

# Change and Stability in the Paternal Role Among Palestinian Fathers Living in Israel

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## Research Article

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# Abstract

In the current study, we expand the understanding of paternal involvement in the Arab world and studied paternal involvement among Palestinian fathers living in Israel. To address cultural and sociopolitical contexts, we investigated the paternal role in relation to modernization processes characterizing Palestinian society in Israel (education, tradition, and religiosity). To capture the variance in the paternal role, we assessed it as a multifaceted construct involving three dimensions: direct childcare, household chores, and taking care of bureaucracy and finances. Sixty-eight Palestinian couples participated in the study. Participating parents separately completed a questionnaire assessing parenting role division. In addition, participating fathers completed questionnaires assessing paternal religiosity, and traditionality. Results showed that among the different involvement types, Palestinian fathers are most involved in home-related financial and bureaucratic tasks (i.e., outside tasks). Compared to bureaucracy and finances, paternal involvement in direct childcare tasks was lower, and involvement in routine housework was the lowest. Among the modernity variables, fathers' tertiary education, but not religiosity or traditionality, predicted increased paternal involvement in childcare tasks and routine housework. The study results suggest the continuous prominence of traditional gender role division among Palestinian fathers living in Israel and indicate a slight change among fathers with higher education. The relative prominence of indirect forms of paternal involvement found in our study highlight the importance of evaluating paternal involvement as a multifaceted construct involving both direct and indirect care tasks in collectivistic and traditional societies.

# Introduction

In the past decades, emphasis on the importance of fathers to child development has increased in research and government policies (Cabrera & Tamis-LeMonda, 2015; Fitzgerald et al., 2020). Several longitudinal studies indicated that fathers' involvement has a positive influence on children's social relationships, cognitive development, behaviors, and mental health (Rollè et al., 2019; Sarkadi et al., 2008; Sethna et al., 2017). A growing body of literature has focused on understanding contributors to fathers' involvement and the development of interventions to increase positive paternal involvement (Lamb et al., 2017; Yeung, 2016).

Despite the broad agreement that paternal involvement should be encouraged and promoted globally, most studies on fatherhood focus on fathers in Western and modernized societies. The roles that fathers play in their children's lives in traditional, religious, and patriarchal societies has remained, for most, less explored and consequently less understood. The goal of the current study was to explore current trends in fatherhood in the Arab world, and in particular among Palestinian fathers living in Israel. We hoped to capture the global and unique characteristics of fatherhood in the Arab world by assessing paternal involvement as a multifaceted construct (Lamb et al., 2017) and by evaluating its relation to modernization processes (Attir, 1981; Lamb et al., 2017). In this study, we chose to explore one part of paternal role; we focused on fathers' involvement in the household division of labor, which has undergone significant changes due to modernization processes, especially in western societies.

According to modernization theory (Attir, 1981; Inkeles & Smith, 1974), modern society can be characterized as industrial, technologically advanced, urban, and secular. People in modern societies tend to have higher levels of education, and for the most part are more liberated from traditional codes. In addition, people living in modern societies tend to be more supportive of gender equality (Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Inglehart & Norris, 2005). On the other hand, premodern societies are described as rural, more religious, and traditional. The division of household roles between men and women is often influenced by age, gender, and social status (less equal between women and men). There is also an emphasis on relationships within the extended family (Hunter, 1983). Fogiel-Bijaoui, (2002) found in her research that in family contexts modernization is a catalyst for interfamily changes. These changes include, for example, preferring nuclear family over the extended family, changes in women–men relationships toward a more equal role division, an emphasis on individualistic achievements, and a higher involvement of fathers in direct childcare.

Palestinians in Israel are a minority group consisting of 21% of the entire population (Taub Central Staff, 2018a). About 83.3% of the Palestinians in Israel are Muslims, 8.4% are Christian, and 7.8% are Druze. Israeli Palestinians are described as a traditional and patriarchal society (Azaiza, 2012; Kulik & Klein, 2010). However, in the past 30 years, the Israeli Palestinian society has undergone several modernization processes. These processes involve, for example, improvements in the access to higher education, transition to smaller families, urbanization, and improvement in socioeconomic status (Ayalon, 2018; HajYahia-Abu Ahmad, 2006; Khalaila & Litwin, 2011; Taub Central Staff, 2018b).

