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Changes and Continuities in Intergenerational Fathering in Türkiye

Feyza Corapci[1] | Fatma Umut Beşpınar[2] | Rümeysa F. Çetin[3] | Nebi Sümer[1]

[1]Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, Istanbul, Turkey | [2]Department of Sociology, Middle Eastern Technical University, Ankara, Turkey | [3]Psychology Department, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey

Correspondence: Feyza Corapci (feyza.corapci@sabanciuniv.edu)

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined intergenerational transmission of fathering in Türkiye, a Majority World context, with particular attention to the socioeconomic status (SES) characteristics. In exploring the intergenerational transmission of fathering in Türkiye, this study was informed by Greenfield's social change theories (2009, 2016) and Kağıtçıbaşı's family change theories (2007, 2012), both of which emphasise the impact of major demographic shifts in family dynamics. This study employs a qualitative research design, drawing on interviews with 29 Turkish fathers (aged 28 to 44) of young children. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that being a moral guide was a consistently upheld fathering role, predominantly endorsed by fathers from lower SES families. In contrast, autonomy support and open expression of affection were two sustained parenting practices that were more pronounced among non-low SES fathers. A small subset of fathers sustained negative parenting practices such as being overly restrictive, permissive, or indifferent. Compared to their own fathers, contemporary Turkish fathers are adopting a more communicative, engaged, and supportive fathering style, with this trend being particularly evident among non-low SES fathers. These changes and continuities in fathering were analysed and discussed in relation to various mechanisms and expectations of fatherhood across different SES groups.

1 | Introduction

Since the 1980s, social science literature has increasingly celebrated the transformation of fatherhood (Pleck 2012). Research from Western, industrialised societies reveals that contemporary fathers, compared to previous generations, not only fulfil the traditional role of breadwinner, but they are also more accessible, display greater warmth, engage in parenting and day-to-day caregiving more from birth onward, and show physical punitive discipline less, as noted in recent reviews (Bakermans-Kranenburg et al. 2019; Cabrera et al. 2018) and empirical studies (Campbell and Gilmore 2007; Schofield et al. 2013). This intergenerational shift is driven by several social changes: rising female labour force participation (Eagly and Wood 2016; Ranson 2001), increased recognition of the impact of fathers' roles on child well-being (Lamb and Lewis 2013), a move from hierarchical to egalitarian gender roles (Wall and Arnold 2007) and the growing challenge to hegemonic masculinity (Chin et al. 2021). With the increasing new fatherhood trend, there is greater research attention on intergenerational parenting by comparing the child-rearing style of contemporary fathers with those of their own parents

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Summary

- This qualitative study examined intergenerational transmission of fathering in a Majority World context of Türkiye.
- Interviews revealed a more communicative, engaged, and non-authoritarian style, predominantly by lower SES fathers, who sustained a moral guide role.
- Mechanisms underlying changes and continuities are discussed with regard to sociodemographic factors and psychological processes.

(Kerr and Capaldi 2019). Yet, most of the evidence on the transmission of fathering is drawn from the White, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Developed (WEIRD) samples, as noted above.

The paucity of research on intergenerational fathering within the context of the Majority World is striking, where approximately 85% of the world's population lives. These regions are experiencing significant social change due to demographic, economic, political, and technological transformations amid rapid globalisation. Such widespread shifts interact dynamically with the evolving cultural values, continually influencing and reshaping one another over time (Greenfield 2016; Kağıtçıbaşı 2007). Thus, exploring intergenerational transmission in the Majority World can significantly enhance our understanding of change and continuity in paternal involvement, where gender inequality, demanding work conditions, migration-related stressors, and the absence of family-friendly public policies are prevalent (Beşpınar 2016; Ghaffari and Ruspini 2023; Parke and Cookston 2021).

