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The meaning of fatherhood as perceived by Turkish police fathers and their young children

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The purpose of this study is to provide insight and understanding of Turkish police fathers' and their young children's conceptualizations of fatherhood. Data for the present study came from 21 police fathers and their 4-to-6 year old children. We asked the participant fathers to respond to a broad question of "What kind of father am I?" in writing. We used Kinetic Family Drawing, a projective-expressive technique, to collect data from children. Obtained data were evaluated for the content, patterns, emergent themes, and narrative properties by constant comparative methods. Overall, the police fathers and their children in this study tended to identify fatherhood with the traditional provider model and the disciplinarian function. Rather than providing physical care, fathers were more inclined to engage in playful and non-containing interactions with their children. However, all participant fathers expressed desire to be more involved with their children than they currently are, be more actively engaged in their children's lives and go beyond simply providing for their children's needs financially.

Key words: Meaning of fatherhood, Turkish police fathers, experiences of fathers.

INTRODUCTION

Since fatherhood is a historically contingent social construction, the notion, experience and perception of fatherhood vary dramatically across times and cultures (Hewlett and Macfarlan, 2010; Nsamenang, 2010; Shwalb et al., 2010). That is, in different times and various cultures, fathers are expected to behave differently and others treat fathers in highly variable ways (Cherlin, 1998; LaRossa, 1997; Pleck and Pleck, 1997; Stearns, 1991). A closer examination of the fathering practices reveals that historical, cultural, and familial ideologies inform the roles fathers play, influence the activities fathers share with their children and the amounts of time they spend with their children and even shape the quality of the relationships between fathers and children (Lamb, 2010). However, for decades following World War II, traditional focus of social scientists studying children's early development was mothers. In general, fathers were overlooked and excluded from studies in developmental, psychological and sociological fields or their roles were often represented through the reports of their partners (Lamb, 2010).

Early scholars of fatherhood embraced the conservative values of the post war society and endorsed the traditional notion of the family, dominated by a bread-winning, disciplining father and a home-making, child-rearing mother (Griswold, 1993; Knibiehler, 1995; Lamb, 2010; Pleck, 2010a). This conceptualization limits the father involvement in terms of childcare (providing basic care and meeting needs of the child in terms of feeding, comforting, dressing) and displaying affection to offspring. With rapid social and economic changes, women have become more independent of their spouses and assumed increasing responsibility for provisioning themselves and their families. Thus, bread winning role of fathers, which has been thought to be the primary responsibility of men, has begun to weaken and change. In the last three decades, an increasing number of research articles have started to emphasize other more

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psychological roles of fathers and explore the ways in which fathers affect their children's development (Lamb, 2010, Pleck, 2010a). Newly emphasized aspects of fatherhood include such roles as nurturance, emotional support, companionship, play, and tutelage. This has especially been true for industrialized countries for the last decades (Lamb et al., 2004). Nevertheless, when asked to identify the features of parental roles that they most closely identified with, many fathers tended to list the financial provision as the most central aspect of their role (Warin et al., 1999).

Including fathers in any research attempt is important because many fathers today play a larger role in their child's life than did fathers of previous generations (Gerson, 2010; Hook and Wolfe, 2009; Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda, 2004; Townsend, 2002; Wall and Arnold, 2007). Fathers continue to influence their children in diverse ways that may vary from family to family, depending on the aspirations and expectations of individual parents, their communities, and their cultures (Hewlett and Macfarlan, 2010; Lamb, 2010; Nsamenang, 2010; Shwalb et al., 2010; Strier and Roer-Strier, 2010).

The issue of fatherhood has evolved and expanded over the past decades to become a larger part of the research discussions. Research on fatherhood has usually centred on identifying and defining fatherhood and distinguishing this concept from other related concepts, such as motherhood and parenthood (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). Recent reviews of literature regarding fathering practices have acknowledged the multidimensional nature of the construct of fatherhood (Hossain et al., 1997; Lamb, 2010; Lamb and Lewis, 2010; Pleck, 2010a; Wall and Arnold, 2007). Being a multifaceted construct, on the other hand, makes fatherhood one of the least agreed upon concept and in need of more in depth studies (Roopnarine et al., 2001; Tripp-Reimer and Wilson, 1991). However, still relatively little is known about what is the meaning of fatherhood for fathers, how fathers perceive the fathering role, what they consider the father roles to be, and how important the fathering role is to them (Gadsden et al., 2004; Pleck and Steuve, 2004). Although we have witnessed a boom in research on fatherhood, most of this research has been carried out in industrial societies with middle-income White fathers. Literature from nonindustrial societies is much more limited and the notion of fatherhood is not widely explored in developing countries. In his critical review of the studies on fatherhood and masculinity, Pleck (2010a) points out that it is important that future research on fatherhood employs more diverse samples and gives more attention to developing countries. Thus, studying fatherhood in developing countries remains crucial in broadening conceptual thinking on fatherhood.

