Am I Like My Father?

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Eri eg sum pápi?

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Abstract

This article explores fatherhood in the Faroe Islands based on empirical research consisting of interviews with Faroese men in their fifties who are married and have children. It addresses two primary questions: Firstly, how do my respondents describe their childhoods and relationships with their own fathers, and what are the transmissions, continuities, and discontinuities of fatherhood between their generation and their fathers' generation? Secondly, how do my respondents describe themselves as fathers, and how involved were they when they had young children? My objective is to identify familial attitudes and behaviours that are repeated, transmitted, or modified between two generations of Faroese men who were fathers during two different social periods. The article contributes to discussions about family and gender in the Faroe Islands, and challenges prevailing stereotypes about "older" Faroese fathers.

Úrtak

Henda greinin kannar faðirskap í Føroyum við støði í empiriskari gransking av samrøðum við føroyskar menn í fimtiárunum, ið vóru giftir og áttu børn. Greinin viðger tveir spurningar: Í tí fyrra vórðu menninir bidnir um at lýsa síni egnu barnaár, viðurskiftini við pápan, hvat teir hava tikið við sær yvir í sín egna pápaleiklut og greiða frá framhaldi og sliti millum millum ættarliðini. Seinni spurningurin bað menninar at lýsa seg sjálvar sum pápar, og hvussu teir tóku lut, tá teir høvdu børn. Endamálið er at skjalfesta hugsanir um endurtiknar, arvaðar ella tillagaðar hugburðir um familjuna í tveimum ættarliðum í tveimum sosialum tíðarskeiðum. Greinin er íkast í orðaskiftið um familju og kyn (gender) í Føroyum og roynir at nýhugsa nakrar ráðandi stereotypar fatanir av føroyskum pápum av "tí gamla slagnum".

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Leitorð: Faðirskapur, broyting millum ættarlið, framhald og slit, pápaluttøka.

Introduction:

> "Fatherhood is a cultural construction which is never definitively settled" (Bruel, 1997, p. 42).

The discussion of fathers' involvement with their families in the Faroe Islands involves two aspects. On the one side, there is a discussion of the role and practices of motherhood, the mental load borne by mothers, and mothers being the primary caretakers of the household. On the other side, fathers are often described as not being as involved as mothers in daily life. However, this is a simplification of the actual situation of fatherhood.

An involved father in "modern" society is a father who takes care of his family both economically and emotionally by sharing household work and being engaged in his children's daily routines and activities. Men are expected to fulfil the expectations of manhood by positioning themselves effectively in both domestic and public life (Lorentzen, 2011). Therefore, it is important to examine and understand what childcare means for fathers and how they perceive fatherhood practices in daily life.

If we are to understand changes in fatherhood, we need to investigate intergenerational transitions, continuities, and discontinuities. Fatherhood is a gendered practice that stems from internalised repertoires, and those repertoires are transferred intergenerationally by repeating the same gender practices. However, with time and changes in society, gender repertoires change to incorporate new practices; those practices are then sometimes transformed, continued, or discontinued by the next generation (Butler, 1988).

In this article, I address two primary questions that seek to understand the complexities of Faroese fatherhood across generations: First, how do my respondents (Faroese men in their fifties) describe their childhoods and relationships with their own fathers, and what are the transmissions, continuities, and discontinuities of fatherhood between their generation and their fathers'? In other words, what are the familial attitudes and behaviours that are repeated, transmitted, or modified? Second, how do they describe themselves as fathers, and how involved were they as fathers when they had young children?

My object is to identify transmission, continuities, and discontinuities between two generations of men who were fathers during two different social periods. I describe fatherhood through a lens of gender performance, applying gender theory to conceptualise fatherhood as contextual, which encompasses different understandings and practices across various times. The article uses qualitative data from interviews with men in their fifties and contributes to

discussions about family and gender in the Faroe Islands while challenging prevailing stereotypes about "older" Faroese fathers.

The Context

The literature on fatherhood in the Faroe Islands is new and rather sparse. Professor Firouz Gaini from the University of the Faroe Islands has conducted anthropological, ethnographic, and gender-related research focusing on young men in the Faroe Islands (Gaini, 2022a, 2022b, 2021, 2020), in which he discusses fatherhood across different generations.

Like many other places, the Faroe Islands have experienced a shift in society from peasant farming and fishing to an industrial society. These changes have had an impact on gender relations between men and women and negotiations in family life. Bjørg Jacobsen and Beinta í Jákupstova (Jacobsen and Jákupstova, 2005) discuss how, at the end of the seventeenth century, the fishing industry brought economic, social, and cultural changes to this small society, where an open and dynamic fishing industry was practised. There was a clear differentiation between gender roles, with women's role being to support their husbands and take care of the family, while the husband ran the business (men had fishing boats, etc.). Home and family responsibilities have been women's "domain" for several generations in the Faroe Islands due to the impact of the fishing industry, which meant that men were at sea for long period of time. With industrialisation and the development of the Faroe Islands as a welfare society, young Faroese women took the opportunity to obtain higher education (Jacobsen, 2007). As women achieved higher levels of education, society saw a shift in gender and family relations whereby care became decentralised from the family. Care institutions such as kindergartens became a priority among politicians due to this shift in family relations (Jacobsen, 2007). The small island community has experienced changes across society, with a restructuring of the labour market seeing a high percentage of women becoming active agents in paid work.

