

Exploring Paternal Involvement from Greek, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish Fathers' and Mothers' Perspectives: Cross-National Differences and Similarities

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Abstract

Although European fatherhood is “in the process of reconstruction and transformation” (O’Brien 2004, as cited in Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead 2006, p. 5) and there is a need to create a clear picture about paternal involvement, few studies have explored perceptions of actual father involvement as well as the factors predicting and relating to father involvement, especially in Southeastern European countries. The present study explored the role of the father and the types of paternal involvement in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey from the mothers’ and fathers’ perspectives. The study hypotheses are that fathers are involved differently across countries and that in more patriarchally oriented countries both mothers and fathers consider father involvement as less important. Thus, we hypothesized that parental style adopted by each parent and their social cognitions would be correlated with father involvement and that paternal involvement is a multidimensional concept. Research results confirm most of our hypotheses and reveal statistically significant differences in terms of the role of the father and the parental styles adopted in a country level and in the way fathers are involved in a parent level.

Keywords

Father involvement; Role of the fathers; Meta-parenting; Parental style; Greece; Cyprus; Turkey

Introduction

The changing role of fathers has attracted research attention from the 1970s, when research began to emphasize fathers’ active involvement rather than the consequences stemming from fathers’ absence (Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho 2004).

However, fathering practices have been

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changing in the last few decades, bringing into the forefront an emerging role and profile of fathers as true co-parents. This shift is attributed to various societal reasons and on research results emphasizing that fathers' involvement is as important as mothers' involvement for children's well-being and for maximizing the life chances of children worldwide (Bögels and Phares 2008, Dette-Hagenmeyer, Erzinger, and Reichle 2014, Roopnarine 2015, Jung Yeh 2014, Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho 2004).

However, despite the fact that paternal involvement ranks high among research and policy initiatives, various methodological issues, which are extensively presented later, contribute to a blurred picture of the ways fathers are involved in their children's care, education and upbringing, as well as to the benefits of and impediments to this involvement. In addition, the variability of existing policies and intervention programs about paternal involvement across (EU) countries, contributes significantly to the blurred picture. As suggested by Levtov et al. (2015) although the paternal role and involvement is changing, "men's involvement in caregiving has too often been missing from public policies, from systematic data collection and research, to efforts to promote women's empowerment" (p. 16).

Drawing on the above, the present study explored maternal and paternal reports on the role of the father and the way Greek, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish fathers are involved in preschoolers' care, education and upbringing. Further, the study attempts to explain at a cultural and parental level the reasons why fathers may be more or less involved, as well as the reasons which lead them to adopt specific types of involvement. The present study contributes significantly to the limited existing literature by exploring fatherhood in three southeastern European countries and aims to

shed light on how fathers are involved in those three countries which theoretically have different traditions and cultural expectations about the fathers' role.

Fathers' Roles and Predictors of Paternal Involvement

Mothers and fathers play different roles in the family system (Finley, Mira and Schwartz 2008) and the child- father relationship is not simply an imitation of the child-mother relationship, but develops differently (Planalp and Braungart-Rieker 2016, p. 135).

Yet, despite the fact that maternal roles are well established, the roles that fathers may assume and the construct of father involvement has long been debated (Pleck 2007, Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho 2004). According to Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho (2004) there is not "a single way of approaching and thinking about the study of father involvement" (p. 149). In fact, traditional taxonomies such as the one proposed by Lamb et al. (1987), which include engagement, accessibility and responsibility, have been expanded in order to include, among others, qualities such as paternal warmth, support, control/monitoring, teaching, shared interests and activities, caregiving and other cognitions and affects, as well as economic support (Pleck 2007, Palkovitz 1997).

Overall, paternal involvement has been categorized into two broad categories: a) direct investment, which refers to proximal processes of interaction with the child (Torres et al. 2014), and may include positive engagement activities and dimensions of parenting quality (Pleck 2010); and b) indirect investment, which refers to the provision of subsistence means and accumulation of capital (Torres et al. 2014), and may include the emotional, behavioral, informational and financial support they provide both to children and their mothers (Bögels and

Phares 2008, Dette-Hagenmeyer, Erzinger, and Reichle 2014).

A review of the literature suggests that the ways and the extent to which fathers are involved in their children's education and care may be influenced by several variables (Jung Yeh 2014, Planalp and Braungart-Rieker 2016, Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). The two main frameworks which have been extensively used in research aiming at identifying predictors of father involvement are Belsky's (1984) and Lamb-Pleck's models (Lamb et al. 1987). Belsky's model includes characteristics of the father and the child, and contextual sources of stress and support. On the other hand, Lamb-Pleck's model (Lamb et al. 1987) includes motivation, skills and self-confidence, social supports and stresses, and institutional factors. Jung Yeh (2014) in order to address the dynamic and multiple nature of father involvement, has also proposed a comprehensive model of father involvement and suggested that the variables that affect paternal involvement may be social and cultural demographics, mother-father relationship, personality variables and children's gender, age and temperament. In the above factors, institutional practices and public policies should also be added (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2004).

Apart from the above determinants, research suggests that maternal and paternal beliefs and attitudes towards the role of the father also influence paternal involvement (Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2013, Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead 2006). For example, Planalp and Braungart-Rieker (2016) found that fathers are engaged in more caregiving and play behaviors when they strongly identify with their role as a father, and when mothers reported symptoms of depression. McBride et al. (2005) cited in Fuhrmans, von der Lippe and Fuhrer (2014) also found that mothers' perceptions of paternal involvement, but not fathers' own perceptions,

were related to paternal involvement. Further, research suggests that mothers may serve as facilitators or gatekeepers of paternal involvement, and when mothers are not supportive of fathers' involvement, fathers tended to be less involved (Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead 2006, Hoffman 2011).

