Decent work housebound: Recovery experiences of parents during the pandemic

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Abstract

The International Labor Organization considers that gender equality and hours for free time and adequate rest are part of the essential dimensions of decent work. This work aims to analyze parents' recovery experiences in the situation of mandatory telework, controlled by job satisfaction. The research has been developed in Brazil, one of the countries most affected by the extension of the confinement entailing from political and economic decisions that have worsened the health crisis. The survey was responded to by 535 respondents, of which 286 were parents. Results show higher means between parents in experiences of relaxation, mastery, control, and psychological detachment. Although considered a high-protective strategy, the latter is little used by both parents. Another tendency found in the results is that children's presence at home negatively affects mothers more than fathers regarding job satisfaction with mandatory telework entailing from the pandemic. Balancing work and family is not an easy equation. It is even worse in a society where women, mainly mothers, blame themselves when they want to relax or decide to take on challenging activities. In the social light, it seems unsustainable to have more responsibility for family care, and this responsibility is not followed by recovery.

Keywords: recovery experiences; mandatory telework; COVID-19, decent work.

Trabajo decente confinados en el hogar: Experiencias de recuperación de los padres durante la pandemia.

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Resumen

La Organización Internacional del Trabajo considera que la igualdad de género y las horas de tiempo libre y descanso adecuado forman parte de las dimensiones esenciales del trabajo decente. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar las experiencias de recuperación de los padres en la situación de teletrabajo obligatorio, controladas por la satisfacción laboral. La investigación se ha desarrollado en Brasil, uno de los países más afectados por la extensión del encierro que conllevan las decisiones políticas y económicas que han agravado la crisis sanitaria. La encuesta fue respondida por 535 trabajadores, de los cuales 286 eran padres. Los resultados muestran medias más altas entre los padres en las experiencias de relajación, dominio, control y desapego psicológico. Aunque se considera una estrategia de alta protección, esta última es poco utilizada por ambos padres. Otra tendencia encontrada en los resultados es que la presencia de los hijos en el hogar afecta más negativamente a las madres que a los padres en cuanto a la satisfacción laboral con el teletrabajo obligatorio que conlleva la pandemia. Conciliar trabajo y familia no es una ecuación fácil. Es aún peor en una sociedad en la que las mujeres, principalmente las madres, se culpan a sí mismas cuando quieren relajarse o deciden emprender actividades desafiantes. Desde el punto de vista social, es insostenible tener más responsabilidad en el cuidado de la familia, y esta responsabilidad no va seguida de experiencias de recuperación.

Palabras clave: experiencias de recuperación, teletrabajo obligatorio; COVID-19, trabajo decente.

T he International Labor Organization, ILO, considers that gender equality and hours for free time and adequate rest are part of the essential dimensions of decent work (Duffy et al., 2017; Pereira et al., 2019). Although this dimension appears in the Brazilian context (Ribeiro et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2019), it shows a difference in this particular dimension in comparison to European Countries, where recovery is less socially valorized (Ribeiro et al., 2020) in that country.

Workplace changes in the last few years have disclosed several other gender issues, the pre-existing inequalities are amplified, and national gender culture matters when discussing this topic (Bornatici & Heers, 2020; Fuller & Hirsh, 2019; Özkazanç-Pan & Pullen, 2020; Pereira et al., 2019). In this particular, Latin American countries show less egalitarian gender culture and more work-family conflict (Bornatici & Heers, 2020, no Brazilian data, but similar cultural countries). Moreover, the crisis caused by the new coronavirus pandemic challenged those changes in everyday practice. Performing work activities intertwined with housework demands in the same room, notably to female workers, shows unequal household chores and home care responsibility: domestic chores and family care mainly fall on women (Zanello, 2018; Nagy, 2020). However, as rest and recovery do not increase organizational performance and boost profit, it has less evidence of this dimension in the work and organizational field. Rest is a soft outcome (Bal & Dóci, 2018), and for humanitarian, moral, and ethical reasons (Gordon & Schnall, 2009), there is an increasing "focus on the well-being of organizational actors and other entities affected by organizations" (Islam & Zyphur, 2006, p. 18).