According to Genesoni and Tallandini (2009), women in Europe are still the main caregivers and responsible for daily childcare duties, despite research showing that fathers are becoming more involved in childcare in daily life. Statistics show that men are still the main breadwinners in the family, do less housework, and spend less time with their children than women (Haavind & Magnusson, 2005; Plantin, 2001). Research about the Faroese family has also shown that Faroese women are the primary caretakers in the family, and are widely employed in part-time jobs, which allows them to prioritise family life (Hayfield et al., 2016). Faroese women are most likely to be employed in part-time jobs and lower-paid jobs, and receive lower retirement pensions (Hayfield et al., 2016). Women are still the primary caregivers and caretakers of the family in the Faroe Islands, which is also the case in many other European countries.

Research in the Faroe Islands has also shown that a high percentage of Faroese women are still involved in unpaid work, and that these women are more willing to shape their lifestyle and work–life balance according to the needs of their families, such as bringing up children and housework (Hayfield et al., 2016). Likewise, research in Denmark shows that men are still the primary breadwinners in the family and do less housework and spend less time with their children than women (Haavind & Magnusson, 2005; Plantin, 2001). Compared to other European countries, Scandinavian men participate in the household to an increasing extent, but the primary caretakers of the home and children are still assumed to be women (Haavind & Magnusson, 2005).

The Faroe Islands have often been characterised as a male-dominated and traditional society on the northern periphery of Europe, where Faroese men abide by "traditional" customs such as slaughtering sheep, fishing, and catching birds; and not being as involved in fatherhood as men in neighbouring countries (Gaini, 2020). This stereotyping of Faroese men has been a narrative for decades in both Faroese society and neighbouring countries. In the Faroe Islands, commonly represented as conservative, the question of "new" fatherhood and practices had not been discussed or raised until recently. The concept of the "new man", as noted by Gaini (2022a), represents a form of "new" fatherhood. This raises the question of whether the "new man" differs from the men of previous generations or signifies another aspect of evolution.

Recent research indicates that young Faroese men are engaged fathers who prioritise the emotional well-being of their families (Gaini, 2022a). Additionally, Giani's (2021) study found that younger men characterise their fathers as nurturing and emotionally involved in their day-to-day lives. Examining family and personal daily practices provides a valuable framework for understanding everyday experiences and fatherhood in the Faroe Islands. The existing literature often reinforces the notion that mothers are the primary caretakers, with discussions about fatherhood primarily focusing on comparisons with maternal roles (Day et al., 2000). Thus, it is crucial to examine fatherhood without contrasting it against motherhood.

Theoretical Reflections

Since the year 2000, studies on fatherhood have increased, and they report a process of transformation and cultural change in the fatherhood process. As Bruel (1997) describes it, fatherhood is a cultural construction, with each society having its own understanding of what constitutes a good, loving, and responsible father. Fatherhood and fathers' involvement with their families have changed across time and generations. Over time, the definition of and motives for fatherhood have shifted according to the time and place where it was practised. Fatherhood is a multifaceted concept and is not static. Different eras have experienced different ways of doing fatherhood depending on what is accepted

as a “good” and “responsible” father. Historically, men’s involvement in fatherhood has shifted from a focus on moral guidance to breadwinning, then to moral modelling, marital support, and, more recently, nurturance (Lamb, 1997). Therefore, when analysing fatherhood, we must bear in mind that society is not static but changes across space and time. It follows that understanding and describing what constitutes a good, involved, loving, and responsible father is not universal; it varies across cultures, times, and subcultural contexts (Lamb, 1997). Historian Tomas Berglund’s work (Berglund, 2007) demonstrates that fathers in the nineteenth century were also engaged in the domestic sphere; however, there were no documented publications addressing fathers’ roles in the private sphere compared to mothers. Through letters written by fathers, Berglund illustrated that men’s, including fathers’, work consumed much of their time, leaving little for their children and families. This alienated fathers from the private sphere. However, the letters did reveal the acknowledgement and intimacy of fathers in Sweden during the nineteenth century (Berglund, 2007).

The meaning and intimacy of fatherhood practices cannot be simplified to the dichotomy of either breadwinner or involved father, because these two elements can coexist (Dermott, 2008). In the past, the breadwinner father was considered to be an involved father, who demonstrated responsibility and involvement by taking care of his family economically and providing food and shelter for them. However, the taxonomies and concepts of being an “involved father” have changed over time. Historically, the concept of marriage and gender roles has also undergone various changes. The reform of the new idea of marriage in Scandinavia in 1930 played an essential role in the division of labour within the household, with the concept based on gender roles, consisting of a stay-at-home mother and a breadwinner husband who worked outside the home (Melby et al., 2006). This new reform made women more visible in the private sphere, intensifying the division of gender roles between the private and public spheres, emphasising women’s rights as mothers in the private sphere while neglecting the discussion of fathers and their gender roles in that same sphere (Lorentzen, 2011).

To understand fatherhood, we must consider the social and cultural changes that influence it. In other words, we should explore how different men from various social backgrounds perceive fatherhood and how they respond to these changes (McDonald & Jeanes, 2012; Brandth & Kvande, 2017; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015). It's important to remember that we cannot generalise fatherhood across different periods; like doing gender, doing fatherhood is not fixed because it is shaped by cultural and social constructions. The meanings of doing fatherhood and fathering children vary depending on culture, norms, society, and socio-economic circumstances. These factors affect family practices and the (re)production of gender roles. When researching fatherhood and fathering, we must consider the physical and spatial processes involved, as societies hold different ideals about what constitutes a good and involved father.