Fathers' Involvement in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey

As in other countries, in Greece, too, new family models have emerged and the way these models differ from traditional models is mainly in gendered roles, parental role and tasks in relation to all the members of the family (Gregora 2015). However, despite those changes, the role of the male- father remains to a certain extent traditional, supporting Dragona's (2012) argument that "there is an asymmetry between the cultural ideals and actual everyday paternal behavior" (p. 38).

In addition, although some progressive changes in male attitudes and behaviors towards the family and the child is noticed, the role of the male in the family only hesitantly made its appearance in public debate (Koroneou 2007). Only limited research has dealt with Greek men's participation in parenting practices. As a result, we do not have a clear picture about fatherhood in Greece. Central to this blurred picture is also the fact that "there is not one dominant model but several different ones of Greek father involvement" (Dragona 2012, p. 38) and that fathering is highly dependent on fathers' personal biography and circumstances "rather than being modelled on "traditional" or "new" ideal types of the meaning of fatherhood" (Archodidou 2010, p. 8).

Apart from the above, fathers' role is changing in Greece as in other countries. For example, recent research suggested that over two thirds of Greek mothers (69%) feel that fathers are much more involved in the day-to-

day care of children than in the past (Social Issues Research Center 2012). However, compared to fathers in other European countries, fathers in Greece spend the least time caring for children and provide only 11% of the total amount of substantial parental childcare time (Center for Research on Families and Relationships 2007). Archodidou (2010) also found increasing levels of father involvement in the domains of *engagement* and *accessibility* but low levels in the domain of *responsibility*. Finally, Dimitriadi, Aggeli and Papiotis (2015) found that although Greek fathers of children aged 2-8 years old are involved in their children's upbringing and believe that they influence their development, at the same time they feel that their role in children's development is more indirect compared to the mothers' role.

In Cyprus fatherhood is even more blurred since women and the role of gender are under-represented in gender research and those topics are not systematically investigated (Fagan et al. 2010). Because the percentage of men who take paternal leave is low, the government has introduced the option for parental leave entitlements to be transferred from fathers to mothers, which risks "reinforcing current gender roles within the family" (Ellina 2009, p. 24). Further, available research on women emphasizes the need for balancing family and professional life.

The scarce literature from Cyprus indicates that of those participants who maintained that children's care is the responsibility of more than one person, 60% report the mother with the father being just over half the mother's share (34%). With respect to care of children after school fathers rank third, with mothers and grandparents being the most frequently mentioned as persons who take up this responsibility. Further the same study revealed that Cypriot fathers feel that the time

they spent for their children's care is satisfactory (49%) and 59% of the participant fathers maintained that the multiple obligations of the family are a "fair" privilege of women. Overall, the research highlights that Cypriot family is still patriarchic but a new more-involved father model emerges (Ellina 2007).

Fathering in Turkey evolved major conversion, from a provider role to a more of a supporter role (Boratov, Fisek and Ziya 2014). However, fathers are not willing to share the child care responsibilities in a more equal manner due to psychologic, social, and economic reasons (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2005, Dogruöz and Rogow 2009). According to the recent research undertaken by Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV) (2017) 91% of Turkish fathers reported that mothers are the primary caregivers and about half to 35% of the fathers stated that they are not involved with physical care of their children. Fathers generally assume the responsibility for the health issues of their children but are not very much involved in school related issues. Ozgun, Cifti and Erden (2014) found similar results. Both studies revealed that fathers are affectionate and warm towards their children, but they also use traditional disciplinary strategies.

According to Kilic (2013), although there are many studies of mothers' involvement, this is not the case for studies exploring fathers' involvement. However, mothers in Turkey have repeatedly asked for educational programs to support fathers in their role. The Fatherhood Support Program is such a program that is run by ACEV. The program seems to be successful and Turkish fathers moved beyond traditional and authoritarian models of fatherhood and expressed emotions more openly in their family relationships (McAllister et al. 2012, Dogruöz and Rogow 2009).

Methodological Issues on Paternal Involvement Research and Conceptual and Methodological Approach to Paternal Involvement in the Present Study

Despite the fact that fathering and father involvement attracts increasingly more attention, many methodological issues still remain. One major methodological issue is the fact that paternal involvement is typically measured through mothers' reports or through child- or teacher-perception (Charles et al. 2016, Bögels and Phares 2008) which raises substantial concerns about biased reporting and the validity of using third parties reports (Mikelson 2008). In fact, previous research comparing maternal and paternal reports of father involvement indicated that fathers reported significantly higher levels of involvement than mothers reported (Charles et al. 2016, Mikelson 2008).

Taking into consideration the fact that research exploring discrepancies among mothers' and fathers' reports on father involvement with children is limited, this study examined paternal involvement both from mothers' and fathers' perspectives adding significantly to the limited research employing this methodology (see Charles et al. 2016, Mikelson 2008).

