FATHER INVOLVEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF REMOTE WORKING

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Father Involvement During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

A Qualitative Study on the Effects of Remote Working

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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ABSTRACT

Father Involvement during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

A Qualitative Study on the Effects of Remote Working

The present study aims to understand the experiences of fathers who were fully or partially working from their homes during the COVID-19 lockdown measures. In order to do so, twelve fathers who have fully or partially worked remotely during the lockdown were recruited. The participants were interviewed, and the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis method. Five main themes emerged from the analysis of the data with regard to participants' view on fatherhood and the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on father involvement: (1) themes on fatherhood and the role of the father, (2) intergenerational transmission processes, (3) fathers' perspectives on gender roles within the family, (4) bonding with the child during COVID-19, and (5) ambivalence and finding balance. The results indicated that the characteristics participants attribute to fatherhood are diverse, ranging from being responsible, and being the advisor of the family to being a co-parent. Furthermore, participants' relationship with their own fathers was an important factor in shaping their attitudes on fatherhood. Participants who described positive relationships with their fathers carried this into their relationships with their own children; whereas participants who described negative relationships with their fathers try to compensate for this in their relationships with their children. Lastly, the majority of the participants reported that they were able to spend more time and have a closer bond with their children while working remotely during the lockdown.

ÖZET

COVID-19 Pandemisinde İlgili Babalık:
Uzaktan Çalışmanın Etkileri Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma

Bu çalışma, COVID-19 karantina önlemleri sırasında tamamen veya kısmen evlerinden çalışan babaların deneyimlerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunu amaçla, karantina sırasında tamamen veya kısmen uzaktan çalışan on iki baba çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Katılımcılarla görüşmeler yapılmış ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler tematik analiz yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Görüşmelerin analizi neticesinde katılımcıların babalık ile ilgili görüşleri ve COVID-19 pandemisinin ilgili babalık üzerindeki etkisine dair 5 tema ortaya çıkmıştır: (1) babalık ve babanın rollerine dair temalar, (2) kuşaklararası babalık aktarımları, (3) babaların aile içi cinsiyet rollerine dair görüşleri, (4) COVID-19 sırasında çocukla bağ kurma ve (5) kararsızlık ve denge bulma. Sonuçlar, katılımcıların babalığa yükledikleri özelliklerin, sorumluluk sahibi olmak ve ailenin yol göstericisi olmaktan, ortak ebeveyn olmaya kadar çeşitlilik gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca katılımcıların kendi babalarıyla olan ilişkileri babalığa dair tutumlarının şekillenmesinde önemli bir faktör olmuştur. Babalarıyla olumlu ilişkiler betimleyen katılımcılar, bunu kendi çocuklarıyla ilişkilerine de taşımışlardır; babalarıyla olumsuz ilişkiler betimleyen katılımcılar ise çocukları ile olan ilişkilerinde bunu telafi etmeye çalışmaktadır. Son olarak, katılımcıların çoğu, karantina sırasında uzaktan çalışırken çocuklarıyla daha fazla zaman geçirebildiklerini ve onlarla daha yakın bir bağ kurabildiklerini belirtmiştir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The role of parental involvement in childcare, particularly in the early years, is critical for both the parent and the child. While it is a very important period for the child in forming secure attachments, for parents it also signifies a very important milestone in terms of identity transformation and integration of this new identity (Cabrera et al., 2007; Strauss & Goldberg, 1999). The baby is dependent on the caregiver and the caregiver responds to the baby's needs based on a multitude of factors, such as his/her own attachment style, cultural codes, socioeconomic factors, and other psychological factors. This mutual relationship has been investigated much more thoroughly for the mother-child pair; however, the father-child pair is in a sense neglected (Liebman & Abell, 2000). Fortunately, the research on the father-child relationship and fathers' involvement in childcare, although lagging behind, is attracting more and more attention in the last few decades.

The primary caregiver role was associated mainly with mothers and the spotlight was on the early development during which the mother-infant bond is the strongest and most influential (Bowlby, 1979; Niemelä, 1982). Only recently researchers recognized and explored father-child relationship in early childhood (Freeman et al., 2010; Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020). The research interest in fatherhood started in the aftermath of WWII, when the absence of fathers showed its effects on children's maladaptive behaviors. Starting from the 70s, studies have yielded a more comprehensive understanding of fatherhood including personal, relational, social/cultural and developmental aspects (Lamb, 2000). The role assigned to fathers has accordingly changed over time from the breadwinner to a

more nurturant role (Coltrane & Gerson, 1994; Johansson & Klinth, 2008) with the help of the increasing body of research on father involvement and feminist accounts advocating an equal role for mothers and fathers in child-care (Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio et al., 2000).

Adding the pandemic to this intersectional equation of fatherhood has led researchers to examine changing life conditions and the impact of these changes on fathering (Asril et al., 2021; Maestripieri, 2021). The switch to remote working as well as to remote-online education and complete closure of pre-school institutions was one of the major transitions that radically affected daily routines (Cluver et al., 2020; Gallacher & Hossain, 2020). Therefore, the focus of the present study is to investigate the experiences of fathers who have worked from home during the pandemic, which brought an atmosphere of ambiguity along with new work and household arrangements. The unique reflections of the pandemic, fathers' reactions, changes in their relationships with their children and spouses were investigated. In this way, the present study has the aim of shedding light on issues such as what it is like to be a father in this extraordinary pandemic period we are going through, what the advantages and disadvantages of working from home have been for fathers and how this unique situation affects the family relationships and lives of fathers.

In the following sections, fatherhood literature will be discussed from different perspectives. Firstly, the theories that deal with the concept of father involvement and the factors affecting father involvement will be examined. In addition, research on the concept of masculinity, which is intertwined with fatherhood, and the effect of gender roles on father involvement is summarized. Moreover, the unique effects of culture on fathering behavior, studies on father

involvement in Turkey will be discussed. Finally, studies describing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on father involvement will be summarized.

1.1 Theoretical background

Since the middle of the 20th century, the subject of fatherhood and the theories developed to explain the concept of father involvement began to find their place in the literature (Doucet, 2020). For example, Rotundo (1985) gave a very detailed and historical summary of fatherhood, including expectations, roles, and socioeconomic factors influencing the stereotypical fatherhood of various time periods since 70s. He pointed out three such stereotypes; "the patriarchal father" (1600 to 1800s), "the modern father" (1800s to 1970s), and lastly "the androgynous father". The patriarchal father was the symbol of authority, and he controlled his children since he was the sole owner of the land and other commodities of the family and the only one who has the right to distribute them among their children. The concept of modern father, which emerged with the changing economic and social conditions in the 19th century, was the financial provider of the family and moral teacher of children, especially of his sons than his daughters. The similarity between these two types of fatherhood is that they were both the head of the household, yet modern father was not as distant as patriarchal father, hence he was more able to relate to his children in a closer and warmer way. The last style of fatherhood, as Rotundo (1985) claimed, is a reaction to the immense changes in American culture such as women's movements and detraditionalization of gender roles. Even though the most recent type of fatherhood has started to spread only recently and hence could not fully be described, Rotundo asserted that being an active participant in day-to-day caring

needs, socialization of children, and developing an emotional bond with his children laid the foundation for androgynous fatherhood.

In his critical study, Larossa (1988) asserted that there is a social change, but the culture has changed much more rapidly than the conduct, in other words, although there is a discourse that fathers have a much more active role and they are much more competent in fulfilling this role, in practice not much has changed. Larossa (1988) called this "asynchronous social change" and claimed that this new ideal father is imagined and idealized in the eyes of the upper-middle class, but even their actions fail to reflect this social ideal. He called this father "technically present but functionally absent father", who feels ambivalence and from time-to-time guilt, as he could not reach his ideal fathering performance. Finally, Larossa (1988) argued that it is not the kind of fatherhood that has changed but rather the degree of paternal involvement, social expectations, and most importantly fathers' ambivalence over their performance have changed.

Almost all scholars investigating paternal involvement have emphasized the social, cultural, and economic factors in addition to intrapersonal ones affecting a father's attitudes and actions regarding paternal involvement (Bretherton et al., 2005; Cabrera & LeMonda, 2008; Pilinska, 2017). The new father and the extent of his involvement in child-care have emerged as a main scholarly interest in the fatherhood literature, nevertheless, a comprehensive and well-framed conceptualization was required. Father presence was the most commonly used variable in research until the 70s; however, it was insufficient to understand the unique features of this matter. Therefore, a need emerged to conceptualize fatherhood involvement and investigate more concisely the effects of it on both children's socio-emotional development and fathers' sense of self. Accordingly,

Lamb and colleagues (1985) proposed an inclusive framework, namely Lamb-Pleck Conceptualization, which consists of three components: (a) engagement (direct interaction with the child, in the form of caretaking, play or leisure); (b) accessibility (availability) to the child; and (c) responsibility. Later, a revised conceptualization was suggested by Pleck (2010), which emerged as an adjustment to the context of fatherhood research; however, the Lamb-Pleck conceptualization remained as the core theoretical framework for paternal involvement studies. The research on fatherhood has mainly focused on the three core concepts but according to Pleck (2010), there are some differences in practice hence the addition of the two additional concepts.

Identity Theory and Parental Investment Theory (PIT) are two other, less popular perspectives that are used to comprehend paternal involvement and the factors operating around different styles of fathering. Identity theory initially originating from social psychology includes the process of men acquiring a paternal identity and the extent to which they are able to incorporate this new identity into the self (Stryker, 1968). Marsiglio (1993) approaching the subject from the perspective of identity theory, suggested that the self consists of multiple identities, and similar to functioning of neurons and synapses, there are diverse and more prioritized relationships among these different identities. Paternal involvement according to identity theory is about how much importance and salience the father role has in a man's sense of self, the satisfaction a father derives from the father role, and the perceived assessment of his performance as a father by significant others (Fox & Bruce, 2001).

Parental Investment Theory, on the other hand, has originated from an evolutionary perspective and presumes that fatherhood attitudes are controlled by an

implicit mechanism aiming at the continuity of generations, in other words aiming for inclusive fitness (Daly & Wilson, 1980). In other words, according to Parental Investment Theory as long as the child serves the father's well-being, the father will devote more energy and resources to that child. Fox and Bruce (2001) have used these two alternative theoretical frameworks to understand and explain father involvement. Their findings indicated that identity theory is more explanatory. Specifically, the salience of the father role for fathers' sense of self was a stronger predictor of father involvement. In summary, as the joy brought by the role of fatherhood for a father and the importance of this role in their identity increase, the relationship of fathers with their children changes in a positive way.

The intergenerational transmission of fatherhood attitudes and behaviors is another view that has taken place in the involved fatherhood literature. Theories developed from this intergenerational transmission perspective also used both physical, quantifiable elements such as the amount of time spent with the child and emotional elements such as the emotional and psychological value of the child to understand father involvement (Bouchard, 2012; Furstenberg & Weiss, 2000; Shears et al., 2006). Snarey (1993) by using and expanding on the Eriksonian concept of "generativity" analyzed how fatherhood practices, both positive and negative, are transmitted from one generation to another. Generativity is a term coined by Erikson for middle adulthood and refers to the interest in transferring the experiences onto the next generation and making sure that the next generation is well-guided (Erickson, 1986). In this detailed analysis which contained both qualitative and quantitative data from over forty years, it was evident that commitment to fathering, especially the positive attitudes and actions, is a result of a complex net of men's boyhood experiences, relationship with their spouses, and current living conditions

(Snarey, 1993). Two seemingly opposite but in essence not mutually exclusive hypotheses came forward, the modeling hypothesis and the reworking hypothesis. The former suggests that men whose fathers were involved are more likely to become involved fathers themselves, following the footsteps of their fathers (Biller & Solomon, 1986; Manion, 1977). The latter hypothesis suggests that a lack of good enough fathering during one's childhood has a potential for compensatory fatherhood involvement. These neglected children, once they become fathers themselves, are more likely to compensate for the inadequacies of their fathers and will be active participants in childrearing (Baruch &Barnett, 1986; Radin & Goldsmith, 1985; Williams & Radin, 1999). These theoretical frameworks are very useful in helping us understand the concept of father involvement and explaining men's relationships with the fathering role. In addition, the factors affecting fatherhood are crucial to illuminate fathers' involvement in childcare, which will be discussed in the next section.

1.2 Factors affecting involved fatherhood

Fathers do not exist in an isolated bubble; on the contrary, they exist in a society where social, psychological, economic, and cultural conditions shape their feelings, thoughts and behaviors. These factors, which will be discussed in detail in this chapter, take us one step further in understanding involved fatherhood. Although the number of studies on fatherhood has been rapidly increasing, the factors influencing fathers' attitudes and behaviors regarding their involvement are less studied (Lewis & Lamb, 2003). Researchers identified several factors affecting parental involvement of both mothers and fathers (Lamb et al., 1985). These factors are biogenetic, psychosocial-ecological, motivational, skill and support related, and

institutional. Although a biological drivenness to care for children is usually associated with the mother, there is no finding pointing out that this is deterministic, and that fathers lack this ability. Based on the social-ecological perspective, the authors suggest that a behavior is desirable if it provides social and biological fitness in a specific environment, in other words, fathers are very well able to care for children if it boosts the fitness of the family in that particular context. Skills fathers have acquired and the social support they receive are two important elements influencing their involvement. Lastly, institutional factors such as work condition, including working hours, availability and duration of paternity leave, and presence of social policies supporting mothers' employment and providing free and/or accessible childcare services affect paternal involvement (Lamb. et al., 1985). However, work condition affects only a subgroup of fathers who already are motivated to be more involved in childcare (Lamb et al., 1985; Atkinson, 2021). These numerous factors affecting fathers' involvement in childcare have been examined in different studies and will be discussed in detail below.

Gustafsson et al. (2013) conducted a study showing that there is no evidence for the so-called "maternal instinct" and biological sex-related determinant for caring ability. Their findings showed that practice and learning are the main factors facilitating the parent's ability to care for children. This suggests that parental differences, the ability to care, and similarly the level of involvement are a result of a complicated gender socialization and learning process. Jacobs and Kelley (2006) have investigated the predictors of father involvement grounded in the common Lamb-Pleck conceptualization. Overall, their results showed that mothers' increasing participation in the labor force has possibly resulted in fathers' decreased work hours

and consequently taking more responsibility in childcare as a compensatory mechanism.

A similar study by Volker (2014) emphasized the mothers' reactions as a predictor of father involvement. Similarly, the mother's opinions on gender roles and a supportive attitude towards an equal share of parenting were positively correlated with paternal involvement (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). Besides affecting paternal involvement through their attitudes and ideas, mothers can also overtly control the participation of fathers in childcare. This phenomenon is called "maternal gatekeeping" and has three areas of control; inflexible standards put by the mother, validation of maternal identity, and gender-specific family/parenting roles, in other words depicting the mother as the warm, nurturant figure and the father as a distant breadwinner of the family (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). A few examples of the inflexible standards set by mothers can be listed as setting a very strict regimen for the child's daily routine and requiring it to be followed, similarly controlling the methods of daily care activities such as feeding and toilet training. Validation of maternal identity refers to the process in which mothers identify with the culturally dominant nurturant caregiver role and, sharing this role with fathers may be experienced as giving up a part of mother's identity. McBride et al. (2005) has built upon the idea of "maternal gatekeeping" and found supporting evidence that the road to involved fatherhood is mainly being controlled by the mothers. In other words, mothers could either encourage fathers to be more involved or prevent them from active parental involvement among both intact and divorced parents.