Experiencing multiple stressors demands an efficacious recovery process. Empirical research shows that these processes are damaged in the presence of high stressors, but results are inconclusive when positive attitudes are involved (Sonnentag, 2018). Therefore, this work aims to analyze parents' recovery experiences in situations of mandatory telework, based on a comparison of satisfaction with work effect, in a country with gender difference in respect of home care.

According to data from the Gender Equality Observatory (GEO, https://oig.cepal.org/) as of 2017 (last year reviewed), the total sum of paid and unpaid hours among women was higher than among men in all the Latin

American countries. In Brazil, the average unpaid work hours among women is 21.5 hours, against half that time among men (weekly average of 10.8 hours). The average hours of whose have formal jobs in Brazil are 44h per week, but those that do not have, which represents 52% of the population, are 12h per day 6 times per week (Capaverde et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2020).

These data show that conciliating labor and personal lives is much more demanding for women, giving them a feeling that they have worked all day long (Medeiros & Pinheiros, 2018; Nagy, 2020). At the same time, they feel guilty if they do not perform their role well (Formiga, 2007). This accrual of functions and the mental load (mental tasks of control, and management of the family nucleus), together with working hours that exceed the professional shift, can lead in the short term to physiological responses that affect health. Among these short-term responses are increased tiredness, cardiovascular activation, negative affections, while in the long-term results culminate in burnout, depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic issues (Casper et al. 2019; Sonnentag, 2018).

In societies with gender inequality, the shared social norms and gender roles in work and care reinforce and challenge what can be done, and they intervene in this context (Ayudhya et al., 2019; Bornatici & Heers, 2020) because some behaviors are justified and legitimated, as "support from husband" (Omotosho, 2017). The space between duties and privileges in this context is crucial to analyze the recovering process with a gender focus. In families where a woman conforms to social norms and must work, as mandatory telework, a "servant of two masters[1]" situation, may be particularly relevant when applied to a sensitive topic such as the permission to recover.

In a situation where millions of workers continue working on-site, thus being more exposed to contamination from COVID-19, as happens with health professionals, the possibility of working from home can be considered a privilege, as it allows the social isolation prescribed as a prophylactic measure to refrain the disease dissemination. Moreover, it enables the feeling of greater protection by working from home and, at the same time, being able to take care of the children that are not attending on-site classes. In contrast, notably for families with a myriad of family arrangements or who have a demand for specific care, the feeling is that of stress and overload (Omotosho, 2017). That is so because tasks accumulate with cleaning, buying groceries, care with clothing, food, and children, both in leisure and education.

Housework overload increases as auxiliary services (e.g. school – Omotosho, 2017) are no longer available. In the Brazilian context, these services were suspended in March 2020. Although commerce is about to reopen after three months of social isolation, there is no date established to resume on-site activities at universities, schools, and daycare nurseries. Until January 2021 the public schools are still closed. Health actions (closing of schools and the start of working from home) deranged from political and economic actions (opposition to lockdown and encouragement of social contact), placed the Brazilian government among the most criticized for their decisions. In addition to being found in a study that the political position influences the way Brazilians see social isolation measures (Modesto et al., 2020), these mismatches were even the subject of an article in the medical journal The Lancet (The Lancet, 2020).

Moreover, it ranked Brazil in the global ranking as the fourth country with more cases of infection from the coronavirus (according data from the BBC News on July 16, 2020). Part of the Brazilian population (8.7 million people) has been working from home and in isolation for more than one year and still counting. The lack of perspective of change of this setting worsens suffering.

Before the world health crisis, voluntary telework – i.e., flexible delivery format and alternative to the work performed on the employer's premises (Golden & Gajendran, 2018) – was known for its several benefits and positive consequences to the worker, such as: greater flexibility and autonomy to plan their activities and the working hours, avoidance of distractions in the office, reduction of work-family conflicts, increased satisfaction and quality of life, reduced stress (Beham et al., 2015; Green & Roberts, 2010; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016).

However, working from home (mandatory teleworking) differs significantly from voluntary teleworking (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, the previous knowledge about teleworking must be questioned (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Kniffin et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021), since neither companies nor workers were prepared to telework in practice (Fraij, 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Due to the substantial and rapid changes in the social context and work practices, demands, and routines, some reported advantages and positive experiences of voluntary teleworking (e.g., flexibility and autonomy for work-family reconciliation) have been

considered challenges for those who begun working from home for the first time, given their particular conditions: lack of support from schools, lack of technological and soft skills (to balance work-life, for instance), sharing devices (computer, internet) and spaces for working and studying – not ergonomic prepared or designed for those activities. In fact, work-home interference was the challenge most mentioned by teleworkers in the pandemic, and it cannot be mitigated by autonomy at work (Wang et al., 2021).