The present study aims to examine the changes and continuities in parenting style and practices among contemporary Turkish fathers compared to their own fathers, within Türkiye's rapidly evolving socio-cultural context. Going beyond past research, we focused on the role of the fathers' socioeconomic status (SES) in relation to intergenerational parenting and the underlying mechanisms that drive both shifts and sustained parenting style and practices. Of particular relevance to this study are fathers of children 0 to 6 years for several reasons. First, the new fatherhood trend emphasised increased paternal involvement in caregiving and household tasks from the earliest stages of the child's life (Cabrera et al. 2014). Second, evidence suggests that, independent of mothers' contribution, fathers' positive involvement predicts enhanced cognitive skills, improved emotion regulation, and greater prosocial competence in early childhood (Diniz et al. 2021). Finally, SES-related developmental disparities in child development emerge even before the age of three (Fernald et al. 2013), underscoring the critical importance of parents in this early developmental period.

1.1 | Theoretical Explanations for Intergenerational Parenting

In examining the intergenerational transmission of fathering, this study was guided by the social change theory (Greenfield 2009, 2016) and the family change theory (FCT, Kağıtçıbaşı 2007, 2012). Both theories focus on the implications of significant sociodemographic trends for shifts in cultural values and the family environment. According to Greenfield, rising levels of education, national wealth, urbanisation and technological diffusion across the world drive the cultural values and socialisation practices towards increased individualism, gender equality, child-centeredness and innovative, abstract thinking, thereby promoting independence- and autonomy-supportive child socialisation. On the other hand, Kağıtçıbaşı, as a scholar from the Majority World, argues that aspects of family socialisation that are incompatible with new lifestyle demands are particularly prone to transformation in collectivist cultures. Yet, rather than a transition from relational to individualistic values and practices, major demographic shifts would impact middle-class, urban families in the Majority World differently, fostering a family model characterised by psychological interdependence. In this family model, collectivist values co-exist with individualistic ones, and as the expectation for children's material contribution to the family decreases, their psychological rather than utilitarian value becomes more salient for middle-class, urban parents. As a result, parents promote autonomy emphasising self-sufficiency and assertiveness, while preserving traditional relational goals such as maintaining close relations, family loyalty, obedience, and respect for elders.

The FCT emphasises not only the diversity of family transformations across societies but also the variations within them, as social classes, ethnic groups and religious communities experience sociodemographic changes in distinct ways shaped by their unique cultural practices and access to resource availability. According to Kağıtcıbaşı's model, parents from a low SES background often prioritise relational goals, typical characteristics of collectivist culture, emphasising obedience, family connectedness, and the economic value of children, alongside strong moral values that guide their parenting practices. Yet, even for families with strong relational goals, Kağıtçıbaşı (2017) argues for a convergence towards balancing close-knit family ties and individual decision making, as a functional form of parenting when new environmental demands emerge due to social change. Following this premise, this study aims to uncover the 'hows' and 'whys' behind the systematic patterns of fatherhood across different SES groups.

1.2 | Transformations in Fatherhood in the Majority World

Guided by these theoretical models, intergenerational research on fatherhood has gained impetus to identify the significant transformations across the Majority World. Accumulating evidence suggests that even in traditionally patriarchal societies such as Japan, China, and Korea, urbanisation and Westernisation have fostered a more child-centered approach that involves greater nurturance and acceptance, especially among middle-class urban families (Shwalb et al. 2010). Similarly, in Brazil and Chile, contemporary fathers are increasingly expected to participate in childcare and household tasks, though entrenched patriarchal norms continue to challenge egalitarian fatherhood ideals (Bastos et al. 2013; Bush and Peterson 2013). An intergenerational shift from distance

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to intimacy and closeness was also documented among fathers in Israel (Bar-On and Scharf 2016), Pakistan (Sarfaraz et al. 2021), India (Sriram and Sandhu 2013) and Iran (Ghaffari and Ruspini 2023).