Another serious methodological concern on paternal involvement research is related to the way paternal involvement is conceptualized and measured, since literature review suggests that there is little agreement on how father involvement should be measured. Pleck (2007) also highlighted the debate concerning the construct of *father involvement* and what this construct includes and has suggested the renaming of the construct into "positive paternal involvement" (p. 197). Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho (2004) have also

addressed the debate about the measurement of the many different ways fathers are involved and wonder whether father involvement should be viewed as multidimensional or

The multidimensionality of the father involvement construct has generated various issues concerning its measurement (Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho 2004). Although various researchers have attempted to generate instruments that capture the multidimensionality of father involvement, these attempts have failed to address this need and include the whole range of behaviors inherent to fathers' parenting roles (Palkovitz 2002).

Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho (2004) extend the debate about the measurement of father involvement from the tools which can be employed, to the ways father involvement can be monitored. More specifically, according to Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho (2004) the question is whether father involvement is unidimensional and if it should be measured using a single score or multidimensional construct.

Apart from the methodological considerations referring to whether father involvement should be viewed as a uni- or multi-dimensional construct, it is also postulated by Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2013) that "whereas research on mothers' parenting has primarily focused on the quality of maternal behavior, research on fathers' parenting has focused more on the quantity of involvement" (p. 499).

The present study aims to addressing the above mentioned methodological concerns as well as the Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho (2004) suggestion that father involvement consists of distinct domains and therefore should be measured with different instruments. Consequently, the study moves away from a general conceptualization of paternal involvement and views it as a highly differentiated rather than singular construct

with many different domains of a child's life in which a parent may or may not be involved (Finley, Mira and Schwartz (2008, p. 63). More precisely, in the context of the present study, in order to conceptualize and measure fathers' involvement we employed Pleck's (2010) categorization of positive engagement activities and dimensions of parenting quality, aiming at adding to the limited existing literature exploring quantitative and qualitative components of father involvement in the same model. Further, taking into consideration Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ringo Ho's (2004) suggestion that there is a need to measure paternal cognition, a construct which is not included in the *Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI)*, we used the newly developed parental social cognitions to childrearing behavior construct named meta-parenting.

In addition, utilizing systems theories (e.g. family systems theory and bioecological systems theory) we intend to examine, among others, how paternal (ontogenic) and maternal and children's (microsystemic) factors may influence actual paternal involvement in their preschool children's education, care and upbringing. According to Charles et al. (2016) "there is a need to better understand the nature and meaning of differences between mother and father reports of involvement" (p. 2). The present study adds significantly to parenting research since it explores not only how demographic characteristics of mothers and fathers may affect paternal involvement, but also how their attitudes towards paternal role, the parental style they adopt and their meta-parenting style may also affect paternal involvement in preschoolers' care, education and upbringing. This need stems from previous research results which suggest that mothers' views on how large a role fathers should play in parenting were a bigger influence on father involvement than fathers' own views of their commitment to the parenting role, whereas

another study revealed that maternal encouragement was the factor most strongly associated with greater involvement of fathers in baby care, showing that the positive impact of encouragement was larger than the negative impact of criticism (Hoffman 2011).

Finally, although paternal involvement varies greatly in different social ecologies and cultures as well as in different families within the same culture (Torres et al. 2014), the majority of previous research is based mainly on USA population samples. However, fathers play different roles in different cultures and what constitutes a good father may be highly dependent on cultural ideologies about the role of the father, whereas "this new-found focus on fatherhood and in promoting greater father involvement differs somewhat across nations" (Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead 2006, p. 4). Therefore, according to Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda (2004), "careful attempts to describe father-child relationships in diverse cultural contexts certainly help build the database needed for further progress in our understanding of father-child relationships" (p. 15). Since the need to delineate the importance, roles, and diverse practices of fathers in different cultural communities is widely acknowledged (Roopnarine 2015), the present study aims to contribute significantly to existing research by exploring fathers' involvement across three Southeastern European countries (Greece, Cyprus and Turkey).

Overall, taking into account Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda's (2004) argument that "historical, cultural and familial ideologies inform the roles fathers play" (p. 3) the present study aspires to explore if parents' cultural background and familial ideologies about father's role and parenting role affect the way and the extent to which fathers' in three countries are involved in their preschoolers' education, care and upbringing.

Research Questions

Taking into consideration both the predictors of paternal involvement and the methodological issues surrounding this field of research, the following research questions were advanced in the context of the present study: 1) Are maternal and paternal reports on fathering practices and paternal role different or similar? 2) Are fathering practices and paternal role differentiated in a country level? 3) Are there differences or similarities in the way fathers are involved in their preschooler's education, care and upbringing across countries? 4) Are various components of paternal involvement interrelated? 5) Are correlations differentiated in a parent (mother vs father) level? 6) Do children's, fathers' and mothers' factors affect fathering practices and role and maternal reports on paternal involvement and role of the father?

Method

Participants

The authors analyzed consensus among 100 mother–father pairs. The sample included 30 mothers and 30 fathers from Cyprus, 37 fathers and 37 mothers from Greece, and 33 mothers and 33 fathers from Turkey. Fathers' age ranged from 29 to 59 years ($M = 38.47$; $SD = 4.87$). Participant fathers represented all professional groups with 19% of them being self-employed, 16% working in private sector and 14% being business and administration professionals. On the other hand, mothers' age ranged from 26 to 48 years ($M = 35.57$; $SD = 4.53$). Thirty percent of the participant mothers were housewives and 17% percent worked in the private sector. The majority of mothers and fathers were married (98%). Each pair of parents reported on the same child. Children's age ranged from 30 months to 72 months ($M = 56.54$; $SD = 9.04$). Of the children, 58 were boys (57.4%) and 42 were girls (41.6%). Only two children did not attend a daycare center. Of the 98 children attending

daycare, 60 were enrolled in public centers (59.4), 35 in private centers (34.7%) and 3 in another type of daycare center (3%).