Although conflicts ensuing from the interface between work and family have always been present, and clearly interdependent as demonstrated by literature (Eby et al., 2010; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), the routine imposed by the pandemic evidences the gender differences regarding the balance of those spheres of life, and the performance of different roles. Surveys with teleworkers point out different perceptions about this work modality. There is a paradox about work-family conciliation, which is both desired and complex (Nohara et al., 2010; Rafalski & Andrade, 2015), as it facilitates or damages the relationship between both realms. To some, the benefits of bringing these realms together have to do with the possibility of simultaneously managing professional and family-related responsibilities (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Kanellopoulos, 2011; Raghuram & Wiesenfeld, 2004; Windeler et al., 2017). This model would facilitate reaching a better balance between the professional and the personal lives (Fuller & Hirsh, 2019; Gálvez et al., 2018; Navarro et al., 2017). However, to others, the constant interruptions by family members or poor limits between work and leisure times serve as potential sources of conflict (Aderaldo et al., 2017; Martins et al., 2020) that lead to high emotional cost. It means to say that there could be different explanatory mechanisms in the work-family relationship, and to what extent it is harmful to the individuals' recovery.

Telework also has a gender bias. Many women hold jobs that allow teleworking, such as in the sectors of education and social services. This factor affects the maintenance of unequal standards of housework sharing since before the new coronavirus crisis, confirming that task distribution involves gender (Özkazanç-Pan & Pullen, 2020; Vincent, 2016). This difference has been enlarged now, reinforcing the roles traditionally played by women at home, in order to balance tasks related to work and those related to the family (Messenger, 2017). This could potentially overload women. On the other

hand, (voluntary) telework allows female workers to actively manage the time devoted to work, according to their needs and priorities. It enables them to match personal demands (like motherhood) and professional demands, reducing the conflicts between both spheres (Delanoeije & Verbruggen, 2020). This, in addition, denounces and shows resistance against the hegemonic model of (on-site) work designed for men (Bal & Dóci, 2018; Gálvez et al., 2018).

If in voluntary telework the issue of work and family was ambiguously reported, for teleworkers in the current atypical conditions the attempt to balance professional and personal demands seems to be even more challenging, albeit needed. This relationship can result in positive effects (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Fuller & Hirsh, 2019) such as those related to health and well-being (improved sleep quality, reduced stress, and reduced emotional exhaustion) (Jaga et al., 2013; Poelmans et al., 2006; Steenbergen et al., 2007), those related to family relationships (increased satisfaction with the family, and with the relationship with the spouse) (Hanson et al., 2006), and those related to work (increased organizational commitment) (Delanoeije & Verbruggen, 2020).

Literature has comprehensively studied the work-family relationship through different theoretical models about the impact of one realm over the other (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Kelloway et al., 1999). And based on these models and mechanisms, there are different sources of work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time conflict may be the most studied one (Ilies et al., 2007). Although likely to be present in a context of family confinement in telework, the conflict of stress or overload is the most visible one. This type of conflict suggests that the stress generated in a realm affects and reduces the capacity of meeting demands in the other realm. This, in turn, inhibits the proper performance in that role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kelloway et al., 1999). Considering that work conditions are temporal and spatial flexible (Fuller & Hirsh, 2019), it invades the different dimensions.

Considering the current work-family relationship in the pandemic, the need for recovery becomes more evident. The context of parents in mandatory telework clearly affects the realm of family over work and vice-versa. The realms' segmentation was voided; the resource draining, and hence of self-regulatory mechanisms, was committed; the congruence of types of work (e.g.

care works in and out of home) tends to exhaust resources, and make room for different sources of conflict (time, stress, and overload). This context of telework-generated stress can damage recovery experiences.