Despite the modernization processes and heavy influence of the modern characteristics of the Jewish population (Ayalon, 2018), the Arab identity continues to play a central role in Palestinian's self-definition (Hermann et al., 2019), and religious and traditional norms and values continue to guide personal and family lives in the Arab community (Al-Krenawi, 2005; Khalaila & Litwin, 2011). These norms and traditions include, for example, a patriarchal family system, holidays (e.g., Mother's Day), wedding celebrations, funerals, food, and folklore (Abd El Hakeem, 2017; Abd El Hamid, 2018; Ajami, 2016; Rashad et al., 2005). In relation to family structure and fatherhood, Arab families are still considered patriarchal. Fathers are the primary decision makers and the main breadwinners, but they are less involved in direct childcare compared to mothers (Alayashi, 2008; Kuttub & Heilman, 2017; Ridge et al., 2017).

Similar processes have been documented in other Arab societies, where despite the maintenance of traditional attitudes and roles, changes toward a less patriarchal and more egalitarian family structure have occurred. For example, in research conducted among 120 Iraqi Arab families (120 couples) with at least one child between the ages of 13 and 18, Sharabji (2011) found that 73.3% of parents thought that democratic parent–child dialog prevents conflicts. While this result indicates a modernization process, most children in the study reported not sharing their private lives with their parents, suggesting that although fathers are more aware of the importance of open communication, the practice of it is still relatively minor (which points to preservation of the patriarchal structure). Dwairy et al. (2006) showed a link exists between parenting style and the social-political system in the country. For example, nondemocratic countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia and occupied Palestinian territories) have higher prevalence

of controlling patterns in parenting. Concomitantly, in more democratic countries and countries that have undergone more robust modernization processes (e.g., Lebanon and Jordan), a mixed flexible pattern predominated. Palestinian parents in Israel showed a similar mixed pattern, which may indicate the dual cultures (Arabic and Israeli) in their lives.

Hallawa (2011) studied the role of Syrian parents in the children's social development. Her results suggested that both parents play essential roles in children's social personality development in terms of responsibility, equality, independence, and expressing opinion. Despite this similarity, the study results indicated that Syrian fathers emphasize adherence to the family system more than mothers do. Ridge et al. (2017) found that Emirati Arab individuals rated their fathers highest on the good provider role (breadwinner) but lowest on responsible paternal engagement. In addition, they found greater self-esteem levels among participants who perceived their fathers as more positively and responsibly engaged in their lives, more available, and less adherent to traditional gender roles. Finally, participants who perceived their fathers as good gender models and breadwinners had higher self-esteem than those who did not.

In relation role division, research conducted in the Palestinian territories between 2016 and 2017 found that despite an increase in women's participation in higher education and the paid labor market, this transformation has not been accompanied by fundamental changes in the division of domestic and care work (Kuttab & Heilman, 2017). It was found that Palestinian women are considered the main persons responsible for domestic and care work, whereas men are the main breadwinners (Kuttab & Heilman, 2017).

Taken together, the scientific literature on Arab fathers is relatively small (Kuttab & Heilman, 2017; Ridge et al., 2017). The existing studies suggest a continuous prominence of traditional gender role division among Arab fathers and a trend toward lower involvement in direct childcare. Notwithstanding, evidence shows changes in the paternal role related to modernization processes may vary between the different Arab subcultures (Ahmed, 2013; Cohen-Mor, 2013). The existence of modernization processes alongside traditional values and norms may require applying a broad definition of paternal involvement that does not rely solely on direct childcare and can capture paternal roles practiced in more patriarchal societies.