Research in different countries has demonstrated the importance of a father figure for children and the growing interest and willingness of fathers to be present during childcare, and to take on more involvement in care activities (O'Brien & Wall, 2017; Miller, 2011; Gregory & Miller, 2011; Lamb, 1999). In other words, they wish to provide a father figure who is emotionally active in his child's daily life and involved in unpaid housework. The term "new fatherhood" is often associated with changes in household behaviours and is often related to a generational change in gender behaviours and sociodemographic change. These changes are associated with and influenced by women's increasing labour-force participation (Gregory & Miller, 2011). However, some researchers reflecting upon the process of fatherhood transformation are questioning the characteristics of "new" fatherhood and the conditions attached to it.

Nowadays, a male identity has different meanings attached to it. Alongside being a good and emotionally involved father, the "new" man should also show a desire to take responsibility for being a good economic provider for the family (Bosoni & Mazzucchelli, 2019). According to Dermott (2008), there is an urge to distinguish between and dichotomise the two elements of being *either* a breadwinner *or* an involved father as opposites, although these two elements can also coexist. Across time, being a responsible father meant being someone who took economic responsibility for his family, while the women were at home taking care of the household and childcare. Such men were not considered to be disengaged from their families; gender roles and the fathering role during that time had different associations and expectations attached to them.

Dermott (2008) describes paternity through the concept of "intimate fatherhood", where intimacy is described as a personal relationship characterised by presence, closeness, the expression of emotions, reciprocity, and one-to-one relationships. The gender norms around fathering are changing in "modern" society, with the meanings attached to fatherhood and fathering being in transition (Gregory & Miller, 2011). "Traditional" gender relations and gender roles are also in transition, and men's gender roles and participation as involved fathers who participate in daily life are being discussed in both the private and public spheres. Embedded in the perception of new fatherhood is both how involved fathers are and the changes in gender relations between men and women, in both the private and public spheres (Farstad & Stefansen, 2015).

Studies have shown that both the nature and quality of parenting in families are transmitted intergenerationally, and this viewpoint is reflected in Bowen's intergenerational transmission theory (Bowen, 1978), which states that various parenting styles and behaviours are passed on from one generation to the next. Understanding the factors that contribute to the continuity or discontinuity of parenting styles is important because these factors help us to acknowledge that continuities and discontinuities do exist. Such factors may include socioeconomic status, the environment in which a person is brought up, or other life factors.

In five publications (Kovan, Chung, & Sroufe, 2009; Bailey, Hill, Oesterle, Hawkins, & the Social Development Research Group, 2009; Shaffer, Burt, Obradovic, Herbers, & Masten, 2009; Neppl, Conger, Scaramella, & Ontai, 2009; Kerr, Capaldi, Pears, & Owen, 2009), continuities were found to exist in different kinds of studies such as populations, geographical locations, and years between generational parentings. The focus on positive parenting within continuities and discontinuities acknowledges the intergenerational transmission of parenting in a broader and more strengths-based way (Belsky et al., 2009).

These findings reveal that the social and educational spheres both have an impact on the mechanisms of continuity of parenting styles (Kerr et al., 2009; Neppl et al., 2009; Egeland et al., 2009), which leads to the development of competences during childhood and young adulthood and the reproduction of positive parenting behaviours. Different parenting styles have an impact on how fatherhood/parenthood is performed. Earlier research by Caspi and Elder (1988) showed that harsh parenting in one generation leads to a greater likelihood of antisocial behaviour and harsh parenting in the next generation.

Various empirical studies mention and support the hypothesis that both harsh parenting and positive parenting are passed from one generation to the next. Although different theoretical perspectives suggest that several mechanisms contribute to the repetition of familiar patterns (Belsky et al., 2009), it is important to recognise the complexities of intergenerational transmission and to take into consideration the possibility that several different variables may affect parenting behaviour. In the analysis below, I reflect upon the different social variables in the studied material that contribute to different fatherhood performances, continuities, and changes. This can give us a broader understanding of and perspective on the different performance styles of doing fatherhood.

(Un)Doing Gender

Current research on fatherhood considers it to be a social construction that is shaped by the interplay between the relationships in the men's surroundings and the structures in their lives (Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Coltrane, 1994). Doing fatherhood is doing one's gender, which has a societal and cultural expectation attached to it. Studies have also shown that intergenerational transmission is crucial when performing fatherhood/fathering (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006; Bosoni, 2014). Intergenerational transmission has led to the internalisation of gender/fathering practices relating to how to be a father, whereby some of those practices (perhaps several) are transmitted from fathers to sons and are called generational practices. These transmissions and practices must then be adapted to the "modern", contemporary social and family context. Gender performances are understood as practices that are constructed intersubjectively, rather than existing a priori (West & Zimmermann, 1987). This perspective helps us to

understand that gender is relevant within all social situations, including social structures and social inequalities (Kvande & Brandth, 2016). In other words, gender practices are influenced by the culture and society in which the individual lives.

The debate on transformations in fathering is strongly connected to cultural transformation, where cultural dimensions such as "the rules, values, beliefs and symbolic representation of paternity" (LaRossa et al., 2000, p. 375) are strongly associated with fatherhood practices. However, these variables have different meanings depending upon the social-historical contexts in which fatherhood is performed. LaRossa (2007) mentions that different social and normative aspects of fatherhood can be identified: "the father as economic provider for the family, the father as a male model of reference for sons and daughters, and the father as the playmate" (LaRossa, 2007, p. 89).

Fatherhood changes, and its transformation is a non-linear process that occurs over time, as the cultural dimension of parenthood changes over the centuries, but not in a simple or linear way (Bosoni & Mazzucchelli, 2019). New studies have also highlighted the presence of different fathering styles (Marsiglio et al., 2000), defined as "fatherhood diversity". This study highlights the coexistence of "traditional" and new models of fatherhood, which do not necessarily conflict. The term "new fatherhood" is often linked to a dichotomy between traditionalism and modernism; however, the "new" can coexist with the "old" because paternity and fatherhood are expressed in different ways and there is no single model of reference.