Recovery experiences refer to the process through which the individual recovers their resources and can potentially relieve the negative impacts of work stressors (Kinnunen et al., 2011; Sonnentag, 2018; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Recovery refers to the process occurring when the individual functional systems that are activated during a stressful experience return to the pre-stressor levels (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). It is worth mentioning that recovery and coping may be confounded, despite being different processes. Differently from coping, recovery is a procedural, continuous experience that does not respond to a specific event, which would be the definition of coping. Previous studies have compared both constructs and found low or null correlations between them (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2017).

This understanding of the recovery process and successful recovery experiences is supported by the Effort Recovery Model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), and by the Resources Conservation Theory (Hobfoll, 1998), in addition to the literature on humor regulation. In the first, there is an understanding that spending effort at work leads to load reactions such as fatigue or physiological activation, which are reversed in normal conditions (i.e., when recovery takes place). The second assumes that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect their resources, which can be external entities, such as objects or financial assets, or internal attributes, such as personal characteristics or energies. Therefore, both suggest two complementary processes through which recovery takes place: on the one hand, it points to the importance of refraining from work demands and avoiding activities that demand the same functional systems or internal resources demanded by work. On the other hand, gaining new internal resources such as energy, self-efficacy or positive humor helps the recovery of threatened resources.

Recovery experiences can be of cognitive or behavioral nature. Diversified strategies seem to be more promising for stress recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Table 1 presents some of them and includes their definitions, examples, and the empirically reviewed consequents.

Table 1

Definitions of recovery experiences based on Sonnentag and Fritz (2007), examples and consequences

Experience	Definition	Examples	Consequences
Psychological Detachment	It goes beyond physical absence; it implies mentally detaching from work, stopping thinking about work, and work-related issues or opportunities.	Not taking work-related calls at home, and stopping thinking about work.	A moderating effect on the relationship between stress and burnout; positive relationship with better humor by the end of the day
Relaxation	Process frequently associated with leisure activities, and that could result from activities purposely selected to relax body and mind.	Walking in the open air, listening to music, performing activities that demand little intellectual effort.	These assist in reducing stress-related complaints in the short and long terms.
Mastery	It refers to activities external to work that distract from work, offering challenging experiences, and learning opportunities in other realms.	Taking language classes, climbing a mountain, or learning a new hobby	Performing intellectual activities during vacations is reversely related to exhaustion during vacations.
Control	It refers to an individual's capacity of selecting an action between two or more options.	The degree to which individuals can decide which activity they will pursue, when and how to pursue that activity.	Highly related to happiness and well-being.

A meta-analysis performed by Bennett et al. (2018) reviewed the antecedents and results of these four recovering experiences and how these relate to well-being. The authors found that these experiences account for up to 62% of the variability in well-being, and perform a mediator role in the relationship. In the decent work literature, rest and job satisfaction presents relation (Duffy et al., 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2019). Moreover, the psychological distancing was strongly and more negatively related to fatigue than relaxation and control, while control holds a stronger positive correlation with energy in comparison with the experiences of detachment or relaxation. The results of another study showed that workers more engaged in integrating work and personal lives reported fewer recovery experiences and, therefore, were more

exhausted, and experienced less balance between both spheres (Wepfer et al., 2018).

Therefore, it is observed that recovery experiences are more frequently studied as mediators and moderators, rather than as criterion variables. Considering its relationship with elements involving balance with work, it seems relevant to have studies that allow for filling in this gap, by analyzing recovery as an end variable, that can be influenced by attitudes such as job satisfaction, for example. Moreover, this complex work-family situation imposed by the weak and tenuous frontier between the work and non-work realm during work in confinement, requires from teleworking parents the use of recovery experiences to prevent declining.

Hence, when analyzing the evidence that female workers mainly play roles to manage work and family demands, and that these are not easily conciliated demands, the changes for women declining when they do not use resources to efficiently recover are higher than those for men. Men, however, can focus almost exclusively on work demands and, therefore, have more time to recover in a more efficacious and complete way. Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H.1 Fathers succeed in using a larger quantity of recovery experiences than mothers.

Sonnentag (2018) suggested that, although the work stressing experiences demand higher, and more varied recovery experiences, the empirical results found in literature show the opposite. In other words, when stress is high it tends to damage the recovery mechanisms, leading to what she called "recovery paradox". According to the author, high work stressors, low tendency to recovery, and its high need result in a paradox. This tension between need of recovery when a stressor is high, and reduced probability of restoration constitutes the recovery paradox.