For example, Lamb (2010) and Lamb et al. (2017) described paternal involvement as manifested in both direct and indirect pathways, with both demonstrating positive influence on children's development. According to Lamb (2010), direct involvement involves direct childcare (e.g., feeding, bathing, and playing with them). On the other hand, indirect involvement pertains to paternal activities that support childcare but are not conducted directly with the child (e.g., helping with house chores). Direct childcare involvement was found important for children's social and language development as well as self-confidence (Lamb, 2010), and it is linked to children's psychological adjustment (Flouri, 2008), fewer behavioral problems (Carlson, 2006), higher educational attainment (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004), and overall mental health (Boyce et al., 2006; Dubowitz et al., 2001). Paternal involvement in household tasks (i.e., house chores) or in tasks with external institutions (e.g., paying bills) found to contribute to the financial stability of the family, the availability of resources, and the level of stress experienced by parents

as well as to the mother's availability to provide direct care for the children (Lamb, 2010; Valizadeh et al., 2018). The relationship between paternal involvement and child outcomes was found to vary substantially depending on paternal functions or roles across familial, subcultural, cultural, and historical contexts (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004).

Despite the multifaceted approach described above, research on paternal involvement still focuses for the most part on the direct childcare path as the means of evaluating paternal contribution. This emphasis may reflect the shift observed in many Western societies toward a more egalitarian role division with mothers and an increase in direct paternal childcare (Lamb et al., 2017). Nonetheless, in non-Western or more traditional societies, the indirect paternal involvement suggested by Lamb et al. may nevertheless represent a major component of paternal care and studying it can be crucial for understanding fatherhood.

## **The Present Research**

The goal of the current research was to improve the understanding of the level and quality of paternal involvement among Palestinian fathers in Israel using the lens of modernization theory and a multifaceted definition of paternal involvement. We evaluated the involvement using reports from both mothers and fathers and evaluated paternal involvement in relation to (a) childcare tasks (e.g., taking the children to doctor's visits), (b) routine housework (e.g., doing laundry), (c) and outside tasks (e.g., buying grocery, paying bills, etc.). We hypothesized that paternal involvement among Palestinian fathers in Israel will be characterized by higher levels of routine housework and outside tasks compared to childcare tasks and that modernity-related variables (father's education, traditionality, and religiosity) will contribute to higher paternal involvement in childcare tasks.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants were 68 Palestinian couples who were citizens of Israel and recruited from the community using a snowball sampling method during the spring of 2018. Inclusion criteria were (a) Palestinian resident or citizen of Israel, (b) a couple who lives and raises children together, and (c) having at least one child. Fathers ranged in age from 25 to 56 ( $M = 39.78$ ,  $SD = 7.25$ ). All the participants were married and had at least one child ( $M = 2.49$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). Children's ages ranged from 1 month to 17 years old ( $M = 8.79$ ,  $SD = 5.35$ ). Half of the participants reported an average salary between 10,000 ILS and 20,000 ILS, which is consistent with the average family income in Israel (16,518 ILS; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In addition, 47.1% of the fathers and 66.2% of the mothers completed tertiary education. The majority of the participants (61.8%) lived in cities, while 38.2% lived in villages. Of the participants, 79.4% were Muslims, 14.7% were Christians, and 5.9% Druze, representing the three major religious groups within the Palestinian population in Israel. Bottom of Form

### **Measures**

## ***Demographic Variables***

Participants completed a set of demographic questions including age, marital status, educational level, family income, number of children and their ages, and religious orientation.

Religiosity was measured using the Arabic version of the Religiosity Level Questionnaire (Hammada, 2002). The measure includes three statements examining the level of an individual's belief in religious values and the level of acting in accordance with religious commandments ("You believe in religious values," "You behave according to your religious values," and "You practice the religion commandments"). Each statement was rated on a 5 point Likert scale, (ranging from 1 "do not agree at all" to 5 "strongly agree"). Internal reliability in the current study was good (Cronbach  $\alpha = .84$ ).

Traditionality was measured using an Arabic translation of the Traditionality Questionnaire (Karkabi, 2004). The translation was validated using a back translation to Hebrew procedure. The questionnaire consists of 21 items assessing attitudes toward traditional Arab norms (e.g., "The best thing is to listen to adults' advice," "The man is the head of the family regardless of who the financial supporter is"). Participants were asked to rate on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *do not agree at all* to 6 = *strongly agree*) how much they agree with each statement. In Karkabi (2004), the internal-consistency reliability was .65. However, in the current study, the internal-consistency reliability of the questionnaire was low (Cronbach  $\alpha = .53$ ). Thus, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis and formed a shorter version of the questionnaire, which consists of 6 items (Items 2, 3, 5, 13, 14, 15) of the Traditionality Questionnaire representing the individual–environment relationship (e.g., "Children who obey rules like adults are commendable" and "I try to listen to my parents, as much as possible, out of respect"). The new internal consistency was adequate (Cronbach  $\alpha = .72$ ).