Measures

The Role of the Father Questionnaire (ROFQ)

Mothers and fathers reported on the extent to which they believe the father's role is important to child development by filling in the ROFQ (Palkovitz 1984). The ROFQ contained 15 items. Subjects indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each item on a five point scale. In the present study the ROFQ was found to have good internal consistency with Chronbach's alpha values being .79 for the total sample, .82 for mothers and .77 for fathers.

The Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI)

Mothers and fathers reported on the ways fathers are involved by filling in the short, 26-items version of the IFI (Hawkins et al. 2002). The IFI measures affective, cognitive, and direct and indirect behavioral components of involvement. Subjects rate how good a job they think fathers do on a rating scale ranging from 0 to 6. The IFI in total has been found to have good internal consistency with Chronbach's alpha values being .92 for the total sample, .94 for mothers and .91 for fathers.

Parenting Style

In order to record mothers' and fathers' parenting style we employed the Parenting Style Questionnaire developed by Robinson et al (1995). The questionnaire is comprised of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive subscales. In brief, when parents assume an authoritative parenting style the relationship with the child is reciprocal and responsive. Authoritarian parenting on the other hand is characterized by high demandingness and low responsiveness. Finally, in permissive parenting

the relationship is indulgent. Subjects were requested to report how often they engage in different parenting practices on a 6-point scale (ranging from 1 “Never” to 6 “Always”). In the present study, the shorter version of the questionnaire (30-items) was used. Cronbach’s alpha values for the total sample ranged from .75 to .89; from .68 to .89 for mothers and from .80 to .90 for fathers.

Meta-parenting Profile Questionnaire (MPQ)

In order to record parental social cognitions to childrearing behavior we employed the MPQ (Hawk and Holder 2006). Meta-parenting refers to the deliberate thoughts or effortful cognitions parents have about their children or childrearing (Hawk and Holden 2006). Assessment of the factor structure of the MPQ revealed the following five factors: problem solving, assessing child, assessing external influences, reflecting, and anticipating. Subjects are asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach’s alpha for the total scale were .82 for mothers, .87 for fathers and .85 for the total sample.

Demographic Information

A part aiming at collecting demographic information about mothers, fathers and children was also included in both versions of the final survey.

Procedures

After receiving consent from the creators of all 4 measures, we translated the questionnaires from English into Greek and Turkish using a translation back translation procedure. After finalizing translation of all measures in the two languages, we created two versions of our questionnaire. One version addressed fathers and one version addressed mothers. Fathers were asked to respond to all measures from their perspective whereas mothers were asked to respond to the first two measures (ROFQ and

IFI) in reference to their children’s father’s role and involvement whereas in terms of parental style and meta-parenting they were instructed to respond by thinking of themselves and not their children’s father. In order to ensure paired responses we added paired codes to the footer of each questionnaire (e.g. a mothers’ and a fathers’ version with the code F1, a mothers’ and a fathers’ version with the code F2, etc.), as well as an indication of whether this was mothers’ or fathers’ version. Each pair of questionnaires was sealed in an envelope. Using snowball and convenient sampling techniques, questionnaires were administered to parents by early childhood educators. Parents were informed by early childhood educators that both mothers and fathers should fill in the version of the questionnaire addressed to them. Parents were also asked to return the sealed envelope with the two questionnaires filled in to their children’s early childhood educators.

Results

Table 1 presents means and SD’s as well as the results of paired t-tests for differences between mothers’ and fathers’ ratings. As seen in Table 1, mothers’ and fathers’ ratings show variations on the various scales, depending on the country. In terms of fathers’ role, only in Turkey was there a medium effect, with mothers assigning greater importance to the role of the father as compared to fathers self-reports, whereas as far as father involvement is concerned in Greece and in Cyprus, fathers reported that they were more involved compared to mothers’ ratings. Medium to large effect size was also found in authoritarian and authoritative parental styles across countries with mothers assuming a more authoritative style whereas fathers a more authoritarian style. Finally, medium effect size was also revealed in the meta-parenting construct in Greece and in Cyprus.