Sonnentag (2018) proposed different mechanisms that can work on this paradoxical relationship, as follows: negative activation, energy depletion, constant connectivity with work, and explanations through third variables. Individuals will not experience the recovery paradox in the same way, as they have different ways of reacting to stress, and not everyone suffers from connectivity to work, for example. Being technologically connected out of working hours is a problem only for those with highly segmented work-family boundaries; yet, there are individuals who prefer integrating both realms.

However, negative activation remains a mechanism that, virtually regardless of the case, seems to be present and receives little attention in the literature (except for Sonnentag & Lischetzke, 2018).

Negative activation refers to the hypothesis of humor congruence. Specifically, it means that being in a negative affective state results in more accessible negative cognitions in memory (Fiske & Taylor, 2008), being more susceptible to higher tendency of rumination (Keltner & Lerner, 2010) and, therefore, having a lower probability of detachment for recovery (Sonnentag, 2018).

Negative affections at work is one of the definitions of dissatisfaction at work. Job satisfaction comprises attitudes developed by individuals about their work (Quinn et al., 1979; Warr et al., 1979) and are positively associated to rest (Duffy et al, 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2019). Studies on job satisfaction show different mediators and moderating relationships, with implications on work, regardless if oriented to performance or well-being. Understanding that satisfaction at work is a positive emotion, and dissatisfaction can be read as a negative emotion, harmful to the recovery strategies, we could infer, considering the general context of mandatory telework, that:

H2.1 Job satisfaction increases the recovery experiences in the context of mandatory telework.

However, despite the general relationship between the mentioned constructs, the focus of this paper is on the analysis of the gender difference. Therefore, it is expected that:

H2.2 Mothers have less satisfaction at work than fathers when analyzed in the context of mandatory telework.

Method

Participants

On-line data collection through a snowball procedure occurred from April 18 to June 16, 2020, nearly one month since the beginning of the social distancing period established as a measure to refrain from the Covid-19 pandemic. This was the period when people started working from home. To

participate in the survey, the criterion was to be in a compulsory teleworking situation.

There were 535 respondents from all five regions of Brazil (the largest participation was from the central west with 45% of the respondents) with an average age of 42.2 years (*SD* = 12.1 years). Among them, 286 were parents (62.6% of mothers), who reported having from 1 to 4 children (*M_o* = 1 child). Regarding education, almost all respondents had higher education (24.8%) or a graduate degree (72.4%), and this ratio remains between the groups of men and women. Only eight respondents reported having high school as the last education level.

The ratio between fathers and mothers also remains the same when one observes the respondents reported to be exclusively team managers or leaders (12.2%), exclusively subordinates (36.4%), and managers and subordinates concomitantly (51.5%). Nonetheless, when analyzing the information on the monthly household income, 50.3% of women reported earning more than R$ 10,000.00, against 70% of men that reported the same salary band – it corresponds to nine times more than the minimum wage in Brazil (R$1,100,00, approximately 175€), i.e., around 1.575€. These data show that, even if women hold leadership offices in the same proportion as men, homes with men holding managerial offices report a higher family income.

As complementary information, respondents were asked about their working from home experience before the pandemic, and how many hours they have been devoting to work since then. Considering all respondents, 47.6% said to have never worked in that format before, and 40.9% said to have worked from home sometimes, but not regularly. Most respondents (44.1%) reported working between 4 to 8 hours from home (in addition to domestic chores), but it is also expressive the percentage of individuals working from 8 to 12 hours a day (31.5%). It is worth highlighting that 46.5% of respondents were civil servants, 31.8% held a fixed-term or indefinite employment contracts. In comparison, only 18.2% were self-employed, and the temporary workers and freelancers accounted for less than 4%.

Instruments

Participants responded to a brief adapted version of the *Recovery Experience Questionnaire* (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007) with good psychometric

qualities. Cronbach's alphas were the following: psychological detachment α = .74 (e.g. *I forget about work*); relaxation α = .89 (e.g. *I use the time to relax*); mastery α = .89 (e. g. *I seek out intellectual challenges*); control α = .86 (e.g. *I decide my own schedule*). Job satisfaction was measured according to one single item "How do you feel about the job you have now?" inspired by Quinn et al. (1979), responded to a 5-point scale ranging from "absolutely not satisfied" until "absolutely satisfied". Moreover, profile questions were asked to characterize participants.