## ***Parental Involvement in household division***

Paternal involvement was assessed using the Arabic version of the Division of Household Labor questionnaire (Lavee & Katz, 2002). The measure consists of 15 tasks (e.g., meal preparation and taking care of official business). Each parent had to choose separately who performs each task on a 7-point scale (1 = *only the wife*, 2 = *mainly the wife*, 3 = *both parents*, 4 = *mainly the husband*, 5 = *only the husband*, 6 = *someone else*, and 7 = *irrelevant*). Tasks that were scored 6 or 7 were omitted from the analyses. Lavee and Katz (2002) found that these tasks are divided into three main subscales: routine housework (e.g., cleaning and laundry), childcare tasks (e.g., bathing children and tucking them into bed), and other household tasks (e.g., paying bills), which we label *outside tasks* in the current study. In the current study, the internal consistency of the first two scales was good (Cronbach  $\alpha = .80$  and  $.74$ , respectively). However, the internal consistency of outside tasks was low; thus, we conducted item analysis and omitted statement 14 (car treatment), resulting in adequate internal consistency (Cronbach  $\alpha = .66$ ). Due to the high correlation between fathers and mothers' reports ( $= .81$ ), we used the mean of each couple's answers in the analysis.

## **Procedure**

Each participating parent signed a consent form and completed separately a set of paper-and-pencil questionnaires in Arabic. Parents were not aware of each other's responses.

## Results

The results of Shapiro's normality test revealed that the following variables were non-normally distributed, without a tendency toward a specific trend: family income, fathers' education, traditionality, religiosity, routine housework, and childcare tasks. Therefore, to test the associations between paternal involvement (i.e., routine housework, childcare tasks, and outside tasks) and the modernity variables (i.e., family income, fathers and mothers' education, traditionality, and religiosity), we conducted a Spearman correlation test. Results (presented in Table 1) showed a moderate relation between fathers' education and both routine housework ( $r = .33$ ) and childcare tasks ( $r = .27$ ), whereas a moderate positive relation between mothers' education and routine housework ( $r = .33$ ), and a moderate negative relation between mothers' education and traditionality ( $r = -.26$ ) were found.

To test the first hypothesis that Palestinian fathers are more involved in outside tasks (e.g., paying bills), and in routine housework (e.g., dishwashing), compared to childcare tasks (e.g., helping the children with their homework), we conducted three paired  $t$  tests with a Bonferroni correction ( $\alpha = .016$ ). In line with our hypothesis, Palestinian fathers scored significantly higher in outside tasks than they did in routine housework,  $t(67) = -16.78, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 2.92$ , and childcare tasks,  $t(67) = -11.80, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 2.15$ . Contrary to our hypothesis, Palestinian fathers scored significantly higher in childcare tasks than they did in routine housework,  $t(67) = -6.90, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = .91$  (see Figure 1).

To test the second hypothesis that modernity variables contribute to paternal involvement type, two hierarchical linear regressions were conducted. Results of the regression analyses (see Tables 2 and 3) showed that involvement in childcare tasks was positively predicted by the fathers' education level, which explained 14% of the variance. Paternal traditionality and religiosity had no additional contributions to the prediction.

For routine housework, the results of the regression indicated that fathers' education level, explained 10% of the variance in paternal routine housework. Paternal traditionality and religiosity had no additional contributions to the prediction.

To test the contribution of paternal education to parental involvement type further, we divided fathers into fathers with tertiary education (those who had more than 12 years of education;  $n = 32$ ) and fathers without tertiary education (those who had 12 years or less of education;  $n = 36$ ). We then conducted three independent  $t$  tests with Bonferroni correction ( $\alpha = .016$ ) comparing fathers' average scores in each involvement category. Results showed that fathers with tertiary education scored significantly higher in routine housework,  $t(66) = -2.94, p = .004$ , Cohen's  $d = .72$ ). In relation to childcare tasks, the results indicated higher involvement of fathers with tertiary education that was significant at the .05 level,  $t(66) = -2.13, p = .037$ ). Fathers with tertiary education did not score lower in outside tasks than fathers without tertiary education did,  $t(66) = 1.66, p = .290$ ; see Figure 2).