Along with mothers' attitudes, fathers' attitudes about childcare are another fundamental factor found to be correlated with the level of father involvement. Fathers' beliefs about child-care influence their ability in child-rearing activities and

motivation, which then becomes a self-fulfilling cycle (Belsky, 1984). Fathers' motivation and their personal traits are good predictors of the quality of their involvement, and how they spend time with their children (Grossman et al., 1988; Berman & Long, 2021). Mothers' characteristics, on the other hand, had a large effect on the quantity of father involvement, the overall amount of time fathers spent with their children. A meta-analysis aiming to develop a model of father involvement found that more involvement during the gestational period and at the time of birth were significant predictors of father involvement as children got older (Santis & Barhan, 2017). Negative life events that could negatively influence fathers' mental health predicted less involved fathering. Additionally, the father's financial status as well as more hours spent at home, depending on the flexibility of business hours and business conditions, were positively correlated with more involved fathering. Mothers' employment status was also a strong predictor of how involved fathers are; when the mother was unemployed the level of father involvement decreased. Another study found that fathers' willingness and intentions about having children affect their involvement compared to unintended fatherhood (Linberg et al., 2016). A recent study has utilized intersectional theory with the existing literature on fatherhood in order to understand marginalized groups of fathers such as those who belong to a minority group, or who are socially excluded due to poverty (Strier & Perez, 2021). It is clear that belonging to a minority group puts fathers in a fragile position and affects their psychological well-being, which also influences their level of participation in childcare.

Child characteristics such as temperament, sex and social skills are also considered among variables affecting father involvement. Some researchers found that unlike the positive significant interaction between father involvement and

child's social skills, factors such as the sex, temperament and birth order of the child were not significant correlates (Holmes & Huston, 2010). Whereas other studies have shown that fathers are inclined to be more involved with their sons than with their daughters (Hosley & Montemayor, 1997). The inconsistent results of the studies investigating child's sex and/or other inborn characteristics might be related to the different traditional social codes that sons are still more appreciated in some cultures, whereas daughters are not seen as equally worthy (Arnold & Kuo, 1984). Another important area for understanding views on fatherhood and fathers' feelings and behaviors is the influence of gender roles and culture, and the impact of these variables will be discussed in detail in the next section.

1.3 Gender roles and culture

Among several factors influencing fatherhood and paternal involvement, concepts of gender roles and masculinity have been one of the most important intersectionality points and therefore remained a focus in fatherhood literature (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017; Levant, 1996; Pleck, 1981; Pleck, 2010). Pleck (1981) has argued that gender roles come from society and are enforced on individuals, which results in distress when the individual is unable to fit into these roles. He coined the term "gender role strain" for this distress and later explored its effect and potential clash especially with traditional fatherhood (Pleck, 2003; Silverstein et al., 2002). There is evidence that especially in Scandinavian societies, these traditional gender roles are somewhat more flexible and changed in the last decade; however, non-western populations are still struggling with "gender role strain" and there are differences even at the micro-cultural level (Johansson, 2011; Levant et al., 1998).

Among the reasons that require a change in the masculine traditional father role, McMahon (1999) argues that women's increasing participation in the labor market and the social decline of patriarchal authority are important elements. Congruent with this change, narratives of the fathers present a new kind of father who is more involved and caring, and disidentifies with his father representing a distant and authoritative type of fatherhood (Finn & Henwood, 2009; Joshi, 2021; Lewington et al., 2021). Another factor that may contribute this change is fathers' identification with their own mothers and learning from that experience. The possibility of this new kind of fatherhood is meaningful when we consider both feminist theories and gender role stereotypes that suggest men are not innately disqualified to be nurturant, but it is rather socially constructed (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Ruddick, 2016).

Doucet (2006) handles the subject of fathering from a multitude of perspectives in her book mainly deriving the data from primary caregiving fathers' accounts. Hegemonic masculinity both at conscious and unconscious levels is evident in fathers' expressions, they define their fathering as distant as possible from feminine ways of caring. On the other hand, especially the aspect of what Doucet (2006) calls emotional responsibility introduces some contradictions, since fathers clearly state that they can be nurturant, calming and perceptive about the child's needs. These qualities that have long been deemed as maternal or feminine are now part of fathering narratives. However, even though fathers are now incorporating more "feminine" features while caring for their children, they prefer to separate childcare from any maternal and/or feminine connotations (Doucet & McKay, 2020)

A recent study by Adler (2021) is complementary to Doucet's work, which utilized nationwide data in the United States in order to understand how affordable

childcare opportunities, being a dual-earner couple and, traditional masculinity stereotypes impact paternal involvement. She has found support for all the three factors; access to affordable childcare and mother's employment were positive predictors of father involvement whereas traditional masculinity was negatively related to fathers' involvement in the US. Numerous studies in recent years support the view that fathers are struggling to mold this new caring, nurturant identity to their sense of self and have a need to masculinize caring activities (Jordan, 2018). The narratives of fathers interviewed in these studies suggest that they do not perceive their care work as contradicting their masculine identity but rather describe it as an opportunity that enabled them to have a new set of skills (Brandth & Kvande, 2018; Hanlon, 2012). Following the influential article on doing gender by West and Zimmermann (1987), Deutsch (2007) argued that fathers can combine caring and the masculine identity, even can reconstruct it and put an effort to convert caring into a gender-neutral activity. Lastly, Schiebling (2018) put forward a unifying and comprehensive understanding of the intersection of masculine identity and performing fatherhood and claimed that fathers can alternately do and undo masculinities as well as reconstruct them to accommodate their caring role into their identity.

While analyzing fatherhood, it is important to examine gender roles, historical and sociological aspects together, as well as how the state and social policies construct masculinity and fatherhood (Hobson, 2002). Hobson (2002) points Sweden and Norway as two exemplary states that support fathers' involvement in carework (World Economic Forum, 2021). The fact that these two countries are among the top five countries in terms of global gender equality highlights the importance of the link between gender roles and government policies. Looking at the

theoretical background, the institutional factors in the original Lamb-Pleck model, which has not been paid attention to much until recently, are now gaining importance both from the policy-making perspective and from the academic community. A qualitative study by Miguel and colleagues (2019) comparing the Scandinavian and Mexican contexts examined institutional as well as personal barriers to involved fatherhood in fathers' narratives. They have found that both an egalitarian, nontraditional view towards gender roles and also a similar structural promotion through more equality-based policy contribute to the transformation of father involvement. One of the most important differences revealed by the participants' statements is that although social policies and institutions support father involvement in Norway, fathers in Mexico lack such social policy support. It was evident in most of the Mexican participants' narratives that no matter how equally a father wishes to share childcare and household responsibilities, the lack of equality-based social policy leaves fathers in a conflict between their desires to be more involved in childcare and social, structural limitations to do so.

An insightful study by Locke and Yarwood (2016) using a qualitative method, investigated how work and involved fatherhood are negotiated and interact with each other in fathers' narratives. Their accounts included being torn between a demanding work environment and the wish to be more involved in their children's lives. This is also shaped by whether they have gendered views about parenting or if they support more egalitarian, less gendered ways of parenting. A former study by Warren and Johnson (1995) has already discussed how the double burden of family and work can cause distress for both mothers and fathers. They have found that perceptions of work environment support and supervisor flexibility to be related to

lower levels of stress for both parents, which improved parenting behaviors both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Another study suggested that fathers with a more stable financial situation were more involved as opposed to those who did not have a stable income (Shapiro et al., 2011). It can be said that having a stable income and financial stability is required for involved fatherhood; however, to achieve that, one needs to work many hours which then prevents fathers from spending more time with their children. This problem is much more common in developing countries that do not prioritize gender equality over economic growth (Miguel, Gandasegui & Gorfinkiel, 2019). Another related study aimed to pinpoint the relation between working conditions and the father-child relationship found that fathers' job satisfaction mediated the relationship between work and father-child interaction (Cia & Barham, 2006). In other words, the happier fathers were with their working conditions, the better they performed as fathers and the more satisfied they were with their family performance.

The literature on the intersection between fatherhood and gender roles has expanded over the past decades, yet the importance of culture and the complex network of beliefs and values cultural codes bring to the subject of fatherhood has been a less explored area (Roopnarine, 2015). It should be noted that fathers' approach to their role in the family and their relationship with their children is a micro element within the macro sociocultural picture, hence it would be a simplistic assessment to consider involved fatherhood separately from cultural, societal, and religious aspects of life (Cabrera et al., 2000; Cruz et al., 2011). Schwalb and Schwalb (2014) have examined how eight types of contextual variables interact with fathering in five heterogeneous countries, namely, Brazil, Bangladesh, Russia, Japan and Australia. They examined: "(1) geographical location (e.g., dispersion of fathers

across huge land masses in Russia and Australia; impact of dense populations in Japan and Bangladesh); (2) long-term historical legacies (e.g., centuries of patriarchy in Brazil) and short-term historical events (e.g., fall of communism in Russia); (3) family characteristics (e.g., joint, extended families of Bangladesh; small Japanese families); (4) economic factors (e.g., high standards of living in Australia and Japan); (5) work-related conditions (e.g., long work hours in Australia; level of encouragement for paternal work leave); (6) societal norms and values (e.g., social expectations for Russian fathers to be disengaged and uninvolved); (7) ethnic groupings (e.g., homogeneity of Japanese society; impact of Islam on Bengali fathers); and (8) patterns of immigration and emigration (e.g., emigration from Bangladesh; immigration to Brazil)". For example, the social movement initiated by fathers in Japan has greatly influenced the dominant fatherhood discourse and social policies throughout the country. In the Balinese, Brazilian and partially Russian contexts, migration has resulted in what the authors called "isolated fathering," while some fathers more actively engaged with their children because they were away from extended families, some fathers started to live away from their homes due to economic migration. These diverse accounts exemplify not only how fathers and fatherhood as a construct are affected by the culture but also how fathers are active agents changing and transforming the dominant cultural and societal views.

1.4 Fatherhood literature in Turkey

Despite the changes in family dynamics and father involvement in developed countries, developing countries have different cultural norms, and as a result, paternal involvement is affected by those unique contextual values and norms (Gürmen & Rohner, 2013; Metindoğan, 2015). While gender equality and

participation of fathers in childcare as much as mothers have become an important part of the culture in developed Scandinavian countries, these issues are not prioritized in developing countries such as Southeast Asia and Brazil (Rush & Seward, 2015). Elements such as being moral teachers of children and keeping a certain distance from children are part of the culture in those countries. In this regard, Turkey can be considered in the developing countries group, but its unique cultural values and social norms bear a different kind of masculinity and familial structure and fathering (Kağıtçıbası & Ataca, 2015; Boratav et al., 2017). In Turkey, childcare, especially in the early years, is still considered a mother's responsibility (Kuruçırak 2010). The study by Kuruçırak revealed that fathers of 4-12 months old infants were rarely the primary caregiver, which was moderated by factors such as the employment status of their wives, the socioeconomic characteristics, and the number of children they have. In dual-earner couple households, fathers were more involved both in childcare and house chores. Whereas SES level of the fathers was positively correlated with their involvement, the number of children they have was negatively related to their participation in childcare.

Another study by Rentzou et al. (2015) explored father involvement and perceived role of the father from both parents' perspectives in three geographically close and culturally similar countries: Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey. The results indicated that fathers' satisfaction regarding their involvement in childcare was high in all three countries and that the fathering repertoire is changing both quantitatively and qualitatively. On the other hand, mothers' reports suggested that there might be a "social desirability effect", namely that fathers overreported their involvement in childcare (Charles et al. 2016 as cited in Rentzou et al., 2015). The findings overall suggested that fathers' involvement might be changing in these countries; however,

this does not translate into a strictly equal share of responsibility or co-parenting as in the case of other European countries. The research on fatherhood in Turkey as in other developing countries is scarce (Sen et al., 2014). Studies that look into the parental attitudes and conduct of fathers living in the rural regions of Turkey remark once again how rooted traditional and conservative stances are (Volkan & Çevik, 1989). Even though these fathers take pride in the actions of their children, they display an authoritarian and distant fathering as well as a discriminatory attitude between their sons and daughters. This trend transforms into a more egalitarian and modern fatherhood as the geographical structure expands from villages to cities (Volkan & Çevik, 1989). Yalçınöz (2011) in her qualitative study on intergenerational aspects of fatherhood, identified two main types of fatherhood. These were “traditional fatherhood” and “new fatherhood”, the former transforming from one generation to the other. Compared to their own “traditional” fathers, second generation "new fathers" stated that they establish closer relationships with their children, are more flexible and tolerant in their relations with their children, attach more importance to emotional sharing, and play a much more active role in their children's daily lives.

Similar to the dominant traditional fatherhood model in the Western literature from mid-nineteenth century until the beginning of twenty first century, especially in families from rural areas where patriarchal structure dominates, the role of the father in Turkey is to provide for the house, protecting the house, providing authority and social representation of the family (Sunar & Fişek, 2005). On the other hand, Kağıtçıbaşı (2002) proposed a family model that integrates the family structure of the West, which emphasizes independence, and the family structure of traditional Turkey, where values like solidarity and dependence are prominent. Parental

attitudes in general and fathering in particular had their fair share of this changing social, economic and cultural structure with modernization. The pivotal studies on masculinity and fatherhood in Turkey and Understanding Fatherhood in Turkey Series by the Mother-Child EducationFoundation (AÇEV) are crucial to close the gap in this area and help us understand the position of men in the family and how their fatherhood identity has evolved over the years (Akçınar, 2017; Boratav et al., 2017).

The study by Boratav and colleagues (2017) investigated fatherhood from various perspectives such as the unique relationships of the participants with their fathers and mothers, working conditions, spousal relationships, masculinity and gender roles, and their relationship with their children. The study revealed two dimensions of fatherhood in the Turkish context, namely, hierarchy and proximity (Boratav et al., 2017). For the more traditional and lower SES participants, respect, fear and distance were the defining words participants used for their relationship with their fathers. The relational intimacy aspect referred to the extent to which feelings and thoughts could be shared. The participants reported different levels of relational intimacy, for some this was a positive aspect of their relationships whereas for others it was a reminder of paternal deprivation. Overall, the commonalities of participants' narratives were that they would usually tell their wishes and problems to their mothers rather than their fathers and that mothers would convey these issues to their fathers, which exemplifies the hierarchical order of the families in this study.

