vs. longer, statutory vs. extended, part-time vs. full-time, organizationally vs. legally provided, etc.) as well as interactive antecedents and effects for example by not limiting the scope of research to a particular discipline, further examining interrelated connections and embracing several theoretical perspectives that integrate family, regulatory and organizational research. For instance, attention could be given to more integrally developing the topic by extending connections between policy/regulatory research (Weimer & Vining, 2017), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and social/organizational research (Neuman & Robson, 2014).

Regarding meso-level (organizational forces), a number of studies have evaluated the organizational and cultural antecedents of male employees' use of paternity leave, including variables that are common in the organizational behaviour literature such as organizational culture and structure, HR policies or leadership processes (Barcus et al., 2019; Dahl et al., 2014). Our analysis of these studies altogether shows that meso-level organizational forces such as HR policies and practices that are sensitive to work-life balance, perceived organizational support, supervisor support, coworker support and gender equality policies help increase men's use of paternity leave. However, in spite of a relatively high representation of studies in the work and organizational field, we note that important organizational variables and outcomes have been surprisingly ignored. For instance, whereas management research is largely common in the organizational behaviour literature (e.g., Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020), studies looking at the effects of paternity leaves on career promotion and leadership evaluations are virtually absent (see Gartzia et al., 2018). Given the particular challenges that male employees face in managerial positions when asking for a leave (Gartzia et al., 2018) and the role modelling effects that male leaders can generate in firms (Gartzia & Van Knippenberg, 2016), fully supporting paternity leave for men in managerial positions is a particularly relevant future research area.

It is also surprising the scarce number of studies and theoretical development considering effects of paternity leaves on male employees' responses at work, such as work satisfaction, motivation, commitment or related work attitudes. Based on the principles of work-life enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), to the extent that leaves have a positive impact in different facets of men's lives it may also be beneficial at work. The socio-motivational theory of domestic engagement (Gartzia, 2023) may be useful here to understand how institutional and psychological individual factors interact to predict work-life balance. According to this model, institutional and organizational patterns that explicitly encourage non-traditional work-family role standards (e.g., male-targeted fully paid leaves or having referents of involved fatherhood) can activate a motivational psychological process with perceptions that domestic efforts: (a) are feasible (high Expectancy), (b) do not lead to organizational penalties (low Cost) and (c) are personally desirable (high Valence). These motivational mechanisms are understood to be critical for individual decision-making regarding work-family balance (Gartzia, 2023). There is also evidence that a family-friendly organizational culture can boost the take-up rate of leave (Gartzia et al., 2018; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017). Therefore, the way in which the organization is positioned regarding paternity leaves both explicitly (through organizational policies) and implicitly (through shared values, implicit norms, and managerial support) seems to be a determinant factor for men to decide whether or not they actually are able to ask for a leave.

The ways in which these organizational processes influence gender equality outcomes at work also represents a fruitful area of research. In the professional sphere, paternity leaves appear to be a factor that reduces gender inequalities, decreasing the motherhood wage penalty and improving women's labour outcomes and career progression (Farré & González, 2019). However, analyses in this area have focused mostly on how men's use of leaves influence their female partners' career development, with a general lack of research examining more specifically effects at work (e.g., whether and how parental policies directed explicitly to men help improve their female colleagues' career development in the same firm). Our analysis shows that work-life balance research has traditionally been directed to women being only more recently (in the last few years) specifically targeted to men, so directing attention to men to address these gender equality gaps is needed.

Although work-life balance research highlights a range of family-level variables that may influence use of domestic options available to employees (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011), the role played by family factors as antecedents of men's use of paternity leave remains uncovered in current research. For instance, although variables such as the household income structure, family time demands or family/spousal support have been consistently studied in the work-family literature (e.g., Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Michel et al., 2011), they have been generally omitted as antecedents of men's paternity leave decisions. Given that these family-level predictors are

fundamental for understanding work-life balance, this is a clear gap to be addressed in future studies. Likewise, father's sexual orientation or gender ideology/values are uncovered areas. Our analysis overall reveals that research on paternity leaves has been carried out considering conventional family models (e.g., traditional, heterosexual couples). As the diversity of family compositions and structures continues to grow (same-sex parents, single-parent households, blended families, and families with non-traditional caregiving arrangements), it is necessary to understand the factors that influence work-family balance and the use of leaves in these diverse family compositions, as well as their specific dynamics. Future studies identifying non-traditional family compositions involving men specifically (e.g., male-male, single father, father with female/male family members to provide support) are also needed.

In terms of research methods, our analysis indicated that a broader set of quantitative designs that more precisely analyse cause-and-effect relationships would allow for theory development and hypothesis testing. In our review, the majority of the studies were cross-sectional, which are limited in their potential to make causal claims and providing deeper insight into the specific directions and underlying mechanisms among the variables affecting or affected by paternity leave use. Longitudinal and experimental designs have not yet been adopted. Although these designs are difficult to implement in the context of paternity leave, future research should consider applying related methods. For instance, in contexts in which paternity leave regulations are anticipated with a sufficient timeframe, it may be feasible to collect several waves of data in line with studies in which regulatory changes are compared *ex ante* and *ex post* situations, as with state-sanctioned care leaves (D'Addio et al., 2014).

