



Department of Social Sciences

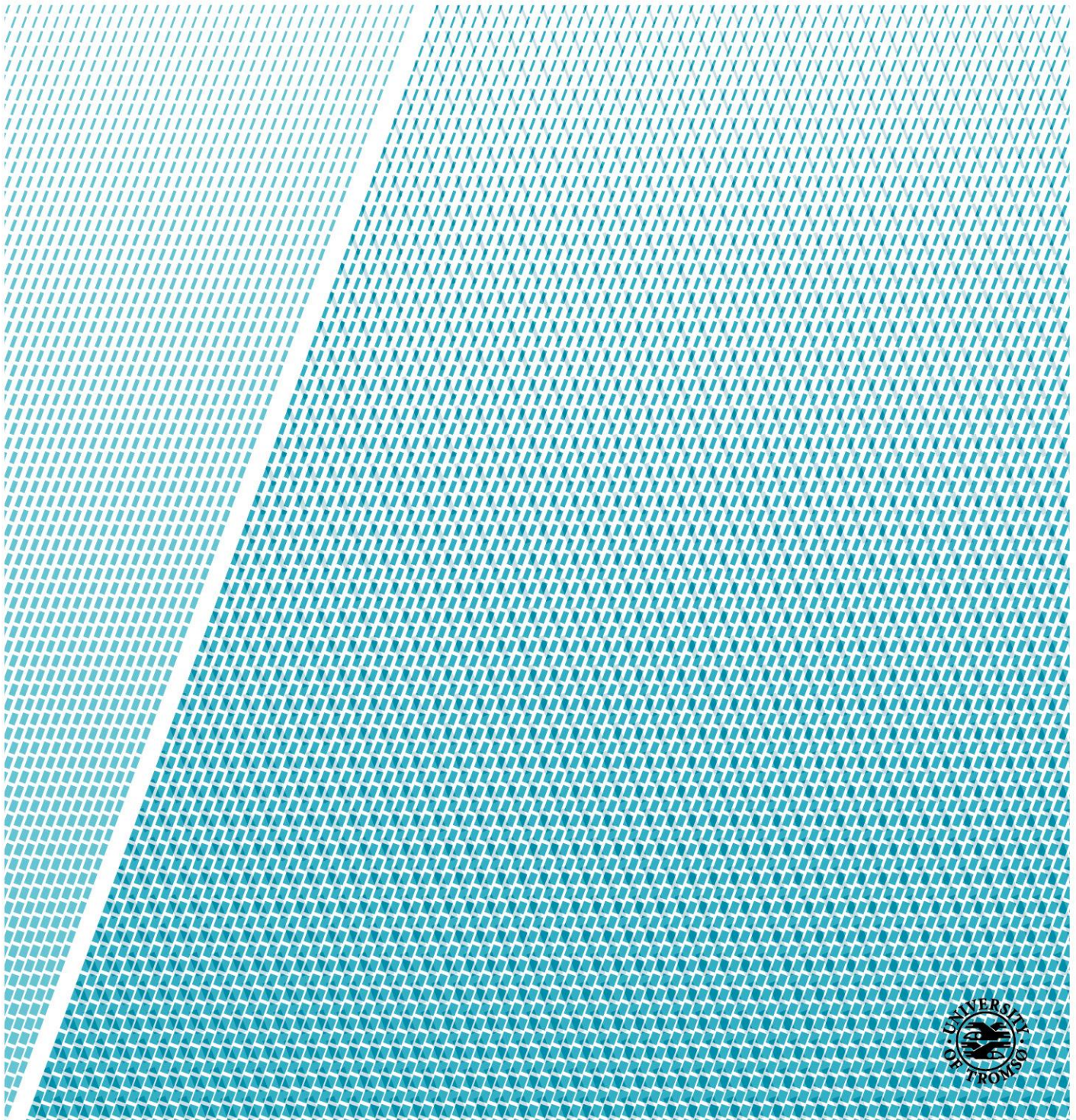
A Journey towards Fatherhood

The importance of embodying a new role

Irati Lafragua Salazar

Master's thesis in Visual Cultural Studies – May 2018

*Supervisor: **Trond Waage***



Abstract

This thesis explores the complex transformations involved in first-time fatherhood, when adult men undergo one of the most important changes of status in their lives. How is this new status reached? What are the stages of this transition? What other social factors influence the way this transition takes place? The study is primarily based on audiovisual material of my husband, a Spanish researcher living in Norway, collected from one month before the birth of our son through the first four months of his life. This footage allows me to examine the psychological and physical evolution of this newborn father, who, during the process, will have to redefine and understand himself and his new status, as well as his privileges and expectations as a man. This case study of my husband-collaborator, together with fieldwork material from focus groups and interviews with other fathers and medical staff in Norway and Spain, forms the basis of an analysis of fathering and masculinity that explores, among other things, the degree to which this status change is dependent on embodied knowledge, and how this requires an amount of time and practice that fathers do not always experience.

Film Synopsis: A Fatherlike Feeling

Becoming a father is major, one-time event in a man's life. However, during the pregnancy, the delivery and the first months of the post-natal period, most of the attention is directed to the mother and the baby, with fathers experiencing the process more as privileged spectators than as main actors. Being about to become a mother myself gave me the opportunity to do research into my own family, filming the process from the very beginning to document my husband's slow, gradual transition to become a committed father who wants to be as important for his son as I am. As a result, this intimate narration opens a window into a newly created family, and especially to Jorge, his feelings and the evolution of his physical relationship with the baby, in the context of a 7-month parental leave which created a unique opportunity for him to establish long-lasting bonds.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Trond Waage, for his support and all his insightful comments, which have greatly helped improve this thesis. I would also like to thank my professors at the Department, Bjørn Arntsen and Peter Crawford, for their helpful comments on both the film and this thesis, and for encouraging me to always give a more accurate shape to my ideas and arguments.

Thanks are also due to the technical and audiovisual team, Andreas Buch, Prudence Uriri and Seifu Haile, for their support and advice during the long process of film editing, and to my fellow students, Ema Goričanová and Torgeir Lien, for their comments and perspective at different stages of this research project.

This study would not have been possible without my collaborators. I want to thank the fathers in my focus groups and interviews, both in Norway (Björn Lundquist, Sebastian Bican, Florian Hiss), and in Spain (Jon García, Javi Saratxaga, Miguel García), as well as the midwives (Helena Roos and Maddalen Corcuera) and the paediatrician nurse (Alberto Morrás) that kindly agreed to talk to me. Of course, special thanks are due to my and Jorge's family: my father, Jesús Lafragua, his father, Eugenio González, and his brother, Daniel González.

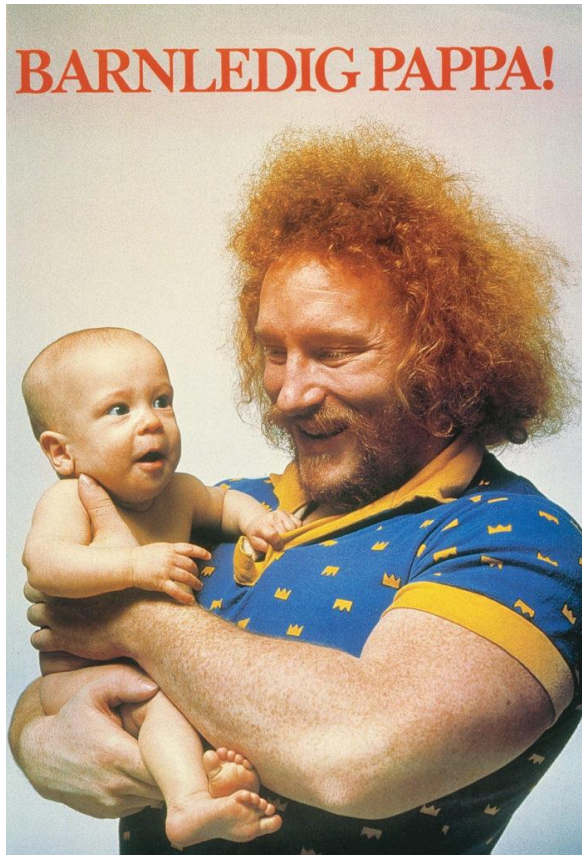
Finally, I want to thank Jorge, who agreed to collaborate with me in discovering such an intimate moment of our lives from a not-too-long-ago unexpected perspective, and our little son Oihan, without whom, quite literally, none of this would have been possible.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| MOTIVATION | 2 |
| THE IDEA | 3 |
| FIELDWORK CONTEXT..... | 4 |
| Our family | 4 |
| Geographical context..... | 5 |
| Parental leave in Norway and Spain..... | 7 |
| METHODOLOGY | 8 |
| Negotiating access to the field..... | 10 |
| EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS | 12 |
| Why visual?..... | 12 |
| Reflexivity..... | 15 |
| Anthropology at home and autobiography | 16 |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS | 18 |
| FATHERING | 19 |
| Traditional sex-based arrangement | 19 |
| Natural vs. Cultural | 20 |
| The ‘new’ father..... | 22 |
| FATHERHOOD, A RITE OF PASSAGE | 24 |
| Pregnancy and embodiment | 26 |
| Delivery and first days | 29 |
| After the baby’s first month | 32 |
| EXPLORING UNKNOWN TERRITORY: THE FEMININE | 34 |
| Maternal influence..... | 34 |
| Secondary role..... | 35 |
| FINDING THEIR OWN SPACE..... | 39 |
| IS FATHERING A CHALLENGE TO MASCULINITY? | 42 |
| Masked gender roles..... | 43 |
| WHEN SOCIAL CLASS MATTERS | 47 |
| THE OPPOSITE EFFECT | 49 |
| A SUMMARY OF CLAIMS | 50 |
| CONCLUSIONS..... | 52 |
| REFERENCES..... | 57 |

INTRODUCTION

This image of the Swedish weightlifter Leif “Hoa Hoa” Dahlgreen holding a baby became the symbol of paternity leave in Sweden, where it featured as the picture of the first paternity leave campaign back in 1976. In the words of Johansson and Klinth (2008:42), Dahlgreen was ‘a



family-oriented version of a Swedish welfare-state Viking’. The message seemed clear: you can remain virile, taking a parental leave will not challenge your masculinity. Many different campaigns, which according to numbers have only been partially effective, have followed this one trying to convince men of the importance of paternity leave. Even though Swedish men regard this permission positively, in 2004 they took only 18.7 percent of the total leave—a raise, nonetheless: at the beginning of the 80s this number was only 5 percent. Sweden was the first country to introduce the right to a paid parental leave for men in 1974, with the aim of moving towards gender equality by ‘get[ing] jobs for moms and get[ing] dads pregnant’ (Klinth, 2002:243, in Johansson & Klinth,

2008). Norway was the second country to introduce a parental quota that could be shared between the mother and the father, in 1978, but, as in Sweden, the possibility to share this period did not necessarily encourage men to do so (Meil et al, 2017; Rostgaard, 2014). Perhaps as a response to this, Norway was the first country to introduce, in 1993, a 4 week paternal leave (father’s quota) exclusively dedicated to men—that is, a period of leave that would get lost if the father did not make use of it (International Labour Organization, 2005). Around the same time, Spanish fathers could only take 2 days, and it was not until 2007 that a father-specific permission was established in 13 days (Meil, Rogero-García & Romero-Balsas, 2017).

Already from 1968, the Swedish government had started to set some principles to question traditional gender roles and try to give women the same importance in economic life. It was written that this equality could only be achieved ‘if the man is also educated and encouraged to take an active part in parenthood and is given the same rights and duties as the

woman in his parental capacity' (Sandlund, 1968:4). However, to this day many if not most people still perceive the father as the person whose role is to support the mother (Thomas, Bonér & Hildingsson, 2011), and only a handful of studies have researched and discussed fathers' own needs and experiences during the transition to fatherhood.

This study departs empirically from the personal transformation of Jorge González Alonso (31), who, in the course of a 7-month parental leave, underwent a transformation that is in fact three: he went from professional researcher to 24-hour father on work leave, from just a son to both son and father, and, together with me, from couple to parents. This thesis is articulated around this multiple transformation, analysed here as a kind of *rite de passage*. It is also about the way Jorge incorporated the role of caregiver within the ever-changing construction of his masculinity, and the expectations he faces as a consequence of his being a man. His evolution, seen through daily situations starting before the baby was born, direct interviews, one-on-one conversations with friends and family, and focus groups, will help us understand this moment of crucial importance for the re-definition of his identity.

MOTIVATION

This is, indeed, a very personal project, since it has been conducted within my own family. Once you find out you are pregnant, a whole world of books, shops, brands and gadgets you had never heard of opens up almost instantly. Jorge and I were very much interested in reading books about attachment and natural parenting, as well as exploring alternative ideas about how to experience the pregnancy, the delivery and the relationship with the baby. We then got hold of different books about the subject, and we tried to read them together. However, in doing so we realized that almost every single one of them addressed the mother, and that the role of fathers was always limited to assisting the mother's needs and taking care of housework (cleaning the house, cooking, etc.), without reference or mention to the emotional journey they may be undergoing, or how to deal with it. In an attempt to develop an egalitarian parenthood from the beginning, I became interested in the role of the father and did an informal academic search—I could only find a few articles and book chapters. A more thorough search confirmed that, despite a growing interest to understand fathers' experiences, research is still minimal compared to motherhood experiences (Halle et al., 2008:58). It occurred to me that our own upcoming parenthood was an opportunity to add to that research; to see if, once the moment

arrived, our interiorized models would be challenged or perpetuated. To witness how this newly created father would cope with his new role, both internally and socially.

Besides my own interest, I believe that my research addresses a gap in the existing literature about fathering, which, as I have just mentioned, is still not very large. The goal, therefore, is not only to increase the amount of research done on this matter, but rather to add something new. Most of the current studies on this matter are based on questionnaires or interviews. Even if these are good methods to capture some of the experiences and worries of the fathers, as well as the policies regarding fatherhood (as I am doing here), they also homogenize the group and thus make the research more impersonal. Fatherhood is a process where feelings and physical transformations are key. That is why, by using a camera as my main tool, I believe I have been able to grasp a new kind of knowledge which is closer to experience, trying to understand and portray the ‘immaterial and sensory nature of human experience and knowledge’ (Pink, 2007:22). By *experience* I mean here Jorge’s direct involvement in the events that make up and surround his new situation as a father: the interaction with the baby, the organization of tasks related to his care, the contact with other people as a result of his being a parent (e.g., medical staff dealing with the baby), etc. The term is also meant to include Jorge’s feelings and reactions to these situations, that is, the way he lives these events internally. I believe that video images allow us to document *external* experience faithfully, while at the same time they capture very subtle signs of the *internal* experience (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, silences, etc.).

THE IDEA

Having your first baby is, by definition, a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Mothers undergo a nine-month physical pregnancy that affects their bodies and their minds, and as (traditionally) primary caregivers in our societies, they are the ones who have received the most attention, both from the academic and from the social point of view. However, men’s commitment to their newborn babies is growing, and they also have to learn how to become fathers and how to deal with changes in their social role which are, in principle, as significant as those of the woman. In 1979, Ross Parke wrote that fathers were less likely than mothers to be ‘actively involved in caretaking activities such as feeding or changing diapers’ (Parke, 1979:12). Nowadays, however, fathers in most Western cultures are expected to be “present” from the

very beginning of pregnancy, but they are rarely offered the necessary training and support to do so.

When I started planning this project, my idea was to follow the first three months of a “newborn father” with his baby, and his relationship with his family and friends, in order to explore how social constructs of masculinity affect fathering. I wanted to analyse this using my own family, which was about to grow by one member, and I hoped to capture the intercultural perspective intrinsic to our situation: the father is Spanish, but he is working in Norway. This means that he got a parental leave from the Norwegian system, most of which he spent in Spain—two countries that would confront Jorge with different expectations about his role, his situation as a father on parental leave, and his responsibilities towards the baby and the home. Finally, I also wanted to touch briefly on the generational perspective, investigating how differently he developed from his father (and mine) in the way of living their fatherhood.

I started this project with a high commitment to what I was doing and with a lot of faith that, whatever it was going to be like becoming a mother or a father and filming the process along the way, it would make for interesting research that would address issues of gender and parenthood in a moment which is absolutely unrepeatable—the first few months of a newborn and a father—and from a very close point of view—the mother’s. The gender perspective makes it very interesting due to the slow but steady incorporation to the public debate of parental leave and its relationship with shared responsibilities within a family. This debate inevitably leads to the question of how gender identities are socially constructed, at a moment in life (pregnancy, delivery, breastfeeding) where biology accentuates differences between men and women, posing a challenge to the idea of them being interchangeable.

FIELDWORK CONTEXT

Our family

Jorge González Alonso (31) is a Spanish man. He was born in Gijón, Asturias (northern coast), within an average working/middle-class family. His father was a primary school teacher, and his mother worked in a bank branch; both of them are now retired. While they are obviously working class, they managed to buy an apartment downtown—a sign of relative wealth in Spain. Jorge grew up in the northern region of Asturias, in a traditional family together with his parents and his brother Daniel (37). He received a BA in English Studies from the local

university, and then went to Sheffield (UK) to study a Masters in Language Acquisition, after which he started his PhD in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country. He defended his dissertation in 2015, and afterwards moved to the UK for a postdoc. After a year there, another opportunity came up in Tromsø to work in a strong Linguistics department for 3 years, so he and his wife (me) moved there in July 2016.

I am Irati Lafragua Salazar (29), also Spanish. I was born in Vitoria-Gasteiz. My mother used to work in a toy factory, and my father was a truck driver; now they are both retired as well. I took a BA in Media Studies at the University of the Basque Country, and then worked for the regional News: almost 3 years in Bilbao (Basque Country) and another two as a correspondent in Latin America, based in Bogotá (Colombia). After some travelling around the world, I moved to the UK to work at Latimer Group, an audiovisual consultancy company, and then moved to Tromsø to study a Masters in Visual Cultural Studies.