Family context, society's culture and gender role ideologies influence not only fathers' but also their children's gender-related cognitions and their beliefs and perceptions about parental roles (Akrami et al., 2003; Gelman et al., 2004; Poulin-Dubois et al., 2002; Rudman, 2004; Tenenbaum and Leaper, 2002). Children in different cultures appear to differentiate between the roles of mothers and fathers early on (Banse et al., 2010; Chaplin et al., 2005; Liben and Bigler, 2002; Endendijk et al., 2013; Freeman, 2007; McHale et al., 2003; Trautner et al., 2005; Turner and Gervai, 1995). In one study with preschool children, children were taken into a laboratory play room in which a range of sex-neutral and sex-stereotyped toys were presented and then researchers asked children which toys they and their parents thought it was appropriate to play with (Raag and Rackliff, 1998). Many boys, particularly those who had chosen sex-stereotypical toys, stated that their fathers would consider cross-sex toy play to be 'bad'. Thus fathers were believed by sons but not daughters to have more restrictive rules of conduct than mothers did. By the time of their entry into school, furthermore, children appear to have highly stereotyped views of parental roles. Domestic work is widely described as the mother's prerogative while bread winning is seen as the province of fathers throughout the school years (Langford et al., 2001). In addition to giving an account of fathers' meaning of fatherhood, this study focuses on their young children's perception and compares it to their fathers' conceptualization.

Problem

Despite the fact that the fatherhood is an emerging focus of research in Turkey (Anlıak, 2004; Balcı, 2007; Fişek, 2001; Güngörmüş, 1992; Gürşimşek et al., 2007; Karslı and Allexsaht-Snider, 2011; Sahip and Turan, 2007; Taşkın and Erkan, 2009; Turan et al., 2001), so far, however, too little attention has been paid to fathers' accounts of their own fatherhood experiences. Fatherhood studies, in Turkey, have primarily used quantitative methods and tended to focus on the information obtained from mothers rather than the fathers themselves. We still know little about the current experiences of fathers, the ways in which fathers participate in the lives of children, and how fathers make meaning of their roles and lives as fathers. Therefore, questions remain about how Turkish fathers experience, define and perceive fatherhood.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of fatherhood among police fathers and their 4-to-6 year old children by (i) gaining insight into how fathers conceptualize fatherhood; (ii) examining fathers' perceptions and feelings about their experiences; and (iii) comparing fathers' perceptions to their 4-to-6 year old children's perceptions related to fatherhood.

While studying perceptions, feelings and practices of fatherhood, we focus our attention on a specific professional group, namely police officers, and their 4-to-6 year old children. There are two main reasons why this study focused primarily on police fathers; first of all,

police officers are one of the biggest professional groups in Turkey. As indicated by the Turkish National Police General Directorate (2012), Turkish Police Organization has 240.175 staff. Majority of staff are sworn police officers and officers with a rank. Male to female sworn police ratio is approximately 95 to five, making most of the police officers either fathers or prospective fathers. Second, in contrast to being such a large group, police fathers, their experiences and perceptions are under-represented in research studies.

METHODS

Sample

We sampled police officers and their young children from a southern metropolitan city in Turkey. The list of male police officers working at four different bureaus (Organized Crime, Technical, Narcotics, and Financial Crime) was obtained from the provincial police department's personnel division. The original list only contained the ID numbers of 146 male police officers, and the number and the ages of their children, if any. No additional information (that i gender of the child) was available on the list. Out of 146 police officers on the list, 106 police officers had children. However, only 36 police officers had children between the ages 4-to-6 years. In order to obtain even number of children in each age group, the researchers stratified the children into three different groups based on their age (4 year olds, 5 year olds, and 6 year olds) and then conducted a random sampling using the random numbers. Seven children were randomly selected from each age group. After the sampling process, personnel division of the provincial police department provided us with the contact information of the individuals in the sample. The study sample comprised 21 police officers and their 4-to-6 year old children (N=42). All participant fathers were biological fathers. Since the list we used for sampling did not contain any information on children's gender, it is not clear whether the skewed gender distribution of the children in the sample was a result of the gender ratio of the list or the random sampling procedure. See Table 1 for more detailed information on demographic characteristics of the participants and their families.

Procedures and measures

Prior to carrying out the study, the participants were informed about the study and their role in it. Each father was asked to fill out and sign a consent form for himself and also for his child. Fathers were asked to respond to a broad question of "What kind of father am I?" in writing. In order to enable fathers to write freely and to provide an open format for their responses, no limits were imposed neither on the number of pages they could use nor the format of their written response. Fathers' response sheet and children's narratives had the same research numbers, but they did not contain names or any information that could be used to identify the participant.

Data related to children were obtained through one of the projective-expressive techniques, Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD). The basic idea behind family drawings is that through the process of a pictorial representation of their family, young children may provide important information regarding their perspective on such issues as family dynamics, emotional relationships, their place within the family, their perception of roles, behaviours and practices of family members, including their father (Merrell, 2003). The use of projective-expressive techniques, such as KFD, mobilizes feelings and reveals attitudes more adequately than do interviews or other methods using language alone (Anastasi, 1976). This technique is particularly useful with younger children and with those who have difficulty with verbal expression (Knoff and Prout, 1985). This technique is widely available and has been used in previous studies, such as to evaluate psychosocial status of 4-to-16 year old children with muscular dystrophy (Siegel and Kornfeld, 1980), reflect sibling relationships of preschoolers (Metin and Üstün, 2010), and identify internalizing problems of 4-to-5 year olds (Kim and Suh, 2013).