Another key finding of the study was that in different SES groups, helping with housework was only acceptable if there are very young children in the house, the spouse works outside, or when the spouse is ill. Nevertheless, the assumption that housework is essentially "women's work” remains for the majority. Opinions of

the participants on gender equality were quite ambiguous, torn between traditional expectations and being more egalitarian. In the narratives of most of the participants, contradictions and dilemmas stand out between their actions and discourse. Father involvement was evaluated on control and proximity dimensions that differed based on the age of the child, whether the residence of the family was in a rural or a more metropolitan area, and the education level of the father. For the control dimension, the participants were asked the following question "What would you do if your children disobeyed you on a serious of matters?" The answers of fathers ranged from physical force and showing resentment to talking to the child. As the SES levels of the participants increased, fathers were more likely to respond in a more tolerant manner. For the proximity dimension, the results of the qualitative part indicated that participants from all SES groups cared about being in a close relationship with their children. Furthermore, most of the participants seem to have adopted a more involved fathering role than their own fathers. In addition to the fact that the conditions of the day were conducive to these changes in paternal involvement, the majority of the participants explain this change as a conscious effort, implying that they wanted to compensate for the deprivation they experienced with their fathers. The most significant differences, both in father involvement and on gender equality, were seen among upper SES respondents living in the metropolitan area. Consequently, there is a change among Turkish fathers regarding their involvement in childcare and their perspective on child-father interaction. On the other hand, this change is taking place slower than western examples and moderated by SES levels of the fathers in Turkey.

The first leg of AÇEV's "Understanding Fatherhood in Turkey Series", which consists of 3 parts, investigated involved fatherhood and its determinants in

Turkey (Akçınar, 2017). The study defined involved fatherhood as assuming responsibility for the child's care, providing an environment and opportunity for the child's development, establishing mutual and close relations with the child, spending time with the child, listening to the child, and using effective and perceptive methods to support the child. Based on this definition, five different fatherhood categories were identified. The most common type of fatherhood, which included 35% of the participants, was "traditional fatherhood" which stands for a rigid, authoritarian, and distant fatherhood. This type of fatherhood correlated with patriarchal masculinity. The second type of fatherhood, which similarly correlated with patriarchal masculinity but differentiated from traditional fatherhood was "new traditional fathers," who resembled traditional fathers but tried to overcome traditionality in the relationships with their daughters. They were more tolerant and warmer in their relationship with their daughters. Another group consisting of 23 % of the participants was defined as "keen fatherhood," including fathers who have a traditional perception of fatherhood but have started to exhibit a more involved fathering. This group was suggested to play an important role in the transformation of the society. This group was associated with “masculinity in transition”; on the one hand, fathers in this group retained some features of hegemonic masculinity, on the other hand they show more egalitarian and less patriarchal attitudes, such as being an involved father. Therefore, they play an important role in transforming hegemonic masculinity in society. The other two categories that make up a smaller proportion of the participants in the study were identified as “diligent fatherhood” and “extraordinary fatherhood.” The former corresponded to masculinity in transition whereas the latter corresponded to egalitarian masculinity. This last group of fathers,

which only made up 0.9%, assign great importance to the fatherhood experience and aspire to become as active as possible in childcare.

The second part of the study, which examined the qualitative data, investigated the interplay among historical construction and structural determinants, roles, and meanings surrounding fatherhood today (Bozok, 2018). The patriarchal codes of masculinity dominated fathers' narratives when they were asked about the meaning of fatherhood and the role of the father within the family unit. These patriarchal codes depict the father as the head of the family, who provides the livelihood of the house and also as a figure who has authority over the family and is affectionate towards his children, as well as a role model for them. Results revealed that participants overall did not believe in gender equality but were thought to be open to change in this area. Regarding participation in household chores, most of the participants kept their share limited to providing for the livelihood of the family and stated that their spouses were responsible for the housework. The working conditions and their effect on fatherhood were another essential part of the study. Fathers who take on the role of breadwinner of the house feel the pressure of this role even more compared to those who hold less traditional masculinity ideals and share the responsibility with their spouses. In sum, it was observed that fathers, especially those from low SES, who spent longer time at work, had less opportunity to spend time with their children even though some wished for a more involved fathering. Given the policies in the areas of fatherhood and working conditions in Turkey, the findings of the study point to the need for increased awareness in these areas.

The studies in Turkey investigating fatherhood and masculinity showed that there is stratification regarding the extent to which fathers are involved in childcare and share the house chores. This stratification is based on various factors such as the

residential area (metropolitan or rural), SES level (low, middle or high), internal motivation to participate in childcare activities and other responsibilities and views on gender roles (traditional or egalitarian). A study investigating how father involvement is affected in Turkey during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has radically changed the lives of both fathers and children, has not yet been conducted. The present study aimed to contribute to the literature by examining the unique challenges of being a father working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey. In the next section, the studies examining the impact of COVID-19 on fathers and on father-child interactions will be discussed.

1.5 Fatherhood during the pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Parenting in general and paternity at the micro-level has faced an immense change since the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, yet there is little known about how fatherhood is affected in this challenging era. The WHO identified the COVID-19 pandemic as a risk factor both to physical health as well as to mental health as it has resulted in an unprecedented alteration in daily routine such as "working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with loved ones" (World Health Organization, 2020). Spinelli et al. (2020) has investigated the psychological risk factors of the pandemic and found two main areas. These are parenting stress and a potential decline in their ability to regulate one's children's emotions. The findings pointed out to a vicious cycle: parents' increased stress due to economic and social stressors, which can lead to a decrease in their ability to regulate emotions, which impacts the entire family system.

Cluver et al. (2020) asserted that for many parents, just surviving daily life has become a challenge and it is much more so for families in poverty and crowded

households. Fodor et al. (2020) has investigated the effects of COVID-19 on the gendered division of unpaid work, especially for care work, and has found that the pandemic has resulted in an exponential increase for women concerning childcare and other types of unpaid work. This was even stronger for high SES couples who tend to work from home. The findings of the study suggested that even when both parents were present at home, fathers' participation in childcare was not affected as much as mothers. This was exacerbated by the public policies, traditional gender roles even among the more educated parents, and also by the long-lasting income gap, which forces women to prioritize men's jobs in order to protect the financial welfare of the family. The gendered inequalities that are brought into our lives with the pandemic are observed and explored in various areas of unpaid work, especially in childcare. Women's Rights Division of the UN, whose purpose is to promote gender equality, advocates sharing the care work which "people collectively spend 16 billion hours on every day." They strongly suggest that redistributing unpaid care work should be one of our priorities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (U.N. Women, 2020).

Apart from the gender inequality literature and experiences of women during the pandemic, there is little information available about the experiences of fathers and the barriers to their involvement in childcare during the pandemic. Lista and Bresesti (2020) summarized the prenatal and birth experiences of couples from a medical perspective and claimed that visiting and hospital attendance restrictions related to the pandemic have left the mother alone and the father out of the picture, who was previously expected to be much more involved. Vasilevski et al. (2021) has investigated the experiences of fathers in the face of those restrictions. They reported feelings of isolation and "missing out" this precious experience of bonding with the

baby, which resulted in several risk factors for their psychological well-being and also for the baby's physical and mental health. Cito et al. (2020) has argued that along with economic hardships, health-related threats, and psychological risks of COVID-19, parenting has become even more difficult than before. Confinement and restriction measures have made this burden even more unbearable and as a result, those risk factors for parents have resulted in a threat to children's psychological well-being as well. On the other hand, remote working and remote schooling have made two full-time occupations that required fathers to roll up their sleeves.
The fact that fathers have the opportunity to spend more time at home with their children might have positively affected their participation in childcare, which is normally limited by challenging work conditions (Cito et al., 2021; Pilinska, 2017)

Although the amount of time fathers spent at home increased as a result of remote working, there are studies showing that there is no such positive effect of this situation on father involvement (Cito et al., 2020). For instance, Hipp and Bünning (2020) have also asserted that the COVID-19 pandemic has given birth to both optimistic and pessimistic expectations about gender equality around childcare and unpaid work in general. The optimistic view is that fathers had more opportunity to spend time with children, hence their participation has increased. Whereas the pessimistic view suggests that women carried an even heavier burden and not much has changed for men/fathers concerning care work. Their findings showed evidence supporting the pessimistic expectation. Even though new arrangements were required depending on the job, mothers were still more likely to undertake the extra childcare responsibilities than fathers. Though fathers' behaviors seem to remain unchanged during the pandemic, their feelings and views on fatherhood and their involvement are still a mystery due to the qualitative study gap in the literature.

1.6 Present study

As elaborated above, the literature on involved fatherhood is a significant step towards better understanding the specific beliefs, needs, and experiences of fathers, and these studies shed light on how we can better support fathers in this area. However, the subject of fatherhood has taken its place relatively late among the research areas of social sciences, especially in Turkey. Turkey's heterogeneous culture, which combines different features of the West and East such as gender equality and traditionality especially in familial structures, inhabits diverse thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the fields of masculinity and fatherhood (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005).

In this context, the following research questions were raised; what might be the factors affecting father involvement both positively and negatively; how the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant changes in fathers' lives influenced their views and behaviors on their fathering. In light of these research questions, the present study aimed to understand the experiences of fathers who were fully or partially working from their homes. Considering the literature on involved fatherhood and the COVID-19 pandemic, it focused on the factors affecting paternal involvement in the context of remote working. Another goal of the study was to explore how fathers' opinions on gender roles, gender equality, and the quality of the marital relationship affect their views, beliefs, expectations, and behaviors about childcare. Since the present study was carried out with a sample of Turkish fathers, cultural codes, especially those about gender equality, were of great importance. In accordance with the aim of the study, fathers' narratives were analyzed to identify the barriers to paternal involvement and also the enriching factors that have facilitated father involvement during the pandemic. Finally, the use of semi-structures interviews for

data collection and qualitative methods for the analysis will help us understand individual experiences of fathers beyond numerical data.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the experience of fathers who had young children and have worked from home for a certain period of time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender studies, parenting and developmental research have all conducted studies on involved fatherhood (Cabrera, 2019; Fagan, 2021; Lee et al., 2020). Whereas there are many quantitative studies of fathers' attitudes and behaviors, qualitative studies that can offer a deeper understanding into fathers' motivations and emotions are scarce in the literature. Additionally, although there is a change in involved fatherhood at the discursive level, it is evident that fathers' behaviors lag behind this discursive change. Therefore, a better understanding of fathers' internal processes with the use of qualitative data analysis will allow us to identify the mechanisms necessary to support fathers' participation in child care. In-depth interview method was preferred to allow for the emergence of individual emotions, motivations, thoughts, and actions in fathers' narratives regarding gender roles and father involvement. Lastly, a qualitative method is selected to explore how a group of fathers from various backgrounds experience and reflect on those experiences as they went through the uncertainties and challenges of fathering and the pandemic. Thus, a qualitative method is applied in this study in order to have a sense of the possible cultural, and gender-based similarities and dissimilarities among fathers.

2.1 Sample of the study

The participants of this study were 12 fathers from intact families who have at least one child of one to six years of age (M=3,58). While six of these fathers were fathers-of- sons, the other five were fathers-of-daugters, and one participant had heterozygotic twins, one son and one daughter. All participants were from a middle or upper socioeconomic background, as jobs that enable remote working are often middle and upper-class jobs. The number of father-of-daughters and father-of-sons was kept in balance as gender of the child might be an important factor. The age of fathers ranged from 31 to 40 (M=31,17) and they were married for 4 to 11 years. All fathers were from intact families and spouses of all participants except 2 were currently employed. Demographic information is presented in Table 1.

In this study, participants are purposefully chosen from fathers who have a child of one to six years of age, hence the developmental level of the children required more concrete and physical care compared to school-aged children (Berk, 2006). Children in this period have not yet started formal education at primary school level. In this period, when the need for physical care from parents continues, the basic needs of children include various activities such as feeding, changing diapers, bathing, toilet training, and playing.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

ID	Age	Level of Education	Type of Occupation	Number of Children	Child's Sex	Child's Age	Duration of Marriage	Wife's Employment Status	City
P1	32	Bachelor's degree	Government employee	1	Boy	4	6	No	Ankara
P2	38	Bachelor's degree	Private Sector	2	Boy	6	8	No	Ankara
P3	31	Bachelor's degree	Government employee	1	Girl	3,5	4	Yes	İstanbul
P4	39	Bachelor's degree	Private Sector	1	Boy	1,5	6	Yes	İstanbul
P5	32	Bachelor's degree	Private Sector	1	Boy	2,5	6	Yes	İzmir
P6	40	Bachelor's degree	Private Sector	1	Girl	1	6	Yes	İstanbul
P7	36	Bachelor's degree	Private Sector	1	Boy	2	5,5	Yes	İstanbul
P8	31	Bachelor's degree	School Counselor	1	Boy	4	6	Yes	İstanbul
P9	33	Bachelor's degree	School Counselor	1	Girl	4,5	7	Yes	İstanbul
P10	37	Bachelor's degree	Private sector	1	Girl	5,5	8	Yes	İstanbul
P11	35	Bachelor's degree	Private sector	2	Twins	6	7	Yes	İstanbul
P12	38	Bachelor's degree	Private sector	1	Girl	2,5	11	Yes	İstanbul

2.2 Data collection tool

The data of the study was collected through a semi-structured interview that was developed by the author. In the pilot study, one father-of-daughter and one father-of-son were interviewed. These interviews did not give rise to major revisions in questions, only the order of the questions was changed. The questions regarding the period of COVID-19 and remote working were prioritized over the questions on participant's developmental history. The interview form was used in data collection, while also leaving room to ask about the personal differences that emerged during the interview (See Appendix A and B for interview questions in English and Turkish, respectively). All the interviews lasted approximately 1 hour. The interviews consisted of 5 main areas of interest which involved 24 questions and 1 closing question to give space to the participants to add anything related with the issues discussed during the interview. The first part was designed to get retrospective and/or current information about the father's experiences of remote working and its effects on his relationship with his child and wife. The second included questions

related to father involvement, such as the unique features of their relationship with children, type of activities they do together and how they discipline their children. The third part was mainly about the father's childhood experiences and his relationship with his parents, especially with his own father. The fourth part included questions about marital relationship and the last part asked questions about the gender roles.

The interview questions used in this study was partially constructed based on qualitative question form used in the qualitative research of involved fatherhood in Turkey (Akçınar, 2017). There were additional questions on the father's experience of remote working and its effects on his relationship with his child and wife. The open-ended questions used in this part was constructed by the author.

2.3 Procedure

All study procedures were approved by The Ethics Committee for Master and PhD Theses in Social Sciences and Humanities (SOBETİK) of Boğaziçi University (IRB no: SBB-EAK 2021/48, 01.07.2021; see Appendix C). The fathers who met the desired criteria for inclusion are informed that the present study is about the fathers' subjective experience of remote working during COVID-19 pandemic. Convenient sampling method was used to reach the participants. The researcher and her acquaintances announced the study to people who may be interested and meet the desired criteria. Twelve participants applied and were recruited in the oresent study. All participants met the inclusion criteria for the study, which was being married and living in the same household with their family, having at least one child under the age of six and remotely working from home at least for one month during the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the pandemic measures and to minimize the risk

of contagion, all meetings were held in the form of online video calls via Zoom or Skype. All of the interviews were conducted at a time convenient for the participants, in an environment where they could pay attention to the interview. An informed consent form was sent via e-mail or Whatsapp to each participant. Each participant's permission for recording his voice was taken. All interviews were taped via a voice recorder. Before starting the interview, participants are informed that this interview was designed to investigate their experience of fatherhood during the pandemic. They were reminded their right not to answer questions that they do not want to answer and their right to quit the interview whenever they want. After each interview, the participants were thanked and reminded that they could reach the researcher at any time if they had any concerns about the research.