Oihan Lafragua-González, our baby, is another central character in this study, even if he doesn't know it yet. He was born on May 3 in Tromsø, but has spent most of his 7 ½ months in Spain. His name is Basque, and it means "forest".

Geographical context

Since we are currently living in Tromsø, Northern Norway is the first arena worth mentioning, and where the home of our little family is. This is the city where Jorge works, where I study, and where Oihan was born and spent (almost) all of his first month. Afterwards, we temporarily moved to Vitoria-Gasteiz, where I am from and Jorge has lived for many years before. We had, from the beginning, planned to spend his parental leave there, since it is where my family and most of our friends are. Our arrangement was the following: Jorge would take all of the shared parental leave and stay home with Oihan, while I was able to continue studying my masters remotely for a semester.

When it comes to family reconciliation and gender equality, Norway is slightly closer to these goals than Spain is, at least in general terms. In Spain, perhaps especially in the Southeast and in rural areas, the prototype of masculinity is still related to the Mediterranean model of a virile breadwinner, while in Norway this seems to have been challenged (at least to some extent) for some decades now. Nonetheless, the Basque Country (the region to which I belong) is economically and, in some ways, socially more developed than most other regions in Spain, according to international indexes (Moisés Martín, 2015).

Moss and Wall (2007) identified different models of family reconciliation. To that effect, they evaluated the traditional male provider or breadwinner figure, and they identified two blocks of countries: those where this figure had almost disappeared, such as the Nordic countries, and those where it is still dominant, such as the Mediterranean countries (e.g., Italy, Spain or Greece). In more urban areas like ours, and/or where sociocultural levels are higher on average (especially in the Basque Country), men who don't *collaborate* with housekeeping or raising their children are socially frowned upon, but many practices still hide a certain degree of inadvertent machismo—the fact that we tend to use the word “collaborate” is a self-evident example. According to Nordenmark (2014), Southern European men and women tend to be more traditional than those living in the Nordic countries when it comes to gender values (see Table 1 below). The largest differences are related to practices, since, perhaps surprisingly, Spain and Norway have the same percentage of acceptance regarding the idea of equality (23%)—Norway having the lowest percentage among the Nordic countries, and Spain the highest among the Mediterranean countries. My data support this numbers, and few differences can be found in the discourses of young people regarding fatherhood between the two countries, even though the conditions and state-provided benefits are miles apart and, as a consequence, the real practices are also observably different.

TABLE 1. (From Nordenmark, 2014:172). Involvement in housework, involvement in childcare and attitude towards family responsibilities among cohabiting/married fathers in all countries included (%).

| | Do >25% of the total housework | Are looking after children | Men should have as much responsibility as women for home and children (agree strongly) | N |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------|
| <i>Male breadwinner regime</i> | | | | |
| Spain | 28 | 34 | 23 | 324 |
| Greece | 15 | 33 | 21 | 449 |
| Portugal | 15 | 49 | 22 | 318 |
| N | | | | 1092 |
| <i>Dual earner/dual carer regime</i> | | | | |
| Denmark | 58 | 29 | 40 | 219 |
| Finland | 62 | 59 | 35 | 313 |
| Iceland | 60 | 44 | 33 | 127 |
| Norway | 56 | 55 | 23 | 322 |
| Sweden | 70 | 55 | 32 | 285 |
| N | | | | 1266 |

Parental leave in Norway and Spain

One of the most important differences between the two countries concerning parenthood is the duration of parental leave. In Spain, after intense debates, paternity leave was raised from 2 to 4 weeks in 2017, and it was scheduled to be increased to 5 weeks in 2018, though with no small opposition by some sectors. For broader political reasons—disagreement over government budget and power struggles in Congress—this growth has not yet taken place. In Spain, then, men have 4 weeks and women 16, of which 6 weeks are mandatorily for the mother and 10 can be shared within the couple. Equal sharing of these 10 weeks, however, is rare, due to the physical recovery of the mother and the attachment the baby-mother attachment developed as a consequence of breastfeeding—when this is the case. Note that, despite the shared or mutual character of this 10-week period, the Spanish system still refers to it as *maternity* leave.

In Norway, both the father and the mother (in the case of heterosexual couples) have 10+2 weeks each, plus 40 weeks to share in any way they want. The implementation of a father's quota in 1993, which I mentioned in the introduction, made the number of men who took that period jump from 4 to 45% in only one year (Rostgaard, 2014). In Troms, the region of which Tromsø is the capital, 69.2% of fathers took their paternity leave in full during 2015 (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2016). However, even if a majority of men used the father's quota, only 16% across Norway took any of the shared period, also called *gender-neutral leave* (Naz, 2012). This last aspect is particularly important, despite that neutrality of the term it is yet the mother who is perceived as having the right to decide how to share it (Eerola, 2014).

Encouraging men to use part of the shared period has been set as a key objective by the Ministry of Children and Equality, who argue that this period is indeed the one which can more efficiently promote gender equality in housework and childcare (see Meil et al., 2017). This time can make a great difference on the implication fathers develop in parenting, since only when they are alone with the baby do they really take responsibility on their own. Time alone with the baby has been described as fundamental for bonding for some fathers (Eerola, 2014; Premberg, Hellström & Berg, 2008). It also entails having the chance to find their way around the house in terms of where child-related things are kept, who their paediatrician is, and where to buy nappies, to name a few examples. One good example of this is the study Brandth and Kvande (2014) conducted among Norwegian fathers. Some of the participants who were on paternity leave while the woman was still at home described their situation as 'being like in a weekend' (2014:135), a statement which is indicative of their incapacity to assume the responsibility of being the primary caregivers. This, in turn, prevented them from achieving the

confidence to take on the caring responsibility alone at later stages, and limited their view of their own role to playing with the child and supporting the mother.

This debate has not yet developed as much in Spain, where paternity leave is always seen as a period for the father to support the mother while she is still recovering from delivery, and not as a period of full responsibility. This is a consequence of timing: this (4 week) permission is usually taken just after the birth, or in some rare cases (as with Jorge's brother), saved up to extend summer holidays. Unsurprisingly, when "normal" life starts again it is the mother who remains exclusively in charge of the baby. This sets the basis for future distribution of responsibilities within the couple, that is, even after the mother has gone back to work.

Nevertheless, there is still an important gender gap in both countries, apparent in things such as who takes a reduction at work to help with childcare. Only 2% of men versus 20% of women in Spain do so, and when it comes to asking for an unpaid leave, the numbers drop to 1% vs 10% (Meil et al., 2017). According to a survey conducted by the Basque Government, we can see how, even if both men and women support gender equality measures for parenting, there is still a large gap between what they think and what they actually do (Bacete & Gartzia, 2016). In that line, the Basque Government wants to approve a law so male civil servants get the same amount of paternity leave as their female colleagues, making this period 100% paid and intransferable. Josu Erkoreka, spokesman for the Basque Government, said that this would be a big step towards equality and that they are looking 'towards the north (of Europe).' (EFE, 2018).

In this context, our decision that Jorge should take the whole shared period so that I could continue with my MA without putting my studies on hold for a year is far from common in either country. Since we spent almost 7 months in Spain, and despite the fact that I was working remotely, most people assumed that I was also on leave and were surprised to see Jorge alone with the baby on a regular basis.

METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork for this study was conducted from one month before Jorge became a father until Oihan was 4 months old (i.e., 01.04.2017 to 04.09.2017). The main source of data are video recordings, which were more consistently employed than fieldnotes. While the latter are essential in ethnographic fieldwork, the intimate and personal nature of the subject matter makes camera work an important, if not indispensable, resource (see *Epistemological*

Considerations below for more detailed discussion). This thesis is also based on a considerable amount of interview-like data, which helps broaden the scope from the case study of Jorge's transition into fatherhood. My decision to conduct traditional interviews in addition to the more naturalistic footage was not so much directed to using them in the final video, but rather to encourage Jorge to be reflective of his own role, expectations and feelings at that moment. For this reason, I conducted two regular interviews with Jorge (one in month 1 and another one in month 4), two interviews while showing him visual elements (as a form of elicitation, as I will explain below), two one-on-one conversations with colleagues or friends (one in each country), two focus groups (one in each country), two conversations within the family context (one with my father and one with his father and brother), and three interviews with healthcare professionals (two midwives, one from each country, and a Spanish paediatrician nurse). This collection of conversations provide insight into cultural knowledge and give us the opportunity to compare what people say with what they do, contributing as the external voice, meant to complement other collaborators' first-person accounts.

The focus groups consisted of 3 people each. For the first, I had the collaboration of two of Jorge's department colleagues in Norway: Björn (40), Swedish, father of a 6 year old, and Sebastian (30), Romanian, who was about to become a father for the first time almost at the same time as Jorge.¹ All of them were academics working in a university setting. In Spain, I asked for collaboration from the partners of some of my friends: Jon (31), father of a 2 month old boy, and Javi (32) father of a 3 year old girl. Jon is a social worker, and Javi is employed in a factory. I was physically present for most of the discussion in both focus groups, as opposed to the one-on-one interviews. In the latter, I just started filming and left Jorge and the other man alone to make sure that my presence would not condition them in any way—especially in the first conversation, when I was still pregnant. The first of these conversations took place in Tromsø, before the birth of our baby, with Florian (33), a department colleague who had just become a father 3 months prior. The second conversation was filmed in Spain with Miguel (32), one of Jorge's childhood friends, who was about to become a father barely a month after that day. This conversation took place when Jorge had already enjoyed his status of “newborn” father for a month.

¹ It should be noted that I will refer to this as the *Norwegian focus group* for reasons of location and broader context, despite the fact that none of the fathers in it were actually Norwegian. The reason to choose these people is that they are representative of those with whom Jorge spends time in Tromsø. While they might not reflect the Norwegian fathers' reality directly, they are very much part of it as foreigners living here, and could be taken to represent, at least, those working at the university level.

The decision to be present in the focus groups, but not in the one-on-one conversations, was partly motivated by how things developed in the first focus group, where they immediately started talking very naturally and without making reference to me at all. Also, the fact that Björn had a 6 year old boy while Sebastian was also going to become a father, made me feel that my presence would not prevent them from speaking freely—that is, they would not avoid subjects like delivery, because it was either too distant or too unfamiliar to them. On the one-on-one conversation in Norway, however, I was already 9 months pregnant. Florian's experience with delivery had only been 3 months prior, and so I felt that he might refrain from telling Jorge what that was like for him (how he experienced his wife's pain, for example), if I was around. While I might be wrong, I had the gut feeling at the time that there is some tendency to protect expecting women from details about the delivery. Right or wrong, these were my reasons to stay in the first case and leave in the second while in Norway; afterwards, in Spain, I just decided to replicate the same methodology, and so I stayed for the focus group and left for the one-on-one conversation.

Negotiating access to the field

I have to admit that my terms and negotiation with Jorge were not discussed clearly from the outset. When I proposed the idea of filming him, he said he did not even have to think about it. At that point none of us was probably very aware of the tension we were going to be exposed to as a couple becoming parents. We are one of those couples who talk about everything, so it didn't feel strange to us to talk once and again about our expectations, experiences and thoughts. Also, since I would be behind the camera (and most of the time in front of it as well), he never perceived it as an intrusion. Furthermore, Jorge was aware that only 30 minutes of that footage would actually make it into the final film, and even then he could discuss with me not to include certain things if they made him feel vulnerable. This did not happen, and so I edited the film as I felt was closest to our experience. Upon seeing the film, Jorge agreed that it reflected reality and his emotions as he remembered them. When I asked him how it made him feel to see himself in those more vulnerable moments, he replied that there is of course some amount of shame, and in a way he feels insecure in that he is now incapable of controlling his appearance in front of others. However, at the same time, he said that his approach to this project has always been to let himself go, and this is how he was feeling at that moment. He appreciates the fact that the realness of his feelings gives value to this research.

It is important to mention here two things that have had an impact on us and the way both Jorge and I have experienced our parenting. The first one is this research itself. Even though we had been reading about child rearing on our own before, my readings of academic articles about fathering and gender roles soon started to trickle into our conversations. Inevitably, I started to relate those articles to the behaviours I observed and perceived around us, but I also reflected a lot on Jorge and me, and our newly created family. In many cases, I would pick up subtle (and not that subtle) differences in how people treated us, or even in how we were distributing tasks ourselves, and I was able to question them according to what those academic texts had made me aware of. I also brought a lot of issues to the table that otherwise I would probably have never thought of. Interestingly, Jorge was willing to discuss these openly with me, which made him very much aware of differences, similarities and social expectations towards each of us. This project, apart from being a study on new ways of fathering, has also allowed me to live my motherhood together with Jorge's fatherhood in a more critical and conscious way, a reflexivity that otherwise I would have never reached. While the focus of the study itself is on him, studying the very same phase of life I was going through really sharpened my consciousness about the factors involved.

The other aspect worth mentioning is that now, from a distance, I can see the risk of the project, and how it could have been a source of conflict between us as a couple, which fortunately did not happen. A key factor was perhaps Oihan's relatively predictable sleep patterns, which allowed us to remain rested and retain a very positive attitude. The correlation between these two factors became much more apparent when it surfaced in the negative: when Oihan was around 6 months (I had stopped filming already), he spent about 3 weeks sleeping less than an hour at a time during the night. During that period, both Jorge and I were so tired that the tiniest thing was enough to make us angry with each other. When I started this project, I could not imagine how much sleep deprivation changes your character. If we had lacked sleep from the beginning, as many other parents do, the camera would probably have been one more thing to argue about, instead of a reason for reflection and the symbol of a common goal as a family.

In that sense, there has been a need for me to step back and consider what (and why) I have interiorized are the good or bad ways of being a father, directing my attention to the things I usually take for granted. For that matter, showing the material to my supervisor, professors and fellow students has been key. Thanks to their advice and their interpretations of the different situations I was showing them, I was able to step back and interpret the material I had in front of me, taking into account perspectives other than my own—or Jorge's. The same is true of this

thesis with this thesis, even though I feel that it is somewhat easier to distance oneself from a(n academic) text: the objectivity brought in by other authors' works and the regular presence of statistics contributes towards a less emotional/personal interpretation of the data.

In any case, and based on the audiovisual material I have, I will do my best to deliver a truthful narrative and provide, in this thesis, a focused analysis based on that material. Text and video are, nonetheless, no different when it comes to their faithfulness in portrayal: the ethnographer who uses audiovisual recordings is also charged with the task of interpreting and, inevitably, selecting how to present the reality contained in her footage (Barbash & Taylor, 1997). In Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2009) words, film and text are both incapable of representing 'unequivocal prints of reality'. However, I am committed to the effort of taking a step back and analysing the material as a researcher, and not as a mother or partner. That said, I am very aware that even as a researcher I cannot pretend to have a last word on the matter, and that there will be many contradictions and omissions in this work, just like there are in the way Jorge and most men experience their fatherhood (Zeitlyn, 2009:224).

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Why visual?

This is a study where embodiment and inherited attitudes—which will be most apparent in the video that accompanies this thesis—are central pieces of the puzzle, since physical change both in attitude and in posture is what will help us understand this transformation. As MacDougall (1998:61,80) says, modern anthropology is taking up the study of a whole new matter, especially connected to emotions, senses, construction of identity, gender, and bodies. Gathering knowledge of these things requires *direct acquaintance*: we need to see and live those experiences. For that purpose, film is a much more powerful tool to reflect the 'corporeal' or the *anthropology of the senses* (MacDougall, 2006:272). If written texts are more oriented towards generalising to aspects of cultures, film 'can say much about how individuals live within (and transmit) a "culture".' (MacDougall, 1998:80) As I discussed above, the strength of this thesis might lie on the approach to the issue of fathering from a very close and intimate point of view, but also on the use of video, since most of the research conducted on this matter is reported on articles and is mostly based on interviews, making these studies, despite their very important contribution, somewhat impersonal and disembodied. I wouldn't be able myself to find the words to describe, accurately and in detail, the physical and physiological

transformation Jorge has gone through—from disengagement in talking about breastfeeding in his conversation with Florian, to his insecurity expressed in his body language, to a more confident approach to the baby and his role as a father. I believe that this study has been most fruitfully conducted by using a camera, and visual material in all the different ways it has been used.

Davies (1999:124) describes three different ways in which video is used in ethnographic research, all of which have been used here. First, it is the main data source for this thesis as a discovery tool: most of my claims about the physical side of the transition to fatherhood are grounded on an observation of Jorge's posture and gestures, none of which would be faithfully conveyed by words or obvious from what he says. Second, a film was edited from these 5 months of footage, which accompanies the written thesis. Finally, I have also used video images for elicitation. This means that I have sometimes shown Jorge part of the material I had previously filmed, and again filmed him watching it to see his response to, or interpretation of, those earlier moments. The first one of this kind of interviews took place before Oihan was born, while Jorge browsed through pregnant pictures of me. The second re-narrating interview was recorded on the day Oihan turned 3 months, showing Jorge some footage of us in the first stage of labour while we were at home, so we could go back to it after those months and talk about it. These conversations were especially interesting in the way they foregrounded a conflict between what Jorge said and what he did, since his words came *after* his actions, and he was confronted with these as he talked. The elicitation practice was not restricted to Jorge as a collaborator: As I discussed in the previous section, I also had my colleagues and professors watch rushes (3 seminars) and editions of the film (another 3 sessions) to corroborate with them what meaning they were extracting from those passages, and how they were reading specific situations. Having someone with distance to the field and my family was key, since my fear was being so close that I could not even interpret the data. While peer feedback is an essential component of research, I believe that audiovisual material is particularly suited for this practice, as it generates reactions to content that might be obscured by formal issues—e.g., discourse, structure, argumentation, etc.—when the material is written, distracting the reader from the actual ideas. It was also very important to see how different audiences get different interpretations, or extract more meaning from one part or another of the film, probably depending on their personal experience and closeness to fathering.