Many studies have explored fathering, taking into consideration fathering practices involving young children (Davis-Kean et al., 2001; Brotherson et al., 2005) and the desire to be a good father. Less well explored is the process of becoming a father and how men define/describe themselves as fathers. This process can be highlighted within an intergenerational approach to fatherhood; namely, to relate to one's own father in order to define the experience of being a father oneself. This suggests that fatherhood and fathering are done through transmission from, or in some cases discontinuities with, the previous generation, which represents the internalised gender model and repertoires of fathering (Brannen & Nielsen, 2006).

The concept of fatherhood is multifaceted and complex. Rather than looking for prevailing or appropriate fatherhood models, we must understand that different interpretations of the paternal role can coexist, even if they contradict each other (Bosoni & Mazzucchelli, 2019).

Methodology and Framework

This research does not aim to juxtapose fatherhood with motherhood, but rather to investigate fatherhood on its own terms because this will give us a better understanding of the concept of fatherhood and the transmissions,

continuities, and discontinuities between one generation and the next. To understand fathers and fathering, we need to approach the subject using methodological approaches that are appropriate to studying fathers in a family context (Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). A key difficulty that researchers have faced when researching fatherhood is the framing of caregiving, because caregiving as a concept is built around maternal parenting (Marsiglio et al., 2000). Using the maternal template creates limitations when conducting fatherhood research which are likely to hinder us from understanding the common definition of fathers and fathering. There is also a lack of theoretical models regarding fatherhood and fathering, with little or no recognition in the literature of the cultural embeddedness or variability of fathering (Tamis-LeMonda, 2004).

This article is based on five interviews with men in their fifties. However, only four of the interviews have been included, as one respondent was less talkative than the others. He did share some perspectives, but not enough to be included in the article. The respondents shared their childhood memories and their relationships with their fathers. The interviews focused on their recollections of gender roles in their households while growing up, and how they interpreted those roles when reflecting upon their childhoods. It also considered how their childhood have shaped them as fathers.

The interview method was semi-structured, and the questions were divided into three themes. The first concerned the respondents' childhoods and their recollections of their relationships with their fathers. In the second part of the interview, I focused on their own lives as fathers when they had young children. In the third part, I focused on their relationships with their children now as adults and their views and perspectives on fatherhood in society nowadays. We also discussed the ongoing parliamentary debate on paternity leave. Choosing semi-structured interviews gave me the information needed to make comparisons between the interviewees and the method also allowed the respondents to talk freely and bring up issues that I had not thought about.

Conducting interviews has been my main strategy in obtaining empirical data. Interviews as a social research method are used to explore individuals' understanding of their lives and experiences (Edward & Holland, 2013). Qualitative research can be described as a conversation between researcher and respondents, during which the respondents can raise new themes and subjects during the interview (Widerberg, 2001). The respondents' narratives gave me an insight into intergenerational transmissions, continuities, and discontinuities.

The interpretation of data is important in relation to the construction of knowledge (Ísfeld, 2019) as it demands reflexivity and a hermeneutic approach. Alveson and Skoldberg (2005) claim that the two elements of reflexive research are the process of interpretation and reflection. As mentioned above, using the maternal template creates limitations when conducting fatherhood research, therefore, as a woman and a mother, I had to reflect on my positionality and

understand my respondents from a male and a father's perspective without being biased.

The Respondents

I conducted interviews with five men from different parts of the Faroe Islands. They were all in their early fifties and married with children. Two of my respondents were divorced and had remarried, and three were grandfathers. The respondents' social class and backgrounds varied; two had a Master degree, one was a primary-school teacher, one an unskilled worker, and the last had a background as an accountant. The respondents' wives had higher education degrees, two of them had Master's degrees, and three were primary-school or kindergarten teachers. The wives were all in full-time employment when the interviews were conducted. The respondents' fathers had different backgrounds; two were sailors, while three worked ashore as teachers or in banking.

All the interviews were conducted in my office at the University of the Faroe Islands. I chose each respondent according to their background, work, and where they lived in the Faroe Islands. We communicated on Messenger before the meeting, and I explained the purpose of the research to them. Precautions and ethical concerns relating to how to maintain the anonymity of my respondents are important. When conducting research in a small-scale society, it is crucial that respondents cannot be recognised. Therefore, all the participants' names and personal information have been changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Besides using pseudonyms, I have not mentioned where they worked, their specific ages, or to whom they were married. Each interview lasted for around one hour, and they were all conducted in Faroese. All the interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed by me. All the quotes presented below have been translated into English by me.

Limitations

I must emphasise that the aim of this study is not to generalise the results. I am aware of the limitations of this research and that it is not representative of all Faroese men (or fathers) in their fifties. However, by analysing and considering the interviews strategically, I was able to extract some interesting dynamics to escape the generalisations of doing fatherhood for men in their fifties. It is also important to take into consideration the different social dynamics among my respondents. Therefore, when analysing the interviews, I approached them through an intersection of age, where they live in the Faroe Islands, educational background, social background, and childhood experiences. These parameters were helpful in revealing different dynamics among the respondents and their perspectives on fatherhood.

Findings

Childhood Memories: Caring and Supporting at Home and at Sea

The respondents' childhood memories reveal how fatherhood operates as a cultural construction (Bruel 1997) that varies according to time, space and socio-economic conditions. My respondents' mothers were homemakers during their early childhood, while their fathers were the main breadwinners for their families. My respondents described their childhoods in terms of loving memories of both parents being present for them in different ways. At the same time, they remembered having different kinds of relationships and intimacy with each parent. Being at sea created distinct conditions for performing fatherhood, where family had a clear gender negotiation whereby the mother/wife took care of the private sphere and caring for the children, while the men/fathers were the primary breadwinners and were away at sea for several months at a time.