To collect data from children, the researchers visited children in their home. Before the child was asked to draw his/her family, the child was informed about the study. The researchers talked to, played and/or engaged in an activity with the child to allow the child to establish rapport with the researcher. After the child was comfortable with the researchers, he or she was requested to "draw everyone in your family *doing something*". No time limit was set. In order to enable the child to depict the family as an active unit, the emphasis was on actions. After the drawing is completed, the researcher began the inquiry by asking a series of post drawing questions. We used an interview guide during the inquiry phase in order to keep the interactions focused on children's concept of fatherhood while allowing individual perspectives and experiences of children to emerge. Questions, which were ordered from general to more specific, were aimed to find out the child's perspective on additional information related to the drawing. The areas of inquiry attempted to find out what is the weather like in the picture, who the figures in the drawing represent and what is the child's relationship to them; what the persons in the drawing are doing, feeling and thinking; what is good and bad about each person; what the child was thinking about while they were drawing; what the drawing makes the child think of. Researchers let the child to talk about each figure in the drawing but questions mainly focused on the father figure.

Children's responses were tape recorded using a digital voice recorder. Also, notes were taken by the researchers during the interviews. After the interviews with children were over, tape records of interview data were transcribed.

Analysis

The data gathered in this investigation consist of textual data from each father's responses to a broad question of "What kind of father am I?" and children's responses to interview questions related to their drawings. We used qualitative procedures to code and analyze the textual data and then performed a cross-case analysis of each case looking for divergent and convergent patterns within their responses (Johnson and Christensen, 2011). Raw data obtained from fathers and children were analyzed for the content, patterns, emergent themes, and narrative properties by constant comparative methods. In order to reveal the patterns that can be sorted into categories, as a first step, the three researchers classified, coded, and analyzed the obtained data independently for recurring regularities. When preliminary patterns emerged, researchers recorded memos (Babbie, 2013) in the margins of the transcript for later review. The researchers coded the data by underlining key words and phrases in the text. This process produced a framework for organizing and describing what has been collected in the fathers' responses and the children's narratives related to their drawings. After the researchers coded each informant's responses individually, they transferred all of the coded words and phrases by informant and response into spreadsheets. Then, the researchers brought their individual categories together, examined each category and compared them for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity by constantly comparing the categories within and across the interviews. Researchers systematically examined the data and compared it to the classification system to authenticate the meaningfulness and accuracy of the c ategories and the

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

	n	%	M	sd
Father Age (years)			36.95	4.47
Father Education				
High School	1	4.8		
Associate Degree	11	52.4		
Bachelor's Degree	10	42.9		
Children				
Male	13	61.9		
Female	8	38.1		
Mother Age (years)			33.24	3.78
Mother Education				
Primary School	2	9.5		
Secondary School	2	9.5		
High School	9	42.9		
Associate Degree	2	9.5		
Bachelor's Degree	6	28.6		
Mother's Occupation				
Not Employed	15	71.4		
Teacher	3	14.3		
Nurse	2	9.5		
Civil Servant	1	4.8		
Monthly Family Income (Turkish Lira)			3238.1	820.19
Number of Children in the Family				
1 Child	4	19		
2 Children	10	47.6		
3 Children	6	28.6		
4 Children	1	4.8		

placement of data in categories.

RESULTS

The findings related to the police fathers' and their children's conceptualizations of fatherhood and their perceptions related to fathering roles and practices were organized in five categories and presented as follows.

The results of this study indicated that neither the fathers' nor the children's responses significantly varied by the child's age or gender. This finding is in agreement with Lytton and Romney's (1991), and Pleck and Masciadrelli's (2004) findings which showed that beyond infancy, the effect of the child's gender on father-child interactions appears hard to detect and relatively small. Thus, the child's age and gender have not been considered in further analysis.

Father as provider

The most often recurring theme in the fathers' responses was the provider role of fathers. The majority of the participant fathers equated fatherhood with providing. The fathers thought the responsibility to provide for their wife, children, and other family members was an important function of fatherhood. For the respondent fathers, providing role entails working hard, acquiring economic resources and social capital, providing material and financial support for their children and making savings to secure their offspring's future.

When I reflect on my fathering, I can say that am kind a

father that always tries to provide his children with the best of everything. I do my best so my children can continue to live in the best available circumstances and can have a better future (Father #1, Age: 42).

My entire struggle is to build a better future for my children. To this end, I try to provide them with the best educational opportunities available. I also work very hard not to say “no” to any of their requests (Father #15, Age: 30).

Whatever I do, I do it for my children. With each passing day, I better understand that I have to work harder for them, because I want my children to have a better future and to live in better circumstances in peace and happiness (Father #17, Age: 35).

I aspire to give my son everything that I couldn’t have when I was a child, various toys, a good many of opportunities, anything he wants (Father #18, Age: 31).

Interestingly, the provider role was also the most frequently mentioned role of fathers by the participant children. Without exception, all of the participant children mentioned going to work and earning money when talking about their fathers.

My father goes to work and earns lots of money (Child #1, Male, Age: 4).

My father earns money for us. He needs to earn money to buy me toys. So he goes to work (Child #7, Female, Age: 4).

My father goes to work. He eats his meal and then goes back to work, because he needs to earn lots of money. I wish my dad was a doctor, because he earns too little. I will be a doctor when I grow up. I feel happy when he goes to work, because he earns very little money (Child #12, Male, Age: 5).

My father has a job so he goes to work. He loves working (Child #14, Female, Age: 5).

My father goes to work in the mornings and my mother sees him off (Child #16, Female, Age: 6).

My father works and he goes to work every day. We need money to buy things. So he brings us some money (Child #17, Male, Age: 6).