To summarize, the results showed that Palestinian fathers are most involved in outside tasks, their involvement in direct childcare tasks was lower, and their involvement in routine housework was the lowest. Furthermore, fathers with tertiary education scored higher than fathers without tertiary education did in routine housework and marginally higher in childcare tasks. Among the modernity variables, fathers' education predicted their involvement in both childcare tasks and routine housework, whereas the rest of the modernity variables had no additional contribution to the predictions.

## **Discussion**

The goal of the current study was to investigate the involvement of Palestinians fathers living in Israel in their children's lives and its relation to modernity processes (e.g., traditionality and education). The results indicated that Palestinian fathers, as a group, are more involved in outside tasks than childcare tasks and routine housework. In relation to modernity variables, the results indicated that a father's education level plays a significant role in relation to paternal involvement, as indicated by an increase in childcare task and routine housework involvement. Contrary to our hypothesis, family income, religiosity, and traditionality had no additional contribution to the prediction of either childcare task or routine housework involvement.

### **Patterns of Paternal Involvement Among Palestinian Fathers**

As a group, Palestinian fathers scored significantly higher in outside tasks than they did in routine housework and childcare tasks. In addition, a positive correlation between paternal traditionality and outside tasks' involvement was found. Outside tasks involve dealing with external institutions (e.g., taking care of finance matters). This finding supports the patriarchal structure of the Palestinian society, according to which men are considered mediators with the outside world, hence they take on more responsibilities involving relations with organizations and people outside the extended family (Kuttab & Heilman, 2017; Lerner, 1987; Sharabi, 1992).

Interestingly, Palestinian fathers scored higher in childcare tasks than they did in routine housework. Similar results were found in a study conducted in Lebanon with Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees. Participants in the study were asked to rate their fathers or significant male figures' involvement in their childhood. The results showed that only 48% of men and 33% of women reported that these male figures were involved in roles that were considered feminine (i.e., house chores or childcare tasks). These roles usually involved taking care of the children, buying groceries, and helping the children with their homework (Mansour et al., 2017). Only a small portion was involved in house chores (e.g., cleaning the house and doing laundry). An additional study conducted with Palestinian couples found that the couples viewed house chores as women's obligation whereas they were seen as optional and voluntary for men (Rezk Allah, 2006). The perception of household chores as a feminine task can explain the lowest involvement rates in routine housework observed in the current study.

### **The Contribution of Modernity Processes to Paternal Involvement**

Tagharobi and Zarei (2015) overviewed modernization processes in the Middle East and showed that although modernization processes in the Middle East began in the 19th century, their influence has been gradual and slow to this day. The results of the current study seem in line with this observation. Although modernization processes, and in particular, education, has contributed to paternal involvement, the differences in involvement were partial, pertaining mostly to direct childcare. The prominent role of education in relation to paternal involvement may have several explanations. First, in the present study, we found a high correlation between fathers and mother's education levels and a moderate correlation between mothers' education and paternal involvement in routine housework. Employment levels are often higher among educated mothers (OECD, 2020). In two working parents' homes, childcare tasks were often divided differently, resulting in a higher level of fathers' involvement in both childcare and housework (Craig & Mullan, 2011).

A second explanation may be related to the nature of higher education in Israel. Palestinians in Israel often go to Israeli higher education institutions to gain tertiary education (Council for Higher Education, 2018). The Israeli academic institutions are usually far from the Palestinian's hometowns, resulting in Palestinian students moving to a foreign city and experiencing separation and independence for the first time (Shaviv et al., 2013; Sikkuy, 2013). This is a significant transition for Palestinian students who are used to living in separated Palestinian communities with limited contact with the Jewish community (Shadma, 2020; Shaviv et al., 2013), and hence they may experience separation and independence for the first time (Shaviv et al., 2013; Sikkuy, 2013). This change in students' independency as well as direct exposure to the Israeli secular society may contribute to changes in attitudes toward gender role division and gender equality that may increase their openness to performing house chores and being better skilled at them (Mulder & Clark, 2002). It is possible that Palestinian fathers with tertiary education will be more prone to being partially involved in childcare tasks and routine housework because of their direct exposure to the modern values of the secular Israeli society.