Table 1. <i>Means, standard deviation and paired samples t-test results</i>						
Variable	Country	Mothers	Fathers	t	df	ES r
ROFQ	Cyprus	4.28 (.31)	4.24 (.32)	.773	29	.10
	Greece	4.22 (.34)	4.16 (.41)	.916	36	.10
	Turkey	4.09 (.55)	3.79 (.31)	2.636**	32	.42
	Total	4.20 (.42)	4.06 (.40)	2.746**	99	.26
IFI	Cyprus	5.06 (.90)	5.18 (.71)	-.897	29	1.00
	Greece	5.14 (.74)	5.22 (.43)	-.782	36	1.00
	Turkey	5.32 (.62)	5.27 (.54)	.318	32	.10
	Total	5.17 (.76)	5.23 (.56)	-.699	99	.99
Authoritative	Cyprus	4.55 (.44)	4.33 (.48)	2.113*	29	.36
	Greece	4.34 (.49)	4.09 (.48)	2.592**	36	.40
	Turkey	4.28 (.57)	4.23 (.55)	.441	32	1.00
	Total	4.38 (.51)	4.21 (.51)	2.773**	99	.27
Authoritarian	Cyprus	2.16 (.51)	2.47 (.63)	-3.021**	29	.05
	Greece	2.08 (.73)	2.43 (.68)	-3.343**	36	.67
	Turkey	2.45 (.70)	2.75 (.79)	-1.984*	32	.37
	Total	2.23 (.67)	2.55 (.71)	-4.635***	99	.53
Permissive	Cyprus	1.80 (.57)	1.98 (.79)	-1.270	29	.24
	Greece	1.98 (.79)	2.16 (.91)	-1.567	36	.27
	Turkey	2.47 (.88)	2.40 (1.14)	.306	32	1.00
	Total	2.09 (.81)	2.19 (.97)	-1.149	99	.12
Meta-parenting total	Cyprus	3.64 (.38)	3.34 (.53)	2.711**	29	.45
	Greece	3.65 (.430)	3.42 (.43)	2.819**	36	.42
	Turkey	3.61 (.49)	3.48 (.52)	1.202	32	.21
	Total	3.63 (.43)	3.42 (.49)	3.805***	99	.10

Note: SD's appear in the parentheses next to means. In order to calculate ES r we used the following equation found in Field (2009) $r = \sqrt{t^2} / (t^2 + df)$ with $r = .10$ small effect, $r = .30$ medium effect and $r = .50$ large effect.

p <.05, **p <.01, *p <.001*

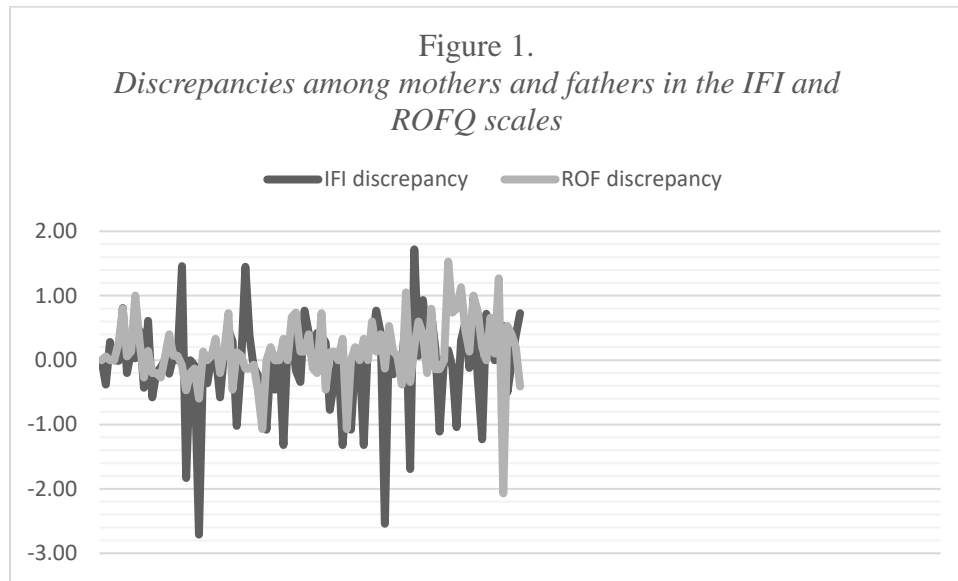
In order to explore statistically significant differences among countries we also ran ANOVA analysis. Analysis revealed that there were statistically significant differences between our group means (fathers from the three countries) in the ROFQ ($F(2,97)=14.31, p. = .00$) as well as to the ratings assigned from the total sample to the ROFQ ($F(2,197)=11.403, p. = .00$). Although there were no statistically significant differences in the mean score of the ROFQ among mothers, ANOVA analysis at the item level and post hoc analysis results revealed statistically significant differences on various items. In terms of IFI there were no statistically significant differences on fathers', mothers' and total sample mean scores among countries. Item analysis indicated however significant differences in various items. As far as parental styles are concerned ANOVA analysis showed statistically significant differences in the mean assigned by mothers in the Authoritarian subscale ($F(2,97) = 3.036, p. = .053$) as well as in the Permissive subscale ($F(2,97) = 6.445, p. = .002$). Fathers' ratings did

not differ significantly in any of the three parenting subscales. However, analysis on the item level revealed some statistically significant difference. When differences among the total sample were explored analysis revealed statistically significant differences in the Authoritative ($F(2,197)=3.437, p. = .034$), Authoritarian ($F(2,197)=4.776, p. = .009$) and Permissive parenting ($F(2,197)=6.491, p. = .002$). Finally, no statistically significant differences were revealed in the meta-parenting scale.

Since one of the main aims of the study was to explore cultural differences in father involvement as well as similarities and difference on maternal and paternal attitudes towards fathers' involvement, we also analyzed data at a subscale level. Table 2 presents means, SD's and paired samples t-test results for the IFI subscales. As seen in Table 2 analysis revealed large effect sizes in quite a lot of the IFI subscales.