Themes of getting toys and other materials or receiving a pocket money from their fathers were also frequently surfaced in children’s narratives.

My father gives me money and buys me toys and clothes. But it would make me very happy if he bought me lots of surprises. I want him to buy me a computer and a helicopter, but then he would run out of money (Child #1, Male, Age: 4).

My father brings me crayons, biscuits and flowers. When we go to Carrefour, he sometimes gives me money to buy jelly bones (Child #4, Female, Age: 4).

I feel very happy when my father brings me a Barbie toy, a teddy bear, a bicycle, building blocks, and ice cream (Child #8, Female, Age: 5).

My father takes me to Real (a shopping mall) and gives me money to buy whatever I want from there. He also gets me gifts (Child #9, Female, Age: 5).

My father gives me pocket money and then I go and spend it. I buy döner kebab (a Turkish dish made of meat) with that money (Child #12, Male, Age: 5).

My father buys me toys and hüptrik (fruit yogurt) when we go to that little market behind our house (Child #15, Male, Age: 6).

Affectionate father

Almost all fathers emphasized that they were aware of their children’s emotional needs and that meeting children’s emotional needs was one of their obligations as fathers. Nearly all of the participant fathers asserted that they loved, valued, and admired their children from the bottom of their hearts and stated that they foster positive affections towards their children.

Yes, I am trying to be a good father by working hard to build them a better future. But children need love and affection as well. When I come back home from work I try to greet my children with a kiss, I try to strike up a conversation about their day, and when leaving home for work I try to kiss them good bye (Father #1, Age: 42).

I am a father who is very fond of his children and who loves them so much. I feel very happy when my children greet me and hug me at the door after coming home from work. At the end, my children are very special to me (Father #2, Age: 37).

As it is for everyone in the family, you (i.e. his son) are also very special to me. Being with you, doing things together with you, spending time with you are the happiest moments of my life (Father #6, Age: 35).

I think I am a father who is loyal to his family. I am a loving, openhearted, and good natured father who loves and is fond of his children (Father #7, Age: 37).

I am a father who loves his children and is genuinely interested in them. As it is the case for all parents, my

daughters are very precious to me. Yes, I have two daughters and as a father, I know that I need to show them my fatherly love (Father #8, Age: 30).

My daughter is my most valuable asset and she is the most precious one for me. Her happiness makes me very happy (Father #9, Age: 29).

Some of the participant fathers, however, acknowledged that they did not always express their feelings openly.

I am an abstruse father, a father who is hard to be understood, but deep in my heart, I nurture compassion and love for my children (Father #17, Age: 35).

In short, although it is sometimes difficult for me to say it to my children directly, I am a father who loves his children and wants to make them happy. My children are my world. I want to keep my world pure and uncontaminated. I love my family (Father #19, Age: 42).

The fathers frequently complained about the work conditions of police officers, such as the long and inflexible work hours, rotating non-standard shifts, stressful work conditions, and experiencing lack of sleep. Fathers indicated that their work prevented them from spending adequate time with their children and fully responding to their emotional needs. Analyses of fathers' responses in terms of this category showed that because of the occupational conditions inherent in the police profession, the fathers tended to withdraw from interaction with their children, be less tolerant of their children's physical activities and perceived their children to be exhausting. As a result, most of the fathers felt that they were neglecting, and some indicated that they sometimes treated their children harshly. Not being able to fully respond to their children's emotional needs and neglecting them made the participant fathers feel regret, stress, inadequacy, and dissatisfaction with their fathering practices.

Because of the heavy conditions of my work, I am overreacting to minor things, to things that could easily be tolerated, and am hurting the feelings of my children and my wife. After a while, I become aware of what I did and regret it. My dearest wish is to spend more time with my children and strengthen my bond with them (Father #3, Age: 37).

Rather than being a father, I try to be a friend of my children. But because of the heavy work conditions of my job, I am unable to care for them adequately. I am not able to take them to social activities. This is a problem related to not having enough time (Father #4, Age: 39).

For the most part, my work conditions prevent me to be present at home. As a result, my wife takes care of the children at home. I usually take care of the outside affairs like things related to children's school, shopping, taking children to a barber shop, etc. If time permits, I make every effort to be involved and do things together with my children. But after work, I usually feel exhausted and stressed out. In such moments, I easily get annoyed with my children, lose my control, and treat them harshly (although I do not wish to be such a father). And this creates a negative atmosphere at home (Father #5, Age: 42).

I think I am a good father or at least trying to be a good one. I often care about my family and my children and try to find a mutual solution to all of our problems. Nevertheless, a busy work schedule and stress related to my work prevent me from fulfilling my duties and responsibilities towards my family and children. I frequently criticise myself and conclude that I am neglecting them. Although I try my best not to carry work stress home, I think that sometimes, especially when I feel overwhelmed at work, I fail at separating work from home. I can't exactly figure out how to approach my children on such stressful days. So in order not to hurt the children, I usually withdraw myself from them (Father #10, Age: 43).

As it is known, balancing work and family life is very hard if you are a police officer. I am a father who wishes to share every moment of his children, their joy, and their sorrow. I strive to see them standing on their own two feet and succeeding in life. I want them to live happily in a harmonious family. Yet accomplishing all of these, in this profession, is very challenging. Unlike other parents, I cannot spend time with my children as I wish. I am only able to spend time together with my children when I can find the odd moment, once or twice a month. I know it is never enough (Father #13, Age: 39).