While fathers are increasingly valued for their caregiving commitment rather than solely for authority, middle-class non-Western fathers continue to emphasise moral guidance (i.e., fostering honesty, respect) and behaviour monitoring for their children in India (Sriram and Sandhu 2013), in Singapore (Ee et al. 2022), and in Malaysia (Juhari et al. 2013), similar to research from the Minority World (Diniz et al. 2021; Feldman 2023). Assuming limited responsibilities in childcare also emerged as an intergenerational continuity, considering it primarily the mother's duty, in these studies. Furthermore, while evidence suggests an intergenerational transmission of punitive disciplinary methods (e.g., spanking) among fathers in Korea (Jung and Honig 2000), more recent research shows a shift from strictness and respect to permissiveness as seen in Israel (Bar-On and Scharf 2016) and in Pakistan (Sarfaraz et al. 2021) across generations. This emerging pattern suggests a dialectic synthesis among urban, educated non-Western fathers, supporting Kağıtçıbaşı's (2007) premise for a socialisation pattern to promote both relatedness and autonomy.

Mechanisms for increased paternal engagement are linked with fathers' higher educational attainment, higher job satisfaction and marital quality, urbanisation, the decline of Confucian ideology following modernisation and globalisation, particularly for fathers in East Asia, decreased work hours, decreased family sizes, increased rates of maternal employment, and more egalitarian gender roles (Ghaffari and Ruspini 2023; Juhari et al. 2013; Jung and Honig 2000; Neppl et al. 2009; Shwalb et al. 2010). Yet, limited resources, particularly among rural and less-educated families with low gender equity beliefs, constrain the transformation to paternal engagement (Rush and Seward 2015).

1.3 | Socio-Cultural Context of the Present Study

As a Majority World country with a collectivist cultural base, Türkiye has undergone rapid social change in the past four decades, accompanied by significant demographic transformation, notably in family structure, due to urbanisation, economic development, and ideational shifts. While 75% of Türkiye's population lived in rural areas and in extended families 40 years ago, today 85% live in cities and in nuclear families. Additionally, marriage occurs later with delayed and reduced childbearing over the last few decades, while divorce rates have risen significantly and fertility rates have decreased (Turkey Statistical Institute 2023). A noteworthy change impacting fathering and paternal involvement occurred in education. Mean years of schooling for men reached 10.1 years (vs. 8.6 years for women), and the percentage of college graduates increased from about 1% to 25%, though with large regional variations, over the last 50 years. Nonetheless, with an employment rate of 67.1%, compared to 32.6% for women, men remain the primary breadwinners.

Studies on intergenerational fathering mostly rely on the retrospective report of college students or predominantly middle-SES fathers about their own family-of-origin experiences (e.g., Ayçiçeği-Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı 2010; Yalçınöz 2011). These studies have shown that the traditional father figure in the Turkish family was perceived as authoritarian, physically as well as emotionally distant, but also protective, and thus evoking both fear and respect. Yet, compared to their own fathers, contemporary fathers assume more responsibility and involvement in parenting (Ördek and Aktaş Arnas 2020; Ünlü-Çetin and Olgan 2021), maintain stronger emotional connections with their children (Beşpınar 2016; Beşpınar and Beşpınar 2018; Boratav et al. 2014, 2017), and show less authoritarian discipline (Boratav et al. 2014; Yalçınöz 2011). However, in line with other research in the Majority World, these men continue to see primary childcare as the mother's responsibility (Beşpınar 2016; Ördek and Aktaş Arnas 2020).

Improvements in fathers' education, SES conditions, and work status have been identified as predictors of greater emotional closeness, open communication, and autonomy support across generations, reducing the traditional hierarchies and shifting perceptions of children from economic assets to individuals (Ayçiçeği-Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı 2010; Pekel-Uludağlı 2024; Yalçınöz 2011). Evidence from Western research also corroborates the buffering role of educational achievement to curtail the intergenerational transmission of negative parenting, within both normative and at-risk samples (Serbin and Karp 2003). Other suggested transmission mechanisms involve modelling (i.e., acting like one's own father) to sustain positive parenting and compensation (i.e., responding in the opposite direction) to break the chain of negative parenting such as hostile, punitive discipline and lack of involvement (Sagi 1982; Shannon et al. 2012; Shears et al. 2006). Yet, research that specifically addresses the intersection of fatherhood and social class remains limited.