Procedures

On-line data collection through a snowball procedure took place from April 18 to June 16, 2020, nearly one month since the beginning of the social distancing period established as a measure to refrain from the new coronavirus dissemination. This was the period when people started working remotely.

Mothers and fathers were compared considering the factors of recovery experience and the score of job satisfaction. In brief, the hypotheses were tested using the General Linear Model Multivariate (GLM), where the recovery experience factors were considered as dependent variables, the condition of being a father or mother was the independent variable, and the covariant was the average job satisfaction. Data analyses were through the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 24.0.

<div align="center">

Results

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The results, including effect size, means, and standard deviations for fathers and mothers, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary results of GLM on Recovery Experiences dimensions for mothers and fathers

Dependent Variable	Condition	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		F	p	η2
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Psychological detachment	Mothers	2.420[a]	.073	2.276	2.563	0.072	.788	2.420[a]
	Fathers	2.387[a]	.095	2.200	2.575			2.387[a]
Relaxation	Mothers	2.874[a]	.080	2.716	3.032	3.882	.050	2.874[a]
	Fathers	3.134[a]	.105	2.928	3.340			3.134[a]
Mastery	Mothers	3.629[a]	.069	3.493	3.766	5.020	.026	3.629[a]
	Fathers	3.885[a]	.090	3.707	4.064			3.885[a]
Control	Mothers	3.346[a]	.074	3.201	3.492	2.755	.098	3.346[a]
	Fathers	3.549[a]	.097	3.359	3.739			3.549[a]

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Job Satisfaction = 3.87

Table 2[2] shows that both fathers and mothers experience more frequently the mastery experience, seeking out challenges, and we suppose that is result is related to respondent's profile once almost everybody has higher education or graduate degree. The highest means among fathers concerning experiences of relaxation, mastery, and control support the confirmation of H1. Psychological detachment, considered to be a high-protective strategy, is less frequent among fathers and mothers. Figure 1 presents a graphic comparison of means in factors of the recovery experience for better visual inspection.
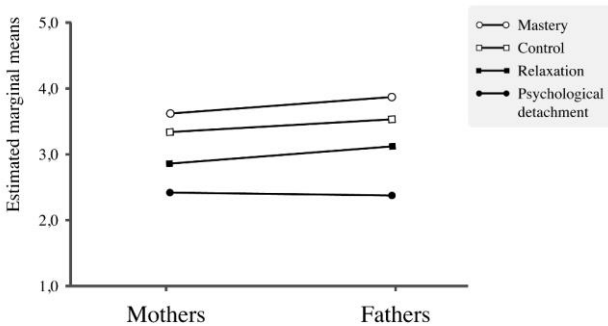

Figure 1. *Comparison of averages in the Recovery Experiences by job satisfactory score as covariance* (M = 3.87; SD = 0.95)

Observing the figure, one finds that the use of mastery and control experiences are the most used by respondents in this situation of mandatory telework. Relaxation experience is more likely to be used by fathers than by mothers. These results support H2.1, and point to the interference of job satisfaction in the use of recovery strategies in the context of mandatory telework. It is noted that, without job satisfaction control, the tendency is that fathers' means are higher in the recovery experience factors where there is a significant difference in comparison to the mothers.

To supplement the analysis, job satisfaction and recovery means were analyzed considering fathers and mothers and men and women (without kids). We apply a tree hierarchy map that compares all factors averages between groups and within groups. Considering the hierarchization for job satisfaction during compulsory telework and recovery experiences, we can see in Figure 2 that fathers are in the first position, followed by men and women without kids, and in the last position are the mothers.
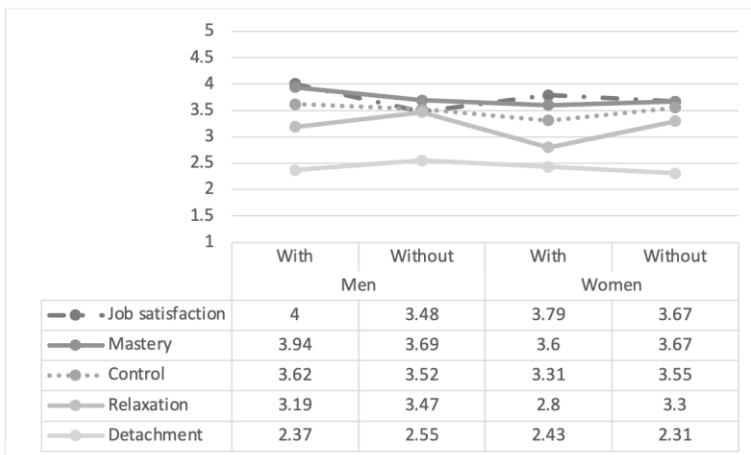
		With	Without	With	Without
			Men		Women
—●—	Job satisfaction	4	3.48	3.79	3.67
—●—	Mastery	3.94	3.69	3.6	3.67
···●···	Control	3.62	3.52	3.31	3.55
—●—	Relaxation	3.19	3.47	2.8	3.3
—●—	Detachment	2.37	2.55	2.43	2.31