Interestingly, although our results indicated an increase in routine housework and childcare tasks among fathers with higher education, these fathers had similar involvement rates in outside tasks. The maintenance of high paternal involvement in finances and tasks conducted outside the house suggests that although educated fathers are more open to taking on roles related to childcare and household chores, the patriarchal structure is nevertheless preserved to a degree as fathers continue to serve as the main mediators between the home and the external world.

The partial shift in paternal roles documented in our results echoes results from past studies on the gradual and slow changes characterizing modernization processes. For example, research in 13 countries from Europe, the United States, and Australia showed that in more traditional countries, modernization processes result in rapid changes at the macrolevel (e.g., education, labor market, and politics), but slower changes in household labor division (Geist & Cohen, 2011; MenEngage, 2014). Traditional gender role division may thus remain prevalent despite modernization processes. An additional study conducted in Palestinian territories (Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem) found that men with

higher levels of education were more likely to be involved in care work activities (e.g., child and house care) than men without higher education levels were (Kuttab & Heilman, 2017).

In the current study, contrary to our expectations, paternal traditionality and religiosity had no additional contribution to the prediction of paternal involvement in childcare tasks and routine housework. One explanation can be related to the constricted distribution of these two variables in the current study (Dette et al., 1998). The constricted distribution may be related to relative homogeneity of the sample in relation to these two variables due to the sampling method.

An additional explanation could be related to the political context of the modernity process in the Middle East. Unlike Western countries, in the Middle East, modernization processes are embedded within a political context and represent to some extent the presence of external political power that can undermine and oppress the Arab cultural identity and values (Gasper, 2014; Tagharobi & Zarei, 2015). Though caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from our data (due to the non-normal distribution of the modernity variables and the lack of inquiry related to participants' perception of these changes), the results of the study suggest a trend toward maintenance of traditional values and a rejection of modernization processes. If we take into consideration the political meaning that can be applied to modernization processes, education can represent a form of modernization process that is less charged politically and hence may enable more participation and changes to take place (Shaviv et al., 2013). Thus, educated fathers may continue to maintain their alliance to traditional and religious values and norms, while simultaneously changing the practices involved in their core family and parenting.

## **Limitations**

The current study has several limitations that deserve mention. First, we recruited the sample using a snowball sampling method. Although this sampling method is prevalent among minority groups (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Dragan & Isaic-Maniu, 2013), it is unclear whether the sample accurately represents the diversity of the Palestinian population living in Israel. Second, the conclusions are limited by reliance on parents' self-report measures. Although we used both paternal and maternal reports to increase the validity of the response, it is possible that parents' reports were biased and adhered to societal and cultural norms. Because we did not include a social desirability measure, it was difficult to control this effect. Another limitation was the reliability of some used measures among Palestinians in Israel. Measure's reliability limitation is common among minority groups (Ofek-Shanny, 2020; Ramirez et al., 2005). Future studies should aim to develop measure with higher reliability among Palestinians in Israel. For example, traditionality measure can take into consideration different aspects of traditionality, such as: gender equality, contact with the modern Jewish population, relationships with the extended family (including using technology and social media), etc.. While outside tasks can include more detailed categories, for example: instead of the statement "car treatment", more detailed category can include car wash, refueling, and going to car workshop. Finally, although our results indicated relationships exist between the constructs, the collection of the data at one time point, with no comparison of several

generations, limits our ability to fully capture modernization processes that may require a multigenerational perspective. Future studies using a larger representative sample, measures adapted to the Palestinian society, and participants from several generations would strengthen the confidence in the observed patterns. Moreover, using a mixed methods approach involving qualitative inquiry of perceptions may be important to understand the complex social and political processes described above.