2.4 Method of analysis

Among different qualitative methods, thematic analysis is chosen as the method-of-choice for the current study. It is a method originally developed in order to identify and analyze meaningful chunks of qualitative data, such as narratives, in-depth interviews, etc. The most common thematic analysis approach is the one developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Compared to other qualitative methodologies, this method allows the researcher to better understand the subject matter by identifying common themes that are congruent with the theoretical framework upon which the study is based.

Initially, interview transcripts created by audio recordings, which were later decoded, constituted the basic input of the qualitative report. The analysis started by doing line by line coding for each interview on MaxQDA12 software program. By doing line by line coding process, the researcher defined the processes by naming

each process without considering any theoretical direction. This process was repeated for the transcribed data of each one of the 12 participants. The total number of initial codes was counted as 1534 for all participants.

Afterwards, these initial line-by line codes were clustered into more inclusive themes based on their frequency and analytical meaning in order to categorize and conceptualize the data. It was seen that all the initial codes with regard to before and during the COVID-19 were separately meaningful parts. Thus the analysis continued on the basis of two different time dimensions; fatherhood experience before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The coding, conceptualization and thematizaton processes were supervised by two senior advisors. The following step of analysis includes a refinement process; the researcher reviews the themes and sub-themes, finalize the thematization process in a meaningful and concise set of themes. The final stage entails presenting the fully developed themes and writing out the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.5 Reflexivity

Beside the analysis of the interviews, the process between the interviewer and the participants during the interviews is also important. Firstly, while most fathers were hesitant to participate in an interview on their fatherhood experiences, a few of them presented a more eager attitude. Most fathers were open to share their experiences; however, they could only reflect on their feelings to a certain extent, especially when it comes to ambivalence and negative feelings about fatherhood. Except for two fathers, the emotional tone of the interviews was predominantly positive. Only two fathers displayed a clear hesitant stance about the effects of the COVID-19 restrictions and remote working. The subjective experience of the interviewer was

that being a young female researcher made it potentially difficult for fathers to share more fragile feelings. Some participants perceived the researcher as a little sister which made it unformidable to share their difficulties, whereas some wanted to draw a more positive image.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The analysis of the narratives will be presented in two parts. In the first part, themes regarding the participants' views on fatherhood, the similarities and differences between generations, and views on gender roles will be presented. In the second part, emerging themes with regard to COVID-19 and remote working will be addressed. The names and personal information of all participants and the people they mentioned in their narratives were anonymized or pseudo names were used.

3.1 Themes on fatherhood and the role of the father

In this section, the results will be presented under emerging themes from the fathers' narratives with the aim of reflecting participants' views on their understanding and performance of fatherhood. The emerging themes were; responsibility, fatherhood roles, intergenerational transmissions of fatherhood and fathers' approach on gender roles within the family. First, the conceptual category of "responsibility" will be described to reflect the experiences of the participants. Then, the themes regarding fathers' perceived role in childcare and house chores will be presented. Following that, fathers' narratives on the inheritance or their denial of inheritance of fatherhood from their family of origin will be discussed. Lastly, participants' approach on gender roles and division of work within the household will be analyzed.

3.1.1 Responsibility

Responsibility emerged as an important theme in describing how fathers feel about fatherhood as well as what their sense of self and corresponding actions comprise of.

Half of the participants described being a father, including raising children and participating in childcare activities, as “being responsible” and “having to give up on things.” Furthermore, some participants viewed marriage and marital life as a responsibility to their wives and a consequent loss of independence.

In the two following examples, participants talked about fatherhood as bearing responsibilities. While one of the participants (P4) emphasized the financial aspect of these responsibilities, the other emphasized the child's expectation of play as a responsibility.

> So I think the father has certain responsibilities. As long as his health and strength allow her to do what he has to do. You know, a person always wants the best for his child. There are certain things that I should do which is the best in the conjuncture of that day, whatever my own opportunities and health allow. (P4)

> Transforming the car, the concepts he uses are childish, after all, due to his age, I mean, these are a bit boring, I can't say they don't, but we have a responsibility after all. (P1)

One of the participants similarly defined fatherhood as something that brings responsibility, but he also thought that fatherhood requires giving up on socialization.

> What I understand from responsibility is to abandon some of the things. For example, I have a son now, I have responsibilities. I gave up on things as a result, I withdrew from social life. I used to meet with my friends 3 days a week, going out. Now there is none, it has dropped to zero. It has nothing to do with the pandemic, so for example, I am here in Ankara, where I was born. I have friends of 30 years, 3 kilometers away, and they are offended. I mean,(they ask) can't we have a coffee, but now that I'm needed here. What I mean about responsibility is giving up some things like this. (P4)

The quote below indicates how this father views fatherhood as a life-long responsibility that needs to be fulfilled:

> It is challenging, Ms. Ozlem, it is challenging. The child is something else. It's a matter of responsibility, the attention you need to give. You know, something that has continuity, one month, two months, not something you can't manage (for a period of time). It is this responsibility that will continue for the rest of his life. (P6)

Another participant similarly expressed that he feels an obligation to assume childcare responsibilities and emphasized that this is a life-long responsibility.

> Yes, yes, it is a heavy responsibility. As I said, even if you do nothing, it means that the whole program is dependent on the child, which is psychologically tiring. In other words, if you are not well, you do not help the child either, which is a much bigger problem. It's not a thing (that you can get rid of) (P8)

3.1.2 Fatherhood roles

In regards to fatherhood roles, participants mentioned participating in childcare to support mothers. In addition to that fathers talked about two distinct roles regarding fatherhood: the advisor role and the co-parenting role.

3.1.2.1 Father as supporter

The ways in which participants perceived, interpreted, and made attributions to their function as fathers in childcare are discussed in this theme. It was evident in the narratives of the participants that they see the mother as the person with the main childcare responsibility and themselves in the background, as substitute players. In line with this view, some participants mentioned that it was natural and understandable for mothers to be at the forefront of childcare and that it was considered unusual for the father to take on this "motherhood" role.

Three participants viewed the prominence of mothers in childcare from an essentialist perspective. They presented this view as a natural occurrence rather than

a willful distancing. Fathers attributed being in the background in childcare to their innate characteristics, as a natural result of their biological sex.

> Then, inevitably, the feeling of the mother is a little more prominent than the man, I guess. Mothers can't let it go, but fathers inevitably seem to let it go a little. And frankly, after the age of one and a half, I can say that I did, I pulled myself back a little bit. (P1)

> Of course, the mother comes to the fore in some things naturally. It is in the nature of the child as well. You know, especially if the parents live together, the bond between the child and the mother come to the fore, resukting from the natural breastfeeding etc., but apart from that, we can do everything together, especially after this age (of the child). (P7)

Five of the participants perceived their participation in childcare as a way of "helping" the mother to lighten her burden. The underlying assumption in all of these expressions was that the mother is the primary caregiver. The role that fathers assign themselves is to share the responsibility attributed to the mother to a certain extent, to prevent them from feeling overwhelmed, rather than a position of sharing the childcare equally.

> I spent a lot of time with her. I still spend a lot of time. So, I have been very supportive of my wife in this sense. So, in this sense, my awareness about the family has increased a little bit more. (P4)

One of the fathers stated that he "allowed" his wife to sleep until late during the weekend, for which his wife was grateful to him. The underlying implication in this narrative is that taking care of the child and allowing his wife to rest is a merciful act. Here too, the father is seen in the role of a supporter of the mother rather than an equally responsible caregiver.

> It feels like I'm not doing anything. You have a relationship with ups and downs this time, I mean, it's very difficult, I mean, it's really hard to raise an individual, it's very difficult to give up on yourself and, my wife, well, think about it like that, I let her to sleep until 11

> on the weekends, I mean, she is very grateful because she missed sleeping. (P5)

Similar to the previous example, another participant defined his involvement in childcare as lightening the burden of childcare on his wife to a certain extent.

> Together with them, I take the little ones and keep them busy so that my wife can rest. You know, I do things like this so that she can get some rest, enjoy some silence. (P2)

One of the participants, who is currently the primary caregiver of the child, stated that he saw childcare and household chores as "feminine" tasks.

> We never did it separately at home, cleaning, cooking, childcare, you know, we always wanted to do it together with my wife. It seems to me that I am a bit feminine, I have a feminine perspective on things. (P3)

One of the participants identified a situation in which his friend became the primary caregiver of his daughter and mostly undertook childcare activities, referring these activities as “babysitting.” While talking about this friend, he spoke in a condescending tone, emphasizing that this friend took the place of the mother.

> İsmail, if I'm going to give an example from my friend İsmail, for example, he is playing games, as a dad. In other words, İsmail has now taken the place of the mother, his daughter wants to play with her. (…) He worked from home all the time during that pandemic, and he still works and takes care of his child. So you know, he’s babysitting. (P1)

3.1.2.2 Father as advisor

In this sub-theme, fathers' expressions of seeing themselves as advisors for the family members are presented. Three participants who adopted this role talked about how they advised children for their education and development, as well as feeling responsible for setting an example for the child. In the quotation below, the

participant expressed his perspective on how to educate the child with advice and by giving examples from himself.

> I say, look, if this happens, we will get very wet, your mother would get tired, frankly I want her to get in order with things like this. Maybe I share a little bit from myself, but I was advising her on some things. (P2)

Another participant mentioned that this advisory role also takes place in his relationship with his wife, and he gives advice to his wife to make up for her lack of knowledge in childcare.

> Like I said, I didn't do anything, or I didn't read anything, I didn't. It's right. Our exploratory effort is already weak, as parents. My wife doesn't do much either. I've always given a bit of a advise to her. You know, look around, buy, read a book etc. (P6)

Another participant mentioned that his taking an advisory role led to conflicts in his relationship with his wife and therefore he no longer gave advice on childcare to his wife.

> So when my wife comes in the evening, I go to my room for 1-2 hours like this and go out. This time, I leave her alone with that performance, because I will give her advice, like G. (his daughter) does not like that or don't do it like that. Then she gets angry "do you forget that I am the mother of this child" she says, "I know these things too, you are criticizing me" (P9)

3.1.2.3 Father as co-parent

Although this was a small subgroup, three participants stated that they had a more egalitarian view of fatherhood and childcare. They did not see their involvement in childcare as helping their spouses, but rather viewed sharing childcare responsibilities among equal caregivers as a necessity. In the two narratives below, one of the fathers stated that he is against the view of *helping his wife* [emphasis

added] while the other recounted that he was an involved father from the very beginning, starting from the birth of his daughter.

> You know,it’s not helping my wife, it's not such a role. I'm even against the concept of helping, so there is a child, we both have a responsibility, so what should we do, so are the responsibilities at home. This is her responsibility, this is my responsibility. There is no such distinction. (P8)

> It's like this, when the child was born, I was always involved in childcare with my wife even before I switched to flexible working or working from home. My wife and I were both always involved. You know, if the child's diaper is going to be changed, here I am, if she needs to bathe we can do it together, I can change her clothes. (P3)

3.1.3 Becoming a father

The participants talked about their journeys of becoming fathers in unique ways, yet most described it as an ongoing, ever-developing process. Beginning with the idea of having a child, the experiences, feelings and thoughts of fathers spanning from before the birth of their children to the current day were clustered under the theme of "becoming a father." The participants referred to different turning points in their lives, namely, moments or experiences in which they felt like fathers and embraced their identity of fatherhood. However, the transition to fatherhood was not as smooth for every participant. First of all, some of them recounted ambivalent and even hesitant feelings about becoming a father. Three participants mentioned that they had reservations about having children. Another important sub-theme emerging from the narratives of the participants on their journeys to becoming fathers was inexperience. They expressed initially having had difficulties in fatherhood, particularly due to a lack of necessary skills and knowledge regarding childcare but they gradually felt more competent through gaining experience.

Apart from the experiences of being indecisive and being inexperienced in the transition to fatherhood, the participants mentioned two different dimensions of becoming a father. Of the six participants who talked about their journey of becoming a father, some of the fathers pointed out that it was an instinctive process for them, whereas others stated that it was a learning process that developed over time. Participants also expressed this process as a progressive one, saying that as the child grows and their interaction increases, they feel more and more like a "dad."

3.1.3.1 Indecision

The theme indecision referred to fathers' reluctance about their readiness to become a father. Some of the fathers mentioned that they did not plan to be fathers at the beginning of their marriage, and were worried about what kind of father they would be.

In the quote below, one of the fathers expressed his initial concerns and lack of desired to be a father.

> Yes, what kind of father have I always been, normally I was someone who did not want to be a father. Exactly, I did not want to have children, but my wife did. You know, it wasn't planned, but when my daughter grows up like this, I always want her to have tears in her eyes when she talks about me. You know, I wanted her to talk about me with love and I wanted to be a father in that way, this would make me happy, so her happiness makes me happy too. (P3)

Another participant reported that they did not plan to have a baby, and that he had hesitations about being too young to become a father. After comparing himself to his peers who became fathers at a younger age, he felt relieved and more confident.

> Having a child was not planned, having a child was not a planned process. Of course, at first, I was hesitant about whether I was

> young or something. Then I thought that if everyone can do it, even those younger than me have become fathers, I felt I can do this paternal duty too. (P1)

Lastly, another father underlined a prerequisite, a condition that he deems necessary for becoming a father, namely experience. Even though he did not mention any reluctance or indecision about being a father, he believed that in order for a man to be ready and willing to be a father, he must have had some experiences.

> Life stopped for us, suddenly we were confined to house. We did not leave the house at once. Our whole life has adapted to them, and we could not do anything. I mean, I'm not a person who goes to a nightclub at all, I didn't go before, I don't have such a style, but for example, I go to the bar, but I do not go to the nightclub. All of a sudden, I started to say things to my wife, which she tells me later, I said thing like; let's go to the nightclub or something. I mean, I've never been, like, 10 times in my life, I don't have a style like that, but you want something like that, you get into the escape mode. That's what I mean when I said you it (becoming a father) requires being ready. Also, being ready materially and spiritually. You should experience that phase of your life, and after it's over you have to be settled down now. I think one should be a father after that. (P11)

3.1.3.2 Inexperience

While talking about the experience of becoming a father, the participants frequently mentioned that they had difficulties due to inexperience especially right after the birth of their children. Five participants, four of whom were fathers with one child, talked about being in an obscure position regarding the child's needs and, feeling anxious as a result of their lack of experience and knowledge.

Portrayed in the two quotes below, are the difficulties that the participants experienced in caring for a small baby and in being uninformed about what to do when faced with a health problem. However, they also mentioned that the experience

and knowledge necessary for care are gained relatively quickly, which gave them comfort on their journey to becoming fathers.