One of the main concerns when using video in ethnographic fieldwork is the risk of collaborators 'staging' their behaviour, or in any case acting differently from how they would normally act if the researcher were not there. However, this is inevitable whenever someone

knows s/he is being observed, and is therefore not limited to videotaped data. In any case, it is generally assumed that this is only a temporary situation, and that informants eventually go back to their natural behaviour as confidence between them and the researcher builds over time (Geertz, 1973; Stoddart, 1986). I had something of a headstart in this sense, since Jorge has an absolute trust in me and behaved in a way that I found very natural from the beginning. This, however, did not prevent either of us from being very much aware of the camera most of the time. Nonetheless, staged performances are as important as other, more “truthful” types of data, since they reveal ‘how individuals perceive themselves and would like to be perceived’ (Monahan & Fisher, 2010:363). This is indeed very useful for the researcher, because it allows us to grasp meaning from their performances, which might in turn show contradictions between the way they want to be perceived and the way they actually behave. Arntsen and Høltedahl (2005) speak of a (kind) of triangle with the audience, as the collaborators are absolutely aware of the implications of being filmed, and are thus constantly negotiating values.

A second widely debated issue is whether the ethnographer should allow herself to be part of the scene, or rather try to separate herself from it. There were moments where I could just observe and film Jorge’s actions. This worked well while he was doing some action such as changing Oihan, or preparing food. However, it was not always like that. Sometimes he would ask me questions, or I felt I had to be on camera as well with him and Oihan, so acting more as a filmmaker and following Jorge with the camera felt strange and unnatural to both of us. This is why in general, and for a big majority of the filming time, I decided that just leaving the camera on its own while we interacted would yield a more honest representation of the moment and permit a more participatory film style. I would place the camera on the tripod, on a table, or in some other flat surface so I could also forget about it and act more naturally myself. This combination of observational and participatory filming style might resemble Cinéma Vérité (Nam, 2015), where it was precisely the filmmakers’ presence what was key to open a reflexive process. This is beautifully shown in *Chronique d’un Été* (1961), the film by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin.

Video and sound recording are particularly suited to explore misalignments and contradictions among the three main aspects Spradley (1980) highlights as the basis for ethnographic research: what people do (cultural behaviour), what people know (cultural knowledge), and what people make and use (cultural artefacts). These three elements are informative both in harmony and in conflict, as we can see, for example, in the context of an interview: hesitation, pauses and non-verbal communication (i.e., gestures) often modulate the meaning of the words being spoken, and sometimes change or challenge it entirely. I filmed a

number of situations and environments with these elements in mind, and especially with the purpose of seeing how their interaction can also provide important information. Breakfasts, nappy changes, trips, visits of the grandparents, etc., are good examples of cultural behaviour in the context of my fieldwork. And all those situations and feelings that are so loaded with meaningful gestures, postures and other small nuances take a more prominent meaning thanks to the use of video as a tool.

Reflexivity

In analysing and presenting their fieldwork data, anthropologists must overcome the mirage of literal representation, understanding that the bias which comes with our gaze—and our informants’—will always make it impossible to represent the world ‘as is’ (if there is such a thing). Instead, it is important to work towards constructing a narrative that is as close as possible to the experience we share with our collaborators (De Bromhead, 2003). The set of practices and considerations usually referred to as reflexivity give us the tools to do this, by encouraging to analyse our own role and that of the methods we employ in the field—as well as how these change over time, if at all (e.g., O’Reilly, 2012).

Reflexivity implies examining and reflecting on our own interpretation of the data. As such, Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009:9) define it as an exercise in meta-interpretation—in their words, the ‘interpretation of interpretation.’ Since it is impossible to separate knowledge from the knower, the smallest change produced by external elements will somehow alter the reality we are trying to observe. Even in a study like this one, where the anthropologist is not an outsider—although her work tools, the camera and the notebook, are—an important part of our work is to understand how the research is affected by our presence, and by the very act of observing (Davies, 1999).

The particular characteristics of this study make subjectivity and reflexivity crucial notions if I want to develop a narrative that makes sense of the data as it was collected. I said before that my role was double, but this is not entirely accurate: I stand here in a three-way role, being on the one hand the researcher/filmmaker, and on the other the baby’s mother *and* the collaborator’s partner. For this reason, there is a deep level of intra subjectivity I need to keep reminding myself of—and even trying to escape sometimes. I must admit that these roles were not easy to keep apart. In several occasions when I was supposed to be filming Jorge as a researcher, I interrupted or corrected him as his partner, instead of just hearing his point of view as a collaborator without judging if he was right or wrong—e.g., when telling a story I had

witnessed myself and remembered differently. In the film, there is a scene in which Jorge is showing all the things we had prepared for Oihan. When he says ‘These are gloves’, I correct him saying ‘No, those are shocks!’

Conversely, this is a project that has been developed together with Jorge, my husband, but also my informant. As I have mentioned before, he himself was very much influenced by the academic papers I was reading, so I was not the only one adjusting to his point of view: knowingly or not, he also adjusted himself to try to understand my perspective. In that sense, we created meaning together in a process of “making sense” of what we were living (Rudie 1994:30), and without a doubt we had a potential audience in mind to whom we were addressing something (Arntsen & Holtedahl, 2005). This, however, is what the process of making knowledge is all about: at the point where both the researcher and the collaborator are trying to understand what are they experiencing, they also act as a catalyst for the others’ understanding of the situation (Waage, 2013:160).

For both Davies and Alvesson & Sköldbberg, transparency is a core aspect of reflexivity, a view I share. If we cannot escape the embodied structures that we carry around with us, if we cannot avoid being who we are, having this body and this personality, what use is it to try and hide the effect this has on our view of the world, and the representations of it we create? It makes sense to think that, if we are transparent about this process which will transform the reality we observe as we capture, analyse, and re-present it, the results will be somewhat more truthful. In the film, I sometimes allow myself to give in to that subjectivity: I think that re-narrating the story can be a good way of conveying the subjective/reflexive character of my work, while providing a formally attractive resource to close the circle. This is, however, in a never-ending state of renewal and change, because the way I will interpret this in the future, with more experience as a mother and as a researcher, will probably be different, and so will be the way I re-narrate those 5 months. As mentioned by Zeitlyn (2009:219), even with the people you know best, such as your family, the constant change you all experience makes it impossible to access and attempt to re-narrate the memories of others (and even your own), since all of you are now different from your past selves.

Anthropology at home and autobiography

It might seem that familiarity with the terrain and the collaborators would make the job easier, but doing anthropology at home is, at the very least, a challenge in personal and professional ways. Strathern (1987) considers that, in a sense, some things are made easier by the fact that

you share the language and the codes, and you feel comfortable moving around. However, as a member of the culture you share values with your collaborators, so it is really difficult to step back and take distance to analyse what really is going on, because that implies analysing yourself. Since I was working in my own society, this is the first challenge I was facing, which is in fact the opposite to that of most anthropologists: gaining distance instead of proximity—even if distance might not always be the desirable (Abu-Lughod, 1991). I must add, however, that despite the autobiographical side of it being so strong, I sometimes felt that I was also confronted with an unknown reality, and with knowledge that had not been accessible to me before, since the experience of parenting was completely new to myself as well. This novelty makes a difference in allowing me to look at things with somewhat fresh eyes, as if I was confronted with a new aspect of my own culture. Besides the value that autoanthropology has in itself, as I will discuss here, there is also important knowledge to be produced in the interaction of the researcher as an outsider—or, rather, the researcher that sometimes *feels* like an outsider—and the researcher as him or herself (Davies 1999:189).

In a further level of embedding, I am not only researching a part of my own culture, but indeed my own family. For some anthropologists, autobiography is more related with narcissism, and will eventually lead the discipline to become an ‘appendix of literature’ (Llobera, 1987:118). Others, however, see the power of using autobiography and the anthropology of the particular, in general, to empower individual voices and avoid homogenization of a group (Abu-Lughod, 1991). Contrary to how it might sound, this approach, apart from elaborating on the uniqueness of each case, is also an invitation to recognise the similarities and common aspects of a group (Okely, 1992:7). In an argument that resonates with my own situation, Cohen (1992:223) suggests that very often what motivates a particular research might be the anthropologist’s personal concerns, and that in trying to understand the complexities of others, you have to confront your own and, as a consequence, learn about yourself.

Esteban (2004) conducted anthropological research based on her own body. The hirsutism and weight problems she suffered and that condemned her to shame and guilt in her younger years are the base of this article based on her body, which seeks to understand other bodies. She claims that one’s own experience is a unique strategy to reach knowledge that would otherwise be inaccessible. She argues that autoethnography is as objective and valid as other approaches, or even more due to the tough conditions of legitimacy that the work might suffer from the very beginning, making the research more aware of its limitations. However, she claims that this kind of studies are done from a privileged point of view, and that the

discussion should not be about the appropriateness of using one's experience or not, but rather about the way of using it to reach cultural, political and economic dimensions, the local and the global, from the individual to the collective. A very creative way of doing autoanthropology without losing distance is the method followed by Panourgiá (1995). In her study of death and social organization through her own relationship with her grandfather, Panourgiá used a curious way of expressing her two roles by using two different narratives and dividing the pages horizontally. In them she wrote as two different people: the grandchild and the researcher. I believe this is a very effective way of not denying any of the two roles she had on that project, making the reader and herself aware of when we are reading/writing from Panourgiá-the-researcher's point of view, or from that of Panourgiá-the-grandchild. In my project, having the video and the written thesis has in some ways enabled me to express those two aspects of my research, allowing myself to be more personal in the video and trying to be more of an outsider, more analytical in the written piece. Nonetheless, even when using this kind of tools both roles are impossible to fully disentangle, since they are ultimately part of the same person and thus belong together. In relation to the film, I believe the only way of making such an intimate film is by making an autobiographical one. This intimate moment would be quite inaccessible by a non-fiction film, or as Taylor points out (1998:7), it would at least raise some issues regarding ethical considerations from trying to film someone else's lives from such a close point of view.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This project seeks to contribute a more intimate, in-depth perspective to the existing literature on fathering. My position in the family, which gives me privileged access to routine and intimacy, allows me to grasp my collaborating husband's point of view, but also his way of acting. By participating in and observing his daily life, as I would do anyway, it is easier for me to discover what Jorge's transition into fatherhood consists of when it comes to (corporeal) emotional expressions, experiences, and how these gradually develop towards knowledge and a new role. In the end, this is a process in which meaning is constructed by making sense of a new experience (Rudie, 1994). Besides the "internal" perspective of this transition, I am also interested in how his environment going to see/accept his new role. Both his family and friends, but also the society at large (Spain - Norway).

Thus, the two main research questions guiding this work were the following:

1. How will my informant/collaborator grow into the role of father, assimilating his new family situation? Is he going to interiorize the role in all his environments?
2. Is his perception of masculinity being changed (or challenged) by being a 24-hour father on paternity leave, both in a community setting and more privately?

FATHERING

Myths about (giving) birth, motherhood and fatherhood surround us no matter where we live and which culture we are part of. Reproduction is one of the most (if not *the* most) important issues we face as a species, and consequently there are lots of myths and expectations around it. It is also heavily constructed by media, people, policies, and many other aspects of society, which condition the way we see and understand things to be. Within this realm, both academic and fiction literature have dedicated most of their attention to mothering. However, in the last 30 years the (academic and non-fiction) literature on fathers has grown (e.g., Doucet, 2009; Henderson & Brouse, 1991), both in quantity and scope, going beyond the more traditional themes of the absent or problematic father (Draper, 2000) into a new way of fathering where caregiving is assumed to the same degree as the mother. Despite the relative scarcity of dedicated research, other studies have highlighted the unique contribution of fathers towards the family (e.g., Friedewald, Fletcher & Fairbairn, 2005) and the healthy development of the baby (e.g., Durmaz, Baş & Gümüş, 2016).

Traditional sex-based arrangement

Women should stay at home, in the private sphere, while men should be able to provide for their families and remain visible in the public sphere. This assignment of duties and social environments on the basis of sex (Aldous, Mulligan & Bjarnason, 1998) has been in operation for centuries. Traditionally, being a man or a woman determined much of what you could or could not do, in parenting as well as in most other social domains.

The ideals or prototypes of masculinity and femininity lay strong bases over which we identify and construct a person (Goffman, 1977). As a consequence, our biological sex is often taken as the criterion on which some of our behaviours will be justified, explained or approved. Traditional stereotypes for fathers and mothers, both of which are part of hegemonic masculinity—as masculinity has typically defined femininity in opposition to it—have very much differentiated the parenting roles of men and women throughout history (Draper, 2003).

The main features of traditional masculine behaviour were the father's authority within the family and his role as breadwinner (Draper, 2003; Hobson & Morgan, 2002). In contrast, caring has always been gendered and constructed with the 'qualities of the feminine' (Thomas, 1993), reinforcing the idea that this distribution of tasks followed naturally from the natural traits of men and women.

This association between sex- and gender-based roles is subtle in the way it develops. According to Goffman (1977), since the mother is the only one that can breastfeed, the father takes the responsibility of the tasks that involve separation from the family and the house. However, what might be biologically justified for a certain period is then culturally extended and, as a consequence, some duties are defined as inappropriate to perform according to your sex. This creates a barrier for men to develop caregiving capacities, which are then constructed within "mothering" and assumed to be biologically conditioned (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

My father Jesús (65) remembers his father as being the only income source in the house, and as a consequence as never present, since the working hours were long. Afterwards, he would go to the bar to relax with his friends, only to arrive at the house when dinner (and everything else) was ready. Even if Jorge's father, Eugenio (66), had both parents in paid jobs—his mother being a tailor—he can recall, like Jesús, his mother's threatening him with the return of his father as an authoritarian figure: 'You'll see when your father comes back!' As we can see from their example, 50s-60s Spain was still very traditional in every sense, including a strong adherence to a traditional gender-based division of roles where women stayed home and took care of everything in that domain—Jorge's grandmother, of course, took care of the house besides working her job. Perhaps unsurprisingly (because alienation and assimilation are vital components of oppression), this status quo had some of its fiercest defenders in women. My father remembers how his grandmother would not allow him to do anything around the house, saying that 'as long as there are women in the house, I won't let a man do it!' Similarly, Jorge's father remembers his aunts calling him "marica" (sissy) for trying to lay the table before dinner.

Natural vs. Cultural

The theory that it is biology that makes men and women different was very influential in the post-war period, defining women as expressive or emotional and men as instrumental or pragmatic (Gutmann, 1997). The breadwinner-protector prototype we have just discussed was particularly influential—or has been so for longer—in Mediterranean cultures, which had an impact in the way men approached their role as fathers. In short, they were prepared to be the

providers but not the carers, because men are socialized to feel less prepared and “clumsy” around babies (Gutmann, 1997:392). This lack of preparation is often emotional—showing vulnerability through the expression of emotions is not perceived as masculine—but it is also physical—not knowing how to hold a baby is, and should remain, the natural state of things for men. This is a good example of embodied practice in the Bourdieuan sense, which might suggest that things are in fact the other way round: the aggressive man vs. nurturing woman contrast might be the way our bodies have learnt to act according to the classification we have been socialized in, instead of the natural instincts we would otherwise possess (Silva, 2005). Butler (1987:131) puts this nicely: ‘It is our genders that we become.’ From this perspective, then, gender determines physical behaviour, and not the opposite.

Traditional gender roles might have changed in the last decades, but there is still a difference in the way boys and girls are socialized from the moment they are born, especially when it comes to caregiving (Doucet, 2009). One of the participants in the study of Plantin, Månsson and Kearney (2003) would say that it was easier for a woman to cope with kids, that despite everything we say or think this was after all what is “natural”. But it might be that men and women are just a way of categorizing humans, and thus correspond more to ‘political categories’ than to ‘natural facts’ (Butler, 1987:137). A more egalitarian distribution of tasks and roles could equally be embodied from the start, however, as we can see in the transformation of some adult men. In Jorge’s case, the embodied knowledge he has acquired since Oihan was born is remarkable, and the differences in the way he holds the baby are more than evident: from feeling nervous and even out of place, to a high level of confidence and comfort. It might not have felt “natural” to him at first, but not because it eluded or went against his innate abilities as a man—rather, because he had never practiced before.

Some of the best known research on fathering outside of Western countries is that conducted by Barry Hewlett among the Aka of Central Africa (e.g., Hewlett, 1991). More than 50 studies from Europe and the USA had previously differentiated the way fathers “father” from the way mothers “mother”, with the former being more energetic and vigorous—more related to play—and the second more emotional and sensitive (Hewlett, 2001). Because these seemed to be robust trends, most of these studies took these differences to be, to a greater or lesser extent, natural or biologically determined. However, Hewlett found that Aka fathers do share with the mothers the caring of their babies almost at 50%, that they do hold the baby very often, and that as a consequence of spending time with them they are just as prepared as the mother to interpret the signals of the newborns. He also found that they do not play in a vigorous

manner, but that they hug and kiss the babies both in private and in public², as if playing in an exaggerated way would be an easier way of entertaining and bonding with a kid when you cannot really understand his or her needs (Doucet, 2009). Hewlett's findings are the greatest challenge to theories that justify traditional gender divisions on the basis of purported biological pre-conditions.