Unfortunately, because of its mandatory overtime hours, my occupation, which is the only source of our livelihood, is always at the forefront of my family. I wish I had a job with weekends off and with leaves on official holidays and New Year's Day, so I could spend more time with you (i.e. his daughters). I wish I had a less stressful job so when I come back home I wouldn't be so glum, dour or harsh. But I know you love me, no matter what. Believe me my dear children; I also love both of you so much. I wouldn't trade you for anything in the world. Your health and your presence in my life are my fortune. I feel sorrow when I think that I neglect my family and regret the moments I haven't spent with you. But I am aware of the fact that as long as I continue working in this job, we won't be able to spend enough time together until my retirement. They say police officers rarely live more than 5 years after retirement. I presume we won't be able to interact sufficiently in this evanescent world. Please forgive me my dear daughters (Father #14, Age: 38).

It saddens me to think that my children are growing up without a father because of the work conditions of my profession (Father #15, Age: 30).

I earn my livelihood from the anti-smuggling and organized crime bureau. This is a fast paced working environment and you will have a child, namely you will get a new criminal file to decipher, in every 7 or 8 months period. I personally think, these files are more important and valuable (in terms of the time allotment) than my family and children. Because I think I allow less time to my children and family. My heart breaks when I think of not attending my daughter's readers festival, arriving at her graduation at the last moment or not being with her when she was getting ready for the graduation. I also feel sorry about not being able to take my son to a park, for a swim, or for shopping. Such things may seem unimportant, but I can imagine the impact they will have on my children. But I can't help it; the lack of time and the need of sleep clip my wings (Father #20, Age: 42).

When I put myself in my children's shoes, I believe my job prevents me from allocating enough time to my children and this makes me feel guilty (Father #21, Age: 38).

Some of the participant fathers reflected on their own relationships with their fathers, compared their own fathering practices with the fathering they received, and were motivated to be better than their own fathers.

In the past, when I was I child, I used to reflect on my father's behaviours. Back then, I remember saying to myself: "I will not treat my children like this when I have children of my own in the future." What I am most curious about is what my children think of me as a father? (Father #3, Age: 37).

My father was distant to me. But I try not to put distance between me and my children (Father #4, Age: 39).

I try to give my children the love and care I didn't receive from my father when I was a child (Father #8, Age, 30).

I didn't have a childhood and wasn't sure about my father's love as a child. But, as a father, I let my daughter live her childhood and I show my love to her (Father #11, Age: 31).

Except for one participant child, all children perceived their fathers to be emotionally distant and unavailable for most of the time. Children reported that when not at work or after coming home from work, their fathers spend most of their time sleeping, watching TV, playing games on the computer or the mobile phone, reading newspapers, taking shower, or talking to mother.

When he goes to work, I feel very sad and miss him so much. I feel happy when he comes back from work. But he takes a shower, eats his meal and goes to sleep. He sleeps too much (Child #3, Male, Age: 4).

He sleeps but doesn't take me to the park or play with me. I want to make drawings together with him; I want to draw a sun. But he doesn't look at my drawings (Child #4, Female, Age: 4).

When my father comes home from work, he plays games on the computer. He doesn't play with anything else. Sometimes he lets us to play on the computer. Then he watches television. There is always a television and a computer. I want to play computer games with him (Child #8, Female, Age: 5).

My father keeps playing games on his phone (mobile games). I want him to play with me but he plays on his phone. I wish he wouldn't play games on his phone. He is always tired and goes to sleep when he comes home. But sometimes he doesn't sleep, just plays on his phone (Child #10, Male, Age: 5).

He gets sleepy and goes to sleeps, because he is always tired. He watches the news, reads the newspaper and plays on the computer. Sometimes when he comes early from work, he directly goes to sleep. But I feel sad when he plays on the computer too much (Child #15, Male, Age: 6).

My father sits after coming from work and my mother prepares him meals. We used to play and build towers together. We rarely play now. I tell him let's play together but he never plays with me. I don't think he is getting tired because he always talks to my mother. But he gets tired when he comes back home after work and sleeps. I wish he wouldn't go to work or get tired. So maybe he could play with me (Child #16, Female, Age: 6).

My father comes home, takes a bath and sleeps all day long when he works non-stop throughout the day. I wish my father wouldn't go the police station and would do different job. It would make me happier if my dad would go to work less often (Child #20, Male, Age: 6).

Father as activity/play partner

For the fathers, playing with their children and engaging them in recreational activities were important parts of fatherhood. Many fathers listed taking their children to a park, to a market, out for a meal, for a walk, or for a ride as important aspects of their role.

Due to heavy work conditions of my job, I can't take my children on outings regularly, but it is important for me to try to take them out at least once a week (Father #1, Age: 42).

When I have time, I try to play with my children. They love running. So when we go outdoors we play tag or blind man's buff. (Father #4, Age: 39).

I always try to devote some of my time to hang out together with my children, go out for meals together, or go for a trip with them (Father #5, Age: 42).

I enjoy spending time together with my daughter. Playing together, running in the parks, going out for a walk or for a ride with her give her and me a great pleasure (Father #9, Age: 29).

When we play together, make up and sing some silly songs, or dance together; we sometimes get carried away by the joy and excitement (Father #11, Age: 31).

When I have time, I like to take my child out for a park or to fun places like amusement parks. I enjoy playing ball games with him too (Father #18, Age: 31).