Figure 2. *Descriptive for men and women (without kids) and fathers and mothers*

considering job satisfaction during compulsory telework and recovery experiences

Note: the difference between the means was tested using ANOVA

Regarding job satisfaction, when observing Figure 2, we note that women have lower scores during compulsory teleworking and, curiously, among fathers, are the highest scores. The analysis of variance comparison (ANOVA) indicated that this score among mothers ($M = 3.79$; $SE = 0.98$) is lower than that for fathers ($M = 4.00$; $SE = 0.87$), although this difference is only marginally significant ($F = 3.385$; df = 281; $p < 0.067$). Hence, there seems to be a tendency that children's presence at home negatively affects the mothers more than the fathers regarding job satisfaction with mandatory telework entailing from the pandemic. Therefore, H2.2 could be confirmed.

The job satisfaction means for men ($M = 3.48$; $SE = 1.21$) and women ($M = 3.67$; $SE = 1.08$) are not statistically significant ($F = 1.479$; $df = 247$; $p < 0.225$) and the same happens for recovery experiences factors. We generally found differences statistically significant between fathers and mothers (the only exception is for detachment) but not for men and women. Therefore, it is observed that, during the compulsory telework, mothers are those who use the least amount of restoration resources. Finally, similar as we showed in Table 2, the map also reveals that mastery is the strategy most used by the four groups, which indicates that the respondents preferred to search for intellectual challenges or tasks to expand their horizons during the confinement of a resource to restore themselves.

Discussion

This work aimed to analyze the recovery experiences of parents in situations of mandatory telework, based on a comparison of job satisfaction effect. The study points out some impacts on Brazilian families. However, considering the similar configuration that it presents concerning other societal arrangements, it could be expanded to other contexts (Bornatici & Heers, 2020). Women have taken on a double role (the mean weekly hours devoted to unpaid work is systematically higher among women in several countries, according to the Gender Equality Observatory) and the result of this study exposes a society that is declining homes with working mothers that are not adequately recovering. The confinement resulting from COVID-19 has just denounced and intensified unequal relationships in domestic care as already pointed out (Özkazanç-Pan & Pullen, 2020).

Findings suggest divergent implications of individual differences in the recovery experience. Fathers use more recovery experiences than mothers. We have argued that, consistent with the recovery paradox concept (Sonnentag, 2018), the stressors call for effective recovery experiences, and fathers more than mothers manage to enhance the recovery process. However, both fathers and mothers are using less psychological detachment, which is the most protective recovery experience. It supports the idea that parenting in the pandemic context is a hindrance stressor, and that the negative mechanisms of work-family relations are blatant (i.e. compensation, resource-draining and conflict) (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Kelloway et al., 1999).

In terms of job satisfaction, it positively affects the recovery experience, and fathers show higher scores than mothers. Taken together, these findings extend the results about work-family relation, decent work and from the recovery process. They reveal that parents differ in their social protection, where fathers are more protected and/or allowed in their recovery experiences. In general, the findings support the recovery paradox concept in another vein, where individual differences and social norms could have a role. In other words, the paradox does not come only with stressors but also with social norms.

Women show a history of sharper work-family overload with worse experience of recovery. It evidences that society is in clear physical and mental declining. The results presented in this study show that fathers report higher means in factors of recovery, but the factor of relaxation presented the highest difference between fathers and mothers. Balancing work-family relation is not an easy equation. It is even worse in a society where women, mainly the mothers, blame themselves when they want to relax or decide to take on challenging activities. On the other hand, the results support that men allow more than women.