> My father was away for long period of time during my childhood. The gender roles in our household were very much differentiated. My mother took care of the children, cooking, and cleaning. My father did outdoor activities with us when he was at home, but he was a stranger to me because he was often away. My brothers had a closer relationship with him than I did. We always went to our mother if we needed emotional comfort. (Sámal)

This narrative demonstrates LaRossa's (2007) observation that different social and normative aspects of fatherhood can be identified, particularly "the father as economic provider for the family". There was also a clear gender differentiation between the private and the public sphere; women primarily took care of the private sphere and, to some extent, the public sphere, especially if they had part-time jobs or responsibilities related to livestock, such as cows or sheep.

Nevertheless, there were exceptions, with some men working ashore and participating in their children's daily lives. The gender relations and negotiations within these families differed from those in seafarers' families, because fathers working ashore were able to be more engaged and active in the private sphere, allowing them to practise a more "intimate fatherhood".

Hanus described his childhood in terms of loving memories and spoke lovingly of his parents. He remembered his childhood as "untraditional" and different from those of many of his friends. He was born in the northern part of the Faroe Islands and spent most of his teenage years there, where his father was a teacher and his mother a homemaker during his childhood.

> My childhood memories are maybe different from others of my generation as my parents were not traditional parents – they were quite "modern" for their generation. My father was very

> untraditional, he was active in the household and helped around the house. The men in our village found it strange that my father was helping with cooking and cleaning. (Hanus)

As a teacher, Hanus' father spent time with him and his siblings and was also involved at home with tasks like cooking and cleaning. At the same time, he engaged in helping them with their homework. He described his father as a "modern" father, one who was far ahead of his time. Hanus' father also taught him different Faroese traditional cultural skills such as slaughtering sheep, tending livestock, and fishing. Hanus account demonstrates how gender performances are constructed intersubjectively rather than existing a priori (West & Zimmermann, 1987) and how some fathers were already challenging some "traditional" gender practices during the 1960s and 1970s. The community's reaction reveals how gender practices have social expectations attached to them.

Hanus stated that he was not interested in outdoor activities like his brothers; he preferred staying at home with his mother.

> I was rather sensitive as a child. I preferred staying at home to fishing and tending sheep. I learned a great deal from my mother, including sewing, cooking, baking, and other domestic tasks. (Hanus)

The fatherhood model has experienced different shifts throughout history, from the moral teacher and guide to the breadwinner during centralised industrialisation (Pleck, 1981) and the sex-role model during the Second World War. The new nurturant fatherhood model, which some of my respondents identified their own father as having represented, emerged during the mid-1970s when my respondents were around 10 or 12 years of age; and this can be seen through their accounts of their childhood memories. Negotiations of gender relations within the private sphere differed in my respondents' accounts. Hanus remembered an involved father in the private sphere who sometimes prepared weekend breakfast.

> I clearly remember dad waking up before us sometimes and I could hear him preparing breakfast for the family. My brothers and I always got in our parents' bed when dad served breakfast; because it was breakfast in bed with my brothers, mother, and our father. It was so cosy and [I have] fond memories. (Hanus)

Bjarni, whose father was also a teacher, remembered him as involved in the private sphere. At the same time, he described his father as a man who was not talkative and did not show his emotions. Nevertheless, Bjarni portrayed his father as caring, not in the traditional sense of talking and playing around, but by helping him when he needed it.

> I remember my father as someone who didn't show emotions but, at the same time, he was there to help me if I needed help with my schoolwork and other things. My father was not a proactive person in the sense that he would do things with us. But he was always ready to help when I asked for it. (Bjarni)

Bjarni notes that, in Faroese culture, particularly among older generations, men often do not show their emotions. Instead of expressing feelings verbally, care and love are demonstrated through activities done with children. He does not remember doing many outdoor activities with his father, but they often attended football matches together, an activity they shared as father and son. Emotional care is often gendered among my respondents, with mothers typically primarily responsible for their children's emotional well-being.

The narrative supports Dermott's (2008) argument that the two elements of breadwinner and involved father can coexist, as Bjarni's father demonstrated care through availability and instrumental support rather than emotional expressiveness. The account also reflects LaRossa's (2007) identification of the "father as a male model of reference for sons and daughters" through educational support.

Bjarni's further reflection reveals how domestic participation could occur even within "traditional" framework.

> As a child, I clearly remember my father engaging in household chores. I think it was not usual for men to hang up clothes to dry outside at that time; but my father often did it when we were young. I remember him also making dinner sometimes. It was also expected of me to help around the house as I was the oldest. (Bjarni)

This memory demonstrates that fatherhood diversity (Marsiglio et al., 2000) existed even in the past, with "traditional" and "non-traditional" models coexisting without necessarily conflicting, supporting the argument of the "new" can coexist with the "old" in paternal practices.

The fishing industry still has a great impact on family life in the Faroe Islands, where for generations families have organised their lives around men's work at sea (Gaini, 2011). This lifestyle had an even greater impact on family lives in the past because communication was not as easy as it is nowadays. Sámal remembered and talked about the long periods when they did not hear from his father because there was no internet, and communication was quite expensive at that time. Time was precious when his father called home.