I will not deny that there are some obvious biological differences between fathers and mothers. In most heterosexual couples (except for adoptions), it is the mother who will suffer changes in her body during pregnancy, it is she who will deliver the baby and who will breastfeed: these are all physically inaccessible experiences for men. However, that might be all there is to insurmountable biological differences. Several studies (e.g., Condon, Boyce & Corkindale, 2004; Halle et al. 2008; Johnson & Baker, 2004; Morse, Buist & Durkin, 2000) have found that the stress levels of fathers are really high during the pregnancy, delivery and first months of the baby. Some of them even experience physical symptoms such as nausea, weight gain, backache, etc., which have their extreme expression in a complete identification with pregnancy known as the "couvade syndrome" (e.g., Elwood and Mason, 1994). The incidence of this syndrome varies depending on the source we consult, but it is definitely higher than the average citizen would imagine: between 11 and 97 percent, according to the review in Brennan, Ayers, Ahmed and Marshall-Lucette (2007). These authors suggest that it is likely more men feel these symptoms, but they are ashamed to admit it. *Couvade* is in fact an anthropological concept that refers to rites performed by fathers in some cultures during and after childbirth, in order to show proximity to the physical situation of the mother—one example discussed by Rivière (1974) is the simulation of birth pains, symbolizing the father's wish to embody and feel the birth. Ritual or syndrome, men are not so far from pregnancy as it is usually thought, and once the baby is born it seems clear that there are less physical or natural conditions preventing fathers from being nurturers in the same way as mothers.

The 'new' father

In previous generations, becoming a father used to be something that just *happened* in the normal course of life: having children was a natural stage of adult life, and as such it was taken for granted that a married couple would eventually become parents. Nowadays, fatherhood and

² Displays of affection, however, are very much culturally determined, so this is perhaps more significant in combination with other facts.

motherhood are a much more conscious decision, which entails that the way in which they are performed is also more planned and analytical, as it corresponds to a voluntary commitment. Society has changed along with fathers (or fathers have changed along with society): 40 years ago men were left aside on purpose (Friedewald et al., 2005), while nowadays a present father has become a cultural expectation (Deave & Johnson, 2008). A present father will start by going to the antenatal classes and controls, will be there during labour, and will actively participate in the raising of his children, adopting a more involved role in family life (Henwood & Procter, 2003). However, and despite the notable changes in the image of what “good fathering” is, the dominant forms of patriarchy are still very much present, setting up innumerable contradictions for men, who are encouraged to continue being strong, providing figures while showing a soft, emotionally involved and committed side (Draper, 2000).

Gender equality is one of the main goals in many current societies, especially among middle class couples who want to be equitable in the distribution of family and work life for men and women. This objective seems to be generalized in Western countries, but there is still a long way to achieve it despite all the social movement and the policies that have accompanied it in many of these countries. Progress, even within the Western block, has been uneven, with the Nordic countries being ahead of other regions—despite having much to work for still. The dual carer/dual earner family model seems to have grounded properly in Sweden, Norway and Iceland (Brandth & Kvande, 2014), having eroded the traditional male breadwinner role that remains dominant in Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Spain or Greece (Miller, 2010).

This type of change, however, takes time precisely because men learn most of their parenting skills from their fathers and not their mothers, despite the fact that inter-generational differences are notorious and there is always a demand for men to be more involved than their fathers were (Deave & Johnson, 2008). However, for men to even follow the steps of their fathers, these need to have been minimally present, which as we have discussed above has not always been the case. This lack of models and a lack of ‘early identification experiences with their own father’ (Daly, 1993:513) may therefore act as a handicap. In fact, those men whose fathers were more involved and present in their education tend to have a more prominent role as fathers themselves (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth & Lamb, 2001).

Eugenio (Jorge’s father) learnt to be a father from an absent, breadwinner figure. In an effort to be more present than his own father had been, he tried to get involved and “help” Jorge’s mother raise their kids, always playing with them while remaining the authority figure. In turn, Jorge learnt to father from Eugenio, the authoritarian but present father. With a strong determination to be even more involved than his father had been, he wants to be close, open

and emotional with his son. Even if he thinks that he is completely egalitarian in his approach, he will discover some very interiorized models which are difficult to erase, and which still accord to the patriarchal system that rules our society. Sebastian, one of the participants in the Norwegian focus group, spoke about this long process that will take several generations:

‘Maybe at certain age it made sense, as the men we were doing certain things, capturing on the forest... then if your father is like that and you grow up like that, you are not going to relate to your child like that, so maybe is over the generations that we become more equal. It is like there is a handicap.’

Fathers that take care of their babies as main caregivers are often said to be “mothering”. One of the most prominent defenders of this idea is Sara Ruddick (e.g., 1989). This concept, as some critics have pointed out, is a double-edged sword: while it might seem to make infant-care genderless, it does use the gendered word “mother”, and so the implications might not be the desired ones: it runs the risk of perpetuating the idea that parenting roles are in fact biologically determined, and that equality is achieved by men approaching the role of women, leaving behind their “natural” inclinations.

FATHERHOOD, A RITE OF PASSAGE

A rite of passage (Van Gennep’s *rite de passage*) is a ceremony of the transition which occurs when an individual leaves one social group to enter another, usually of higher status. Van Gennep (1960) was interested in knowing how societies are able to adapt to changes. According to him, life was a cycle and individuals moved between different stages: birth, childhood, marriage, and death. He was specifically interested in those transitions between stages/statuses, rather than in the stages themselves. In these transitions, or rites, he identified three phases: separation from, transition or limen, and incorporation/inclusion. The first one is characterized by physical removal from previous life. The second, liminal phase is a kind of non-status where one belongs to neither the previous stage nor the following. As such, this phase moves between social structures and so represents the greatest challenge for the *status quo*, because there are several different ways in which the transition between phases can take place, which creates a space for creativity. Finally, the incorporation phase is where the subject has reached his or her new status, culminating the ritual.

Applying Van Gennep’s concept to how men become fathers might sound quite daring, since his idea of a rite was far from the type of transition this represents. Nonetheless, Draper

(2000), who has been the first—and, to my knowledge, the only one—to conceptualize the transition to fatherhood as a rite of passage, advocates for a wider interpretation of the concept. After all, *rite de passage* interpretations are frequently used to analyse almost any social transition—in addition, the concept has been applied in other disciplines, such as literary theory. Flexibility in applying this analysis, and examining features of rituality present in daily events (Seremetakis, 1991), can help us understand the complexities of modern Western life.

Becoming a father implies a status change. ‘Everything changes’ around you: We experienced that those who are parents start to open up and tell you their experiences, experiences that were not shared before you became parents, because you are now one of them. The rules that defined the relationship with your own parents change, because you have acquired a new status—one they have for someone else—beyond that of being their child. This is an important part of the transition between phases, as knowledge comes both from personal experiences and from the act of taking distance from your past role.

Draper notes that she is emphasizing the ‘continuous nature of transition’ (2003:69), and that instead of describing it from the outside—as a traditional account of a ritual would have done—she decided to convey all these phases from the participants’ point of view, as I will do myself. However, there are some differences between our approaches, as a result of working with different types of information: while Draper used interviews conducted before and after her participants became fathers, in my case the main source is the day-to-day filming of Jorge. As I have argued before, the visual part of this work is extremely important to understand the transition into fatherhood. With video material, it is perhaps easier for us to appreciate the subtle nuances of the liminal phase, where Jorge is neither his former self nor the father he is about to become.

Even if Draper can be credited with being the first to approach the topic of fatherhood as a rite of passage in a structured and systematic way, other authors have pointed out that transitions are periods where changes bring you into another stage, and that fatherhood is one of those major developmental periods (Deave & Johnson, 2008). Premberg et al. (2008) report that the fathers they interviewed typically described fatherhood as a sequence going from ‘being overwhelmed’ to ‘mastering the new situation’ to ‘new completeness in life’.

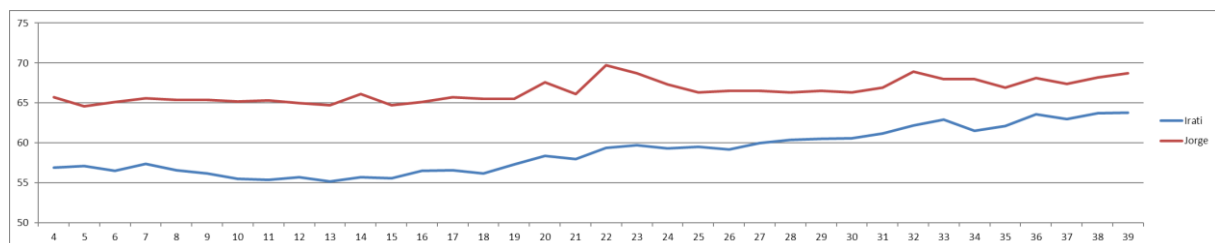
With this idea in mind, in the next sections I analyse three different moments as representative of the three stages in a rite of passage: pregnancy, as the separation phase; delivery and first days, as the transition or limen; and lastly the time after the baby’s first month, as the incorporation phase.

Pregnancy and embodiment

Men experience pregnancy only through their partner's body, never their own. This seems to be, at least in part, the reason why so many of them find it hard to get involved, even when, as we have discussed before, “modern fathers” are expected to show presence and support from the very beginning. Men's experience and transition to fatherhood is thus a disembodied one (Draper, 2003), which creates some contradictions in them arising from the need and expectation to be there for a baby they cannot directly connect with. I will agree with this claim Draper makes, but only to a certain extent. From the analysis of my data, I argue that men's experience is also physical and embodied, even though—at least in Jorge's case—it is not until the baby is born that that process of embodiment effectively starts.

The idea of an expectant mother evokes a very recognizable image: she does not need to demonstrate her status, as this is visually evident. The term “expectant father”, on the other hand, does not seem to *mean* much, beyond the sense that we can get by analogy. To a greater or lesser extent, this is reportedly the experience of many men: trying to be there supporting their partner while at the same time feeling detached and excluded (Miller, 2010), since the physical experience is not accessible to them during the pregnancy (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). This does not mean, however, that there is no physical component to the way they live through pregnancy, as we discussed above in relation to the Couvade syndrome. In Jorge's case, he was gaining weight almost at the same pace as I was during the pregnancy (see Figure 1 below). While this does not represent reliable evidence, since I was not controlling other variables, it is interesting data that might help us understand the complexities of this transformation process:

FIGURE 1. Evolution of Irati and Jorge's weight during pregnancy (correlation: $r = 0.8$, $p < 0.001$)



In both the focus groups and the interviews I have conducted, fathers participated actively by attending the medical check-ups, and some of them even participated in antenatal classes (when allowed, see Jon's comments below). Even if they didn't report feeling frustration during pregnancy as a result of their lack of physical experience, they would mention the ultrasound scan as one of the more emotive moments in the whole pregnancy, as if that kind of body-

mediated experiences where both the father and the mother can see the same thing would help them shape their transition to fatherhood (Draper, 2003). For Jorge, the ultrasound was one of the first really emotive (and emotional) moments. In one of our conversations, he admitted he was even afraid that the midwife would say: ‘there is nothing here.’ Once he could really see something, he started to actually believe in the pregnancy, and thus the long process of becoming a father can perhaps be said to have started at this moment.

To explore of how fathers live in the contradiction between the expectation of presence and their reduced physical experience, I interviewed Jorge while he was watching some photos of myself pregnant which he had taken some days before. In that interview, he would sometimes refer to the pregnancy as a common experience—‘we are pregnant’—while other times he would detach himself from it— ‘you are pregnant.’ In that line, I asked him how it made him feel to be in the pictures, to which he replied:

‘Depending on how you look at it, [pregnancy pictures with fathers are] almost a little bit sexist, in the sense that it is just for you as a man to have a role, and of course you have a role, you are the father... But when you take pregnancy photos the protagonist is the woman’s body.’

We can see how contradictory pregnancy was for him: he was always trying to incorporate himself, but at the same time he felt that he did not have the right to. He would often report feeling excluded—demonstrating that being fine in a secondary role is more a manner of speech than a reality—when everyone asked him how the mother was and never asked about him, even if he considered that “we” were both pregnant. This seems to be shared by most fathers, according to the literature, and definitely by most of the fathers I have worked with. His friend Miguel, for example, wrote the following to Jorge in the instant messaging group they share with their friends:

‘And how are you? I know these questions always go to women 😊’

A month after this message, Miguel’s own baby was born. Their friends then started asking how everything went, and how María—his wife—was feeling. To that, he replied:

‘María is doing better, tired but fine... and me I’m very happy too, eh? Not everything has to be about them.’

In the case of Jon (one of the participants in the Spanish focus group), the exclusion he felt did not come from himself—as in Jorge’s case, with his internal contradictions—nor from family or friends—social exclusion—but rather from doctors and midwives—something we could call “medical exclusion”. The first time he felt this was in the antenatal check-up:

‘Sexism starts at the first visit to the midwife, because we... It had been 45 minutes and she hadn’t even asked me who I was, addressed me...’

Furthermore, despite his interest in attending antenatal classes together with Olatz (his wife), he was unable to do it:

‘The room where they did it was too small, so there was no space for me. That day I did feel frustrated, and angry, and even considered filing a complaint. Because I am going to have a son too, I don’t care if there’s no space.’

Nonetheless, fathers who attend antenatal classes also report feeling out of place, as if nothing was really addressed to them: ‘You’re sort of put to the back of the class, so to speak.’ (Deave & Johnson, 2008:629). In general, parents describe these classes as disappointing. This doesn’t seem strange at all taking into account that both of the midwives I interviewed in Spain and Norway said that, even if they make an effort to include men, it is still difficult for them not to—involuntarily—address the woman instead. They identify two main factors in their own behaviour: the first is that it is the woman who undergoes the physical changes; the second, that this is the way things have always been done, and it is hard to step outside these conventions. Also, both midwives agree that the role of fathers during antenatal classes tends to be secondary, and that if they ask something it is usually about practicalities such as where to park at the hospital, or what should the exact temperature of the water be when bathing the baby. It is indeed unfortunate that fathers’ needs in antenatal classes have not yet been understood, because if antenatal education fails then everyone loses: fathers, mothers, babies, and society at large (Nolan, 1994).

Practicalities are indeed the topic that allows men to speak up without showing their emotions or fears. In the one-on-one conversation between Jorge and Florian, which took place a couple of weeks before Oihan was born and only 3 months after Florian had become a father, they only talk about things like what the best way of travelling with the baby is, which carrycot is better for the snow, or how Florian built his son’s cradle himself—something related with prototypically masculine attributes:

‘In the beginning you’ve got the information, and know that it’s something really, really big, but you can’t really relate to it... and then after a while it gets more and more concrete, you can start doing things. Especially the last month, the last few months, you start preparing stuff... your actions become more meaningful. [...] He has a sort of bed but it’s attached to our bed. I built it.’

In the Spanish focus group, Jon also mentioned how he wanted to build the cradle himself but Olatz would not allow him to do it, since she was afraid that, being handmade, it would have some dangerous edges. This aspect of pre-natal organization very often seems to be the most engaging for men, since it produces a tangible sense of having physically contributed to the preparations for the arrival of the baby, making the pregnancy more real for them (Miller, 2010).

In the process of becoming a father, Jorge decided to focus on his job. That way, he had the feeling that once Oihan was born he was going to be able to dedicate 100% of his time to the newborn. However, this might also be interpreted as a kind of farewell to his previous life. At this stage, even though he was reading a lot about fathering and becoming interested in matters related to parenting, he was sometimes incapable of engaging in certain topics or conversations. The footage of his conversation with Florian, especially the part in which they discuss breastfeeding (which can be seen in the film), is particularly telling in this respect. When Florian brings up this topic, Jorge seems to be trying to listen, however, his body language tells us that he could not really engage in that conversation: he concentrates on pouring more coffee or grabbing biscuits and offering them to Florian, he moves constantly, his gaze changes from one place to another, and he expresses acknowledgement ('yes', 'uh-huh', 'I see') more often than he does when he is actually paying attention. This might be due to the fact that Jorge still perceived breastfeeding as external to him, and so could not relate as much to what Florian was saying. This changed with his own paternity. In the one-on-one conversation with Miguel after Oihan was born, breastfeeding was one of the main issues that Jorge was addressing, since it had really become important and meaningful to him in his exploration of fatherhood.

Delivery and first days

The idea of a room filled with smoke, of a nervous father walking up and down the corridor waiting to hear the baby's cry, makes little to no sense anymore. Along with the change in favour of fathers being physically and not merely symbolically present, new social expectations demand that the father witnesses and assumes an active role in the delivery. As such, they must confront the power of a woman in labour, making them feel vulnerable and marginal (Draper, 2003). Despite this, fathers are expected to be present during labour to assist their partners, relegated to what is generally perceived as a secondary role.

In this thesis, I argue that delivery is the main event during the liminal phase, which is characterized by a high level of vulnerability, but as we said above it also has the potential to be very productive and creative. This is a phase where the feeling of marginalization and the sense of belonging neither to the future state—the baby is already here—nor to the previous one—‘Are you a father yet?’—are stronger (Draper, 2000). A subject in Deave and Johnson (2008) describes the delivery as a ‘shock’. Similarly, just a couple of hours after labour, another midwife came to congratulate us, and asked Jorge how had it been: he then described the delivery as ‘cathartic’. For Jorge, even if he had said, in antenatal focus groups, that he already felt he was a father, that day was a turning point. From then onwards, he started telling people that it was not until he saw the head coming out that it really dawned on him how real his fatherhood was, since from that moment onwards the baby stopped being an idea and became something real and concrete, something tangible. This way, the baby’s transformation (from the inside to the outside, from foetus to newborn) brings about the parallel transformations of woman into mother, of man into father (Draper, 2003). This is what makes this part of the liminality phase especial as compared to other rites: the status change has already happened, and the father reaches that status as soon as the baby is born. However, the actual transformation is slower and could take days, weeks, or months depending on the person and the implication with various aspects of the newborn.