Table 2.						
<i>Means, standard deviation and paired samples t-test results and for the IFI subscales</i>						
Subscale	Country	Mothers	Fathers	t	df	ES r
Discipline and Teaching Responsibilities	Cyprus	4.96 (1.09)	5.20 (.78)	-1.522	29	.29
	Greece	4.98 (1.00)	5.05 (.75)	-.492	36	1.00
	Turkey	5.15 (1.26)	5.19 (1.06)	-.165	32	1.00
	Total	5.02 (1.11)	5.14 (.86)	-1.008	99	.10
School Engagement	Cyprus	4.69 (1.53)	4.69 (1.65)	-.031	29	1.01
	Greece	5.03 (1.38)	5.38 (.66)	-1.541	36	.25
	Turkey	5.60 (.61)	5.55 (.57)	.259	32	.99
	Total	5.11 (1.28)	5.23 (1.09)	-1.031	99	.10
Mother Support	Cyprus	4.97 (1.14)	5.08 (.88)	-.754	29	1.00
	Greece	4.96 (.98)	5.18 (.63)	-1.600	36	.27
	Turkey	5.29 (.79)	5.45 (.74)	-.988	32	1.00
	Total	5.07 (.97)	5.24 (.76)	-1.946*	99	.20
Providing	Cyprus	5.46 (1.22)	5.75 (.43)	-1.437	29	.28
	Greece	5.54 (.74)	5.60 (.55)	-.503	36	1.00
	Turkey	5.77 (.40)	5.66 (.74)	.665	32	.99
	Total	5.59 (.84)	5.67 (.59)	-.799	99	1.00
Time and Talking together	Cyprus	4.99 (1.26)	5.12 (.90)	-.529	29	1.00
	Greece	5.09 (.76)	4.95 (.71)	1.126	36	.18
	Turkey	5.22 (.80)	5.41 (.69)	-1.259	32	.23
	Total	5.10 (.94)	5.15 (.78)	-.541	99	1.00
Praise and Affection	Cyprus	5.44 (.74)	5.62 (.52)	-1.943	29	.38
	Greece	5.48 (.58)	5.51 (.45)	-.280	36	1.00
	Turkey	5.71 (.43)	5.75 (.37)	-.312	32	1.00
	Total	5.54 (.60)	5.62 (.46)	-1.271	99	.13
Developing Talents and Future Concerns	Cyprus	4.81 (1.50)	4.88 (1.09)	-.301	29	1.00
	Greece	5.16 (.82)	5.00 (1.32)	.754	36	.99
	Turkey	5.41 (1.18)	5.47 (.88)	-.232	32	1.00
	Total	5.14 (1.19)	5.12 (1.14)	.132	99	.99
Reading and Housework Support	Cyprus	4.29 (1.65)	4.42 (1.67)	-.515	29	1.00
	Greece	4.76 (1.56)	4.63 (1.39)	.497	36	.99
	Turkey	4.70 (1.50)	4.47 (1.39)	.854	32	.99
	Total	4.60 (1.57)	4.51 (1.47)	.531	99	.99
Attentiveness	Cyprus	5.09 (.90)	5.40 (.76)	-2.814**	29	.61
	Greece	5.40 (.64)	5.20 (.63)	1.628	36	.26
	Turkey	5.16 (.89)	4.65 (1.16)	2.681**	32	.43
	Total	5.23 (.81)	5.08 (.92)	1.651	99	.16

Note: SD's appear in the parentheses next to means. In order to calculate ES r we used the following equation found in Field (2009) $r = \sqrt{t^2} / (t^2 + df)$ with $r = .10$ small effect, $r = .30$ medium effect and $r = .50$ large effect



In order to explore discrepancies among mothers and fathers we also created a discrepancy score. Figure 1 presents the distribution of the discrepancy scores for the IFI and ROFQ for the total sample. Discrepancy scores of the IFI ranged from -2.71 to 1.72, whereas for the ROFQ discrepancy scores ranged from -2.07 to 1.53. As seen in Figure 1, there were more discrepancies in the IFI as compared to the ROFQ. Further in the IFI discrepancies were in their majority negative (in 45 pairs) whereas in the ROFQ positive (in 58 pairs), suggesting that mothers assigned higher scores in the ROFQ whereas fathers assigned higher scores in the IFI scale. However, the percentage of agreement between mothers and fathers that we calculated for IFI, ROFQ and the IFI subscales was low and ranged from 7% (for the IFI) to 50% agreement in terms of fathers' role as provider. Praise and Affection had also relatively high percent of agreement (39%).

Since in the present study father involvement is viewed as a multidimensional construct we ran bivariate correlation analysis in order to explore correlations among various "components" of father involvement (that is

scales and subscales). Bivariate correlation analysis run for the total sample showed that there is statistically significant positive correlation among almost all scales and subscales at the 0.05 level, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting were negatively correlated with some of the other scales and subscales and positively correlated one with the other. Further, analysis showed that the IFI total score is significantly correlated not only with the ROFQ (sig. = .254; $p = 0.05$) but also with all three parental styles (sig. = .439; $p = 0.05$, sig. = -.198; $p = 0.05$, and sig. = -.248; $p = 0.05$ for the authoritarian, authoritative and permissive subscales respectively) as well as with the Meta-parenting construct (sig. = .302; $p = 0.05$). Further, we explored correlations among scales and subscales separately for mothers and fathers (Table 3). As seen in Table 3, whereas fathers' data revealed statistically significant correlations among all scales and subscales (apart from the Permissive parenting) and the IFI mean score, mothers' data revealed fewer statistically significant correlations.