Some practical implications for changing this picture rest on the development of public policies that assume differences in childcare (e.g., differentiated social security laws and maternity/paternity leave) (Fuller & Hirsh, 2019; O´Brien & Wall, 2017; Sato et al., 2017); the need for discussing the macro and micro social contexts, and the lack of public policies towards conciliating work-family in the pandemic, considering the inequality socially assumed, and its harmful effect. In addition to the contradiction for many

families in which part of the working class is punished by lack of work, while others suffer from excessive work (Navarro et al., 2017).

In the Brazilian context, teleworking's reality may extend for a long time, since the number of cases of contamination and deaths caused by the disease are not decreasing. It also represents a limitation of this study, a part of the expected limitation of self-reported measure. The study sample cannot be considered representative of the Brazilian workers, which accelerate its informatily and precarious work situation in the pandemic period. In addition, in other countries, teleworking is being implemented again due to the "second wave" that led to the re-confinement. In any case, this experience has shown that teleworking can last longer than the compulsory period predicted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it should be adjusted and better planned to be effective in the work-family conciliation, which should not be an exclusive responsibility of workers.

Supportive organizational policies are required for that (Fuller & Hirsh, 2019). These policies range from a better ergonomic adjustment of the labor environment, relaxation of stipends such as aid to contract Internet with better connection and speed, offer of training to plan, organize, and manage time (Guadalupe, 2018). They should also teach people to identify and remove potential environmental risks of stress and exhaustion, such as interruptions, noise, and distraction that can increase their strain.

Moreover, based on the results of this study, individuals should be better instructed about more protective, therefore more efficacious, recovery experiences that can contribute towards a rest capable of recovering them and preparing them to move on with work, mainly under these circumstances. While job satisfaction is conditional to the use of these strategies, and to the presence of children at home, mothers deserve special attention, by being granted more opportunities for recovery, better distribution and management of domestic chores, and strengthening their internal resources.

If mothers cross the boundaries between realms more frequently to balance them and suffer the effects of these conflicts, this can entail damages when performing the multiple roles. The feeling of not fulfilling the role as a mother, home manager, efficacious and productive worker, jointly with the difficulty of recovering (despite perceiving and pursuing it), culminates in emotional deterioration and dissatisfaction. Evidence confirms that individuals more engaged in conciliating work-family experience fewer recovery experiences,

feeling more tired (Wepfer et al., 2018). With the accumulation of duties during the confinement period, exhaustion will have a clear outcome if it is not followed by the proper use of recovery situations. In the end, the result will probably be a drop in well-being, with the decline of the women, accelerating the drop between gender, discrimination and vulnerability (Bal & Dóci, 2018; Cramwinckel et al., 2018; Özkazanç-Pan & Pullen, 2020).

It is worth mentioning that the sample of participants in this survey refers to individuals with high education levels and economic status, holding stable jobs in the public sector (coinciding with the profile of workers in home offices). These are the individuals currently performing activities that allow working at home and being close to children, taking care of them while school centers are closed. Therefore, if these women already suffer from the shortage of opportunities for recovery, the impacts on the relationship between work and family can be even more detrimental and devastating for workers performing on-site work, either for being providers of essential services or for being not supported by policies that legitimate social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic (Martins et al., 2020). In addition, the punishment seems to be even stronger among women with children.

Therefore, it seems unsustainable in the social light that the main responsibility for family care does not come with greater recovery experiences and that job satisfaction can obviate this process. Given the empirical evidence, parenting is needed, but it is seen as a hindrance stressor, with clear social and family implications. As recovery processes are hindered with being a mother, it is crucial to keep parenting roles within healthy and sustainable boundaries and supported by the State. Mothers should be cared for, as a way of caring for society, to have decent works and dignity (Bal & Dóci, 2018) and support the ILO priorities (Pereira et al., 2019).

Notes

[1] The Servant of Two Masters refers to a Carlo Goldoni (1746) play where the main character, The Server, renders services to two masters at the same time for the purpose of survival. The play is about the survival of the excluded.
[2] The difference between the means was tested using ANOVA

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