The role of fathers during labour is still understudied, usually dismissed as a simple supporting role or even a witness of the “drama” performed by the woman (Saphiro, 1987:36). Of course, there are views contrary to this one, which argue that fathers should have their own recognized role not only as supporters of their partner, but also as parents of the child in their own right (Lee & Schmied, 2001:560), with their own need of emotional care. Only a couple of hours after Oihan was born, Jorge said that thinking about the delivery made him anxious, and that he would not want to experience that again (soon). When I asked him why, he looked at me and then immediately backtracked: ‘Well, what right do I have to say that, it didn’t even hurt me at all, but seeing you like that...’ This sentence demonstrates two things. First, that fathers also need assistance and guidance about the way they are going to feel, because it is not going to be easy for them either. Second, that they really do not feel they are legitimised to talk about their feelings about delivery in front of women, because their experience is always regarded as “less”—less intense, less real, less direct.

Jorge and I have since talked at length about the delivery and how everything happened, our impressions and our fears at that moment. Fortunately, our special circumstances make it so that we have footage of the early and active phases of labour, which help us remember and

situate ourselves mentally and emotionally in that day. Jorge has repeatedly mentioned how he felt very much focused on organising everything, and how, despite that, when he sees the footage of me having contractions with him running around the house, he finds himself completely useless and a little lost, perhaps because things happened much more quickly than we thought they would. Even if Jorge was trying to stay calm, it is evident from his body language (e.g., constantly touching his hair) that he is nervous while calling the hospital. The fact that he concentrated on the phone to be able to time the contractions in an effort to know the exact duration and separation between them shows, once more, how these practicalities hide a need of having a role during the whole process. There is a need of knowing what to do, and it wasn't until the baby had been born and was lying on my chest that Jorge allowed himself to break down and cry, overwhelmed by emotion, nerves, and the resolution of expectations. After that, he was invited to perform one of the rituals which, despite how much delivery rooms have changed, are still reserved for the father: the cut of the umbilical cord.

I will argue that the liminal phase does not end, in this case, when the baby is “out”, but rather that becoming a father is a long(er) process. For that matter, the first days/weeks, or even months in some cases, are still a crucial part of the liminal phase. This moment is still characterized by feeling in between statuses: the father feels incapable and insecure in his new role, but is willing to acquire soon the skills and knowledge that accompany his new status. In order to acquire the ability and confidence to overcome the liminal phase, time and experience are needed. The problem is that, very often, fathers see the mother as the main parent (Fägerskiöld, 2008), even if both are first-time parents. Men tend to perceive their wives as better at infant care, as having the instincts that they lack, which often makes them feel jealous and excluded by them (Henderson & Brouse, 1991). Some men attribute these strong bonds between the mother and the baby, which they cannot replicate, to the embodied side of pregnancy and the biological arguments we discussed above: ‘I had a connection with them. But she had her body transformed.’ (Doucet, 2008:86).

Related to fathers' insecurity and vulnerability during the liminal phase, breastfeeding is particularly problematic, since they cannot directly participate in it even if they want to. Yet fathers' attitude towards breastfeeding is also quite contradictory. They see it as necessary and they want their babies to receive the best nutrition, but at the same time it makes them feel irrelevant (Fägerskiöld, 2008). For some, this is the main reason for stepping back and reducing the amount of time they are present for their children (Magaraggia, 2013).

The inconsolable cry of a baby held in one's arms is an unsettling thing. When a father experiencing this sees how quickly the baby calms down in her or his mother's breast, dealing

with the resulting feelings seems to be problematic. Jorge had two strong crises or frustration moments related to this at the very beginning—one of which can be seen in the film, when he breaks down after changing Oihan. Since he was so committed to being an egalitarian father, he wanted to be able to calm Oihan down himself in the same way I did. Not being able to do so sometimes brought him to the point of crying and asking himself whether he was a good enough father. This frustration once more highlighted a contradiction: if I asked him how he was he feeling after a few minutes, he would say:

‘I am fine, but I still think that I am expendable, since you can do anything I do, but I can’t do everything you do.’

This kind of statements reflect Jorge’s vulnerability at the time, and show how his expectations about himself—which were very high—did not match a reality he didn’t know how to read due to his insecurity. It is likely that his ideas about father involvement and gender equality had taken him to expect that he would be able to calm the baby down, and generally be comfortable in his role and do things in a natural way. However, as with any process it took him time to learn to understand the needs of the baby as well as his own. Progress through and out of the liminal phase proceeds from the practical to the emotional aspects. It was precisely by exercising practical skills—changing nappies, dressing the baby, bathing him, etc.—that Jorge became more confident in his role, opening the door to the emotional side of things and allowing him to overcome the liminal phase. When this happened, breastfeeding (and the intimacy/dependence in baby-mother relations it represents) stopped being a challenge for him, because he already felt a parent in his own right, one who had created his own bonds with the baby. This, I believe, is why the liminal phase should be seen as a key stage. In practical/applied terms, the presence and involvement of the father should be promoted, so he can practice and acquire new skills that allow him to experience paternity. This experience is what will allow him to feel at ease—or at least less vulnerable—facilitating his growth into the final phase: incorporation.

After the baby’s first month

I think that it is during the first month that the phase of incorporation took place for Jorge, although this process will of course be different for each father—and, in any case, this does not mean that the learning stops at any time: parenthood is lifelong learning. I take the position that incorporation begins once the vulnerability and insecurity of the father starts to fade away,

which in Jorge's case was relatively quickly: after a couple of weeks at home with the baby, his new status was progressively acquired and internalized. As this change consolidated, some practices went from being strange and forced to completely natural and embodied. While it is difficult to identify a particular turning point, I consider an episode that happened with his mother to be the moment when I realised the liminal phase was over. The first time Jorge's parents met Oihan (when he was almost 1 month old), her mother tried to correct Jorge's nappy-changing technique, probably because she felt that, since she was more experienced, she was entitled to saying something—although Jorge being a man was undoubtedly a large part of the equation. He curtly replied that he had been changing nappies several times a day, every day, for almost a month, and so he knew what he was doing. I considered, thus, that at that point his vulnerability had already turned into confidence in his new role.

In this phase of incorporation, observing physical practices is indispensable as a way of determining whether the transition to the new role has been completed, 'emerging from the ritual into another person' (Draper, 2003:68). If we live our life through a physical body, how else would a new father learn to move through social spaces and fulfil public expectations about his new role? Goffman's (1959) work on embodiment and space is again relevant here. We are in the world, indeed, thanks to or through our bodies (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:206, in Doucet, 2003). Becoming a father and learning how to hold a baby implies considering the other 'carnally' (Magaraggia, 2013:81), and being ready to rethink your own body and your masculinity.

It is meaningful to analyse the physical evolution of Jorge. This can be seen very clearly during the film, and is especially apparent in the way he holds the baby, comparing the effortful, clumsy movements of the beginning with the easiness and security of later times. He has embodied that knowledge, and this is reflected not only on his own (psychological) security but also on his body language. At the beginning, Jorge was trying to replicate what he believed was the "proper" way of holding a baby, of talking or relating to a newborn. But even if he was mimicking what he had seen in others—probably his brother, friends or even on television—it still felt unnatural, as if those movements didn't fit his body. This resulted in strange movements that started becoming incorporated and adapted to his body. After some time with the baby, he started feeling confident and his movements started to become more automatized, to the point that he didn't need to explicitly think about how to hold or change the baby anymore: he had incorporated these movements to his tacit—embodied—knowledge.

Becoming a father is not an overnight process that comes automatically with the ultrasound or the delivery, but rather a constant process, a path full of ups and downs that will

never really come to an end. It is for the reasons discussed in this section that I argue fathers also have their bodies transformed. Because much of what signals transitions between phases is non-verbal (e.g., gestures, postures, body language), video has been a very important tool for understanding and reflecting about fathering as a rite of passage.

EXPLORING UNKNOWN TERRITORY: THE FEMININE

‘One becomes a father through the relationship with a woman; it is the women’s body that changes, that welcomes and nourishes the foetus and, finally, brings the child into the world.’

(Magaraggia, 2013:81)

Parenting, or at least those aspects of it that have to do with caregiving, has traditionally belonged to symbolically feminine domains, and thus has been a female-dominated world (Doucet, 2004). It was the role of other female members of the family or tribe to take care of the pregnant woman, assist her during labour, and help her with baby caring—mostly by helping out with practicalities so she could just focus on the baby. That kind of knowledge has traditionally been feminine, and men would simply not enter into this realm of life. Nowadays, some men are trying to open a door into that world, but it is not always easy.

Maternal influence

We have discussed above that fathers often experience a “woman-mediated” pregnancy and delivery, since their physical experience of these two periods is not as direct—or not as obvious—as that of the mother. However, this mediation might not end there. Often, mothers influence fathers’ relation with their infants, relegating the father to the role of an apprentice always instructed by them (Magaraggia, 2013). Some women even find it difficult to accept that fathers are involved in raising their children, as if their territory had been invaded (Robinson & Barnet, 1986, in Henderson & Brouse 1991:294). Mothers might, thus, determine the type of relationship the father establishes with the newborn, by either encouraging or restricting his involvement (Thomas et al., 2011), or even ‘exert direct control over fathering’ (McBride et al., 2005:362).

The term “maternal gatekeeping” has been used in this context, defined by Allen and Hawkins (1999:200) as ‘a collection of beliefs and behaviours that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work.’ They add that, by doing so, mothers limit their partners’ chance to practice with the baby and develop the necessary skills. This brings us back to the importance of the father and the baby spending time alone. In addition to the strong bonds that can only arise from contact and interaction, father-baby (alone) time can help both parents develop trust in the father’s skills. Crucially, the absence of this time and opportunity makes it difficult for a father to overcome the liminal phase of the transformation we discussed above, making him continue to feel vulnerable and insecure. Nonetheless, it is unclear yet to what extent maternal gatekeeping is, in fact, a reaction to a lack of involvement on the part of the father. One reason to suggest this is that mothers who are more satisfied with their partners’ involvement and care of their babies are also more likely to let them in into that territory (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015:838). In any case, this is in part a self-fulfilled prophecy: the belief, by both members of the couple, that mothers are better at nurturing and bonding with the baby will eventually make it true, since this will make them inclined to have the baby spend more time with the mother. As a consequence, mother-baby bonds will get stronger at the expense of father-baby ones (Deutsch, 2001). In retrospect, then, the higher degree of closeness between the mother and the baby might seem like a “natural” thing, but it is actually a consequence of holding that very same belief in the first place.

Secondary role

Muted group theory was developed by Shirley and Edwin Ardener in 1975, to describe the relationship between a dominant social group and a subordinate one (E. Ardener, 1975). Usually, it has been applied to describe situations between men and women, with men as the dominant group that formalizes or determines the language and the way of seeing the world in general. In the context of my study, though, and perhaps as the only exception, I would like to apply the theory conceptualizing men as the muted group. Even though nowadays the presence of the father is socially expected during the whole process, their role has mostly been relegated to that of a practical assistant, helping the mother if she is tired, cleaning the house, keeping her calm or bringing her water. In not giving them voice, we haven’t created an equal relationship: we have included fathers without really including them. Note that here I do not understand not describe *muteness* as silence, but as a lack of power for the oppressed—or non-dominant—voice. Nino, a 29 year old participant in Magaraggia’s (2013:83) study, said:

‘At present my role is to “hold him a little while I [the mother] have a shower and take a nap. Try to make him sleep, take him for a walk.” In short, I’m a helper.’

This feeling seems to be quite common among fathers, and even in the focus groups or interviews I have conducted Jorge and Jon mentioned that they sometimes feel like they were there just to clean the house and cook—tasks they perceived as things anyone could do—and that they were in search of their unique role to differentiate themselves from ‘others.’. Some men would say that, whenever they were with their babies, people around them treated them as if the only reason for this was that the mother had to do something else—as if they were there only until the ‘real parent’ showed up (Doucet, 2009). This seems to have been a shared experience for several generations. My father Jesús (65) told Jorge that, when I was a baby, he was feeding me in a cafe once and some old women started talking to him. He soon realised that they were sympathizing with him because they assumed he was widower. Shocking as it was to him, the women couldn’t otherwise understand why he would take care of a baby if there *was* a woman in the home. Not much seems to have changed, however, since Javi (32), a participant in the Spanish focus group, told Jorge and Jon that he had experienced some women’s surprise at ‘how well he was feeding the baby’ when out with his daughter.

In Jorge’s case, some tensions arose between him and his mother, as she would frequently comment on his choice of clothes for Oihan—too light, too warm, too big, too small—often questioning his decisions in a subtle way (*Might it be better if...?*). One of the reasons for this might be that, being a man, Jorge’s mother assumes that he is not supposed to *have* that knowledge. With time, the initial tension turned into a sort of admiration, and so every time Jorge changed Oihan in the presence of someone new, she would say ‘It is always him who changes the nappies.’ Once more, for good or bad a woman emphasizes the exceptionality of a father in a caring role, instead of normalizing the situation to the extent possible.

This questioning of the father’s abilities might be even worse when the father is not seen as complementary to the mother, because there is no mother. The Danish newspaper *Politiken* (Aconis, 22-04-2018) publishes a reader comment from a single father of twins (by decision, not circumstance) in Denmark, who denounces how even the most feminist women have asked him questions such as ‘What is he going to do during the night?’, and even suggested to him getting an au-pair. He complains: ‘Just because she is a woman, is she better at handling my children, who know me?’ This case is a good example of the contradictions in social expectations, where men are asked to be active fathers yet are still considered “secondary” or even unqualified. These contradictions are absorbed by them, because they are constantly

receiving conflicting messages. Interestingly, these societal attitudes are sometimes reflected in the way the State interacts with its citizens. In the case of this single father, the State has had to register him as the *mother* of the twins, in order for him to be eligible for some economic help, which he describes as ‘a very sexist practice.’

In a study conducted in the USA with 207 stay-home fathers, 44.9% reported having experienced a negative reaction by another adult. In most cases (69.9%) this negative reaction came from a stay-home mother (Rochlen, Mckelley & Whittaker, 2010). As for the causes of this stigma (see Table 2 below), 36.4% attributed it to being in violation of traditional gender roles, while 18.2% believed it was due to the unfamiliarity towards a man being the main caregiver. 12.5% reported feeling suspiciousness about their intentions, and 8% directly pointed to entering a woman’s domain as the main reason why, they perceived, were being stigmatized.

TABLE 2. Category name, Description, % and Sample responses for perceived stigma (From Rochlen et al., 2010:283).

| Category name | Description | <i>n</i> (%) | Sample response |
|--|---|--------------|---|
| 1. Reasons unknown | No clearly delineated reason(s) for stigmatizing experiences or unable to interpret response | 6 (6.8) | I couldn’t say; maybe I didn’t shave that day |
| 2. Religious, cultural, or geographical differences | Explicit statements that attribute stigmatizing experiences to differences in religion or culture | 6 (6.8) | Religious values |
| 3. Ignorance/unfamiliarity w/ SAHF role | Statement reflects the idea that most people are not familiar with or have experience with a male serving as the primary caregiver; generally expressed a lack of knowledge about the SAHF role | 16 (18.2) | Good old-fashioned ignorance |
| 4. Distrust/suspicion/fear of harm | General discomfort with men around children including preconceived notions that their intentions are harmful toward children | 11 (12.5) | General distrust of men at a playground |
| 5. SAHF’s negative perception/projection of person | General statements specific to the person attributing the stigmatized response, including responses suggesting some negative projection | 4 (4.5) | Not happy with her life and closed minded |
| 6. Violation of traditional gender roles/norms or value system | Responses that reflect a general prejudice toward men in traditionally female roles; includes statements directly attributed to stigma of being male (no more information given) or a direct violation of traditional parenting norms | 32 (36.4) | Gender bias/discrimination |
| 7. Encroaching on woman’s niche | Statements that specifically reflect a sentiment of person (e.g., mother at playground) feeling threatened by SAHFs; illustrates the idea that women feel entitled to a specific role with children and in the home | 7 (8.0) | Threatened that a man can do “their” job |
| 8. Other | Statements that do not fit into any of the above categories | 6 (6.8) | Child is too young for parks/ play grounds |

Note. *N* = 88. SAHF = stay-at-home father.

The suspiciousness these American fathers were talking about has also been a main topic in several studies, as if every man that came close to a child would have devious intentions. Doucet (2006:704) reports on this story told by Archie, a man in care of his son Jordan:

‘This woman comes up and introduces herself and says — “I am a little embarrassed but I am coming to check you out.” She said — “My daughter came home and told me about this man hanging around the school yard, reading stories to the kids”.’

Jokes could be considered a softer version of this suspiciousness. In most domains of life, there is a tendency to joke about women—woman-driver jokes, wife jokes, mother-in-law jokes, etc. (Connell, 2002). Making fun of women just for being women, assuming our triviality and stupidity/ignorance about any given matter, since we are the “weak” group. Something similar happens to fathers when it comes to parenting. There is a tendency to make jokes about fathers and to doubt their ability to do anything related with the child. In the Spanish focus group, Jon explains that some of his friends joked about how long it would take him to change a nappy, and that they were surprised when they saw his speed.

‘Why? They think well because you’re male, you’re the father...’

Another example is a present that one of my parents’ friends gave to us for Oihan: a bib with a drawing of baby only half dressed—different colour socks, jacket only halfway on—and which says ‘Don’t laugh, dad put on my clothes.’ When we opened it, everyone laughed at it and thought it was quite an innocent joke, but it is also very telling of our values as a society, and how deeply this suspiciousness of fathers as caregivers is rooted.