4.2. Limitations of the study

Although this review was conducted in a structured manner, it is not devoid of the constraints that are commonly observed in other literature reviews of this nature (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). The primary limitation pertains to the predefined criteria, necessary for the inclusion of studies in this review. Specifically, papers were selected based on well-defined terms within their abstracts through references available online, and corresponding to scientific articles indexed in the abovementioned databases. Consequently, this approach has led to the exclusion of articles published in journals not featured in these databases, along with books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and any references not accessible online. The second limitation revolves around a bias that disfavours languages beyond English. Although this issue has been partially addressed by the inclusion of Spanish references, other languages have not been included. Concerning the geographical origin of the references, a bias persists towards studies developed in North America and Europe, potentially leading to an imbalance in perspectives from other geographical contexts.

In light of these limitations, the potential exists for crucial research work or papers to have been inadvertently omitted. To mitigate these concerns, a possible avenue for future research expanding the scope of this review could encompass additional databases in other contexts and cultures, a comprehensive review of meta-analyses and reviews, as well as the inclusion of articles published in languages other than English. Such extensions would undoubtedly uncover captivating areas for exploration. Note that absence leave policies for parents vary considerable among countries on duration, flexibility and payments (Kosłowski, Blum, Dobrotic, Moss, & Macht, 2019), which makes it difficult to identify general conclusions that can be applied universally and across firms in different locations.

4.3. Practical implications

Our review shows that both macro-level and meso-level forces can move paternity leave decisions significantly forward. Consequently, our findings invite policy makers and practitioners to fully appreciate the value that regulatory perspectives of parental leave can have for gender equality in organizations, and critically assess their contribution in shaping individual decision making. In general, there is agreement that greater use of paternity leaves can help reduce the division of domestic work: when men make use of longer paternity leaves (i.e. more than the statutory norm; e.g., Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007), positive and persistent effects towards a more gender-equal housework emerges. Thus, paternity leaves have the potential to contribute to the attainment of better gender equality levels, by closing the gap in the domestic division of work and by contributing to the advancement of women's career.

The European Union has set the pace for ensuring men's leave right, with the introduction of a minimum 10-day paternity leave. Of particular relevance are the Spanish 16-week fully compensated leave for each of the parents, Finnish 160-day leave also for each of the parents, as well as the 64-day paternity leave of Lithuania compensated at a 77% rate (EIGE, 2021). These EU policies may serve as inspiring practices for the advancement in the provision of leaves targeting specifically men in other geographical areas. Because our findings overall suggest that there are several positive outcomes that can be achieved in terms of health, family, and organizational outcomes, men's use of paternity leave has multiple benefits that policy makers should more ambitiously manage. Ambitious domestic policies and regulatory action that challenge traditional gender norms and are more specifically targeted to men may move societies and organizations closer to gender equality and a healthier implementation of work-life balance policies. Managers and human resource practitioners in firms also need to more fully understand the role they can play in individual decision making for male employees in organizations, and how their role interact with other individual and family level variables (e.g. some HR policies might be ineffective to certain family structures). It is thus important that HR policies consider not only firm variables but also individual and family needs of employees, in order to achieve good fit between paternity leave policies and the employee's reality.

Because the experiences and outcomes that an individual can develop in a given life domain can transfer to outcomes and experiences in other domains, particularly those related to work and family (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), life experiences and outcomes acquired through paternity leave practices should be understood in interaction. Note for instance that, from the organizational perspective, generating a culture of line manager and co-worker support to paternity leave will contribute to the development of a more family-friendly culture that is key for the success of human resource management and, in particular, employee retention

(Lamane-Harim, Cegarra-Leiva, & Sánchez-Vidal, 2021; Van Engen and Gartzia, 2022). Although some attempts have been made to increase the number of men who take paternity leaves in the workplace (e.g., Deloitte; Behnson, 2014; Dove Men+Care, Dove, 2022; Mutua, Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades, 2016), more efforts are needed so that families, firms and societies can benefit from the many positive outcomes that paternity leaves can bring. As illustrated in our review, these positive outcomes include multifaceted benefits not only for working fathers but also for their partners and children, fostering enhanced family bonding and leading fathers to actively engage in the nurturing and care of their newborns. Moreover, it contributes to dismantling traditional gender norms, promoting equitable distribution of childcare responsibilities between partners. Investment in early father-child interaction can bolster the child's cognitive and emotional development, while simultaneously help cultivating a more supportive and egalitarian family environment.

5. Conclusion

All in all, our study contributes to a more holistic and multidisciplinary picture of men's use of paternity leaves. We reviewed all studies in this field to provide a comprehensive overarching model about the various dimensions, antecedents, and effects of paternity leaves for men, women, families and organizations. We highlighted the growing interest in paternity leave in recent years, suggesting that scholars (particularly female, and European) are reorienting the study of work-family dynamics to more specifically account for men's experiences. The growing interest in the topic strongly supports the theoretical and applied value of paternity leave research and suggests that additional research is required to more fully understand the complexities and interdisciplinary nature of paternity leave action and research. However, given the multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature of the topic involving theories and variables from different disciplines (e.g., law, social policy, organizational behaviour, gender theory, social psychology), we pointed to an unresolved disconnection between disciplines that requires additional efforts towards further unifying the field and more integrally understanding the multidimensional nature of men's decision making. Responding to this concern and broadening our knowledge in this field, we provided an organizing framework that synthesizes current interactive challenges into three main areas of action: regulation/law, organizational norms (explicit and implicit), and family options that more equally distribute family-work demands. Our review also points to a wide variety of family, health, and organizational outcomes to justify these efforts. We hope that our findings help provide further convergence in this field, pointing to boundary conditions and contingencies that shape men's use of paternity leaves, and help advancing this fruitful area of research.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Jon Pizarro: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Data curation. **Leire Gartzia:** Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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