> I remember dad calling home once a month while he was at sea – he called through the Lyngby radio, and everybody could hear the conversation. There was not much privacy during the conversations; but that was life back then, it was expensive to call home, and our conversation was only five minutes. (Sámal)

Nevertheless, Sámal describes his father as caring by nature and as being interested in knowing how things were going at school and what was happening in their daily lives. Being an engaged and involved father had a different definition in Sámal's family negotiations because it was not a direct "intimate fatherhood", but an "involved and intimate" fatherhood practised from a distance. Samal's memories reveal how Dermott's (2008) concept of "intimate fatherhood", characterised by presence, closeness and emotional expression, could be modified to accommodate physical absence through the radio. Sailors were perceived as heroes in society because they were away for long periods, risking their lives at sea. Back in those days, several families in the Faroe Islands experienced deaths at sea, when men drowned, leaving women as widows and children as orphans. The discourse of the engaged father had a different meaning in those days because the dichotomy between an engaged "intimate fatherhood" and the breadwinner father was (and still is) complex. The facts of poor communication at sea and being away for long periods of time created a "distant engaged fatherhood", in which fathers were doing/practising fatherhood through radio communication. As Sámal mentioned, his father engaged with his schoolwork, his plans, and daily life through radio communication. Sámal described those memories and moments with love, even though his father was not present in their daily life.

> I would describe my father as a loving and caring father. He always asked about our lives and our school activities and was interested in how things were going. He loved us even though he was so far away. That's an important thing to know. But I also remember my father having a bad conscience about being away so much; he always had so many gifts for us when he came back home, and he was always trying to impress us by building small huts and sledges for us to play. (Sámal)

In the past, seafarer fathers did not have as many opportunities to practise "intimate fatherhood" as most seafarer fathers nowadays. "Intimate fatherhood", where fathers are present and participate actively in their children's daily lives, was not a possibility for seafarer fathers in the past. But those seafarers can still be described as engaged and caring fathers because they were risking their lives at sea and sacrificing their "freedom" to provide for their families at home.

The Caring Father

In this section, I look at my respondents' roles as fathers when they had young children and how they described themselves as fathers. My respondents became first-time fathers in the early 1990s, and fatherhood and fathers' involvement were evolving during these years. Faroese women were becoming more active on the labour market, and it became more common for young children to attend daycare while both parents were in full-time work. The

respondents' descriptions of their own fathering practices reveal how doing fatherhood operates on a form of doing gender (West & Zimmermann, 1987) with social and cultural constructions attached to it.

Jóhan shared his experiences as a young father and how he balanced parenthood with a full-time job, while his wife was also working. He described their daily life as very busy during the early years of having children, as both of them held full-time jobs. He characterised himself as an involved father during that time.

> I've been an engaged father because I've always been interested in my children's daily activities. I closely followed how they were doing at school when they needed it. And at the same time, I was the one who drove them to their football practice, and I was also physically present at all the football matches they played. (Jóhan)

The concept of an involved and engaged father varies depending on the context and the stage of fatherhood. When my respondents became fathers, their understanding of the gender role associated with fatherhood changed. They expressed a desire to participate actively in their children's lives while also being engaged husbands and contributors to the household. Jóhan described himself as an involved father and took care of all the outdoor activities. However, playing and being involved in their children's sports activities are not described as an "unpaid" job in research or public debates. These activities are considered "fun" and not part of the domestic sphere because they are mostly practised outside the home. What is mostly discussed as an "unpaid" job is the domain of motherhood within the domestic sphere, when women/mothers have full-time jobs and at the same time are more involved than fathers in domestic sphere.

When circumstances required greater domestic involvement, Jóhan adapted to it. While his wife was studying and had to travel to Denmark for extended periods, he assumed all the household chores and responsibilities. He noted that his mother and several other women expressed concern about him being alone with the children.

> While my wife was away studying in Denmark, I took care of the kids on my own – and I did everything, like changing nappies, making dinner, cleaning the house, and putting the children to sleep, etc. But I also participated in household chores even when my wife was at home in the Faroe Islands; I know some of my friends living outside Tórshavn have a different lifestyle, where they didn't participate in the household chores. (Jóhan)

The women in the family offered to help with cooking and cleaning. He found the situation amusing, noting that his wife never received such offers of assistance while she was alone with the children.

At the same time, Jóhan reflected upon his position as a father and his fatherhood style by distancing himself from his own father's style. He mentioned that his father was not always present when he was a child, and remembered him being out very late and rarely participating in the domestic sphere. He was out almost every evening, while his mother was active both on the labour market and in the domestic sphere. He consciously chose to be different from his father, vowing to be an involved and caring parent to his children.

> My upbringing was very traditional; my father had a good job, and my mother worked in an office as well. But I can't remember my father taking part in the domestic housework. It was always my mother doing the domestic work and, as the oldest child, I helped my mother after school with dinner and other housework – I had to take responsibility as the oldest child in the family. (Jóhan)

Fatherhood and parenting styles in families are transmitted intergenerationally (Bowen, 1978). These parenting styles are culturally influenced, and both time and space are significant factors. Additionally, some respondents consciously chose to transform their fatherhood style compared to that of their own fathers because the meaning of fatherhood had evolved by the time they became fathers. Embedded in the concept of "new" and "involved" fathers are both the level of involvement fathers exhibit and the shift in gender relations between men and women, in both the private and public spheres (Farstad & Stefansen, 2015). These changes also coincided with the rise of dual-income households, with women gaining higher education and becoming more active on the labour market.

Sámal followed in his father's footsteps and became a seafarer as well. He married at a young age and became a father in his early twenties while sailing during his children's early years. He described his family life as "traditional", with his wife managing the home and children while he was away at work. Despite being at sea, he felt that fatherhood and his relationship with his children differed from his own childhood because he was not away for months at a time, and communication methods had changed since his father's sailing days. Sámal described how fatherhood had evolved between his childhood to his own experience as a father.