Scales and Subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ROFQ (1)	1	.212*			.244*	.227*		.303**			.287**		-.218*		
IFI (2)	.343**	1	.778**	.593**	.776**	.593**	.792**	.749**	.795**	.676**	.650**	.347**	-.277**	-.268**	
Discipline and Teaching Responsibilities (3)		.640**	1	.389**	.610**	.376**	.516**	.419**	.670**	.480**	.403**	.347**		-.313**	.251*
School Engagement (4)		.495**	.288**	1	.422**	.312**	.440**	.409**	.539**	.399**	.240*			-.200*	
Mother Support (5)		.744**	.404**	.373**	1	.488**	.554**	.687**	.576**	.324**	.443**	.370**			.261**
Providing (6)	.301**	.434**	.216*		.260**	1	.387**	.533**	.327**	.283**	.441**				.211*
Time and Talking together (7)	.250**	.738**	.363**	.322**	.619**	.271**	1	.653**	.588**	.476**	.522**	.320**			
Praise and Affection (8)	.340**	.549**	.200*	.251*	.460**	.320**	.461**	1	.473**	.350**	.513**				.250*
Developing Talents and Future Concerns (9)		.511**	.519**	.235*	.443**		.337**	.209*	1	.531**	.468**	.266**	-.289**	-.240*	
Reading and Housework Support (10)		.678**	.399**	.266**	.361**		.485**	.244*	.321**	1	.442**		-.247*	-.259**	
Attentiveness (11)	.349**	.629**	.385**		.231*	.376**	.348**	.240*		.408**	1	.263**			.221*
Authoritative (12)	.348**	.607**	.330**		.573**	.315**	.584**	.354**	.277**	.332**	.455**	1	-.205*	-.260**	.509**
Authoritarian (13)	-.318**												1	.497**	
Permissive (14)	-.214*	-.249*	-.251*	-.207*						-.225*	-.199*		.582**	1	
Meta-parenting (15)	.232*	.499**	.220*	.302**	.463**	.376**	.435**	.483**	.207*	.256*	.324**	.584**			1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

We also explored correlations among parents' and children's demographic information and the mean scores assigned in scales and subscales. In this analysis we did not add parents' marital status since most (98%) were married. Table 4 presents bivariate correlation results stemming from fathers' data. As seen in Table 4, analysis revealed only limited correlations among parents' and child's demographic data and fathers' responses in the scales and subscales. Further, results showed that the country, child's gender and the type of day care children attend are the variables, which were

found to be correlated with most of the scales and subscales. In addition, we explored correlations among parents' and children's demographic information with mothers' ratings in scales and subscales. For the mothers' data, a variable for mothers working status (working mother and non-working mother) was created. Analysis showed that mothers' demographics affect their rating in many scales and subscales. As far as children's demographics are concerned, only child's gender was found to correlate with ratings.

Demographic Variable / Scale	ROFQ	IFI	Discipline ... Responsibilities	School Engagement	Mother Support	Time ... Together	Praise and Affection	Developing Talents	Reading ... Support	Attentiveness	Authoritarian	Meta-parenting
Country	-.455**			.311**				.209*		-.328**		
Child's age	-.227*										.231*	
Child's gender		.247*		.204*	.314**	.287**			.199*			
Parents' age												.200*
Educational level	.318**									.240*		
Mothers' working hours				-.223*					-.228*			
Child attends daycare				-.359**								
Type of daycare	.226*	-.227*	-.204*		-.264**	-.278**	-.298**	-.297**				

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Discussion

Drawing from serious methodological concerns surrounding research exploring fathers' involvement in their preschoolers' education, care and upbringing, the present study aimed to explore fatherhood in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, as well as agreement and disagreement in fathers' and mothers' reports of father involvement in those three countries.

Our results indicated that fathers in all three countries believed that they are doing a good job on all aspects of father involvement as recorded with the IFI, with Reading and Housework support having the lowest percentages, but still above 4.50. Some variations were revealed among countries, in terms of school engagement, developing talents and attentiveness, with Turkish fathers being more engaged at school and contributing into their children developing talents, whereas Cypriot fathers being more attentive compared to fathers from the other two countries. Our results are confirmed by previous research results from the three countries that suggest that fatherhood is changing and fathers are more involved in their children's care, education and upbringing compared to previous generation. Further, our results seem not to confirm our first hypothesis that qualitative differences would be revealed across countries. This may suggest that all three countries are underpinned by similar traditions about fathers' role. Further, fathers' SES may explain the lack of variances. For instance, previous research results have suggested that fathers' educational level may predict levels and/or types of involvement (Jung Yeh 2014, Planalp and Braungart-Rieker, 2016). In our study, the majority of participant fathers were university graduates and only 12% of the participants were primary or secondary school graduates. It is essential therefore for future studies to explore father involvement in these

three countries with participants representing all SES.

Comparing maternal and paternal reports on IFI, our results are in line with previous research results, which showed that there are discrepancies concerning paternal involvement when comparing maternal and paternal reports (Charles et al. 2016, Mikelson, 2008). Participant fathers assigned higher scores to IFI scale and subscales and reported that they were doing better job than mothers believed. The highest percent of agreement was found in the providing subscale whereas the lowest in the school engagement subscale. Those discrepancies may have various interpretations. For instance fathers may report higher levels of involvement due to social desirability (Charles et al. 2016) or mothers may report lower levels of involvement due to the fact that they may be in conflict with the father, or they may not be present during father – child interaction (Charles et al. 2016) or they may not receive the support they wished for in their children's upbringing. Another possible explanation is that mothers and fathers conceptualize paternal involvement differently. As we have seen conceptualization and measurement of fatherhood and father involvement is blurring. To this end, it is essential for future research to examine, employing qualitative techniques (e.g. interviews, focus groups and observations of actual interaction), paternal and maternal nomenclature of father involvement.