1.4 | Present Study

Utilising a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the intergenerational transmission of fathering, we aimed to explore not only what has been maintained and what has changed, but also why changes or sustained practices occur, and the meanings Turkish fathers attributed to their family-of-origin experiences, an often-overlooked issue in quantitative research. Considering rapid social and demographic transformation in Türkiye, we investigated whether the fathers' narratives reflected broader mechanisms of change in intergenerational parenting such as increased gender equality, child-centeredness, and urbanisation as suggested by the theoretical models for intergenerational parenting (Greenfield 2016; Kağıtçıbaşı 2007). We addressed the following research questions: 1) How do contemporary Turkish fathers compare their parenthood to that of their own fathers? (2) What factors drive intergenerational continuities and discontinuities in fatherhood? (3) How does the intergenerational transmission of fatherhood/fathering vary across different social classes?

2 | Method

2.1 | Participants

This study draws on data from a larger project investigating the cultural and sociological precursors of parenting across generations and developmental stages in Türkiye. Of the enrolled

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participants, 29 fathers with at least one child aged 0–6 years comprised the sample for this study. Participant fathers resided in Ankara or Istanbul, two metropolitan cities of Türkiye. Their ages ranged from 28 to 44 years ($M = 35.5$, SD = 4.38). All participants were married biological fathers of their target children (19 males), who were on average 3.71 years old (SD = 1.87), and 19 were firstborn. The mean number of children in the household was 1.59, ranging from 1 to 3.

Paternal education level was used as a proxy to classify fathers into SES groups. The low SES group ($N = 13$) included fathers with an education level below high school (15% secondary school dropout, 8% secondary school graduates, and 46% high school dropouts), whereas the non-low SES group ($N = 16$) comprised fathers with at least a high school degree (19% high school graduates, 56% college graduates, and 25% with a postgraduate degree). Demographic details for each SES group are presented in Table 1. No significant differences were found between SES groups regarding father and child age, child gender, or the number of children in the family, based on independent samples *t*-tests or chi-square tests. Participants were recruited using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Initially, community fathers were recruited through convenience sampling. Snowball sampling was then employed, particularly to reach low SES fathers of infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers, who are typically harder to access in research settings.

2.2 | Procedure

Data for the present study was collected between December 2019 and June 2020, following approval from the university's institutional review board. As part of a larger research project, a comprehensive interview on parental ethnotheories was conducted, exploring caregivers' beliefs about the nature of children, child development, their parenting practices, and intergenerational transmission. Trained undergraduate and graduate students (70% male) conducted face-to-face interviews at the participants' homes or workplaces in private settings without third-party presence. With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, 12 interviews were conducted online. At the beginning of each session, participants were informed about the study's objectives and interview procedures, and written consent was obtained. If a participant had multiple children within the target age range, they were asked to select one as the focus child for the interview. Interviews were semi-structured, lasting between 20 to 67 min, with an average duration of 34 min. Although online interviews during the pandemic were shorter in duration, the number of coded segments did not differ significantly between the online and face-to-face interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded for verbatim transcription. As the study primarily focused on fathers' past experiences and reflections on their family-of-origin, field notes were not taken as a part of the interview process, and no follow-up interviews were conducted. Additionally, transcripts were not sent to participants for review or corrections. Fathers did not receive incentives for their participation.

TABLE 1 | Child and family characteristics by socioeconomic status (SES).

	Non-low SES ($n = 16$)	Low SES ($n = 13$)
Child sex (% male)	63%	69%
Child age (years)	3.56 (1.83)	3.90 (1.98)
Number of children	1.50 (0.63)	1.69 (0.75)
Paternal age (years)	36.4 (4.10)	34.3 (4.61)
First time fathers (%)	56%	46%
Spousal education (% at least high school)	88%	50%
Spousal employment (% currently employed)	67%	0.0%

2.3 | Measure

The current study utilised four questions from the ethnotheory interview to examine fathers' past experiences in their family-of-origin in relation to their current parenting: (1) How do you see yourself as a father? (2) What advice was given to you while growing up? (3) When you reflect on your father's parenting, are there any behaviours and/or attitudes you continue to exhibit in your parenting? (4) Are there any aspects of your father's parenting that you deliberately avoid with your own children? Follow-up questions were used as needed to gain deeper insights into fathers' experiences.