During my research, I have discovered that this muteness goes beyond societal aspects, as we commented above for the Danish parent. Besides policy and State-citizen relations, this affects the behaviour of medical staff. If medical personnel make the father feel as a mere company for their partner, that is inevitably the role he will acquire. The “father as assistant” prejudice has deeper implications in the case of medical staff, because they represent an argument of authority in themselves, and thus fathers are more likely to assimilate the discourse that is being projected from that direction. This problem often continues even when the baby is born. The paediatrician nurse I interviewed recognized that he has tendency to address the mother—even though he is a man himself. In that line, some studies report on (some) father’s feeling like they are left aside when the nurse or the doctor more often address the mother in asking questions or providing explanations (Fägerskiöld, 2006)

FINDING THEIR OWN SPACE

During these months of research, and having explained my project to many men, I have realised that they really want to talk. All the men I asked to participate did so willingly and even enthusiastically, and showed no shyness in talking about their feelings and experiences. After the first focus group in Tromsø, the other two men asked me whether I was going to turn this into a regular thing or if, at least, there would be more sessions, since they had really enjoyed talking freely about fatherhood and feeling that it was them I was focusing on. For them, being the main voice in a discussion about pregnancy, delivery, breastfeeding, bonding, etc., was in many ways a new experience, since their secondary role in this domain is deeply interiorised. This means that, since the idea of them not being the “main protagonist” of this process is so widespread, they are never asked about their feelings and points of view, so they often feel that they do not have the right to talk. Jorge’s father (66) said that this was the first time he really talked about his fathering experience:

‘I can’t imagine discussing these things with my friends, but I have really enjoyed the conversation.’

In line with what I have witnessed, other research suggests that men do want to talk, but that they lack the necessary support systems and they often don’t know who to talk to (Deave & Johnson, 2008). Also, very few mention their own fathers as someone they could talk to about this, in contrast with women, for whom the main referent and information source tends to be their own mother or some other female relative. In my personal experience, I realised that any other mother—not only close friends or relatives, but even Jorge’s colleagues, or friends of our friends—would offer themselves in case I needed to talk to anyone, or in case I had any questions. Very often, if they were Jorge’s friends, they would tell him to let me know that they I could talk to them about anything if I needed to. However, none of his friends or relatives—nor mine—would offer him counsel or help in case he had any questions or worries about paternity.

Fathers’ doubts, fears and feelings are not treated equally to those of the mother. Considering that their own needs are not being met, it sounds unfair to expect them to be there providing support to the mother (Friedewald et al., 2005). As Saphiro (1987:38) explains, even if men are required to be present during the process, their feelings are not. While this seems to be a general trend (Jorge’s father spoke for the first time about his paternity feelings only after 37 years), it seems that it is during the pregnancy that this needs begin. A challenge for the antenatal classes is to create an environment where men are able to identify and express their

feelings regarding fatherhood. Nowadays, the experience in preparation classes seem to encourage men to forget about their feelings and need for support, in order to fully concentrate on their couples (Bradley, Boath & McKenzie, 2004). In a sense, this is also a matter of self-perception, since the more prepared the father thinks he is, the higher involvement he will have with the mother and the baby (Henderson & Brouse, 1991). The current lack of specifically designed discussion groups for new fathers is really surprising, taking into account that the idea of a committed father is not that new anymore. However, not only are there no specific groups for fathers—or, at least, the practice is not as common and not as widespread as it should—but very often they are not even allowed into the ones designed for women. Furthermore, when they are allowed to attend those classes, they often take place within working hours, when many fathers are unavailable, and being men it is extremely difficult for them to get permission from their employers to attend (Henderson & Brouse, 1991).

Antenatal classes dedicated exclusively to men are slowly starting to become a reality. In Vitoria-Gasteiz, my home town, there was a 2016 initiative promoted by a group of midwives to host gender-specific antenatal classes. The group was called *Tú también cuentas* (“You also count”), and it consisted of three different sessions, starting during the pregnancy and ending after the baby is born. In the first session, they discussed the changes occurring during pregnancy at different levels, and how to face them and their role during the delivery. The main foci of the second session were the postpartum period and the care needs of a baby. Finally, in the last session (once the baby is born), they covered the emotional side of the experience, the adaptation to the father's role, how to create bonds and co-responsibility with their partners, etc. In an interview, one of these midwives mentions how this group came out of the necessity expressed by fathers, together with their observations as midwives. They identified a need both in primary care—where fathers were just a company, lacking an active role during the pregnancy—but also at the hospital during the delivery, where they observed that couples were improvising, and that some men often did not know where to place themselves and felt anxious for not knowing what to do, while others were directly overwhelmed by the situation (Muñoz, 2018; Philips, 2018).

While I could not get in touch myself with any of the men who had attended those antenatal classes in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Friedewald et al. (2005) interviewed a group of men who had participated in a similar group in Australia. All their participants reviewed the course as very useful, mostly valuing the relaxed atmosphere and the opportunity for everyone to express themselves without being judged, as compared to previous sessions in mixed groups, with a special emphasis on the sense of connection and belonging (Carlson, Edleson & Kimball,

2014). These sessions also give them the opportunity to explore gender roles and analyse their own life to realize what their own fathers' model has been (McElligott, 2001:558).

Men in the focus groups I have conducted seemed to agree with the need for these groups. For example, Jon said:

'With your friends or acquaintances it might be more difficult for you to say that, they say sissy, you're not masculine, nonsense like that, because it's not masculine, you're a man and you're going to play that role. But in an open group where everyone is in the same situation... Everybody is afraid, everybody feels *vertigo* in this situation.'

Men's feelings of being out of place undoubtedly begin during pregnancy and antenatal classes, but do not quite end with the delivery: as I discussed above, everything related to infant care seems to be part of a woman's universe. This is the reason why male-focused groups don't stop at antenatal classes, but go on past the time of delivery. In recent years, some fathers' groups have emerged in order to satisfy those broader needs. One of those groups is the Spanish *Si los Hombres Hablasen* ('If Men Would Talk'), with whose founder, Javier de Domingo, I have exchanged some emails. The aim of this group was to get men talking about the issues which worried them as fathers and as men more generally, and to create a network where these people could relate and develop healthier ways of involved fathering, in an effort to promote equality among genders. In his own words, he created this group in order to tackle the need of inclusion and the "masculine loneliness" (also mentioned in Thomas et al., 2011) in the construction of fatherhood. The group used to hold weekly meetings which were really successful. Unfortunately, after five years the project has come to an end, but it has broken ground for similar projects and has helped many fathers reconsider their own role and question hegemonic masculinities.

A different way of challenging hegemonic masculinity was explored last year in the Basque Country, during the first conference on fatherhood organised by anthropologist Ritxar Bacete: *Paternidades que transforman* ('Life-changing Fatherhoods'). Bacete is an expert in positive fathering, and has worked for the Basque Government at the Directorate for Family and Diversity. The aim of workshops and conferences like this one was to put on the table reflections and ideas that would help design a specific intervention model for fathers.

It is obvious that there are several initiatives and groups which empower and encourage men towards caring. However, and even if I regard those initiatives as very positive, it seems to me that so far they have only reached those fathers who have themselves questioned the patriarchal system or the way they do fathering, even if they are open to everybody. The aim, I

would say, is to normalize the fact that fathers are also an active part of the family, and that they will also go through an extreme change their lives. It is important that they are able to engage with these changes and normalize them, making them an active part of the process, since it is through this practical knowledge and experience that the emotions will arise, easing in the transformation. In other words, this is the practical response to the pre-conditions for transitioning out of the liminal phase that we discussed above. As such, for them to meet other people in the same situation, under expert guidance and facing doubts and fears they might otherwise not share, should be regarded as very positive and normal.

IS FATHERING A CHALLENGE TO MASCULINITY?

The structure and agency of hegemonic masculinity is reflected through the commitment of fathers to being part of the world of paid work (structure), and through their identification as economic providers of the family (agency; Miller, 2010). In that frame of mind, all other ways of being in the world are perceived as weakening. Wall and Arnold (2007) suggest that caring is still perceived as clashing with the hegemonic ideas of masculinity. Caring is undervalued because is seen as easy—and yet somehow ‘comes naturally’ to women—and therefore not as a real work—it is, after all, unpaid. Since work is central in the construction of masculinity, these traits render caring an unsuitable activity for men under this perspective. As a consequence, men in charge of small kids find themselves in a sort of no man’s land: excluded from the men’s world, and also very often from the woman’s one; inevitably left feeling that they are inappropriate, and not as talented as mothers.

As in many other aspects, when analysing social situations the language employed is of great importance. In this case, the apparent need to use different labels for the ‘new involved father’, the ‘egalitarian father’, ‘intimate fatherhood’, etc. (Palkovitz, 2002, in Magaraggia, 2013) shows that contemporary ideas of masculinity are not really being taken into account, and that instead of questioning hegemonic ideals of masculinity other labels have been added to ‘fatherhood’ (Magaraggia, 2013). The ‘new fathers’ want to have a close relationship with their babies, based on emotionally nurturing aspects, and be involved in every aspect of children’s life (Bar-On & Scharf, 2016). By doing that, some authors would argue that fathers either reproduce or challenge hegemonic masculinity. For example, Brandth and Kvande (1998) suggest that, rather than challenging hegemonic masculinity, caring practices are

adopted or assimilated by it. In Plantin et al. (2003), the thesis is that fathering and caring are complicit, since even fathers who support equality still maintain a traditional gender-based division of tasks. Doucet (2004) argues instead that these men don't represent any of the key masculinities, but that they create new forms of masculinity while rejecting and adopting both femininity and hegemonic masculinity.

In a study conducted among stay-home fathers in Canada, Doucet (2004) mentions how in their narratives those men often seek to position themselves as men, as heterosexual, as masculine and as fathers, rejecting the idea that stay-home dads 'do mothering'.

Masked gender roles

The ideal of gender equality has made more progress when it comes to baby-related tasks than in those related to housework, as revealed by the Norwegian time-use studies (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). From this research, it seems that some aspects of caring and staying at home, such as playing with the baby or doing things together with him or her, are easier to reconcile with hegemonic masculinity. Fathers, who have traditionally been more related to the world outside home, tend to take the baby out with them instead of entering the home themselves—a traditionally feminine universe (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). Caring-related tasks, such as feeding the baby, changing clothes or bathing the child are rarely done by men, especially as compared to other, preferred activities like playing with the baby (Cook, Jones, Dick & Singh, 2005). Fathers' caregiving seems to be mostly characterized by play as well as a high level of activity, which portrays them as active, strong and physical, all of which are attributes that fit nicely with hegemonic masculinity.

In the summer, Jorge and I spent a week with my parents in Oropesa del Mar, a coastal village in the Mediterranean where many Spanish families—including my own—spend their summer holidays. Every day we had the same routine, and like us many others would go to the beach at the same time, establish themselves in the same places and methodically follow a number of rituals without realizing it. Every day we saw the same families. The father of a family who used to be next to us—some days right by, some days a couple of beach umbrellas away—would always wear a red swimsuit and bring a colourful umbrella. He would first play with his two kids in the sun, usually by making a big hole to bury one of the children. They really played hard and had fun, and in the meantime the mother would sunbathe without ever relaxing completely, always checking if the babies had enough sunscreen, or if they had taken off their hats. Afterwards, once the mother gave her approval, they would run to the water with

an inflatable mattress and play until they were wrinkled like a prune. Once out, the mother would be waiting for them with towels, dry them properly and then convince them to stay in the shadow while offering them something to eat. That family, that daily scene just happened to catch my attention, but it could really be anyone, and I could recognise the same pattern under most umbrellas with kids on the multiple lines along the shore. Fathers tend to engage in caring with more physical activities such as play, while mothers are in charge of the emotional and practical responsibility, defined this as knowing what the other's needs are (Doucet, 2004).

There is a very wide range of needs that parents might cover for a baby, and that is what I am referring to when I speak about caring—since the definition of the concept is somewhat problematic within the social sciences (Thomas, 1993). In trying to summarize all those actions to get a more complete idea of what caring is, and according to what the literature on this topic has said before, Doucet (2009:84) differentiates between interaction, accessibility, and responsibility. Interaction refers to the direct action with the child, accessibility to being there for the baby both physically and emotionally, and responsibility refers to the more indirect things such as “planning and scheduling”. It is especially in this last category where I found more differences between fathers and mothers. Here is actually where I see one of the biggest differences and one of the less spoken-about ones. As Doucet points out, these indirect actions are in fact very time consuming, and represent a large part of what caring involves.

Having physicality as the base of the relationship between the father and the baby seems to allow fathers to differentiate themselves from mothers in the way they care (Doucet, 2009). This is materialised in the narratives of most fathers on leave, who report the habit of going for a walk in the woods, the park or any other public arena but the home (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). This might well be the reason why fathers tend to prefer slightly older babies to newborns. Eros, a father in Magaraggia's (2013:83) research, described why he thought he was not yet feeling like a father:

‘For now, aside from picking him up, putting him to sleep, giving him breakfast and so on, I don't do anything else. There is still no communication. When he'll be two or three years old we'll see. But right now I don't feel hundred per cent dad.’

Miguel, Xabi, Dani (Jorge's brother) and most of the men in my study said they mostly enjoyed or were expecting to enjoy more when their babies reached an age where they can really *play*, because that is ‘the fun part’, and where they feel more comfortable. Miguel, for example, said he believes Maria (his wife) is the one who will make the most out of this newborn phase, while he will enjoy later phases more. To this, Jorge replied that he had never thought about it in

those terms, but that it is true that sometimes he wants Oihan to grow a little bit to be able to ‘do more things’ with him. A Norwegian father (Brandth & Kvande, 2014:136) speaks in similar terms:

‘It’s more challenging and that sort of thing when they’re older. It’s more enjoyable and more important.’

The (feminine) role of the carer is undervalued (‘it’s more challenging...’) and taken as the “natural”, whereas the “important” comes afterwards. The partner of the men cited above reports (Brandth & Kvande, 2014:137):

‘He’s the kind of father who feels more at ease with slightly older children. As long as they’re infants, it’s more like: ‘no, you do it, because you know best’, right?’

Caring through play seems to fit perfectly since it is a way to contribute to caregiving without compromising their masculinity. This tendency among fathers to take only the “fun” aspects of caring (Johansson & Klinth, 2008)— shows the privilege to choose which activity they want to engage in, this being perhaps one of the most obvious signs that patriarchy extends even to those domains which are called to take it down as equally shared parenting.

In Magaraggia’s (2013:87) research, only one out of 40 men expressed his intention to share responsibilities and build a relationship with the newborn through everyday practices:

‘Since the beginning, since breastfeeding, we had this division of tasks, by which the mother breastfed and I made the baby burp and changed the nappies. But there wasn’t even the need to speak about it. It was obvious that we both had to share the effort and that we both needed our moments of relationship with the child, right? She did it with her milk, I did it with care, with my warm hands. This was absolutely instinctive.’

In my research most of the fathers report being in charge of nappies during the first couple of weeks, when they were on paternity leave together with the mother. However, for most of them this meant simply a fair way of sharing tasks while both were at home, rather than a way of bonding with the baby. This is why, once they went back to work, they stopped doing it both during the day—because they weren’t physically present—and at night—because ‘since the mother had to wake up to breastfeed anyway, it did not make sense to them for both to be awake.’ Dani, Jorge’s brother, said that for him changing nappies was not at all a way to create bonds, or the reflection of a more involved fathering: “important” things, for him the ones that truly establish a bond, consisted more on playing, hugging or spending time together.

For Jorge, however, changing nappies has been a key realm in order to make bonds and to find his place in the newborn family. From the very beginning, we decided that Jorge was going to be in charge of changing nappies. This decision was taken for two reasons: the first was to allow him his own space and a context in which he could bond with Oihan, a space where he is the one making the decisions, which would hopefully help him feel that Oihan also needed him. The second reason was that, this way, I could rest a little bit between breastfeeding times—when he couldn't physically take responsibility other than being there and bringing me some water or cushions.

Once at home, Jorge started by creating a nice environment in the laundry room, where we had all of Oihan's things: he turned up the heat, put on a low light and always tried move slowly and smoothly so that Oihan would enjoy that moment with him. At the beginning, he was very careful when moving the baby's legs, and in the way he spoke to him. This moment was very important for Jorge and he didn't experience it only as 'something that has to be done', but he tried to make a special moment of it, both for Oihan and for himself. I can now see the confidence he eventually acquired in holding, changing and talking to his baby thanks to those interactions that were only for them. This also helped him overcome a little the frustration of not being able to calm him down when Oihan needed to be breastfed, because he could also have his own moment. At that very vulnerable moment when he was so insecure, having the opportunity to learn through experience alone with Oihan was what detonated his emotional side, turning his frustration into acceptance first and ease latter.

Jon also said that this had been the case for him, and that having an aspect in which he felt he was in charge meant a lot to him in terms of feeling involved in parenting. While Olatz had her breastfeeding moment, he would have the nappy-changing moment which would also make him feel necessary as a caregiver—even if at times of frustration both Jon and Jorge would complain that what they do could also be done by the mother, but not the other way around. Ultimately, however, it is time and experience that make this bonding moments possible between the baby and the parent—the father in this case. The more they do, the more they will learn and feel confident in their abilities as caregivers, and therefore the level of involvement and joy will also increase (Kowlessar, Fox & Wittkowski, 2014). In my case, since Jorge was always the one in charge of changing Oihan's nappies, one of the first times I had to do it myself I remember feeling quite frustrated because, for some reason, the baby started crying—maybe it took me more time than it did Jorge, or maybe there was not even a reason for it. At that moment, my mother was present and she said 'you don't know how to do it as well as daddy!' She was probably saying that without much of an intention, but at that point

her words fed into my insecurity (due to my lack of practice), and my confidence went down. In a way, I felt myself vulnerable as some fathers report to feel. Time is essential to acquire and embody the knowledge, but the moment at which they start practicing is also relevant: the later they face the situation, the more expert the mother will be. Again, this can extend the liminal phase unnecessarily, which in turn establishes more differentiated, less equitable roles for the future.