> Definitely, for example, the first time he was feverish, we had no experience with that. It went up to 41 degrees, I knew that 41 is a very high fever in the human body, but when you experience it yourself it is worse. For example, it was a bad memory, we tried for 3-4 days to reduce that fever, so we were going to the emergency room without knowing it. When I went to the ER, the doctors there said, why did you waste your time bringing him here, they were saying, you should bathe him. Then, of course, you learn. For example, it was a bad memory, but now I feel a little more comfortable. (P4)

> So it's not a very difficult thing, but when you first experience something like this (having a child), of course, there is fear. I remember the first day in the hospital, so when he was born, we stayed in the hospital overnight…. We were saying if we could stay a few more nights. Because you don't know what to do at all, the baby is small, really small. I did not even remember how small it was. There are my nephews etc. I've seen a lot. I didn't remember it being that small. We had questions like how we will dress (her), how we will go out, something like that happens involuntarily at first, but you perceive the needs of the child right away. What you should do, how you should do it. You do that in a short time, you have to learn after all. (P12)

Another participant similarly mentioned that he had difficulties with his first child as an inexperienced father, but he attributed this difficulty partly to the temperament of the child.

> For example, for Ö. (his son) we had the stress of having the first child. As parents, we met for the first time with our child. We had a lot of difficulties there, of course, we also had difficulties due to some of his health situations. Thank goodness (!) he is an active child, he still is. He still walks around on the couches like this in the evenings, always trying to walk over us like this. (P2)

3.1.3.3 Paternal identity as an instinctual process

After the hesitations about becoming a father were overcome, the issue of adopting a paternal identity seemed to be the next challenge. This was another important theme

described by the participants on their path to becoming fathers. When asked how they learned to be a father, two participants explained it based on instincts.

> It's definitely an instinctive thing, of course, someone shows you to change your diaper. Or, for example, someone teaches you that you can wash her like this, you can clean her ass like this. They are something, but apart from that, the bond I have established and the things you do, each and every one of them continues instinctively. (P4)

> Well you know, I guess this is something that can come from an internal sense. I mean, I cannot describe it, like it happened this way. As I said, my starting point was always to be a good father and I strive to do so. (P3)

3.1.3.4 Paternal identity as a learning process

The narratives of the following four participants implied that paternal identity and the feeling of fatherhood is something that is learned:

> You can't even feel it fully when you hold him in your arms for the first time, but when he started to ask you for something, calling you daddy, I actually felt like a dad in those moments. (P5)

Another father explained that he could not fully feel the sense of fatherhood when his daughter was young; however, as his daughter grew up and gained awareness, he could feel more like a father.

> I feel like I understand en experience the feeling of fatherhood a little more as my daughter grows older and gradually shows her feelings. In the first stages, you used to put it like an object, since it's a baby then. You know, I was doing something, I was taking it, it was standing in my lap. She wasn't doing anything. Her hands didn't move or anything. Now, as she gets older, she cries, goes away, does strange things. Now as she gets older, I think I feel the fatherhood thing more, but in the first 7-8 months, as my other friends have said, it doesn't make much sense. (P6)

One of the participants described becoming a father as a process that is learned together with the child.

> In fact, I learn by experience, you know together (with my son), sometimes I joke with Ö. (his son) like that. I say son, you are our first child, after all, I say we learn fatherhood together with you. (P2)

3.2 Intergenerational transmission processes

Men's perceptions and ideas about how to nurture the father-child relationship were observed to be significantly related to their own experiences and relationships with their parents, especially with their fathers. Some participants described their relationships with their fathers as negative and unhealthy, whereas others described them in a positive light. While the participants of the former group were trying to distance themselves from their fathers in their fathering and their relationship with their children, participants from the latter group were trying to follow their fathers' footsteps. Another crucial theme that emerged from the narratives was "superimposing on one's father" which was mentioned by the participants who had positive relationships with their fathers but wanted to modify and improve certain aspects in their own fathering.

3.2.1 Differing from the father

Presented in this sub-theme, is the narratives of participants who were dissatisfied with their relationships with their own fathers and now want to grow away from them in terms of their own fatherhood. These four fathers repeatedly voiced wanting to establish a different kind of father-child relationship with their children, in which their motivations were to prevent their children from experiencing the lack of a warm father-child interaction that they felt in their childhood. These participants all tried to position themselves as polar opposites of their fathers and emphasized that

they could not take their own fathers as an example in their journey of becoming fathers.

In the quote below, one participant expressed his desire to establish, with his daughter, the close and warm relationship that he could not experience with his own father. In addition to a desire to be remembered and mentioned by his daughter in a loving and proud way, he also described his motivation as compensating for the fatherhood he felt he had lacked.

> Well, I don't have a very healthy relationship with my father. You know, we never had a good father-son relationship. He was not a responsible person. I always try to have a good relationship with my child, to be a good father, for example, or what can I say? So I want to do most of the things that I couldn't do with my own father, with my daughter, and I want her to talk about me with praise or happiness. You know, (I want her to say) we had such a good relationship with my father, you know, maybe the need for bonding, maybe not to let my child experience the difficulties I experienced. (P3)

Even though the participant below did not express in detail what he felt was lacking in their relationship with his father, he described the relationship and the environment he grew up in as negative and inappropriate for a child.

> My father was not home much, he was an indifferent type at times. He was angry at certain things, very rare things, and (I believe) he was angry at himself. It is, I mean, when I thought about it, it wasn't an environment where a child should grow up. (…) Or maybe it's because I don't want my child to go through what I experienced. As I said, I am in an aducational field, you see children who have a lot of difficulties, maybe mine is an intellectual effort, I don't know, so that my own child will not be like that. (P8)

The participant in the example below denoted that he is a father who positions himself as the opposite of his father and tries to do the opposite of the things that he did. While comparing himself to his father, he also emphasized that he is at the other extreme of fatherhood in terms of attitudes and behaviors towards the child.

> For example, I say I will do the opposite of what my father did, the last thing my child will hear is the amount of money and the sentence “we will do it for you”. If you compare it like that, what I'm doing now is the negotiation, what I'm doing to my 5-year-old daughter now is economically more costly than what my father did in my 25-year life. (…) That's why I always say; his fatherhood makes my fatherhood much easier. I am asking myself, what would my father do in this situation? I'm saying you can't act like this. (P9)

While talking about his childhood, another participant mentioned that his father was a distant figure, and his mother tried to compensate for his father’s unavailability. In that vein, he mentioned that his father set a negative example of what kind of father he should not and does not want to be.

> I mean, my father... Frankly, he wasn't a father figure who could be such a role model. So we grew up with our mother’s care, my mother is actually like both mother and father, for us, for my siblings. My father is more indifferent, I think he is a classic eastern father figure who can't show much interest even if he is interested. As I said, we understood that he loved (us), but we understood it with our own ways. He wasn't a father who could show his feelings, he wasn't a caring father. Mom always filled in for his absence. So maybe I've seen from my father what kind of father I shouldn't be. (P12)

3.2.2 Following the footsteps of the father

The participants consisting of four fathers expressed that they try to live up to the example they saw from their fathers in their relationships with their children, and in a sense, they try to walk the path their fathers paved in their father-child relationship. In this sub-theme, fathers specifically indicated that they take their own fathers as an example especially in terms of commitment to their family, displaying a democratic attitude in decision-making, and being compassionate and devoted as a father.

One participant, whose account is presented below, mentioned that he was influenced by his father in terms of commitment to his family, and that he made an effort to spend time at home like his father.

> You know, my father would come home, for example, after he left work, he would come home without going anywhere else. If he was going to go somewhere, he would go after he came home. Frankly, I don't have a life like coming home at two o'clock at night, meeting my friends after work. I mean, he was usually a dad who is committed to his family. I was influenced by him in this regard, I am trying to be a father who is committed to his family. So these are the responsibilities I mean. (P1)

Two participants specified that they followed their fathers in terms of having a democratic order in the family and being compassionate fathers.

> In other words, it is a democratic family, I learned it from my father. In our family, my father cared for our thoughts, asked our opinion on matters, and he had some ground rules as well (P10)

> (…) but of course, the feeling of compassion in me, I saw it from my father, doing your best to raise a child with devotion. I already do these automatically as I said. (P5)

An example of following the footsteps of one's own father that diverged from the rest of the accounts within this sub-theme, was given by a participant who mentioned being a somewhat distant father to his children, like his own father who also had a more authoritarian stance.

> For example, I thought that I would not feel like it either, because my father was always distant towards children. Actually, I am a little distant towards children. I mean, I am always on an arm's length basis towards children (P4)

3.2.3 Superimposing on the father

Five participants described having had a positive father-child relationship. Based on this, they stated a desire to be good fathers like their own fathers were. However, rather than copying or following in an exact manner, they wanted to build upon their childhood experiences, improve themselves and be even better fathers.

> But, well, it's hard to provide a life superior what was given to you, which is my life purpose or the fatherhood that I try to do as a

> father, actually. Since the involvement level my father was not a very low level, it is not easy for me to do so. So my mother is telling me, for example, my father put me on his back, he used to ride around like a horse at home, the knee parts of his pajamas were torn or something. So when you become a fatherr, you try to give your son as much as you can accordingly. (P5)

One of the participants stated that he tries to give what he has received from his parents, but also makes an effort to close the remaining "gap" of parenting.

> As I said, we learn by living in life. So how much did we get from our own mother, from our father? We are trying to add to it and close the gap. (P2)

Another participant, besides his concerns about not being able to provide for his child financially as his parents did for him, wants to outperform his parents in terms of academic guidance.

> In the future, I may not be able to provide my child with what my own mother and father provided me. You know, the economic condition may be different now than the conditions of that time. But at least, during my child's education life, my direction may be a little different from that of my own parents. (P6)

Another participant, in addition to praising his father's hard work, complained that his father could not establish a deep bond with him. He reflected on being different from his father in the sense that he has a deeper bond with his child; therefore, in this respect, he takes what he saw from his father a step further.

> Because my father was a very hardworking man, he always worked. He would come at eight o'clock, throw 2 balls to me and leave. I have never had a bad relationship with him, it was good, but I had a relationship, not a bond. In that sense, I bonded with U. (his son) thans to the pandemic. (P4)

> Well, we are a conservative society, I do what I have seen from parents, but of course we have improved ourselves in some ways and trying to add on to it. (P5)

3.3 Fathers' perspectives on gender roles within the family

Participants' approach to the division of labor at home, as well as to the roles of parents, men and women in a family, emerged as another important theme. This sub-theme refers to fathers' way of thinking about the responsibilities, requirements and demands of a household. In other words, how fathers think, feel and act based on their point of view regarding what a father/man should and could do within the family are presented. Expressions that point to the participants' thoughts and attitudes about gender roles are other features of this subdomain. Upon analysis, two main categories of "egalitarian" or "gendered" attitudes about gender roles and division of labor of the mother and father in the family emerged from the interviews.

3.3.1 Egalitarian approach

The narratives of half of participants indicated an egalitarian approach regarding the roles of father-mother, men-women dyads. These participants viewed the various kinds of house chores and childcare activities from an egalitarian and share-based perspective.

One participant stated that he came from a family where there are clear and strict lines between men and women, but that he felt very uncomfortable about these gendered views. He mentioned that he needed a space of his own, such as marriage, to tackle the attitudes and behaviors he saw in his family about gender and to take a different stance.

> So it changed when I got married, not before the marriage. So the discomfort was always there, but I needed to find a performance space to start changing, and I found that performance space when I got married. In other words, there were too many things in the family that men and women could not do. I was a strong man in my

> family's eyes, but I was a person who hated the things they wanted to make me do. (P9)

Another participant similarly stated that he came from a more patriarchal family and he too, was uncomfortable with such views. He explained his attitudes and behaviors as differing from his family in terms of gender roles, and having differentiated from them because of the empathy he felt for his sisters, the discontent he had for the perceived hierarchy, and his need to react to it.

> There is such a culture they (family of origin) adopt, I actually came from the same culture, but I don't know, maybe because I spent a lot of time with my sisters, I've never been that way (traditional). I mean, I did not adop the patriarchal point much. There was something similar I saw from my father, he was a patriarchal father. I wasn't too happy with my sisters' lives either. That's why, as a reaction, I may actually be against this patriarchal structure and have tendency to do these things (childcare), but the examples I see are the opposite of me. Even my brother-in-laws find what I do strange. (P12)

Another participant described their household as one where he has an equal share of all the work along with his wife and where there is no distinction between men and women. His explanation for his egalitarian approach was that he sees marriage as a "togetherness," based on a deep friendship and a desire to share a life together, rather than as relationship where he would expect his wife to take on more responsibility.

> In general, we handled the responsibilities together. In other words, we have never done it separately at home, cleaning, food, child care, we always wanted to do it together with my wife (…) you know, some people expect certain things when they are single, get married, have a routine, be it cleaning, meals, etc. I was already very tidy when I was single, my house was always tidy anyway, I was cooking my own food, I also love to cook. (I got married) because I love my wife because, I want to spend time with her and my wife and I are not only husband and wife but very good friends, my best friend is my wife. (P3)

Two participants emphasized that under the current conditions, where women's participation in business life is a common reality, these burdens should be shared equally. While one of these participants (P10) stated finding it understandable for women to have undertaken housework by themselves back in the day, since it was like a job then, but that this burden should be shared equally now that social conditions have changed. The second participant (P6) similarly expressed his view that all work should be shared equally between spouses, including financial matters.

> There is no such distinction anymore (between men and women). In the past, housewifery was like a profession. More precisely, now both men and women are working. I look at it this way, when we enter a house and the work to be done in this house is certain (…) Women also work. Men also need to make some changes in their way of thinking. Because today there may be spouses, but if you think that you might be alone tomorrow, without your mother and father, you should be able to clean, do the the laundry, prepare the meals in this house. You can order the food from outside, yes, you can have the laundry done. Yes, you can have someone else do the cleaning. Yes, but noone is going to fold your laundry and put it in your closet, or if you need an ironed shirt urgently noone will do the ironing, I think a man should learn these as well. (P10)

> There is no such distinction in our household. My wife can do everything. I don't know, of course, when changing a light bulb or when there is an electrical problem or when something is going to be hung on the wall (I do it), of course, but you know, she has the skill. If we take them as a basis, I don't want to say that I only do some of the responsibilities on my wife's side. You know, most of the responsibility on my side (she does) or fifty-fifty. For example, financially, according to Turkish customs, the wife stays at home and the father works. It is the father who brings the money to the house, etc. We also have everything in common economically. We do not have such a thing, we do not have a distinction. (P6)

Another participant (P3) also mentioned that in their household, childcare activities are shared equally between the parents.

> My wife and I were both always taking care together. You know, if the child's diaper is going to be changed, I can do it, we can bathe her together, if he needs to change his clothes together I can change it. (P3)

Unlike other participants, one of the fathers (P8) stated that his egalitarian attitude regarding the division of housework comes from his political leftist view, and it is meaningful for him to be consistent and to maintain his egalitarian view at home too.