In addition to these four core questions, participants' responses to any of the ethnotheory interview questions that touched upon fathering and intergenerational transmission were also included in the data coding process. These questions prompted participants to describe their child (*How would you describe* [*Child's Name*] *as a person?*), identify desirable and undesirable qualities in their children (*Which traits or characteristics in your child do you particularly like or dislike*?), and explain their parenting strategies for reinforcing or discouraging these qualities (*What do you do to help your child develop these qualities*? *and What do you do to prevent your child from acquiring these qualities*?). This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of fathers' perspectives on parenting, incorporating both their explicit reflections on intergenerational transmission and their everyday parenting practices.

2.4 | Data Coding Strategy

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret and evaluate the fathers' responses in depth (Braun and Clarke 2006). Rather than relying on a pre-determined coding framework or our own assumptions, we adopted an inductive, bottom-up approach (Barbour 2014; Braun and Clarke 2006). This process began with familiarising ourselves with the fathers' reflections on their family-of-origin and developing the initial coding categories, and eventually revealing emerging themes related to the intergenerational continuities and discontinuities as well as their underlying mechanisms.

In this process, all transcripts were independently read multiple times by at least two coders to gain a thorough understanding

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of participant fathers' experiences. During these readings, coders took notes capturing fathers' ideas, remarks, and significant statements regarding their family-of-origin experiences and current parenting. Regular collaborative team discussions were held to review and reconcile the distinctive terms identified by each coder. Any disagreements in interpretation were discussed and resolved collectively. Next, we identify recurring key ideas and statements (e.g., '*If he falls, I let him get up by himself, let him learn to stand on his own feet*', '*My father guided us but did not control us; he allowed us to make our own choices. I am happy with that, and I might adopt the same approach*'.). These statements were grouped into initial codes (e.g., 'agency', 'assertiveness', 'independence') to reflect the meaningful patterns in the data. In the third step, the codes with similar meanings were combined into coherent themes and each theme was labelled (e.g., 'autonomy-supportive parenting'). Conceptually related themes (e.g., 'affection-love', 'peaceful family') were merged under a broader overarching theme (e.g., 'nurturing family climate'). Supporting Information presents our codes and (sub)themes with representative examples.

Transcripts were thoroughly examined for inductive thematic saturation (Saunders et al. 2018), continuing to identify and group codes into themes until no new themes emerged from the data. For example, when coding intergenerational discontinuities in fathering, restrictive and authoritarian parenting, poor communication, distal-cold relation, and lack of involvement were the most frequently recurring themes. The repetition of these themes signalled that saturation had likely been reached. Following these decisions on inductive thematic saturation, we finalised the codebook, which included definitions, examples, decision-making rules and a coding tree. Using the finalised codebook, the first, second, and third authors coded all interviews. Interrater reliability, measured by kappa, was 0.80 or higher among the coders, indicating substantial agreement on the coding categories.

All coders had extensive research experience in the fields of fatherhood and qualitative research analysis, including prior data coding with data from low-income families, which facilitated nuanced interpretation of the data. Because the researchers come from a middle-class background, they found it easier to contextualise and interpret data gathered from middle-class fathers. Moreover, their prior work with low-income fathers, and the familiarity they gained through those studies, facilitated their analysis of the data collected from that group as well. Yet, direct quotations from the interview content were discussed in multiple rounds of review to minimise subjectivity. A qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA 24) was employed to systematically store, organise and categorise the anonymized data. A basic frequency analysis was also conducted to illustrate the relative frequency of the emerging themes, supported by graphical representations of the qualitative findings.