> My wife was at home while the children were young and took care of them. She went back on the labour market when our oldest was around four years old. I called home quite often when I was away as we did have a mobile phone, and the services onboard the ship were much better. When I was at home, I did different activities with the children and played with them. I also fetched them from kindergarten, as my wife was active on the labour market. (Sámal)

Although Sámal was often away during his children's childhoods, they maintained a close relationship with him. He has three adult children from his first marriage and described his bond with them as very strong. He noted that his daughter often calls him for advice on cooking traditional Faroese food, rather than reaching out to their mother.

> My children have different relationships with both me and their mother, and that's perfectly fine. The boys often reach out to me when they need help with various matters, while my daughter calls each time she wants to make traditional Faroese food. They tend to contact their mother about different issues that they feel more comfortable discussing with her. (Sámal)

The concept of a caring and involved father does not have a universal meaning; rather, it varies across different times, places, and cultures. As a result, families negotiate their responsibilities in unique ways. For seafarers, being a caring father presents specific challenges due to the long periods they are away from home, which means that they miss out on their children's daily lives. Sámal explained that he tried to make up for the time he spent away by being more attentive and present with his children when he was at home, in contrast to the approach taken by his father. Sámal often reflected upon his childhood memories during the interview; he mentioned visiting his father at the care home whenever he returned from sailing. He noted that his father is not very talkative, and they usually sit together, engaging in small talk about topics like the weather and fishing, or simply enjoying each other's company in comfortable silence.

> I remember my father not being a talkative person. We never talked about feelings; it wasn't common when I was a child. As a child, I knew that he loved us because he was putting his life in danger to provide for us, and he also brought many things home for us when he came back home. But I tried to be different, I talked to my children and asked a lot about their personal life and was active in the domestic sphere when I was at home. (Sámal)

The "new" and involved father must simultaneously be a breadwinner, present in the domestic sphere, and a caring and involved father. Firouz Gaini (2020) talks about the concept of bricolage to describe Faroese men and their ability to be flexible by being handymen and practical and flexible on the job market. The idea of bricolage can also be applied to my respondents' fathering style as they were breadwinners, engaged fathers in the domestic sphere, and actively participated in their children's hobbies while the children were young. This also shows how gender repertoires change over time, with some practices being transformed while others are continued or discontinued over time (Butler, 1988).

Am I different from my father?

Intergenerational continuities and discontinuities have been widely discussed in fatherhood research, whereby the nature of fatherhood and parenting in families is said to be transferred from one generation to the next (Bowen, 1978). Continuities and discontinuities in parenting styles are influenced by the socio-economic relations of the new generation of fathers and are gendered across time and space. Hanus had been married twice; he had four children, of whom two were from his previous marriage, then he became a father of two young children again in his second marriage. Each time, he had decided to take parental leave and be at home with the children, which was uncommon, especially when he became a father during his first marriage.

> I was quite different from other men in our village, because when I became a father, I decided to be at home for several months. I took the baby out in the pram for long walks and many women in our village were impressed that I did that …but it felt natural to me. And I did the same when I became a father in my new relationship. I stayed at home for a while and did everything that a mother will normally do while on parental leave. Many men in my village didn't understand my decision. (Hanus)

During the interview, Hanus described his family and his father as not being "traditional" in the way that other families were during his childhood. Furthermore, he followed in his father's footsteps by being an "intimate" and involved father in the private sphere. He mentioned his father as a role model and said that he strived to be an intimate father.

> I think that my childhood, and how my parents were, has had a huge impact on how I am as a father. My parents have never been traditional parents, because they've allowed us to be who we are, without putting a gender label to it. They've never told me how I should be as a Faroese man – us siblings had the opportunity to be who we wanted to be as individuals. (Hanus)

He also mentioned that he still has a close relationship with his parents and siblings, meeting up for dinner once a week. Hanus had made a conscious decision to raise his children in the same way as his father did, describing himself as an involved and caring father. On weekends, he brings breakfast to his wife and kids in bed, maintaining a family tradition from his childhood. This demonstrates how positive parenting practices are passed from one generation to the next, with Hanus maintaining and expanding upon his father's approach to "involved" fatherhood.

Parenting, whether harsh or caring, has an impact on the next generation. As Caspi and Elder (1988) argue, harsh parenting is often transferred to the next generation; in other words, there are continuities of harsh parenting into the

next generation. Some respondents made deliberate decisions to reject aspects of their fathers' practices, supporting research showing that understanding factors contributing to continuity or discontinuity of parenting styles helps acknowledge that both continuities and discontinuities exist (Belsky et al., 2009).

Johan did not remember a good relationship with his father and had issues with him while growing up. Although his father did take care of the family economically and was present to a certain extent for some activities, Johan remembered his father as not being involved or caring, as he was often out late and sometimes drinking. During the interview, he mentioned that he had consciously chosen to be different from his father; in other words, to discontinue the fatherhood practices practised by his father.

> When the children were born, I promised myself that I would never come home drunk as my father did during my childhood…this had a negative impact on me during my childhood. I consciously decided that my children would never experience that. I'm also active at home with them, and I took care of them while my wife was away during her studies. I would describe myself as different from how I remember my father. (Johan)

My respondents highlighted both continuities and discontinuities in their experiences of fatherhood. Two of them made intentional choices to create discontinuities in their parenting styles. One respondent noted that his approach to fatherhood had evolved based on changes in time, space, and socio-economic conditions. The final respondent emphasised that he had maintained continuities from his own childhood in his approach to fatherhood. The bricolage and constellation of fatherhood cannot be simplified or juxtaposed. This practice has changed over time; while mothers were and still are the primary caregivers to children, fathers have been finding their position in doing "involved" fatherhood. However, the practice cannot be generalised as universal.