> That is ideological, something that comes from my left culture. You know, there are things that are not enough now, because in our societies, yes, there is something (equality) as an idea, but some people are a entel magandası at their own homes. (P8)

3.3.2 Gendered approach

In contrast with the expressions that had a more egalitarian approach to housework and childcare, six of the participants spoke of a more gender-based distinction, where men and women only do the work suitable for them. This sub-theme aims to present these participants' narratives where such male-female distinctions and essentialist views about gender roles were emphasized. Also included are examples of how participants expressed finding it natural for their spouses to be more active in childcare and in certain household chores.

In the excerpt below, the participant mentions that he is satisfied with his wife's greater involvement in childcare. In addition, he considers it an "advantage" for his wife to have not worked for a while after giving birth.

> For example, there is no changing of diapers, so if you ask my wife, my wife can say this very easily. I mean, I never got up at night, I'm saying this openly, for example. So there is nothing to be ashamed of, I mean, I never got up at night, my wife always got up. I have to be just to my wife in this regard, for example, I never changed the diapers when they pooped. (…) Apart from that, my wife gladly did these, but for example, my wife had an advantage then, my wife was not working. Because my wife didn't work for the first 3 years or so after we had kids. (P11)

The same participant mentioned that he treats his daughter and son differently and believes this approach to be superior for children's development.

> But I had read about that. They were saying something like boys and dads wrestle like this, then… well, after that – sorry for using that word – more masculine physical things– they say it's better for them to do more physical activities, for their bond. (P11)

The following participants in the next two quotes described themselves as involved fathers; however, reported either that they found an equal distribution of childcare between the parents "too much" for the fathers or that they found it natural for the mother to take more responsibility.

> You know, for the roles of father and mother, the father's involvement in childcare being 50% is a high rate in my opinion. You know, since we have everything in common, I was also taking care of our child in our family, as well as my wife was doing. (P6)

> I can say a 70 to 30 percent ratio of childcare. On the care side, the mother stands out a little more. I am doing things like bathing him or being an active participant in play. I prepare food, sometimes I prepare something for him (to eat) while my wife is busy, taking care of him, I help prepare his meals, pudding or something. (…) of course, the mother comes to the fore in some aspects, naturally. So it is in the nature of the child as well. (P7)

Another participant also stated that the mother fulfills most of the needs of the child. Furthermore, he made a distinction between domestic/internal and non-domestic/external responsibilities, in which he expressed undertaking more out-of-home responsibilities, such as picking the child up from school, as the child's father.

> In this way, I help is a little. You know, he usually wants her mother to eat or something. His mother is a little more involved, but whether it's in the morning before school or when he comes from school, I can pick him up and or bring him to school. I mean, I can say that I usually handle the outdoor activities with the child. (P1)

> After all, there is a division of labor. If it is my duty to go to the market, it is also my wife's duty to prepare the food. This was not a choice, we did not make a choice by talking among ourselves, we

> had an order like that and the conditions developed in this way, it happened by itself, spontaneously. (P1)

Another father spoke of a similar internal/external distinction in terms of household chores such as shopping and cooking.

> She usually does the cooking, for example, I usually try to do the shopping. She goes too, but, she usually cooks the food. (P2)

One of the main focuses of the present study was to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fatherhood experiences of fathers who were working from home. In this section, the participants' approach to fatherhood and the effects of the pandemic on the father-child relationship will be discussed. The analysis of the narratives regarding the specific and unique experiences of fathers during the pandemic, yielded one main theme: bonding with the child.
In the next section, the expressions of fathers about bonding with their children during the pandemic period and the conditions that facilitated the forming of this bond will be discussed.

3.4 Bonding with the child during COVID-19

Nine out of twelve fathers stated that they established a much deeper bond with their children during the pandemic period and that they were pleased to have had such an opportunity. As a result of the analysis, it was seen that there were 4 different factors that enabled the participants to establish such a close bond with their children. These factors, namely having an opportunity, work flexibility, the requirement of the circumstances and lastly joy from the connection, facilitated the establishment of this bond.

3.4.1 Having the opportunity

In this sub-theme, the experiences of fathers who viewed remote working as an opportunity almost as a gift, will be described. These participants portrayed the pandemic as an opportunity to spend more time with their children, and they recounted having used this opportunity to invest in their relationships with their children. They stated that besides the opportunity of being together with their families while physically at home, elimination of certain conditions such as strict working conditions and time spent in traffic during rush hours, also contributed positively to this opportunity.

Especially for fathers with children under the age of 2, witnessing important developmental stages from the birth of the child onwards was expressed to be one of the positive effects of the pandemic period. The accounts of the participants commonly indicated that it would not have been possible to establish such a bond with their children under previous, more demanding working conditions. A crucial finding was that such a shift seemed to be taking place even for the fathers who weren't involved in childcare or did not spend much time with their children before remote working as a result of the pandemic (e.g., P11, P7).

In the quotations below, one of the participants conveyed that the pandemic has been very beneficial for the child to get accustomed to his presence. He stated that being home physically and spending his spare time with the child strengthened their relationship.

> That's why this period was very important in establishing that therapeutic relationship, that close relationship, you know, for him to get used to his father, you know, he says father, that is, he says the word “father” knowingly. It settled on his mind, at least, so it obviously contributed a lot to the our relationship. After all, no one works for 9 hours uninterruptedly, and I can play with the child for an hour, maybe half an hour a day, in this way. So being home definitely helped. (P7)

In a similar vein, another participant expressed that since he was at home during the pandemic, his children embraced him as their father, got accustomed to his presence, and their interaction strengthened. He reflected that thanks to the pandemic and his opportunity to stay at home, he became a much more important and prominent figure in the lives of his children.

> In this period, they realized they had a father, he said, "Oh, it happened like this, it happened like that." Yes, they said okey and accepted (my presence), for example, it was a very good thing… I don't know, if I had told them beforehand, "Let's just go out, for example, father and son, let's go out" on weekends, for example, they wouldn't come. Now, for example, he says to me "Shall I come?". After that… because, well, he accepted it now. But for example, if we hadn't had such a pandemic period, such a thing would definitely not have happened. Because that's how they would go on. After that, I would just be a figure for them in their lives. (P11)

Another father highlighted the positive aspects of being home during the pandemic from the child's perspective. He added the positive effect of his bond with his daughter as a secondary gain.

> We rather perefer to raise our child, and the most positive aspect of the pandemic is that the child spent more time with her parents. Well, that was very good for her. So it's a little bit better for us as well. We have established a (stronger) bond. I am somewhat satisfied in this aspect, for example, it is beautiful for me because of my bond with my daughter. (P3)

Another participant pointed out that switching to remote working rather than spending his time in traffic increased his efficiency and hence he was able to allocate this time to his child and house chores instead.

> Because, of course, this was always before the pandemic, that is, at least 3 hours and 4 hours a day could pass in traffic. This negatively affects my productivity. It was the biggest advantage of the pandemic. I have been able to work in that 3-4 hours and dedicate the remaining time to my children and house chores. It has been the biggest plus of the pandemic for me. That's why my productivity has increased. In fact, the biggest challenge in this process is time. How

> I should spend the time is actually a difficult issue. There is a certain amount of time you have to spare for your child, there is a time you have to spare for your spouse, you have work and so on. With the pandemic, the time I spent for myself increased, in fact, I used it very effectively because of the spared time I did not spend in that traffic. (P12)

3.4.2 Work flexibility

Six participants reported that flexibility in working conditions was another important factor that provided them with the opportunity to bond with their children during the pandemic. They commonly asserted that being at home brings flexibility and that it does not have the pressure of strict working hours or expectations as working in an office environment does.

One of the fathers shared that the flexible working conditions make him feel comfortable and owing to this flexibility, he does not refuse his son's demands during the day.

> He does it (interrupt me), so as I said, if I have a job, I say to him “I will come, my son, I will do it, my son, wait for 2 minutes” or something. So I use the flexibility of work during the day. I usually try not to turn him down. (P5)

Another participant mentioned that thanks to his flexible work, he is able to be with the child when he is sick and that they can be together physically even if they do not do any activities together.

> In other words, it gave me flexibility, even if the child is sick, you can stand by her, after all, she can be with you at all times. Even if we don't (always) spend time, she is in front of our eyes when we are playing in the hall and she can ask me something. She's telling her mother something. You know, we get involved in the process by being around each other in such things. (P1)

Another father mentioned that since he can adjust his work hours flexibly according to the sleep patterns of the children, he had the option of not working while the children were awake.

> Overall, I managed well. Because I was working while the children were sleeping, I was working at night, I was always getting up very early in the morning, I was working at that time, etc. etc. Well… there were good, productive times. (P11)

In the quote below, another participant stated that he can be the primary caregiver of the child since he can take care of the child all day because of his flexible working arrangement.

> Of course, in my schedule, working hours were already flexible. I used to go out in the afternoon and take care of the child, when she was so cranky or doing something, my mother-in-law was taking care of her for a few hours. With the beginning of the pandemic, my wife stayed at home for 3 months, and we took care of her together in the same way. She later had to return to work. Flexible working was over for them. For almost a year and a half, you know, I've been at home and I've been taking care of the child until the evening, also I take care of the house chores and the child. After my wife comes home in the evening, I start working. (P3)

Finally, another participant stated that he traveled frequently before the pandemic but switched to working from home without strict working hours during the pandemic period. He mentioned that owing to this change, he was able to be there to witness important developmental stages of his son and that he was very pleased with the timing.

> I was always traveling abroad. I was traveling abroad. I would not be able to experience this phase of my child. I have now experienced every step of the child's first 16 months, thankfully. And in that sense, I think I have been a good parent, too. I spent a lot of time with him. (P4)

3.4.3 Requirements of the circumstances

While three participants mentioned many factors that allowed them to spend more time with their children, they also expressed that this situation was actually due to an obligation. Due to the fact that their spouses could not work from home, and they could not get support from someone else in childcare, these fathers had to be the primary caregivers of their children or at least had to take care of the child's needs more often, compared to the pre-pandemic period.

One of the participants mentioned that he had to take care of the child, especially during the pandemic, because his wife was a nurse. In addition to his own motivations, he expressed believing that he is a good and caring father as a result of this "obligation" and the necessities presented by the circumstances of his life.

> That helped, and the other is, no need to romanticize things like this at all. Life conditions; if my wife wasn't a nurse, I wouldn't be such a good father, there would be no need. So that potential wouldn't need to be realized, or if my wife didn't work as hard as a nurse. So, it's generally independent of the pandemic. She probably wouldn't have given the message that "I trust you that much". Because she would have been able to already do something, she would do it (childcare). Now she supports me. She also supports me because of the obligations of life. (P9)

One of the participants mentioned that the child did not go to school for a period of time and that they were "forced" to stay together at home during this period.

> He was still at home then, of course. There was no school. Inevitably, we spent the process together at home. (P2)

Finally, another father had to take care of the child as the person who was able to stay at home due to his work conditions. He stated that had the conditions been different and his wife were able to work from home, the primary caregiver would have been his spouse, and not himself. Like the aforementioned participant,

this father, too, considered his involvement in childcare as the outcome of compulsory conditions.

> You know, there were times when I wondered if I was being selfish about it, but we talked about it among ourselves, for example, so if she had been in the same situation, she would probably have taken care of that childcare or something. Now I have such an opportunity. In this way, I have now come to an acceptance. (P3)

3.4.4 Joy from the connection

Six of the participants talked about the joy arising from a stronger bond that they achieved with their children during the pandemic, and the pleasure they get from spending more time with them. In the quote below, a father points out the bond that has developed between him and his child as the most positive outcome of the pandemic period in his opinion and refers to this bond as a source of emotional sustenance for him.

> In other words, I think that we have come a long way in this connection-building side, and I think I have emotionally fueled in this process. So, this is the biggest impact of this pandemic on me and I think it is the same for other people working from home. Because they have very precious moments and it was not possible for us to experience these moments (without the pandemic). (P4)

Another father talked about the happiness he felt at being able to spend time with his children during this period. He recounted that he could not have had the chance to experience this feeling earlier because of his busy work schedule.

> As a father, I was very happy because previously (I was) always working, always working.. I eat dinner, they sleep, I wake up in the morning, they either leep or they go to school. As a father, I realized that I was a father for the first time. It was a very good thing for me. (P11)

Caring for and being close with his child as well as witnessing her development was a source of joy for the participants.

> And the caregiving thing actually makes me very happy. In other words, being able to spend very close one-to-one time, to follow her development. These things made me happy, they made me happy. (…) I also like to spend time, I also like to deal with these things, there was nothing that I complained about much. It seriously changed my life. You know, this (caregiving) have very difficult sides, but there are also sides which make you very very happy. (P12)

Another example in this theme, eg., the joy that the participants felt about their recently established or strengthened bond to their children, came from a father who described the feeling of fatherhood as a perfect one. He experienced this feeling, in particular, when he was called a father and when he saw his child imitate him.

> It is difficult when the child is young, it is very difficult for the mother, but the feeling of fatherhood is excellent, (…) someone calling you father, learning something from you, imitating you... Whatever you give, he picks it up. (P5)

3.5 Ambivalence and finding balance

Despite depicting the period of restrictions and remote working as a chance to connect with their children, fathers had negative feelings and thoughts about being confined to home with a small child. However, only two fathers openly expressed such feelings and stated that they would rather have preferred to spend this time alone (childless) or with an older child, who can take care of himself.

One of the fathers pointed out repeatedly that he would prefer to go through the pandemic without his child, and that he would like to improve himself and spend more time with his wife.

> (…) If you asked me if you would prefer to live a process like a pandemic without children, I would definitely say yes. Living alone in a period during which I can spend so much time for myself and get to know myself would be a benefit for me. (…) we had to be focused on G. (daughter) so much at that time, sometimes I ask

> myself, would I be happier if I were childless? I would be happy. I guess I would have liked it more to spend the time being closed at home for 3 months and 4 months, with myself and my wife. (P9)

Another father stated that working from home could be enjoyable, but he would prefer his child to be grown and able to take care of himself.

> Yes, I think we went through a very different period. Yes, I think it is very nice to work in a home office, but you should either be single or your children shoukd be grown up and they will should in a position to take care of themselves, as I said then home office is an incredibly beautiful thing. (P5)

The participants, referring to both COVID-19 and pre-COVID eras of fatherhood, depicted an internal dialog about finding a balance between two things, including childcare and other responsibilities, closeness and discipline, cultural norms of their family and their own opinions. All these internal bargains are gathered under the theme of finding balance.

The area that the fathers talked about and struggled most was finding a balance between work obligations and childcare. In the quote below, the father talked about his professional responsibilities, the difficulties of childcare, and the challenge he experienced having to find a balance between these obligations.

> Of course, the compelling part of it is that you don't sleep at all for 4 days, you don't sleep with the child, but the next day you have meetings. Your meetings continue, but in the meantime, the child is on your mind. Of course, you are in the same house with the child. You know, the new little toddler is always dependent on you, shouting, calling, asking for a hug, asking for this or that, but you are having a meeting. (P4)

Another participant stated how difficult it was to balance his time between the child's needs and the responsibilities of his work. Moreover, his wife's heavy and strict work schedule made it even harder to find a well-balanced routine.