WHEN SOCIAL CLASS MATTERS

The fathers I have interviewed are, in general terms, very proud of being able to spend time with their babies, and of taking care of them in equal conditions. However, it is hard to ignore that there might be an implicit socioeconomic bias in the group of people I have had direct and frequent access to. Most of these men have relatively successful careers, and belong to what is usually (and somewhat vaguely) referred to as the ‘middle class’. This fact is non-trivial: according to different studies, this may be a crucial factor in coping with the numerous clashes between fathering and hegemonic masculinity, as well as in the way parental leaves are distributed within the couple—with everything that this entails for the establishment of caring practices (Brandth & Kvande, 2014; Doucet, 2004; Plantin et al., 2003).

Fathers’ belonging to the working class are typically described as having limited education levels and jobs in industry, transport, cleaning, etc. (Brandth & Kvande, 2014). Fathers from this group are much more reluctant to take paternity leaves, and to get involved in fathering, than middle class parents (higher level studies and better job positions). Also, working class fathers tend to take their leave at the same time as the mother, with the consequences I have already discussed. One of the participants in Brandth and Kvande (2014), a working class Norwegian man, explains he could not understand the official application form for parental leave, and so instead of asking he just decided not to take his leave. Probably, as the authors suggest, because he thought that bringing up the issue at the mill where he worked could damage his reputation as a worker.

The case of middle class men in Norway seems slightly different. Fathers within this group almost always take their quota, usually once the mother’s is over, which also means they often have the opportunity to be alone with the child and develop the necessary skills for caring. Some authors (e.g., Plantin et al., 2003) consider that ‘new fathering’ is an (unconscious) strategy of middle class men to retain their masculinity while pushing the pram as a symbol of their commitment to their wives’ careers. Having the opportunity to practice and develop caring

skills was also a representative topic in both interviews I conducted in Norway: the focus group and the one-on-one conversation. While the group is international and thus presumably culturally heterogeneous, all of these men were academics with social rights in the country. My participants in Norway indeed follow what seems to be the norm among middle class men: taking the leave once the mother is back to work. However, as reported by Brandth and Kvande (2014), these good intentions often fail to translate into real practice, since some fathers report having trouble cutting ties with their job completely.

As I have explained before, we decided that Jorge would be the one taking all of the shared parental leave period, so I could continue with my Masters degree. However, at the beginning it was hard for him to make the decision of taking the leave himself, maybe fearing that being ‘out of the loop’ for some months would be damaging for a junior researcher like him, in terms of missing some opportunities, conferences, or potential publications. In a sense, we might see this as pressure from society, from those structures we have very much interiorised in which jobs come first, even more so when one has a baby because ‘it’s not just you anymore’ and ‘babies cost a lot of money’. Jorge feared he would feel empty without his job. Nonetheless, after much discussion he agreed to be the one taking the leave, and in a way it made him feel liberated to do what he really wanted to—spend time with his son and share the first months with him continuously.

This freedom of choosing whether he wanted to be a long-term (8 months) caring father or not might have been key in Jorge’s attitude towards being the main carer. Jorge has a successful career which he knew he would retake in a few months. While some opportunities would have passed, others would come, and he knew his earnings would be stable for the foreseeable future. Despite being satisfied with their own decision, men who stay in the home very often report feeling the social pressure to earn money and produce (Doucet, 2004). More than one of the stay-home fathers in Doucet’s (2004:287) study reported having issues with this, since people often think there must be something ‘wrong’ with them that justifies this unusual situation—e.g., the impossibility of finding a job, among others.

‘Why is the father at home? Like he can’t earn as much as his partner or something? I struggle with that, because it is also my own internalized kind of condition, too, that I have this struggle. You know, my background, working class, a strong work ethic. And it’s a guy thing.’

This feeling seems to fit perfectly with what the Spanish paediatrician nurse told me in an interview. He said that even though it was mostly mothers who attended the medical practice

and check-ups, he could appreciate two different profiles among the few fathers that went there: those who had lost their job during the economic crisis, and because of that were forced to be stay-home dads, and “modern” fathers who were usually younger, with higher socioeconomic and sociocultural status and with better positioned jobs³. According to him, the first had the attitude of being there as an obligation, and would not even ask him questions. The latter, on the other hand, tended to be more positive and secure in their role, and thus adopted a more invested attitude. I argue that class, level of education and income are key to study masculinity in relation to fatherhood. For working class fathers, their identity as men and their position within the family often feels challenged, and they can’t avoid feeling that they have failed as providers for their own children. For men with (or experiencing having somewhat) successful careers, the feeling is that they don’t need to prove anything because they have already accomplished what they wanted, even if unpaid nurturing might be perceived as weakening (Miller, 2010).

THE OPPOSITE EFFECT

Being clumsy with children is not considered masculine anymore; mastering something new and facing the ensuing challenges (still) is, even if those challenges are taking care of a baby (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). In that sense, fathers who share the leave period with their partners and go on leave to take care of their kids are looked up to by society in general, receiving compliments from friends and colleagues, something that women don’t get in turn (Deutsch, 2001).

Xabi (33), one of Jorge’s friends, is a policeman who works 50% to take care of Naia (his daughter). He mentions that he feels admired, especially by mothers. He says he is usually the only man in the park in the mornings, and that the other mothers praise him very often, saying how brave he is for having made that decision. They often express what a good father they believe he is, and how “lucky” his wife is. In turn, his wife Jaione (39), who also works 60% for the same reason, does not get any such comments. Once more, we have here this dichotomy or contradiction between the mistrust/disdain towards a stay-home father as a man who has somewhat “failed” (and thus almost discriminating him), and the praise of those who adopt the same role coming from a successful career. Stay-home dads first feel the need to

³ All this appreciations were made by the paediatrician nurse according to the way people behaved, dressed or talked, not really because he knew precisely the occupation or personal situation of every father.

justify why it is them and not the mother—after all, that would be the “natural” situation, wouldn’t it? After that comes the condescension: ‘I think that is great, what a lucky woman your wife is.’ As if taking care of the kids could only be a woman’s job, and so anyone who has a partner that has *chosen* to share responsibilities should be grateful for it.

This issue has come up in the focus groups, both in Spain and in Norway. In Spain, it arose in a more critical way, since those fathers seemed to have already reflected on the meaning behind calling their share of responsibility ‘helping your partner.’ Jon would explain it this way:

‘My sister in law always tells [my wife] Olatz how lucky she is because I am very handy, I cook and clean [...] and the same with my mother, “You have to help Olatz”, and it’s not *helping!* It’s my responsibility.’

In the Norwegian focus group, the issue came up in a more innocent way, since Björn was explaining how he felt more social than ever when we walked with Vidar (his son) around the university:

‘[Father’s on leave] are well-regarded... And you’re not expected to accomplish anything academically or work-wise during that first year... Any little thing you manage to do, people will be very impressed [...] People look at you very well if you sit down and play with your kid. You get a lot of extra points for that.’

Once more we can see the contradictions with which men are confronted when trying to go about these new ways of egalitarian fathering. On the one hand, they have to fight their way into an eminently feminine universe, and try to cross that boundary to find their own ways. On the other hand, and since patriarchy continues to be the dominant system, caregiving activities provided by fathers receive a higher status (Brandth & Kvande, 1998).

A SUMMARY OF CLAIMS

Fathering has, without a doubt, one of the best chances of challenging the traditional gender split in society, and in a way it is already doing so. Nowadays, the way a “good father” is conceptualized has more to do with a present, emotional father, whereas the model of the absent breadwinner seems to have been overcome. This is true both of Spain and Norway, even though traditional roles are still very rooted in the former and so the change will likely take longer than in Norway, where the double earner/dual carer model seems to have been established (more) successfully—although still far from a 50/50 share of housework and childcare. However, being an egalitarian father is not as easy as having the determination to be so, because along

the way fathers will not only have to fight against their internalized models, but also against society, the medical stratum, leave policies, the job market, etc. Moreover, finding their own role within the family has proved not to be a quick and easy task, but rather more of a long process.

Becoming a father is facing a new status. In order to get there the man suffers a transformation, a transition into a new way of being in life. I have used Van Gennep's *rite de passage* phases to describe this transition which would include separation, limen and incorporation. Liminality—which I have argued starts some time before delivery but does not end with it—is key, since it is at that stage where there are more possibilities for creativity and also more vulnerability. This phase is peculiar in fathering rite of passage, since the status change happens at the very moment the baby is born but the character change will take longer to incorporate. Nonetheless, it is very important that fathers get enough time with the baby (ideally alone) during that period, so they can learn and embody the knowledge regarding their new status and their newborn, and start developing bonds with him or her. This vulnerability is what has to be overcome in any ritual, including this one. One important reflection is how, in our modern societies, it is the welfare state that sets the conditions on which fathers will be able to develop their skills and handle their vulnerability, by giving them access to this time in the shape of a leave, and/or other kind of support. The mother's attitude also seems to be key in order to either encourage those bonds between father and baby, or to prevent them—although it is unclear if one is the consequence of the other, or the other way round. Nonetheless, if fathers don't get the opportunity to experience by themselves what caring for a newborn is like, this liminal phase will be extended for a long period, increasing the levels of insecurity and vulnerability.

Caregiving has traditionally been part of the feminine universe, and it seems that we have that very much interiorized since often men's capacities and decisions regarding children are questioned, making them the subject of jokes and suspicion. In the best case scenario, they only need to "suffer" compliments, which might be easier to hear but still denote the lack of normality in seeing a father at caring. Caregiving and what it implies should also be questioned and maybe revised, separating it from the notion that it is innate to women. For this purpose, ante- and post-natal groups designed specifically for fathers might be key. Bacete (2017) argues that conscious fathering requires confronting an emotional world for which men often lack codes, tools and references. This is the reason why groups focusing on this, or even extending these discussions on the matter to the world around us—media, for example—can help to provide fathers with words and ideas that enable them to reflect upon their role. This is in fact

starting to be a strong cultural expectation in some countries, such as Finland (Eerola, 2014). These groups should start to operate during the pregnancy, but this is not enough. Midwives and other medical staff should be aware of the importance of addressing the couple as a team, so that what we ask fathers to do—being there from the beginning—matches the way they are treated. Only this way fathers will feel that they are also a main character in the play, and will start acting accordingly. Ignoring the biological changes in the mother, rejecting the embodied nature of the pregnancy in women would make no sense, but it is precisely that fact which makes it indispensable that fathers have their own space to work on their fathering. This is especially true during the first months of a baby, where biological and social differences between men and women reach their highest point—while, at the same time, the major differences on the practice of parenting will be established (Doucet, 2009:93).

Nothing seems to indicate that being better at childcare than men comes “naturally” to women: everything seems to be a matter of practice. After enough time together with the baby—again, alone if possible—fathers gain confidence in themselves as caregivers, and as they embody that knowledge they become able to enjoy that aspect of themselves. In Jorge’s case, being in charge of changing nappies and managing Oihan’s clothes—thinking of what to dress him with, what is clean and what is not, etc.—has proved to be very important for him in order to bond with his son individually. Progress towards real equality must take place based on this transmission of role models from one generation to the next. For this reason, finding proper models and fathers with whom to reflect about their role and their privileges as men is indispensable. This should be extended to every father, including the working classes where the idea of a caregiving father seems to represent a bigger challenge. The babies of today will become the fathers and mothers of tomorrow, and will probably reproduce the models they have experienced: even if our interventions attempt to consciously change some attitudes, a man learns to be a father, first and foremost, by being a son to his own father.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this project is to contribute a more intimate perspective to the—still relatively scarce—literature on fathering. The research reviewed and the different aspects of the social, the political and the personal sides of fathering discussed in this thesis help us understand what influences the transition into fatherhood. This transformation has been my main interest: this project was conceived with the aim of understanding how fathering develops physically and

psychologically, the former being the less explored and more inaccessible part of the process. Video footage allows us to explore that transformation by showing the physicality of it, the feelings and the embodied nature of the transition. On the other hand, the written part (this thesis) has allowed me some space to broaden the analysis, reflecting upon a wider perspective and trying to analyse the challenges and factors that can either help or hinder that process.

I would like to look back to the beginning of this project and make a reflection upon my initial research questions. These may appear to have been only partially addressed, since I feel other issues have taken up most of my discussion. I would like, therefore, to refer back to these original goals before I end with a more general conclusion about this thesis. The way Jorge has grown into the role of father has been shown through the use of images. He has learnt new skills, and that is where observational video is of great importance, because even if in the day to day those learning steps can go unnoticed, thanks to the relatively long data collection period of this fieldwork (almost 5 months of uninterrupted recording) it is easier to appreciate the evolution in his attitude and manners. When I condensed those months into a 30-minute film, the change was undoubtedly evident, altogether with his trajectory (his ups and downs). This is precisely what gives personal value to this analysis, since a large part of this change in Jorge would probably have gone unnoticed by me had I not been in the role of researcher. What shows us the different attitude and the way of enacting his new status is not only his physical transformation in how he relates with the baby—going from forced and awkward to natural and enjoyable—but also the way he is positioned in the different focus groups.

As for the perception of his masculinity, which was the second of my main research questions, I believe now that this might have been too ambitious an issue, due to all the implications it carries. Nonetheless, I have to say that this work has made Jorge very reflective of his role as a male in this world, and of the expectations he is supposed to fulfill. These reflections, though, are perhaps more a consequence of this research project than of his new role as a father per se—showing how ethnographic research can act as a catalyst, both for researchers and for collaborators. In any case, both things have obviously very much affected each other. Jorge feels that he has in a way broken a barrier by deciding to be the one who would take the whole shared parental leave. After all those months, he says he really enjoyed that time, and is now convinced that most men have not had the opportunity of spending real time with the babies from the beginning—either because they have not given themselves the chance, or because their partners, their jobs or their states have not facilitated this. He believes that, if they knew what they are missing, they would fight more for having equal policies and rights. This matches the data I have, since having more time with the baby also makes

confidence grow when taking care of a newborn and, as a consequence, the joy and the ease increase. Regarding the acceptance, he got at the community setting—mainly with respect to family and friends—I have to say that, after some initial surprise at him having ‘such a long’ leave, they took it in a very positive way. Eventually, they even complimented both his actions and his luck for having that much time to dedicate to Oihan. However, I have the feeling that this acceptance is somewhat superficial, since there were two key factors at play. The first one is that most people would see us as a *family* on leave, because they would not consider my Masters a “real” job, and, as such, perceived a very strong presence of the mother. The other factor is that they knew it was a temporary situation for Jorge, which I really believe was key for acceptance: things would likely have been very different if he had decided to *quit his job* to take care of a child. That scenario would have been much more difficult to accept and understand for many people, and also a bigger challenge for himself.

My main claim during this thesis is that fathers, as well as mothers, also suffer a physical/physiological and psychological transformation in acquiring and adapting to a new status, thus the idea of comparing it to a rite of passage. Despite all the challenges and contradictions that fathers have to face, becoming a father is also a tangible process of transformation with different phases. Rather than happening suddenly once the baby is born—even though officially it is perceived as such—this change of status is a gradual process. If given the necessary time and space, the father will have the opportunity to learn through experience (together with the mother), being able to embody certain knowledge that will make him overcome the initial vulnerable period at the beginning to start connecting with the baby and grow into his role with ease. It is a process that can take more or less time depending on the person and the circumstances, but as we can see in the film, it is both physical—about skills—and emotional—about attachment. It is essential that fathers are able to go through this liminal phase, or learning/integration phase, when they are going to feel more insecure, and for that purpose facing fears and learning by doing are indispensable. For all these reasons, giving fathers the time and opportunity to experience caregiving by themselves is fundamental. The Welfare State has a key role here: it should provide long and, most importantly, non-transferable parental leaves for both fathers and mothers. I submit that this would benefit everyone in the search for a more equitable society. If that time is not provided—as in the case of my father, for example, who had to go to work a couple of hours after I was born—the capacity and the opportunity of growing into that role is mutilated, and with it his opportunity to become a present, involved father—or at least it makes it much more difficult.

Men do not have a stable, straightforward way to become a father. Moreover, they have to constantly face contradictions in what is expected of them and the way they are treated afterwards. Their physical needs, rights and emotional aspects are not taken care of, and even if an incipient interest in the topic is growing—it might be that I am more alert now, but recently I have seen many of these issues surface on the media, especially in the press—this is still a minoritarian concern. However, one of the most surprising things I found is that men really want to talk about their experiences; they just don't feel comfortable doing it with their friends or family—they are afraid of being perceived as not enough masculine—nor with their partners—how are you going to express fear towards delivery, for example, if you are not even the one that has to physically suffer it? It is in that sense that I claim they are muted, since they are always regarded as not entitled to express their feelings or make decisions, their experience often being taken as less valuable. That is why, in order to normalize talking and reflecting about these issues, father-specific conversation groups should be encouraged, both pre- and post-birth. In those groups, either home-organized as I did or—preferably—institutionalized, fathers are empowered and feel that they are in equal and suitable conditions to express themselves freely. By expressing themselves and sharing experiences, their confidence is boosted, as is their perspective on their role and position with respect to the mother and the child.

I must admit that fathering cannot be studied and analysed without studying mothering. Both fathers and mothers face different social expectations that are often hard to reconcile. The *maternal gatekeeping* and the lack of power fathers experience on their side of parenting is also a consequence of the patriarchal system, according to which mothers are naturally better at caring and nurturing, and they are always expected to be constantly available. This immersion in the feminine world, as I have called it, is probably one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome for fathers, but it is indeed necessary if they are to get involved at the same level as the mother. For that purpose, a reflection about what kind of fathers they want to be has to be met by a similar and complementary reflection coming from the mothers. However, it would be woefully misled to read this superficially, blaming mothers for not giving fathers the opportunity to achieve certain parental skills under the pretext of biological differences. What is in fact hidden here are the different expectations we have to face and have interiorized according to gender practices.

