

#### SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL

Despite the increased number of studies focusing on fathers, or including fathers in their samples, men, in many cases, tend to be viewed as secondary caregivers, and as a lesser contributor to child development (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2018). Also, when included in parenting studies, fathers are often looked through the lenses of the mother, and not their own, and by using assessment tools designed for mothers. We should also acknowledge that a large percentage of studies tend to focus on Anglo-Saxon samples, overlooking other socio-cultural groups, although parenting occurs in the most diverse contexts, with common as well as specific challenges (e.g., Diniz et al., 2021). During the last decades several authors have highlighted these limitations, with important contributions both at a theoretical and methodological level (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2014; Lamb, 2010; Volling & Cabrera, 2019).

This special number aims to contribute to the field with studies looking at fathering in European and Latin-American countries, while also including mothers, and their contributions for child development, using different methodologies, and framed by an ecological perspective. It is organized in six empirical studies. The first three focus on fathers' parenting, characteristics, and its predictors: Iwanski et al., analyzed fathers' beliefs about sensitivity, challenging, and sensitive challenging behavior, and their specificities and similarities in relation to mothers, in a German sample. Noblega et al. analyzed, in a Peruvian sample, perceptions of fathers' involvement in child related activities, in nuclear families, with pre-school age children, as well as the contributions of fathers rearing history, and sociodemographic variables, to this involvement. Using secondary data, from two previous studies conducted in Chile, Aldoney et al., focused on fathers' involvement and time spent with the child, as well as perceived well-being and sociodemographic variables as predictors of his involvement in affective and cognitive dimensions, before and after the pandemic. The last three studies look at parenting, including fathers and mothers, and their impact on children's outcomes. Using a sample of Portuguese nuclear families, with pre-school age children, Torres et al., explored the associations between father' and mothers' sensitivity and intrusiveness (observed during a dyadic play interaction), and children's salivary oxytocin levels, internalizing and externalizing problems reported by pre-school teachers. Antonucci et al., analyzed children and adolescents' attachment outcomes in an Italian sample, aiming to better understand its predictors by looking at parents' individual and dyadic variables. Finally, Toscano et al., explored the associations between mothers' and fathers' controlling behaviors and children's executive functioning, in a sample of Portuguese preschoolers born preterm.

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The Editors of this special issue,

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#### COMMENTARY ON THE SPECIAL ISSUE

“Fathering in diverse Socio-cultural Contexts” Special Issue offers relevant studies on parenting from an innovative perspective, considering fathers first and in different socio-cultural contexts. This innovative perspective provides new scientific evidences about fathering and in an extended socio-cultural context. Two major questions are targeted in this Special issue: differences and factors associated with differences in fathers’ parenting when compared to mothers’ parenting, and the impact of fathers’ parenting when compared to mothers’ parenting on the child development and mental health.

Differences and factors associated with differences in fathers’ parenting when compared to mothers’ parenting were targeted in the first three studies of this Special Issue. Several new pieces of scientific evidences were provided. Many similarities and few differences were found in the representations of ideal fathers and mothers, when sensitivity, challenging and sensitive challenging behavior was considered in a study conducted in Germany (Iwanski et al., 2022). In some parenting activities the involvement of fathers was equal to the involvement of mothers (e.g., teaching/discipline and outdoor leisure activities), even so the involvement of fathers was different to the involvement of mothers in other parenting activities (e.g., direct and indirect care was higher in mothers and play was higher in fathers) in Peruvian families with children aged between 3 and 6 years old (Nóblega et al., 2022). Fathers’ parenting involvement compared to mothers’ parenting involvement was found to be largely defined according to the ecological context, with an increase in fathers’ parenting involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Chilean families with children aged between 2 and 7 years old (Aldoney et al., 2022). The studies were achieved with dyads (including mother and father), a relevant methodology to better understand fathering, that open the possibility of new important results, but also imply some concerns. One concern: is the fathers-mothers whom both accept to participate in the study representative of the fathers-mothers of the socio-cultural context? New important aims: Father’s parenting involvement and activities depends on mother’s parenting involvement and activities (on diverse socio-cultural context)? And how much mother’s parenting involvement and activities interfere on the father’s parenting involvement and activities (on diverse socio-cultural context)?

The impact of fathers’ parenting on the child development and mental health was targeted in the last three studies of this Special Issue. Several new pieces of scientific evidences were provided. A larger impact of fathers’ parenting sensibility and intrusiveness was found on child’s hormonal functioning and specific behavioral problems, when compared to the impact of mothers’ parenting sensibility and intrusiveness, in a study with Portuguese children aged between 4 and 6 years old (Torres et al., 2022). Both paternal and maternal individual factors, including parenting, but also dyadic paternal-maternal factors contribute to the secure versus insecure attachment of Italian children, aged between 4 and 14 years old (Antonucci et al., 2023). Although both mothers’ parenting and fathers’ parenting play an important role in the development of child’s executive functioning, the negative impact of fathers’ controlling behaviors was greater than the negative impact of mothers’ controlling behaviors, in Portuguese children born preterm and aged of 3 years old (Toscano et al., 2022). The studies were achieved with triades (including mother, father, and child), a relevant methodology to better understand the impact of father’ parenting on the child development and mental health,

open the possibility of new important results, but also imply some concerns. Once concern: Are the fathers-mothers-children whom accept participate in the study representative of the fathers-mothers-children of the socio-cultural context? New important aims: Child characteristics (e.g., sex) interfere on father' parenting impact in the child development and mental health (on the socio-cultural context)? As well mother's parenting interfere on father's parenting impact in the child development and mental health (on the socio-cultural context)?

Relevant studies and empirical evidence are offered in the "Fathering in diverse Socio-cultural Contexts" Special Issue, concerning fathers' parenting and mothers' parenting. Above all, empirical evidence in fathers' parenting and mothers' parenting similarities and specificities and empirical evidence similarities and specificities in the impact of fathers' parenting and mothers' parenting on the child development and mental health. Research teams share the same conceptual framework and objectives. A study including the five contexts would be a great contribute to understanding fathering in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

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