> The process was like a nightmare, really. I'm trying to remember; I must have buried it in my unconscious. It was really tough in terms

> of- I mean, it was difficult to arrange that. As I said, my wife's schedule was more clear-cut; her class schedules etc., were fixed. But sometimes, she had classes spanning throughout her day, and I had to stop working that day. But there is no such thing as taking a day off. There were days when the kid was left entirely up to me—[I was] trying to take care of him at the same time. We were feeding him with a bottle and stuff like that. We wake up really early, like 5.30-6, and it's just taking care of the kid and doing things like that until 9 am or so. My wife would have to rest then because she was also getting really tired during the night. So, I was taking care of him until 9 am, and then I would try to do some work for half an hour or an hour. Then my wife's classes would begin. After that, it would just be me with the kid until nighttime. Get him to sleep, wake him up, feed him, change his diaper, etc. E-mails from work would be dropping on the other side, and I'd try to answer them from my cellphone, just to make do. (P12)

Another father mentioned that he had difficulties from time to time between housework and the child's needs, especially the need to play, but that he was able to find a good balance.

> …she sometimes plays by herself a little. When she does so, I never go near her. When she's playing on her own, and let's say I'm going to do the dishes, she comes to ask for some stuff. [I tell her,] "Come over, let's do this like that". Sometimes we place the dishes [in the machine] together, I ask her to pass them over to me and then I place them. Sometimes she passes me the glasses and stuff like that and sometimes she wants to play a different game. So I play with her and then try to go back to the dishes when she starts playing on her own. (P3)

Another father mentioned that he had difficulty balancing his own family's more conservative cultural approach and his own approach to family life.

> … the mother-in-law factor- or my parents being at home causes all sorts of problems. As I said, because we don't live in a very intellectual environment within the feudal society- and we're from the east, on top of that. That's a different kind of cultural issue. Overcoming these things is not all that easy, staying in balance… To seek, to find… I mean, you're not just dealing with yourself either, other stuff happens constantly. All of these are exhausting. (P8)

Another participant mentioned that he wanted to balance discipline and closeness in his attitude towards his child. On the one hand, he wished to establish a close bond with the child, on the other hand, he believed drawing clear boundaries to be necessary as a father.

> In terms of discipline, I believe that he needs to feel a little on the edge. I mean, of course, I too want to [handle this] by forming a happy, lovely bond with him but I also don't want to slack off too much either. That's the thing in terms of discipline, I mean, I've got to say no when I need to and I will, but once I say that, he should know that "Dad said no, and that's a no, I can't bend that further". It's great if I can give him that [impression]. We'll see how that'll be. (P4)

Finally, one of the fathers mentioned trying to establish a balance between social life and the needs of his child, and that a third person, namely, the caregiver helps facilitate this balance.

> … I can say that there were advantages to the pandemic. I'm working more efficiently and I'm better able to spare time for my family, and friends. The only thing is that you have to find a way to balance that social aspect, and we're trying to achieve that with the babysitter. We can't go out even when the sitter is here, for instance. We try to do stuff during the daytime. (P12)

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

4.1 Summary of the results

The goal of the present study was to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected fathers' views, feelings, and behaviors on fatherhood and father-child interaction in Turkey. The findings were presented in two sections: (1) Different dimensions of fatherhood, and (2) Effects of COVID-19. For the first section, the analysis of the narratives yielded 3 main themes and 9 sub-themes. Primarily, the participants mostly viewed fatherhood as bearing responsibility, both in financial and emotional terms. A significant portion of the fathers considered themselves explicitly or implicitly as secondary caregivers, in other words, they expressed their role as the helper of the mother to lighten “her” burden. Furthermore, two main themes regarding fatherhood roles emerged, which were the advisor role and the co-parenting role. For the advisor role, fathers perceived themselves as being the educator of the house, and guidance was a major characteristic of their relationship with their children. For the co-parenting role, fathers perceived themselves as equal caregivers of the child.

When the narratives of the participants about the process of becoming a father were examined, four sub-themes emerged. While some of the fathers described being indecisive about becoming a father, some of them expressed their concern about being inexperienced and lacking the necessary information and qualification for taking care of their children. After the indecision and inexperience at the beginning of the process, the narratives of fathers about being a father and integrating fatherhood into their identities gave rise to two different themes. The first

theme indicated that becoming a father was an instinctual process for some of the participants, they expressed understanding and adapting to the child's needs instinctually and felt more like a father as a result. For the second theme, fathers recounted that their journey of becoming a father is more like a learning process, during which the fatherhood identity was consolidated with experience.

Another important theme that emerged from the narratives was the intergenerational transmission of fatherhood. The participants described three such ways through which they either not followed or adopted their fathers' attitudes. While some of the participants recounted negative relationships with their fathers, some of them described their fathers and the relationship they had during their childhood as positive, hence setting an example for their own fathering. Lastly, fathers' approach to gender roles within the family was analyzed and the findings yielded two different approaches: egalitarian and gendered. Corresponding with the previous research, the majority of the fathers had a tendency towards a more egalitarian division of work within the household. However, a proportion of participants had a more traditional view of gender roles and accordingly a stricter division of domestic labor.

In the second section, where fathers' narratives about the effects of COVID-19 are reviewed, the most prominent theme was forming a connection with the child. Most of the participants mentioned having a closer bond with their children as a result of having to stay at home together. Additionally, participants stated that under normal circumstances, they did not have the chance to spend as much time and to have a closer relationship with their children due to heavy work schedules and not being physically present for most of the day. Results of this second section suggest that having an opportunity to spend more time at home can improve father-child

interactions both in terms of the time spent together and the quality of their relationship. The relevance of the findings from this group of Turkish fathers to the existing literature on fatherhood and COVID-19 will be discussed in the following section.

4.2 Fatherhood roles and the changing fatherhood ideals

The current study sought to investigate the effects of COVID-19 on father involvement. However, since the pandemic period cannot be evaluated in isolation, participants' view of fatherhood and the extent to which they participated in childcare in general before the pandemic constituted an important pillar of the study. In this regard, even though there was a variety among participants, the majority seemed to belong to the group of modern fathers in various aspects (Rotundo, 1985). These fathers are described as being warm in their relationship with their children yet having traditional gender role stereotypes. In the present study, even those who shared childcare almost equally with their spouses stated that they did so out of some kind of obligation, not completely of their own will. One of the most striking examples was the father, who was the primary caregiver of his child, who did this willingly to some extent, but defined himself as *feminine* [emphasis added]. Additionally, this father exemplified "gender role strain" very well, since he was enthusiastic but at the same time ambivalent to take on the role of primary caregiver, blaming and resenting the mother at times for not empathizing enough with him (Pleck, 1995). Therefore, it can be tentatively concluded that even the most enthusiastic fathers who have a desire to be more involved in childcare, experience internal and external obstacles.

An increasing body of evidence suggests that fatherhood in Turkey is in a transitional phase, even though this transition takes place slowly. The current study's findings are largely consistent with the findings of the Mother Child Education Foundation's study (Tol & Taşkan, 2018). According to the main report of Involved Fatherhood and Its Determinants in Turkey, especially middle and high SES fathers are more willing to be involved in childcare (Akçınar, 2017). As the narratives of the participants in the present study demonstrate, fathers care more about having a closer bond with their children, spending more time with them and being more involved in day-to-day care activities. However, between the lines, the social value associated with male dominance and patriarchal masculinity codes attributed to childcare is still prevailing for fathers. The meanings that fathers assign to their responsibilities are largely influenced by patriarchal masculinity codes, such as being the provider of the family. These masculine roles depict the father, who is the head of the family and provides for the household's needs, as well as the moral advisor of the family, guiding his child and as well as showing affection for his child. As a result, fathers portray themselves as figures who should not behave carelessly because they are expected to be role models.

Three categories of fatherhood were observed, which bear a resemblance to the fatherhood categories of “new traditional”, “keen” and “diligent” fatherhood in Mother Child Education Foundation's involved fatherhood study (Tol & Taşkan, 2018). There was a similar stratification with regard to fatherhood roles and gender roles within the family. The theme of supporter role suggests that a significant proportion of fathers still adopt a secondary role in caring for their children. Additionally, the theme advisor role indicates that fathers see their role and position within the family as the advisor of the family. These findings jointly demonstrate

that patriarchal masculinity codes accompany the new fatherhood which is more involved but is not ready to be an equal partner in caregiving. It is argued that although somewhat influenced by the changing ideals of gender equality, they learn to mask traditional masculinity norms instead of giving it up (Lazar, 2000). In this sense, while the fathers in this study emphasized that they participated in childcare, they could not help but add that they did so either to support the mother or as an obligation.

Parallel to the literature, a shift towards a more egalitarian family structure rather than a traditional hierarchical one, accompanied by a shift towards being a co-parent rather than a secondary caregiver was observed in participants' narratives, albeit an ambivalent shift (Sunar, 2002; Sunar & Fişek, 2005; Scheibling, 2019). A group of fathers in the present study, which is similar to the fathers in the category called diligent fatherhood in the AÇEV study, consists of participants who oppose traditional gender roles and try to break these stereotypical roles in their own families, and strive to be co-parents instead of being secondary caregivers. A growing body of literature indicates that traditional attributes of fatherhood such as distant, authoritarian, and head of the family have been undergoing a change (Dermott, 2008; Dermott and Miller 2015; Giddens 2001; Habib 2012). A qualitative study by Brooks and Hodkinson (2021) has described three categories of fathers who took equal or more responsibility for childcare during the early months. Those who take parental leave and, despite doing their best and possibly the majority of the work in the early stages of development, end up returning to work. Then there are those who become primary caregivers in the early years, for example since the mother earns more and goes back to work. Lastly, the third category of fathers, "equal care sharers," whose childcare and domestic activity obscure gender roles,

and mothers and fathers become interchangeable caregivers. It is suggested that the latter group of men/fathers is at the forefront of new possibilities in fatherhood.

Considering the sample of the present study, the co-parenting fathers coincide with the first two categories of the fathers in the aforementioned study. However, even the more egalitarian fathers who consider their role as equal sharers of childcare have contradictory feelings and ideas. One such example was the father (P3) who described himself as feminine for taking care and for doing so voluntarily. This participant, even though taking care of his daughter equally with his wife willingly and intentionally, had internalized traditional beliefs about gender roles. In other words, being the primary caregiver or taking care as much as the mother meant being demasculinized. This contradiction resulting from stretching one's traditional gender role beliefs in parenting yet having such persistent and internalized beliefs which are further reinforced by the environment leave men in a difficult position (Holter, 2007; Maurer & Pleck, 2006). Turkey, being traditionally a patriarchal state yet currently influenced by the egalitarian values of the zeitgeist, prepare the grounds for this contradiction. This change in fatherhood ideals accompanied by conflictual feelings and conduct in men's parenting is evident in various studies examining masculinity and fatherhood in Turkey (Bolak, 1997; Boratav et al., 2014; Sancar, 2009). Fathers experiencing such conflicts about sharing the care responsibilities equally and struggling to maintain their masculine identity are the ones with the highest potential to bring about a change of established gender roles in parenting (Dermott, 2015; Deutsch, 2000; Doucet, 2016). Therefore, the participants in the present study who are identified as co-parents may be actors of change towards a more egalitarian understanding of parenting that challenge the conventional gender stereotypes.

4.3 Continuities and discontinuities in fathering

Most of the participants described their fathers as good and caring fathers, committed to their family and non-violent towards them or their mothers. Nevertheless, the common point that almost all participants mentioned about their fathers was that they were at home much less than themselves and not available emotionally as much. The majority of the participants stated that they had a positive relationship with their fathers, but they established a much closer and deeper bond with their children. The participants' differentiated perspectives should be considered within the current social and cultural context that has fundamentally transformed the family structure (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Cultural norms and values in Turkey are a mixture of traditional collectivistic ones along with individualistic ones that are gradually gaining ground. In a culture where these values are negotiated and synthesized in a day-to-day basis, the aspirations and conduct of fatherhood is expected to alter. This change is portrayed by Fişek (2002) as an integration process in which the values of the past and present are synthesized and bring about “familial self with individualistic elements”. Congruent with this integration process, the findings of the present study suggest that the fathers, while keeping the positive elements of the fathering they received, are replacing the elements they perceived as negative or lacking in their fathers. The research examining the intergenerational transmission of parenting similarly demonstrates that parenting style one has received as a child is only a moderate predictor of one’s own parental involvement (Conger et al., 2009; Kovan et al., 2009).

When the intergenerational transmissions of fatherhood are examined, there are fathers who completely or partially follow their own fathers' footsteps, and do not substantially challenge traditional gender roles. On the other hand, some of the participants indicated that they distanced themselves completely from their fathers. The common point of these fathers was that they did not want to repeat the mistakes of their fathers and they did not want their children to go through the adversities they had experienced. It is meaningful to visit the identificatory processes proposed by Belsky (1984) in this regard. It is suggested that positive father-child relationships are more likely to result in a strong identification with the father figure, whereas a distant, noninvolved father is more likely to be disregarded in one's own fatherhood. The latter fatherhood is thought to result in a compensatory process, in which having experienced a cold, distant father-child relationship, feeling the absence of a warm, available and nurturant father culminates in an effort to compensate for the unfavorable aspects of the fathering one experienced. Three participants in the present study clearly expressed their disappointment about their fathers and, notwithstanding the negative experience and the absence of a nurturant father, they intended to repair these negative, unsatisfactory experiences by being an adequate and responsive father.

According to Snarey (1993), creating an atmosphere in which the family dynamics and father-child interactions are changed for the better serves as a reparative process for current fathers. Considering these two intergenerational transmission pathways of fatherhood, fathers adopt the positive characteristics from their family of origin and carry these positive experiences they had with their fathers to the families they have established today, while compensating for the negative aspects. That is, these two different processes can operate separately or together,

influenced by the quality of fathers' relationships with their own fathers and socio-cultural values of the day. However, these continuities and discontinuities of fathering styles are complicated by the structural elements such as the availability of paternal leave or having a heavy work schedule. Some of the participants stated that they could spend little time with their children due to the busy work schedule before the COVID-19 pandemic, and that they could not see their families for a few weeks due to business trips from time to time. For example, the findings of longitudinal studies show that along with modelling their fathers or compensating for past resentments in their current fatherhood, fathers could be more work-focused than their own fathers (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006). It is evident in various studies that especially high-status occupations, despite many rewards, entails a lot of stress and may require long working hours (Moen et al., 2013; Rigotti et al., 2021; Schieman et al., 2006). Hence, in parallel with the narratives of the participants in this study, fathers took the positive aspects of their fathers as an example and tried to improve their inadequacy in their relations with their children by following a different path. Fatherhood during the pandemic, which is the focus of this study, has tentatively revealed that fathers can establish a closer bond with their children by spending more time at home. The effects of the pandemic and its effects on fathering experience will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.4 Fathering experiences during the covıd-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has radically changed our lives for over two years now, has also affected parents and the parent-child relationship in many ways. The most important source of this effect is that all around the world, people were confined to their homes for a long time, and children continued their education from

home if they could. However, it was a period when both parents and children could not meet their socialization needs. In addition, until such an epidemic, many families had to spend more time together than ever before. In the participants' narratives, while mentioning the advantages in some aspects and the disadvantages in others, this period is generally described positively in terms of having the chance to spend more time with the child and the quality of the father-child relationship. In this regard, the optimistic approach that COVID-19 can enhance both the quality and quantity of father-child interaction is partially confirmed (Cito et al., 2020). In the context of remote working, fathers stated that they were able to spend more time with their children thanks to the lockdown and that they viewed this change as a benefit. In addition to the many negative influences of the pandemic, such as not being able to see with their loved ones and worrying about their health, they considered the bond they have established or deepened with their children as an opportunity of the pandemic.