3 | Results

Results are presented in four sections: (1) the intergenerational continuities, (2) mechanisms for sustaining practices, (3) intergenerational discontinuities and (4) the mechanisms underlying discontinuities.

3.1 | Intergenerational Continuities

Four primary themes emerged, reflecting the transmission of (1) universal moral values, (2) a nurturing family climate, (3) autonomy-supportive parenting and (4) negative parenting practices. Each theme, along with any relevant subthemes, is discussed below and illustrated with direct quotes from fathers to capture their lived experiences. Figure 1 presents the overall endorsement rates of these continuity themes and further breaks them down by low and non-low SES groups, respectively.

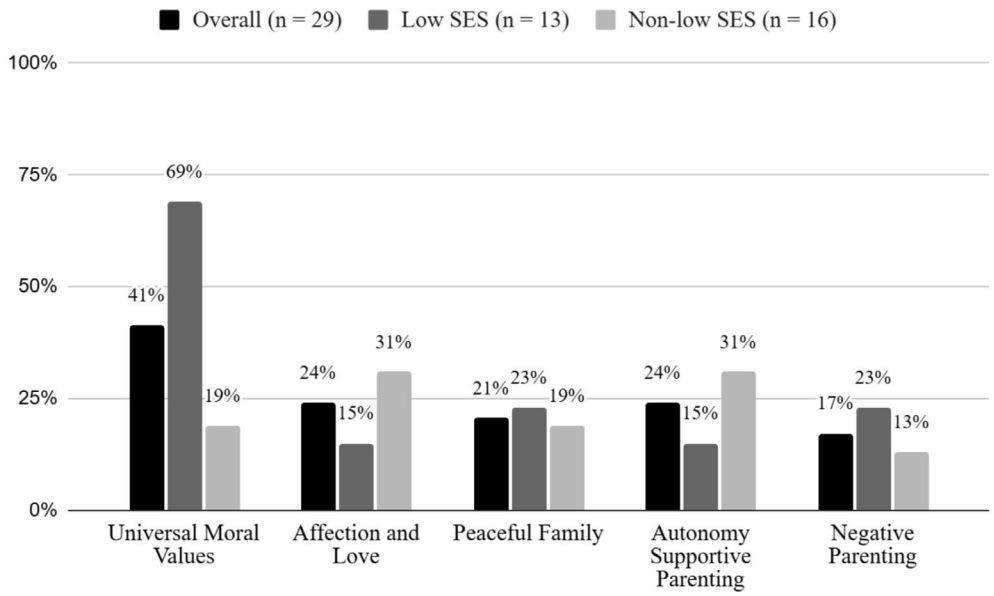


FIGURE 1 | Overall and SES-based endorsement rates of intergenerational continuity themes.

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3.1.1 | Universal Moral Values

The most frequently coded intergenerational continuity theme was the transmission of moral values, which was endorsed by 12 participants. They reported that their fathers placed special emphasis on character development, instilling virtues such as honesty and truthfulness, honour, respect for others, nonviolence, and being a 'good person'. This notion of goodness included refraining from unethical behaviours (e.g., stealing or coveting other people's property) and showing compassion and sympathy. A noteworthy difference emerged regarding SES: 69% of low-SES fathers endorsed this theme, compared to 19% of non-low-SES fathers.

Almost all low SES participants emphasised honesty, respect, and refraining from harming others as the core virtues they aim to pass on to their children. Unlike their non-low SES counterparts, they highlighted how their own fathers taught these moral values as a form of social sanction to deter immoral behaviours such as stealing and lying, lessons they continue to reinforce today with their own children. These fathers also indicated that such immoral acts undermine family honour.