Previous research has shown, though not consistently, that maternal and paternal attitudes towards the role of the father may affect the actual involvement of fathers (Planalp and Braungart-Rieker 2016, Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead 2006, Hoffman 2011). The present study explored both how important the role of the father is considered in the three countries and how maternal and paternal perception about the importance of the father

may affect fathers' actual involvement. Participant fathers from the three countries assigned different importance to their role with Turkish fathers having a less positive view about father involvement. This is in line with our hypothesis according to which in more patriarchally-oriented cultures, fathers' role was expected to be considered as less important from both mother's and father's perspectives, and the role of the father was expected to vary qualitatively among countries. Mothers on the other hand assigned higher ratings as opposed to fathers. In Greece and Cyprus there was more agreement among fathers and mothers whereas in Turkey a moderate effect size was revealed. Further, confirming previous research results (Schoppe Sullivan et al. 2013), bivariate correlation analysis revealed statistically significant correlations between perceptions about fathers' role and actual involvement for the total sample as well as for mothers and fathers independently.

The results of the present study contribute significantly to the existing literature and research concerning the conceptualization and measurement of paternal involvement, since it views fatherhood as a multi-dimensional construct which includes a whole range of behaviors inherent to fathers' parenting roles (Palkovitz 2002). In fact, the study explored how parental style of mothers and fathers as well as parental social cognitions to childrearing behavior (meta-parenting) may affect and predict fathers' involvement. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study on fatherhood which explores such correlations. Our results confirm our initial hypothesis, that is, the parental style adopted by each parent and their social cognitions are correlated with father involvement. More precisely, the analysis indicated that authoritarian and permissive parental styles are negatively significantly correlated with IFI, whereas authoritative and

meta-parenting are positively correlated with IFI. Though this was the case for the total sample and fathers' data, mothers' meta-parenting has not been found to be correlated with their perceptions about fathers' involvement. This finding opens a new way of thinking about, conceptualizing and measuring father involvement. In fact our argument is that both constructs (parental style and meta-parenting) are inherent parts of the maternal and paternal involvement in their children's care, education and upbringing.

In addition, our results are in line with previous research which suggested that mothers may serve as facilitators or gatekeepers of paternal involvement (Hoffman 2011, Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead 2006.). Participant mothers who adopt a more authoritarian parental style assign lower importance to the role of the father and describe the father as less involved. This might imply that they inhibit parental involvement.

Parents' and children's demographic information on the other hand was only mildly correlated with mothers' and fathers' ratings. Further, demographic information was found to predict maternal and paternal views about the role of the father rather than actual and perceived paternal involvement. This might be explained by the homogeneity of the sample in certain characteristics (e.g., almost all children attend preschool settings; the majority of preschoolers range in age from birth to 6; the majority of fathers are at least high school graduates; and the majority mothers are working).

The present study also adds significantly to limited existing literature exploring fatherhood in three Southern eastern European countries. Despite our initial hypothesis, fathers in the three countries are almost equally and similarly engaged in their children's education, care and upbringing. To this end, two factors

should be taken into account. On the one hand the sample of the present study is small and results should be replicated by other studies with bigger samples. On the other hand, those three countries share common traditions and social ecologies and this might be a reason explaining the similarities. Future studies could compare fatherhood and father involvement across European regions. For example it would add significantly to existing literature to explore father involvement in Western and Eastern European countries.

Limitations of this research should be acknowledged. The study relies on self-reported measures. Future research should employ (as already stated) qualitative approaches in order to help to create a clearer picture about fatherhood. Further, our sample was mostly highly educated and married, the majority of mothers were working, children's age did not range across early childhood and they attended a preschool program. Our results may not, therefore, apply to other populations of mothers and fathers.

Greece, Cyprus and Turkey represent countries where the state does not support father involvement. In Turkey there is no paternity leave, in Cyprus paternity leave for two weeks was issued upon the writing of the present study (July, 2017) whereas in Greece there is a two day paternal leave. Although paternal leave is not a panacea or one-size-fits-all for engaging men in care work (McAllister et al. 2012), according to Letvov et al. (2015) it "is a vital step toward recognition of the importance of sharing caregiving for children, and it is an important means of promoting the well-being of children and gender equality in the home, the workplace, and society as a whole" (p. 21). Future research should explore how father involvement is affected by and differentiated across different social and political policies.

Taking into consideration research results which suggest that fathers' voice desires to be more involved in their children's life "changes are needed in policies, in systems and institutions, among service providers, within programming, and within data collection and analysis efforts" (Letvov et al. 2015, p. 22). Apart from paternal leave which might be considered as a foundation for improving and increasing father involvement, planned and programmed educational support is required (Kilic 2013). Previous experience from such programs (e.g. the Fatherhood Support Program) has shown that they contribute significantly to the ways fathers view and implement their paternal role. Further, both our study and previous research results highlight the need to "recognize the diversity of men's caregiving and support it in all of its forms" (Letvov et al. 2015, p. 24) and for informing our nomenclature about fatherhood and father involvement. Finally, taking into consideration Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda's (2004) argument that "within individual families, agreement between mothers and fathers regarding paternal roles may be of crucial importance" (p. 14), it is of high importance to implement educational programs involving both mothers and fathers and to conduct more research which collects, analyzes and presents data stemming both from mothers and fathers.

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