According to the findings of studies conducted since the beginning of the pandemic, fathers have become more engaged than before the pandemic (Andrew et al., 2020; Welsh, 2020). Based on the research specifically examining the effects COVID-19 lockdown on father involvement, it is found that in various countries such as Germany, the UK, Italy and the US, fathers' participation in childcare activities has exponentially risen, that is the time spent with children almost doubled in all countries (Biroli et al., 2020; Kreyenfeld & Zinn, 2021; Zannella et al., 2020). This positive change resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has paved the way for optimistic expectations that the pandemic can work as a facilitating period for more involved and engaged fatherhood and a more equal distribution of care work and elimination of traditional gender roles (Alon et al., 2020; Blaskó et al., 2020; Yerkes

et al., 2020). The main point demonstrated by the above-mentioned studies can be summarized as follows, fathers have voluntarily or sometimes involuntarily spent more time with their children, due to the fact that they could be at home more often as a result of lockdown restrictions in the pandemic (Carlson et al., 2021). In a sense, this obligatory flexibility in working conditions seems to have removed an institutional barrier to father involvement. Thus, the dissemination and extension of paternity leave may positively affect the involved paternity (Tanyeri, 2017). Accordingly, social policies advocating for equal distribution of income between men and women can be an incentive to support father involvement. Thus, it can be ensured that fathers who are willing to be involved in childcare can become more active as they would not be the one with the higher income. Lastly, social policies promoting an egalitarian view on gender roles rather than a traditional perspective is needed, as one of the most difficult barriers to overcome are stereotypes about gender roles in traditional cultures like Turkey.

The findings of the present study are similar to the others in the literature, which attracted attention in a short time and is promising in terms of an equal distribution of childcare and a wearing off in traditional gender norms. Furthermore, these findings are in accordance with needs exposure hypothesis that suggests attitudinal changes emerge as a result of being exposed to familial needs and different perspectives (Churchill & Craig, 2021; Mikhaylova & Sivak, 2021). An important question that comes to mind at this point is whether involved fathering attitudes and behaviors will continue when this exposure comes to an end as the lockdown measures are abolished, and fathers return to their regular (heavy) schedules. In this regard, optimistic aspirations about the change of fatherhood carry on. It is suggested that fathers who were more involved in childcare during the

pandemic will continue to be engaged fathers in the future similar to fathers who remain involved once they return to work by the end of their paternal leave (Margaria, 2021; Tamm, 2019).

A study examining the reactions of Canadian fathers in 2020 is enlightening; the majority of the participants reported that COVID-19 lockdown has facilitated their relationship with their children and half of the participants were determined to maintain their involvement in their children's lives (Intentions Consulting, 2020). The participants in the present study similarly expressed their gratitude about the positive effects of the pandemic related restrictions and their desire to maintain their bonds with their children. Yet, in the predominantly traditional and patriarchal culture of Turkey, the sustainability of this hard-won prize is still questionable. For instance, the study by Kisbu et al. (2022) found that patriarchal views of gender roles and daily working time were negatively associated with father involvement. As most of the aforementioned studies having an optimistic view about the effect of COVID-19 on father involvement are conducted in western countries, the trajectory in Turkey is still unknown. During the restrictions, it was not possible to collect data with any method other than self-report, in a sense, no one could see how much fathers took on domestic responsibilities. Moreover, there has not yet been a study conducted by collecting data from both parents in Turkey, which could provide more reliability. Therefore, the current situation provides an opportunity to observe whether any actual change has taken place.

Moreover, the accounts of two fathers signaled that this positive picture of the lockdown period may not be the whole story. These two participants stated that they would rather be childless or prefer their children to be older if they could have known about the pandemic and resultant flexible work arrangements. This

ambivalence indicated that fathers might not have been more involved and engaged willingly if such an obligatory change and confinement restrictions had not occurred. The ambivalent feelings and attitudes may not be limited to these two fathers, social desirability bias may have prevented other participants from expressing their complaints and negative feelings openly about being confined to home with small children (Grimm, 2010). In a similar vein, a study conducted with stay-at-home fathers demonstrated that most of the fathers expressed their wish to return to work; however, they also indicated that they would not prefer to work full-time (Jones et al., 2021). Their conflictual feelings about the balance between care and work suggested that a shift from conventional gender norms is not as easy and straightforward as it looks. Consequently, it is evident from the narratives of the fathers in the present study that they have been more engaged and available (both physically and emotionally) as a result of the compulsory lockdown in Turkey. However, future research and exploration is required to better understand whether this effect is an enduring one.

4.5 Strengths and limitations

First of all, this is the first study to explore how father involvement was affected during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Turkish context. Although there have been previous pivotal studies on involved fatherhood, there is no comprehensive study examining what kind of changes may be experienced by remotely working fathers during the pandemic. Secondly, a qualitative analysis shed light on the feelings and thoughts of the fathers and how they spent this period beyond what the numerical data could offer. Lastly, although this study was conducted with a small and restricted sample, it contributed to the understanding of fatherhood in Turkey, which

consists of a limited number of studies (Akçınar, 2017; Boratav et al., 2017; Bozok, 2018; Kisbu et al., 2022; Yalçınöz, 2011).

Nevertheless, the present study has also methodological limitations, both in terms of sampling and merely utilizing a qualitative analysis. First of all, the participants consisted of individuals from mainly middle and high SES and well-educated fathers since remote working was only an option for those working in higher status occupations. Despite the restricted range of the sample, a variety of occupations among the participants existed along with a variety of perspectives on gender roles and the level of involvement in childcare. Another problem is that a small sample size may not be adequate to ensure data saturation (Constantinou et al., 2017; Picariello et al., 2017). However, as Braun and Clarke (2019) suggest, the concept of data saturation is not consistent with the assumptions and goals of reflexive thematic analysis. They argue that the core of thematic analysis is a meaning making process which is subjective rather than a mere extraction from data, hence questions of sample size and number of datasets become irrelevant.

Moreover, all the interviews were conducted by the author, a young female researcher, which might have resulted in social desirability bias. In other words, a female researcher might have been perceived as an expert to whom fathers wanted to appear more involved than they really are. For a better and more reliable understanding of father involvement, future research can implement additional methods other than self-report such as observational data and/or complementary information from the spouses of the fathers. Additionally, it should be noted that the data consisted of resrospective self-report data, and looking at the past from the current point of view might not convey the emotional diversity inherent in the process (Miell, 1987; Smith, 1994). In other words, looking back at the end of strict

restrictions, participants might be biased in their assessments to evaluate this process as predominantly positive based on their subjective reconstructions (Metts et al., 1991).

4.6 Implications

The shifting pattern of traditional family roles and fathers' engagement has received a lot of attention. Although the subject of fatherhood and fathers' involvement in childcare in Turkey is examined from the perspectives of gender roles and the relationship of fathers with their own parents, the effect of working conditions, which appears as another significant factor, has not been addressed sufficiently in the studies. In the present study, a group of Turkish fathers' experiences were explored starting from the initial phases of fatherhood throughout the pandemic and the results suggested that father involvement has been improving and the COVID-19 pandemic was a major positive step along the way. Even though some fathers expressed ambivalent feelings and attitudes about the remote working and confinement measures, overall fathers and the father-child interaction were positively affected by this process. Hence, it can be concluded that fathers can benefit from flexible work arrangements and utilize it in order to be more involved in their children's lives (AÇEV, 2018).

As fathers' awareness about the positive effects of their involvement on children's social and psychological development increases, they can be more willing to participate both in childcare and house chores. Furthermore, as it is clear from the findings of the present study that working conditions play a significant role in father involvement, social policies, especially in the area of paternity leave, should be designed to improve fathers' involvement in childcare. Finally, father support

programs that raise awareness of an egalitarian division of work and provide fathers with a support mechanism in areas where they struggle should be expanded in order to increase fathers' involvement in childcare.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ENGLISH)

- Age:
- Level of education:
- Year of marriage:
- Occupation:
- Age of child/children:
- Gender of child/children:
- Wife's occupation:
- Mother/Father alive:

Questions on the Pandemic Period

1. What was it like working from home during the pandemic?
2. Are there any differences resulting from staying at home longer? What were the differences, what remained the same?
3. If the child is not continuing online education; how did your child spend his/her time at home during home restrictions? What were the differences in your routine compared to before, and how did you decide who would take care of them?
4. Has anything changed in your relationship with your children during this period, can you talk a little bit about it?
5. Has anything changed in your relationship with your spouse during this period, can you talk a little bit about it?

Questions on Fatherhood

6. How would you describe yourself as a father?
7. How did you learn to be a father? What/who did you benefit from? What areas do you have difficulty in?
8. What do you think are the skills necessary to be a father, how can they be learned?
9. Could you describe to me a little bit about your relationship with your daughter/son? What do you do together, what are the enjoyable parts, what are the challenging parts for you?
10. What do you do when you have a problem with children? (Punishment, consulting the mother, leaving it completely to the mother, etc.)
11. What kind of a schedule do you have in sharing the responsibility of children, how did you decide on this schedule?

Questions on the Participant's Developmental History

12. Mr. X, can you tell me a little about what kind of a child you were, where did you grow up?
13. What kind of a father was your father? Can you tell me a little bit about your relationship with your father?
14. What did you learn from your father?
15. Can you describe me a little bit your relationship with your mother?
16. What kind of father was your father? Could you tell us a little bit about your relationship with your father?

Questions on Marital and Familial Life

17. So, can you tell us a little bit about your spouse and your relationship with your spouse?
18. What does your spouse think about your involvement in childcare?
    - Does she support it or not want you to get involved?
19. Can you talk a little bit about your thoughts and feelings about your participation in childcare?

Questions on Gender Roles

20. Who do you think should be responsible for the children in the family?
21. How do you handle the division of labor at home?
22. What do you think is the role of the man and woman in a family with children like yours?
    - **Finally, what else do you think I could ask to understand this experience, are there any issues that I missed but that you think are important?**

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TURKISH)

DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİLER:

- Yaş:
- Öğrenim durumunuz:
- Kaç yıllık evlisiniz:
- Mesleğiniz:
- Kaç çocuğunuz var:
- Çocuğunuz/çocuklarınız kaç yaşında:
- Çocuğunuzun/ çocuklarınızın cinsiyeti:
- Eşinizin mesleği:
- Anne/Babanız hayatta mı:

Pandemi Dönemine Yönelik Sorular

1. Pandemi döneminde evden çalışmak nasıldı?
2. Daha uzun süre evde olmanızın getirdiği farklılıklar oldu mu? Ne tür farklılıklar, neler aynı kaldı?
3. Eğer çocuk online eğitime devam etmiyorsa; çocuğunuz kısıtlamalar süresince evde zamanını nasıl geçirdi? Öncesine göre rutininizde ne gibi farklılıklar oldu, bunlarla kimin ilgileneceğine nasıl karar verdiniz?
4. Bu dönemde çocuklarınızla ilişkinizde değişen bir şey oldu mu, biraz bahseder misiniz?
5. Bu dönemde eşinizle ilişkinizde değişen bir şey oldu mu, biraz bahseder misiniz?

Babalık ile İlgili Sorular

6. Kendinizi nasıl bir baba olarak tarif edersiniz?
7. Baba olmayı nasıl öğrendiniz? Nelerden/kimlerden faydalandınız? Hangi konularda zorlanıyorsunuz?
8. Sizce baba olmak için gerekli kabiliyetler neler, bunlar nasıl öğrenilir?
9. Kızınızla/oğlunuzla ilişkinizi bana biraz tarif eder misiniz? Birlikte neler yaparsınız, keyifli kısımlar neler, zorlayıcı kısımlar neler sizin için?
10. Çocuklarla ilgili bir sorun yaşayınca neler yaparsınız? (Ceza, anneye danışma, tamamen anneye bırakma vs.)
11. Çocukların sorumluluğunu üstlenme konusunda nasıl bir düzeniniz var, bu düzene nasıl karar verdiniz?

Kendi Gelişimsel Hikayesi ile İlgili Sorular

12. X Bey nasıl bir çocuktunuz, nerede büyüdünüz biraz bahseder misiniz?
13. Babanız nasıl bir babaydı? Babanızla ilişkiniz nasıldı biraz anlatır mısınız?

14. Babanızdan neler öğrendiniz?
15. Annenizle ilişkiniz nasıldı biraz anlatır mısınız?
16. Annenizden neler öğrendiniz?

Eş ve Aile Hayatı ile İlgili Sorular

17. Peki biraz da eşinizden ve eşinizle olan ilişkinizden bahseder misiniz?
18. Eşiniz sizin çocuk bakımına katılımınızla ilgili ne düşünür?
    - Destekler mi yoksa karışmanızı istemez mi?
19. Çocuk bakımına katılımınız hakkında fikirleriniz, hisleriniz nasıl, biraz bahseder misiniz?

Cinsiyet Rollerine Yönelik Sorular

20. Sizce ailede çocuklardan kim sorumlu olmalı?
21. Evde iş bölümünü nasıl yapıyorsunuz?
22. Sizce sizinki gibi çocuklu bir ailede erkeğin rolü nedir, kadınınki nedir?

- **Son olarak, sizce bu deneyimi anlamak için başka neler sorabilirdim, benim atladığım ama önemli olduğunu düşündüğünüz konular var mı?**

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 02.07.2021-20088

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER YÜKSEK LİSANS VE DOKTORA TEZLERİ ETİK İNCELEME KOMİSYONU
TOPLANTI TUTANAĞI

Toplantı Sayısı	:	19
Toplantı Tarihi	:	01.07.2021
Toplantı Saati	:	17:30
Toplantı Yeri	:	Zoom Sanal Toplantı
Bulunanlar	:	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yasemin Sohtorik İlkmen, Prof. Dr. Ebru Kaya, Prof. Dr. Fatma Nevra Seggie
Bulunmayanlar	:	

Özlem Tanrısever

Psikoloji

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Father Involvement during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Study on the Effects of Remote Working" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2021/48 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 1 Temmuz 2021 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar tüm üyelerin toplantıya çevrimiçi olarak katılımı ve oybirliği ile alınmıştır. COVID-19 önlemleri kapsamında kurul üyelerinden ıslak imza alınamadığı için bu onay mektubu üye ve raportör olarak Ebru Kaya tarafından bütün üyeler adına e-imzalanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla, bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Prof. Dr. Ebru KAYA
ÜYE

e-imzalıdır
Prof. Dr.Ebru KAYA
Raportör

SOBETİK 19 01.07.2021

Bu belge 5070 sayılı Elektronik İmza Kanununun 5. Maddesi gereğince güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

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