## Conclusion And Practical Implications

The present study contributes to improving the understanding of the involvement of Palestinian fathers living in Israel with their children. It is the first to our knowledge to investigate the paternal role of Arab fathers as a broad and multifaceted construct involving both direct and indirect roles (Lamb, 2010). Moreover, it is the first to our knowledge to assess paternal roles in relation to modernization processes taking place within the Palestinian society in Israel. The results of the study highlight that although a gradual shift is occurring in the level of paternal involvement in childcare and in household chores among fathers with higher education, activities conducted outside the home to support the family still encompass the main paternal activity. This pattern, observed in the current study, underscores the traditional gender role division characterizing Palestinian fathers living in Israel, despite the gradual and slight changes observed among fathers with higher levels of education.

Although caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions due to the small sample size and cross-sectional nature of this study, the findings may help inform psychosocial interventions with Palestinian fathers. To support effective interventions with Palestinian families, it is important for clinicians and educators to pay attention to several aspects: First, it is important to be aware of the patriarchal structure of this society and the attribution of gender-based meaning to different roles (e.g., seeing household chores as feminine while attributing masculinity in fathers as the mediators with external figures). Second, to avoid underevaluating the involvement of Palestinian fathers, it is important to evaluate paternal involvement using a broader definition that emphasizes both direct and indirect involvement types. Finally, when applying interventions to increase paternal involvement, it is important to take a gradual approach that takes into account the family values and existing areas of fathers' involvement (Gershby & Omer, 2017).

Increasing fathers' paternal involvement with their children can be beneficial to child development in every society. Nonetheless, clinicians and educators aiming at encouraging higher involvement and participation levels of Palestinian fathers should pay attention to their own biases related to the paternal role, refrain from imposing Western values, and adapt the interventions applied to the societal and cultural norms of the family with whom they work.

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## Declarations

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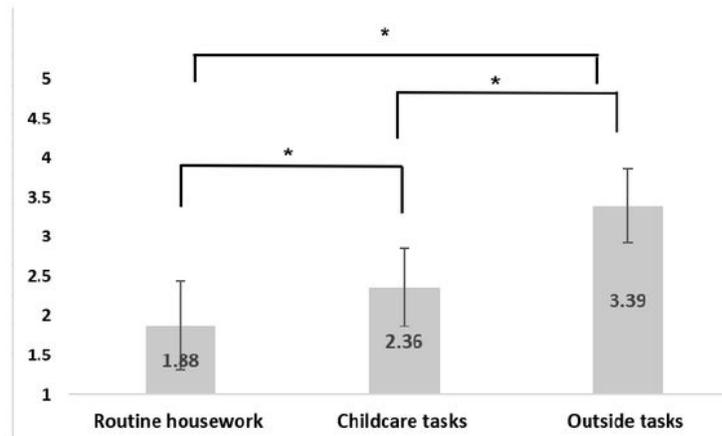
## Tables

Tables 1-3 are in the supplementary files section.

## Figures

**Figure 1**

*Differences between routine housework, childcare tasks, and outside tasks among Palestinian fathers (N = 68)*



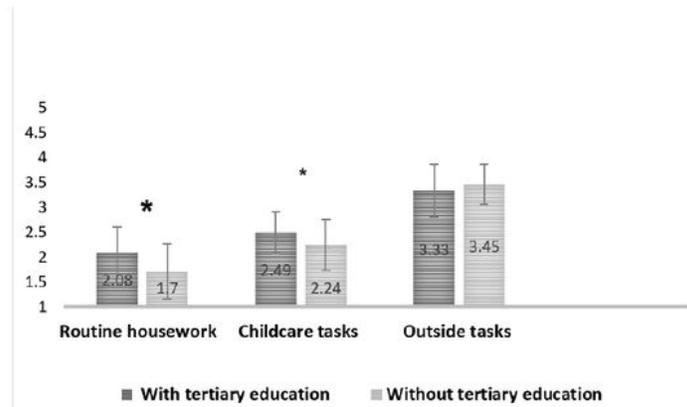
Note: \* $p < .001$

**Figure 1**

Differences between routine housework, childcare tasks, and outside tasks among Palestinian fathers (N = 68)

**Figure 2**

*Differences between routine housework, childcare tasks, and outside tasks between fathers with tertiary education (n = 32) and fathers without tertiary education (n = 36)*



Note: \*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

**Figure 2**

Differences between routine housework, childcare tasks, and outside tasks between fathers with tertiary education (n = 32) and fathers without tertiary education (n = 36)

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