Most of the participant children perceived their fathers to be an activity/play partner. A closer look at the data revealed that father-offspring interactions usually took place at outdoor settings and involved relatively high levels of action such as running, playing tag, riding bicycles, rough and tumble play, or ball games.

My father takes me for a picnic, for fishing, and for a car ride. We go to the market together, but we don't buy unhealthy stuff. Because, they are unhealthy (Child #1, Male, Age: 4).

My father takes me to his work place sometimes. We go for a car ride and to the market. I like going to the park with my father. We play basketball and I get to ride my bicycle (Child #2, Male, Age: 4).

My father takes me to the beach and to Carrefour. He tosses me in the air and I get very excited (Child #4, Female, Age: 4).

My father plays with me. We play blind man's buff at home. We play in the evenings. I have crayons and a drawing book so we make drawings together. I like playing football with him (Child #5, Male, Age: 4).

We play together with my father. He didn't buy me puzzles but he bought me Lego building blocks. We play with them. He takes me to the market. I feel happy when he takes me there. I feel very happy again when we go to the sea and stay there. Because, there is water, simit (a kind of bagel), and beach over there (Child#7, Female, Age: 4).

I play and go out with my father. He takes me to Real (a shopping mall) and for a bike ride. We go out to buy ice cream and eat it at the ice cream parlour (Child #9, Female, Age: 5).

My father takes me to the parks. We walk, run and play tag there. Sometimes he sits and watches me run and go on the slide. But he pushes me in the swings (Child #11, Female, Age: 5).

We go outside and play ball together with my father and my older brother. Sometimes we play computer games together. I love playing ball and going on the swings. My dad swings me really high (Child #13, Male, Age: 5).

When he doesn't go to work, he stays at home and sometimes cooks. We play games on the balcony. We play house and we play market. We always play together. We play both on the balcony and inside. Sometimes we go outside and play ball games there (Child #14, Female, Age: 5).

My father sometimes takes me to the mosque. I feel happy to go there with him, because he plays with me over there. I like it when he takes me for a car ride (Child #16, Female, Age: 6).

My father and I always play together. We play ball and ride bicycle. My bicycle used to have training wheels but we took them off. We go out for a walk as a family and buy ice cream to eat. But sometimes my mother feels tired and doesn't come with us (Child #17, Male, Age: 6).

I play with my father. We play kid games. We play football with my mother's Pilates exercise ball. He takes me for a car ride. Sometimes he rides his motorbike and I sit behind him (Child #18, Male, Age: 6).

My father and I watch TV together. We go out to the garden, feed the birds and play there. We play ball games and tag. He takes me places in his car (Child #21, Male, Age: 6).

Father as disciplinarian

A large number of fathers attested that encouraging appropriate behaviours and preventing misbehaviour in their children and providing guidance were their primary responsibilities. The fathers positioned themselves as educators and role models as they discipline their children and teach them knowledge and necessary skills. While almost half of the participant fathers confessed using power assertion when disciplining their children, the other half mentioned using reasoning, modelling, and reinforcement.

Although I think I sometimes exaggerate it, I attach importance to warning my children when they do something wrong or misbehave. Occasionally, I can be very strict and harsh with them when I want them to comply with my warnings. But I do it for their best interest (Father #1, Age: 42).

I turn some of my children's inappropriate requests back and try to explain them the reasons in a way they could understand. I sometimes don't do everything my children want from me in order to teach them that they can't always get everything they want and they need to make an effort to reach their goals. I realize that my children are constantly observing me and considering me as a role model for them. That's why I am making every effort to be a better model by constantly watching my language, paying special attention to my attitudes and behaviours. I try not to argue with my wife in my children's presence. Besides, I avoid making negative comments about my own family or my wife's family (Father #4, Age: 39).

I think the reward and punishment method works the best for children. In my relationship with my own children, I oftentimes seek to motive my children with rewards. In my opinion, the punishment never solves the problems. Punishing children only makes them more aggressive and instils fear in them (Father #7, Age: 37).

The greatest happiness of a father is the success of his child in life. No one wants others to be more successful than he is, but a father always wants his child to become successful and takes pride in it. First of all, I want my child to have a strong personality and be a moral person. Without these, succeeding in life has no true meaning. I never believe an impious person can be honest. That's why I am trying to be a good model for my son and guide him to keep his spirituality fresh by staying connected to the spiritual resources. I believe my child will be successful in life if he can do that. I am trying to teach him to be honest and moral, to always work hard and settle for what he earned, and to be thankful. I want him to be merciful but nobody's fool (Father #12, Age: 39).

The children also shared the same traditional notion of fatherhood and perceived their fathers as disciplinarians. However, there was a major distinction between the fathers' and the children's perception of the disciplining methods utilized by the fathers. Majority of the participant children indicated that their fathers used power assertion with them. The children reported that in cases of conflicts or noncompliance, their fathers easily got angry, yelled at them, used strict commands and threats, and often used physical force.

I feel sad and cry when my dad gets angry with me and hits me. He gets angry when I roll down the car's window (Child #1, Male, Age: 4).

My father makes me cry. I am scared of him. I keep quiet when he says "no", because he sometimes gets angry with me and beats me (Child #2, Male, Age: 4).
My father tells me what to do. But he sometimes slaps my head if I don't do what he says (Child #4, Female, Age: 4).

It makes me sad and unhappy whenever my dad yells at me and gets angry with me (Child #8, Female, Age: 5).