However, and despite all the complexities and contradictions of this issue, I have observed incipient changes in the implication of fathers on family life, even though in practice changes are inevitably slower than in theory. I do believe that State investments in non-

transferable leaves and father-oriented programs are very much needed—and will indeed pay off in the future in our pursuit of equality. There is also much work to do on the academic side. In that respect, the greatest research window that can and must be opened moving forward is the one related to tracking the corporeal and embodied learning processes of parents in relation to a baby. This kind of data will allow us to understand what is really happening, that is, how and through which transformations—psychological, emotional, physical—we learn to become parents. In this connection, this type of research will provide further insight into some of the fundamental claims of gender theory, such as the extent to which certain practices are cultural (i.e., socialized into individuals of one or another gender, itself a construct), or natural (i.e., grounded in biological male-female differences). There is still much work that can be done on these issues, which would not only contribute to academic research, but also could be applied by policy-makers, hospitals, health services, employers and families in general—inclusive of, most crucially, new family models such as single fathers, homosexual couples, transgender fathers and mothers, etc. Research of this type can help us work towards a more egalitarian society, acting as a stepping stone to improving fathers' (and mothers') rights both politically and socially. In what relates to me and this research, I hope to have contributed some insights with an individual narrative about how a man turned into a father, viewed from the closest and most intimate perspective possible—my own. I also hope that the story of this complex transformation, which required time and effort on all sides, might inspire other men (and women) to reflect upon the way they father, or at least the way they would like to do it.

REFERENCES

- Abu-Lughod, L. (1991). Writing against Culture. In R.G. Fox (Ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Santa Fe, USA: School of American Research Press. (pp. 137-162).
- Aconis, A. (2018, April 22). Far til tvillinger på 8 måneder: Kvinder går i baglås, når de møder en alenefar som mig. *Politiken*. Retrieved from: <http://politiken.dk/6460010>
- Aldous, J., Mulligan, G.M., & Bjarnason, T. (1998). Fathering over time: What makes the difference? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(4), 809-820.
- Allen, S.M. & Hawkins, A.J. (1999). Maternal Gatekeeping: Mothers' Beliefs and Behaviors That Inhibit Greater Father Involvement in Family Work. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61(1), 199-212.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldbberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research. 2nd Edition*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Ardener, E. (1975). Belief and the problem of women and The 'problem' revisited. In S. Ardener (Ed.), *Perceiving women*. London, UK: Malaby. (pp. 1-27)
- Arntsen, B. & Holtedahl, L., (2005). Visualizing Situatedness: The Role of the Audience/Reader in Knowledge Production. In E. Engelstad & S. Gerrard (Eds.), *Challenging Situatedness. Gender, Culture and the Production of Knowledge*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press. (pp. 67-83).
- Bacete, R. (2017) *Nuevos Hombres Buenos. La masculinidad en la era del feminismo*. Barcelona (Spain): Península.
- Bacete, R. & Gartzia, L. (2016). *Implicación de los padres vascos en la crianza: impacto en la corresponsabilidad y en el trabajo productivo*. Deusto, Spain: Basque Government. retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/y7u6ag5p>
- Barbash, I. & Taylor, L. (1997). *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking*. Los Angeles, USA: University of California Press.
- Bar-On, I.K. & Scharf, M. (2016). The Reconstruction of Fatherhood Across Two Generations: From Experiences of Deficiency, Strictness, Precocious Maturity, and Distance to Indulgence, Permissiveness, and Intimacy. *Journal of Family Issues* 37(5), 645-670.
- Bradley, E., Boath, E. & MacKenzie, M. (2004). The experience of first-time fatherhood: a brief report. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 22(1), 45-47.
- Brandth, B. & Kvande, E. (1998). Masculinity and Child Care: The Reconstruction of Fathering. *The Sociological Review*, 46(2), 293-313.
- Brandth, B. & Kvande, E. (2014). Parental leave and classed fathering practices in Norway. In G.B. Eydal & T. Rostgaard (Eds.), *Fatherhood in the Nordic Welfare states*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press. (pp. 121-138).

- Brennan, A., Ayers, S., Ahmed, H., & Marshall-Lucette, S. (2007). A critical review of the Couvade syndrome: the pregnant male. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 25(3), 173-189.
- Butler, J. (1987). Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig, Foucault. In S. Benhabib & D. Cornell (Eds.), *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late Capitalist Societies*. Oxford, UK: Polity Press. (pp. 128-42)..
- Cabrera, N., Tamis-LeMonda, C.S., Bradley, R.H., Hofferth, S., & Lamb, M.E. (2000). Fatherhood in the twenty-first century. *Child Development*, 71(1), 127-136.
- Carlson, J., Edleson, J. & Kimball, E. (2014). First-time Fathers' Experiences of and Desires for Formal Support: A Multiple Lens Perspective. *Fathering*, 12(3), 242-261.
- Cohen, A.P. (1992). Self-conscious anthropology. In J. Okely & H. Callaway (Eds.), *Anthropology & Autobiography*. London, UK: Routledge. (pp. 221-241).
- Condon, J.T., Boyce, P., & Corkindale, C.J. (2004). The First-Time Fathers Study: A Prospective Study of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Men during the Transition to Parenthood. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 38(1-2), 56-64.
- Connell, R.W. (2002). *Gender*. Cambridge (UK): Polity press.
- Cook, J.L., Jones, R.M., Dick, A.J., & Singh, A. (2005). Revisiting Men's Role in Father Involvement. *Fathering*, 3(2), 165-178.
- Daly, K.J. (1993). Reshaping fatherhood: Finding the models. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14, 510-530.
- Davies, C.A. (1999). *Reflexive Ethnography. A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Deave, T. & Johnson, D. (2008). The transition to parenthood: What does it mean for fathers? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 63(6), 626-633.
- De Bromhead, T. (2003). *Looking Two Ways: Documentary's Relationship with Cinema and Reality*. Højbjerg, Denmark: Intervention Press.
- Deutsch, F.M. (2001). Equally Shared Parenting. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(1), 25-28.
- Doucet, A. (2004). Fathers and the Responsibility for Children: A Puzzle and a Tension. *Atlantis*, 28(2), 103-114.
- Doucet, A. (2004). "It's Almost Like I Have a Job, but I Don't Get Paid": Fathers at Home Reconfiguring Work, Care, and Masculinity. *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers*, 2(3), 277-303.
- Doucet, A. (2006). 'Estrogen-Filled Worlds': Fathers as Primary Caregivers and Embodiment. *The Sociological Review* 54(4), 696-716.
- Doucet, A. (2009). Dad and Baby in the First Year: Gendered Responsibilities and Embodiment. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 624(1), 78-98.

- Doucet, A. (2009). Gender Equality and Gender Differences: Parenting, Habitus, and Embodiment. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, 46(2), 103-121.
- Draper, J. (2000). *Fathers in the making: Men, Bodies and Babies*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Hull, UK: University of Hull.
- Draper, J. (2003). Blurring, moving and broken boundaries: men's encounters with the pregnant body. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 25(7), 743-767.
- Draper, J. (2003). Men's passage to fatherhood: An analysis of the contemporary relevance of transition theory. *Nursing Inquiry*, 10(1): 66-77.
- Durmaz, G.B., Baş, N.G., & Gümüş, F. (2016). Father's perceptions of their role in fathers with babies aged between 4 and 12 months in Turkey. *Newborn & Infant Nursing Reviews*, 16, 115-118.
- Eerola, P. (2014). Nurturing, breadwinning, and upbringing: Paternal responsibilities by Finnish men in early fatherhood. *Community, Work and Family*, 17(3), 308-324.
- EFE News Agency (2018, February 16). El Gobierno vasco aumentará los permisos por paternidad de sus funcionarios de 4 a 18 semanas. *El Mundo*. Retrieved from: <http://www.elmundo.es/>
- Elwood, R.W. & Mason, C. (1994). The Couvade and the Onset of Paternal Care: A Biological Perspective. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 15, 145-156.
- Esteban, M.L. (2004). Antropología encarnada. Antropología desde una misma. *Papeles del CEIC*, #12, 1-19.
- Fägerskiöld, A. (2006). Support of fathers of infants by the child health nurse. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 20, 79-85.
- Fägerskiöld, A. (2008). A change in life as experienced by first-time fathers. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 22(1), 64-71.
- Friedewald, M., Fletcher, R., & Fairbairn, H. (2005). All-Male Discussion Forums for Expectant Fathers: Evaluation of a Model. *Journal of Perinatal Education*, 14(2), 8-18.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, USA: Basic Books.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books.
- Goffman, E. (1977). The Arrangement between the Sexes. *Theory and Society*, 4(3), 301-331.
- Gutmann, M.C. (1997). Trafficking in Men: The Anthropology of Masculinity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 385-409.
- Halle, C., Dowd, T., Fowler, C., Rissel, K., Hennessy, K., MacNevin, R., Nelson MA (2008). Supporting fathers in the transition to parenthood. *Contemporary Nurse*, 31(1), 57-70.
- Henderson, A. D. & Brouse A. J. (1991). The experiences of new fathers during the first 3 weeks of life. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 16(3), 293-298.

- Henwood, K. & Procter, J. (2003). The 'good father': Reading men's accounts of paternal involvement during the transition to first-time fatherhood. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 42(3), 337-355.
- Hewlett, B.S. (1991). *Intimate Fathers: The Nature and Context of Aka Pygmy Paternal-Infant Care*. Ann Arbor, USA: University of Michigan Press.
- Hewlett, B.S. (2001). The Cultural Nexus of Aka Father-Infant Bonding. In C.B. Brettell & C. Sargent (Eds.), *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Saddle River, USA: Prentice Hall. (pp. 45-56).
- Hobson, B. & Morgan, D. (2002). Introduction. In Hobson, B. (Ed.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 1-22).
- International Labour Organization (2005). Modern daddy: Norway's progressive policy on paternity leave. *World of Work Magazine*, 54, 12-15.
- Johansson, T. & Klinth, R. (2008). Caring Fathers. The Ideology of Gender Equality and Masculine Positions. *Men and Masculinities*, 11(1), 42-62.
- Johnson, M. & Baker, S. (2004). Implications of coping repertoire as predictors of men's stress, anxiety and depression following pregnancy, childbirth and miscarriage: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 25, 87-98.
- Kowlessar, O., Fox J. & Wittkowski A. (2014) First-time fathers' experiences of parenting during the first year. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 33(1), 4-14
- Lee, J. & Schmied, V. (2001). Involving men in antenatal education. *British Journal of Midwifery*, 9(9), 559-561.
- Llobera, J. (1987). Reply to Critics. *Critique of Anthropology*, VII(2), 101-118.
- Lupton, D. & Barclay, L. (1997). *Constructing fatherhood: Discourses and experiences*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- McBride, B.A., Brown, G.L., Bost, K.K., Shin, N., Vaughn, B., & Korth, B. (2005). Paternal Identity, Maternal Gatekeeping, and Father Involvement. *Family Relations*, 54(3), 360-372.
- MacDougall, D. (1998). *Transcultural Cinema*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.
- MacDougall, D. (2006). *The Corporeal Image. Film, Ethnography and the Senses*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.
- Magaraggia, S. (2013). Tensions between fatherhood and the social construction of masculinity in Italy. *Current Sociology* 61(1), 76-92.
- McElligott, M. (2001). Antenatal information wanted by first-time fathers. *British Journal of Midwifery*, 9(9), 556-558.
- Meil, R., Rogero-García, J. & Romero-Balsas, P. (2017). *Los permisos parentales como instrumentos para la igualdad de género*. Barcelona, Spain: Observatorio Social La Caixa.
- Miller, T. (2010). *Making Sense of Fatherhood: Gender, Caring and Work*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Moisés Martín, J. (2015). Las comunidades autónomas en el contexto europeo. Published in *El Periódico*, 23-03-2015. Retrieved from: <http://agendapublica.elperiodico.com/las-comunidades-autonomas-en-el-contexto-europeo>
- Monahan, T. & Fisher, J. (2010). Benefits of ‘observer effects’: lessons from the field. *Qualitative Research*, 10(3), 357-376.
- Morse, C.A., Buist, A., & Durkin, S. (2000). First-time parenthood: Influences on pre- and postnatal adjustment in fathers and mothers. *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology* 21(2), 109-120.
- Moss, P., & Wall, K. (2007). *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2007*. London, UK: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.
- Muñoz, M. (2018, April 9). Por qué me sentí inútil en el parto de mi compañera. *El Diario.es*. Retrieved from: https://www.eldiario.es/nidos/inutil-hombre-parto_0_759074670.html
- Nam, Y. (2015). Cinéma Vérité Vs. Direct Cinema: An Introduction. *New York Film Academy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/cinema-verite-vs-direct-cinema-an-introduction/>
- Naz, G. (2012). Child-care in Norway: Use of parental leave by fathers. *Bergen Working Papers in Economics*, 12, 1-33.
- Nolan, M. (1994). Caring for fathers in antenatal classes. *Modern Midwife*, 4(2), 25–28.
- Nordenmark, M. (2014). Gender regime, attitudes towards childcare and actual involvement in childcare among fathers. In G.B. Eydal & T. Rostgaard (Eds.), *Fatherhood in the Nordic Welfare states*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press. (pp. 163-182).
- Okely, J. (1992). Anthropology and autobiography: Participatory experience and embodied knowledge. In J. Okely & H. Callaway (Eds.), *Anthropology & Autobiography*. London, UK: Routledge. (pp. 1-28).
- O’Reilly, K. (2012). *Ethnographic Methods. 2nd Edition*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Panourgíá, N. (1995). *Fragments of Death: Fables of Identity, an Athenian Anthropography*. Madison, USA: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Parke, R. D. (1979). The Father of the Child. *The Sciences*, 19(4), 12-15.
- Philips Comparte Innovación (2018, January 25). “Tú también cuentas”, el proyecto dirigido a los padres durante el embarazo y tras el parto. Retrieved from: <http://www.comparteinnovacion.philips.es/entornos-saludables/articulos/tu-tambien-cuentas-el-proyecto-dirigido-a-los-padres-durante-el-embarazo-y-tras-el-parto>
- Pink, S. (2007). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London, UK: Sage.
- Plantin, L., Månsson, S-A., & Kearney, J. (2003). Talking and Doing Fatherhood: On Fatherhood and Masculinity in Sweden and England. *Fathering*, 1(1), 3-23.
- Premberg, A., Hellström, A.L., & Berg, M. (2008). Experiences of the first year as father. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 22(1), 56-63

- Radcliffe, L.S. & Cassell, C. (2015). Flexible working, work-family conflict, and maternal gatekeeping: The daily experiences of dual-earner couples. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 88(4), 835-855.
- Rivière, P.G. (1974). The Couvade: A Problem Reborn. *Man*, 9(3): 423-435.
- Rochlen, A., McKelley, R. & Whittaker, T. (2010). Stay-at-Home Fathers' Reasons for Entering the Role and Stigma Experiences: A Preliminary Report. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 11(4), 279-285.
- Rostgaard, T. (2014). *Family policies in Scandinavia*. Aalborg, Denmark: Aalborg University Press.
- Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal thinking*. Boston, USA: Beacon Press.
- Rudie, I. (1994). Making sense of new experience. In K. Hastrup & P. Hervik (Eds.), *Social Experience and Anthropological Knowledge*. London, UK: Routledge. (pp. 28-44).
- Sandlund, M.B. (1968). *The status of women in Sweden: Report to the United Nations 1968*. Stockholm, Sweden: Sweden Today.
- Seremetakis, C.N. (1991). *The last word: Women, death and divination in inner Mani*. Chicago, USA: The University of Chicago Press.
- Shapiro, J.L. (1987). The expectant father: He's caught in a double bind. His presence is requested but his feelings—fear, anger, uncertainty—are strictly taboo. *Psychology Today*, 21, 36–40.
- Silva, E.B. (2005). Gender, home and family in cultural capital theory. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 56(1), 83-103.
- Spradley, J. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Boston, USA: Thomson Learning.
- Statistisk sentralbyrå/Statistics Norway (2015). Indicators for gender equality in municipalities. Report by the Division for Social Welfare Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/likekom/aar/2016-12-20?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=288828>
- Stoddart, K. (1986). The Presentation of Everyday Life. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 15(1), 103–121.
- Strathern, M. (1987). The limits of auto-anthropology. In A. Jackson (Ed.), *Anthropology at home*. London, UK: Tavistock Publications. (pp. 59-67).
- Taylor, L. (1998). Introduction. In D. MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press. (pp. 3-21).
- Thomas, C. (1993). De-Constructing Concepts of Care. *Sociology*, 27(4), 649-669.
- Thomas, J.; Bonér, A., & Hildingsson, I. (2011). Fathering in the first few months. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 25, 499-509.
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage* [English edition]. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

- Waage, T. (2013) Seeing together. Towards a Shared Anthropology with Visual Tools. In T. Michelsen, A. Kristensen, & F. Wiegand (Eds.), *Transvisuality - The Cultural Dimension of Visuality. Vol.1: Boundaries and Creative openings*. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press. (pp. 157-173).
- Wall, G. & Arnold, S. (2007). How Involved Is Involved Fathering? An Exploration of the Contemporary Culture of Fatherhood. *Gender & Society* 21(4), 508-527
- West, C. & Zimmerman, D.H. (1987). Doing Gender. *Gender and Society*, 1(2), 125-151.
- Zeitlyn, D. (2009). Understanding anthropological understanding: For a merological anthropology. *Anthropological Theory*, 9(2), 209-231.