> Our parents were untraditional, and they didn't put any pressure on how Faroese men should be. We had the freedom to choose. I don't fit in our village, as I don't live up to the gender and activities undertaken by most men in the village. But family means a lot to me, and I chose to be where they are. (Hanus)

The respondents described themselves as both "traditional" and "modern", creating personalised approaches to fatherhood that combine elements from different cultural modes. They considered themselves "traditional" in the sense that Faroese customs, such as slaughtering sheep, whaling, and bird hunting, remain integral to Faroese society. However, they also viewed themselves as more "modern" than their fathers, as they practised a more "intimate" and "involved" approach to fatherhood.

Bjarni describes himself as not very talkative, like his father. However, he mentioned that he had intentionally decided to be present and attentive to his children's needs even though he is not always good at taking the initiative.

> I want my kids to feel I'm a present father. They need to know I'm there for them even though I don't always share my emotions. My parents worked a lot when I was a kid, and I was often alone with my younger siblings. I didn't want my kids to experience the same thing. I made a conscious choice to be more present, even though I'm not too talkative. (Bjarni)

This reflection illustrates how fatherhood transformation is a non-linear process that unfolds over time (Bosoni & Mazzucchelli, 2019), with cultural dimensions evolving but not in a straightforward linear manner. Bjarni maintains his father's emotional restraint while increasing his availability and presence.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has sought to analyse and understand fatherhood among men in their fifties and the intergenerational changes between their generation and their fathers' generation. Overall, how did my respondents remember their childhoods and relationships with their fathers, and what were the transmissions, continuities, and discontinuities of fatherhood among my respondents? Fatherhood is a complex affair, and the ways in which it is practised cannot be generalised. As Bruel (1997) mentions, fatherhood is a cultural construction, which each society has its own understanding of what a good, loving and responsible father is. Therefore, one must consider culture, values, time, space, and socio-economic variables when discussing fatherhood.

The childhood experiences of the respondents varied depending on whether their fathers were seafarers or worked on land. In every family, mothers served as the primary caregivers, but gender roles were more strictly defined in some families than in others. Intergenerational continuities and discontinuities existed among the respondents; two had specifically chosen to abandon certain practices and gender roles common in their fathers' generation, one noted both continuities and discontinuities, while the last highlighted continuities and transmissions of certain practices.

Intergenerational transmission serves to internalise gender practices, and my respondents discussed both continuities and discontinuities in fatherhood. They acknowledged that fatherhood is dynamic, shaped by time, values, space, and socio-economic conditions, and that their fathers' styles of fatherhood had been influenced by these factors. The analysis identified both transmissions, continuities and discontinuities among the respondents. Sámal continued occupational patterns while being more emotional "involved" in his children's lives, Jóhan deliberately rejected specific paternal behaviours (drinking, and

emotional absence) while maintaining other aspects such as sports and outdoors activities, respondent like Hanus expanded upon positive inherited practices, maintaining involvement while preserving his father's non-traditional approach to gender roles, and Bjarni retained emotional restraint pattern while increasing availability and presence. These patterns demonstrate that gender repertoires change to incorporate new practices over time (Butler, 1988), with some practices being transformed, continued, or discontinued by the next generation in response to changing social contexts.

The findings also support Dermott's (2008) argument that the dichotomy between breadwinner and "involved" father is overly simplified. The respondents' father demonstrated various forms of involvement that extended beyond economic provision, including educational support, domestic participation, and emotional availability within the social and economic context.

The dichotomisation of the breadwinner versus the "involved" father, and the "traditional" versus the "modern" father, has created a wedge in the discussion about what being a "good" and "involved" father means. However, these elements may coexist when the breadwinner father is also an engaged and "involved" father, taking responsibility for his family, even though he might not be fully engaged in the domestic sphere (Dermott, 2008). Family practices and negotiations are important factors to take into consideration when discussing fatherhood, as family negotiations differ from family to family. Therefore, understandings of fatherhood will also differ. As Griswold (1993) argues, "new" fatherhood is a concept that was created by the middle class when women began to gain higher education and greater access to the labour market. Meanwhile, the concept of the family and the negotiations attached to it are also in transition (Gregory & Miller, 2011).

Debates in the public sphere and some research often describe the domestic sphere as the realm of motherhood because mothers are still heavily involved in unpaid domestic work and spend more time at home with their children. However, my respondents depicted themselves as engaged fathers who actively participate in both outdoor activities and the domestic sphere. I argue that there is a need to broaden the conceptualisation of fatherhood involvement beyond the domestic domain. The respondents' engagement demonstrated "involved" fatherhood through various means: driving children to sports activities, attending competitions, providing educational support, being emotionally available, and maintaining cultural and "traditional" traditions such as slaughtering livestock, hunting whales, and fishing. These forms of care and involvement should be recognised or categorised as "unpaid" work.

This article has shown that there are various forms of intergenerational transmission, involving both continuities and discontinuities, with "traditional" values remaining a part of "modern" life in the Faroe Islands. The dichotomy of "traditionalism" versus "modernism", and "breadwinner" versus "involved" father, may co-exist, as there is no universal description of what an engaged and

involved father is, because fatherhood is a bricolage of different concepts and identities. Fatherhood is not static, but changes across space and time, with transmissions, continuities, and discontinuities all having a place.

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