Sometimes my father gets angry with me and says "I won't take you on outings anymore". Then I feel sad and lonely (Child #9, Female, Age: 5).

My father gets angry with me when I am not well-behaved. Sometimes I cry for my friends because I love playing with them. Then he gets angry with me and yells at me. When he yells that means he is angry. My father is angry (Child #11, Female, Age: 5).

My father gets angry with me if I am not well-behaved. Sometimes I am not well behaved but I feel sad if he is angry with me (Child #16, Female, Age: 6).

My dad sometimes beats me. He beats me if my sister and I fight. And when he beats me I feel sad. He sometimes beats me but sometimes doesn't beat me (Child #17, Male, Age: 6).

My father beats me sometimes. He also sends me to my room for punishment. I feel sad when he beats me or sends me to my room (Child #18, Male, Age: 6).

I feel sad when my father uses bad language with me. He calls me stupid. He sometimes throws insults at my mom. Then, I feel sad (Child #19, Female, Age: 6).

My father gets angry with me, too. Like my mother does, he gets angry with me when I go out to the garden (Child #21, Male, Age: 6).

Father as protector

The fathers in this sample thought that protecting their children and family from any threat or danger was one of the most important responsibilities of fathers. Most of the participant fathers shared the notion that a father should be physically, financially and morally capable of protecting his family from imminent or distant physical, financial or moral threats.

As a father I think, I should always watch over and protect my children, no matter what (Father #1, Age: 42).

Once and for all, I want you, my dear son, to know that regardless of the circumstances I will always stand by you and be here to protect you from any harm (Father #6, Age: 35).

I am kind a protective father who always does his best to protect his children and family from every evil and danger. My children are everything to me and I always make sure that they are sound and safe (Father #8, Age: 30).

Compared to the fathers' perception, children had a fundamentally different perception in terms of the father's protecting role. In contrast to the fathers, none of the children mentioned protector role of fathers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study examined Turkish police fathers' and their 4-to-6 year old children's perspectives about fatherhood. The participants fathers' and their children's perspectives primarily converged on the traditional provider function of fathers, the activity/play partner function of fathers, and the disciplinarian function of fathers rather than caregiving.

Overall, these findings reveal that the emphasis on the breadwinner role is still significant and a large number of the participant fathers and their children perceive the provision of economic support as the fathers' principal contribution to the family. This finding corroborates the findings of previous studies exploring father-involvement in immigrant and ethnically diverse families (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2009). Previous work with some social, ethnic and immigrant groups revealed that emphasis on the breadwinner role was greater among Sudanese refugees to Canada (Este and Tachble, 2009), Chinese-Canadian and Mainland Chinese parents (Chuang and Su, 2009), and Mexican-American parents (Cabrera et al., 2009).

Part of the reason that the traditional provider role of the father was so remarkably emphasized in this sample may be related to the employment status of the participant fathers' wives. Majority of the participant fathers were married to unemployed wives (71.4%), necessitating the father to shoulder the economic burden of the family alone. Therefore, the practical realities of this sample, that is, living in a single-income family, may be influental in shaping the fathers' and their children's traditional notions of fatherhood.

This finding may also suggest that the traditional gender division of labour, which requires the father to be the breadwinner and mother the caregiver, is still firmly entrenched in Turkish society. Giving priority to the performance of breadwinning may also help the father to incorporate the sense of paternal responsibility into his individual identity. Through economic provision, the father demonstrates to others and to himself that he is taking up his responsibility and fulfilling his duty as well.

It was also interesting to observe that neither the fathers nor the children mentioned father involvement in basic daily caregiving activities (such as providing basic care and meeting needs of the child in terms of feeding, comforting, dressing). The participant fathers' and their children's tendencies to ignore the father's role in childcare suggest that father involvement in childcare is still limited and mothers continue to shoulder the majority of child rearing responsibility in Turkey. This finding is not surprising when we look at the fatherhood literature, which suggests that in all known societies, although fathers' time with children has increased, men have lower levels of involvement than women, and tend to involve in relatively little caregiving activities (Bianchi et al., 2006; Pleck, 2010b; Pleck and Masciadrelli, 2004; Sandberg and Hofferth, 2001; Yeung et al., 2001). Furthermore, the sample of the current study was predominantly composed of single-income families with working fathers and unemployed mothers. Research studies on the influences of parental employment on childcare consistently show that higher levels of father involvement in childcare are related to the hours and status of maternal employment (Sidle Fuligni, and Brooks-Gunn, 2004). When mothers work more hours outside of the home, it is more likely that fathers will reliably be more involved in providing childcare for their children, and for longer periods of time (Casper, 1997; Casper and O'Connell, 1998; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000; Presser, 1995, Tamis-Lemonda and Cabrera, 1999).

It could also be speculated that living in a sigle-income family and taking the whole responsibility in breadwinning may legitimize the participant father's absence from taking care of the children. The father who has fulfilled his parental responsibility through economic provision may also be expecting some privileges like exemption from childcare and housework.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that all participant fathers were aware of their children's emotional needs and they expressed desire to be more involved with their children than they currently are, be more actively engaged in their children's lives and go beyond simply providing for their needs financially. However, home versus workplace dichotomy, resulting in the physical and psychological separation of work from home (Levant and Pollack, 1995), may be a major obstacle to closing the gap between the fathers' desires to be more involved and the realization of these desires. There is an inherent conflict of time and place between the roles of economic provision and emotional support. While the emotional support requires spending time with children, economic provision requires a commitment to spending time on the job. Police officers often face dangerous, unpredictable sittuations and the nature of the job can be stressful and traumatic for them. Chronic job stres may lead to negative spillover (Shwalb et al., 2010) of work stress into fathers' family life and this may be acting as an obstruction to a higher paternal involvement. Furthermore, long, rotating, and non-standard shifts of police officers may be limiting the actual amount of time available to interact and be more involved with their children. Most police departments in Turkey utilize rotationg shifts of 12 h on-duty and 24 h off, for an average work week of 48 h. Rotating shifts have been found to be the most detrimental type of non-standard shift for family functioning (Grosswald, 2003). Other studies conducted in Sweden (Lamb et al., 1988) and in

the United States (Goodman et al., 2008; Hyde et al., 1993) found that heavy work demands and less supportive work environments for men decrease the level of involvement, sensitivity and engagement on the fathers' part (Lamb and Lewis, 2010). Another study with Japanese fathers (Fukumaru et al., 1999) demonstrated the negative correlation between fathers' involvement in childrearing and their weekly work hours. Furthernore, fathers in both Japanese and Korean cultures, like the fathers in this Turkish sample, wanted to be more involved in their children's life (Lee and Han, 1998), but perceived the busy work schedule as the main obstacle to their involvement and expressed worry because they thought they could not take enough time to be with their families (Sakai, 2007).

The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests men's recollections of their past relationships with their father play an important role in molding their conceptualization of fathering. Previous studies in this field have demonstrated that some men are motivated by a desire to be beter, more involved and affectionate than their own fathers (Bretherton et al., 2006; Lamb and Lewis, 2010; West et al., 2009).

In contrast to the inclination to leave father involvement in childcare out, both the fathers and their children tended to give priority to engaging in more playful interactions, especially in the public sphere. This finding makes sense when we consider that although mothers have the primary responsibility for childcare in Turkey, fathers and other male relatives show great fondness for and spend relatively more time playing with children (Turan et al., 2001). This finding is consistent with the previous observational and survey studies suggesting that mothers and fathers engage in different types of interaction with their children (Best et al., 1994, Hossain et al., 1997; Labrell, 1996; Lamb, 2010; Lamb and Lewis, 2010; Roopnarine et al., 1992). These studies have consistently shown that fathers, in terms of relative frequency, tend to devote more time to playing with their children, whereas mothers devote more time to caregiving and nurturance. Researchers find that especially when children are young, fathers are more likely to engage children in more physical and stimulating play activities. Moreover, this finding confirms the reports that maternal unemployment decreases paternal involvement in child care, but not the paternal involvement in leisure activities with their children (Casper and O'Connell, 1998; Crouter et al., 1987).

The participant fathers' and their children's internal definitions of disciplinarian father seem to be strongly influenced by Turkish society's patriarchal ideology. Compared to the industrialized Western societies, Turkish society is more heavily guided by patriarchal ideology and history; fathers are often considered to be the heads of the family. In Turkey, men usually hold most of the public roles of authority and prestige, and still largely retain the power to control the norms of tradition for women and children. This prestige and authority of the males in Turkish society may explain the dominance of the traditional ideals of fatherhood in terms of the disciplinarian as well as the protection function of fathers.

Interestingly, the fathers' and their children's perceptions diverged in terms of protection function of fathers. Although protecting children and family emerged as a major theme in fathers' responses, none of the children depicted their fathers engaging in protection activities in their drawings or mentioned protecting role of their fathers during the interviews. Thus, the fathers, but not the children, perceived that protecting their children and family was an important responsibility of fathers. This finding can be explained in part by the roles police officers play in the society. Police officers are generally responsible for preventing and investigating crimes, dealing with criminals, arresting offenders, protecting citizens and maintaining public order. Everyday experiences and the risks police officers encounter in their job may lead them to be more sensitive about the issues related to security and highlight the importance of protecting their children and family. Another possible explanation for this might be related to the religious context of Turkey, a country with a 99 percent Muslim population. The roles of men as described by Islam and mentioned in The Qur'an include provision and protection of women and children (Abdussalam, 2001). This view may be important in shaping the father's conceptualization of fatherhood in this sample.

The observed emphasis on the provider, the disciplinarian, and the protection function of the father in this study suggest that, in general, the men's' beliefs about father roles may be influenced by the social, cultural, and religious factors as well as fathers' gender role ideology. Maintaining traditionally pronounced rules and customs concerning gender seems to lead Turkish women and men to assume distinctive roles in parenting. In Turkish society, men are still assumed to take care of the public sphere while women the private sphere. Distinctive male and female roles might have inclined the participant fathers to fulfil the responsibility assigned to their gender, but kept them from taking greater responsibility for the care of the child.

The current study has only examined police fathers' and their young children's perceptions of fatherhood in a single city in Turkey. However, with a small sample size, results of this study should be seen as preliminary and caution must be applied, as the findings might not be generalizable to fathers who work and live in different socioeconomic contexts, fathers of younger (infants) or older children (adolescents), fathers of developmentally disabled children, divorced fathers or fathers in single-parent families. Additional studies with larger, diverse samples are needed for more complete analyses and before we can make empirically grounded generalizations about the current experiences of fathers, the ways in

which fathers participate in the lives of children, and how fathers make meaning of their roles and lives as fathers in Turkey.

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