> My brother, what I learned from my ancestors is that no one should come to my door demanding repayment. He should not steal—these things bring us shame. He should not do anything that would make us bow our heads. He should be honorable and brave. He should be honest and love his country and nation. Telling the truth is my father's biggest expectation. Do not lie to me; tell the truth. Be clear.
>
> (ID 2, low SES, age 33, father of a 5-year old boy)

> For example, he used to say, 'Don't live by coveting other people's property.' My father always raised us that way. He told us not to bring even a single nail without permission. Now I am trying to pass on the same thing to my children, what I saw.
>
> (ID 14, Low SES, father of a 4-year old boy)

On the other hand, non-low SES fathers highlighted honesty and being a good personas the key virtues they continue to preach to their children.

> What is right, what is wrong, what is a bad thing, what is a good thing, my behavior towards humanity or my attitude, behavior, actions in society because men usually take their father as a model. And as I think of the father model, I can say that I get many things from my father, my approach to people or at work, valuing people, my value judgements, my honesty.
>
> (ID 1, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 6-year-old boy)

As seen above, the advice to respect one's elders is emphasised in both social classes as a way to accept social hierarchy and foster relationships in line with broader societal expectations. This guidance, particularly concerning obligations and responsibilities towards family members, is likewise seen as crucial for establishing positive relationships with others outside the family, such as neighbours, teachers, and friends.

> From the respect and love that my mother and father taught me, you know, to myself, I only see it as comments from the other side. I have entered many environments, you know, whether in my workplace. They say, 'God bless you, your parents raised you as a very respectful and honest son.' This makes me proud of course. As a father, I too would like my child to be called like that, to be praised, whether in business life or in any other environment. I am also thinking of raising my child to respect the elders, to love the little ones, to be such a father.
>
> (ID 25, low SES, age 32, father of a 2-year-old boy)

> I'm trying to teach what's shameful and honorable, what's right and wrong, what's good and bad. That using slang or insulting someone is not okay. Right now, my eldest daughter is 9 years old and goes to school, but she still wouldn't say "stupid" in front of me. Because I don't allow it, and she knows it's wrong, so she doesn't say it. I learned this from my parents. I never disrespected them, and now I'm trying to teach my kids the same. It will benefit them greatly in the future.
>
> (ID 29, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 1-year-old girl)

3.1.2 | Nurturing Family Climate

The second intergenerational continuity identified was the nurturing family climate. Out of 29 participants, 11 expressed a commitment to fostering an affectionate and nurturing family climate, mirroring their own family-of-origin. When discussing their family's emotional climate, two key subthemes emerged: (1) affection and love, and (2) a peaceful family atmosphere.

3.1.2.1 | Affection and Love. Participants who perceived their fathers as nurturing and warm reported feeling loved and accepted, which, in turn, provided them with a strong sense of emotional security. Growing up in such a supportive family environment, they emphasised that they actively express positive emotions, including affection towards their children. This also extended to the joy they shared during family leisure activities. The transmission of openly expressing affection and love was reported twice as often among non-low SES participants (31%) compared to their low-SES counterparts (15%).

> Friendship is part of our family culture. We can do anything together, we go out, have fun. I joked a lot

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> with my dad; I grew up being like a friend with him. I respected him, knowing the father's place is different, but we were like friends too. We went to matches, watched games, and played football together.
>
> (ID 29, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 1-year-old girl)

> My father has definitely given me a sense of trust and security. As a father, I try to give this sense of confidence by always standing behind my son.
>
> (ID 21, low SES, age 37, father of a 6-year-old boy)

Reflecting on his family-of-origin, one non-low SES father highlighted the cultural emotion norms that constrained the open expression of affection and love. His responses suggested that while the transmission of a positive father-child relationship would continue, it would be characterised by greater emotional openness and expressivity.

> I knew how much he loved us, but due to the geography we live in, they [men] are a bit shy and so on. Because I am their own child, because we have spent years together, I know very well how much they love me and that their behavior is a show of love. But someone looking from the outside may find it difficult to see the bond of love between my parents and me. But I hope to be able to love my child at least as much as they love me and show it much more than they do.
>
> (ID 24, non-low SES, age 29, father of a first child-4 month-old boy)

3.1.2.2 | Peaceful Family. When discussing continuity, participants were cognizant and expressed gratitude towards their fathers for avoiding negative, punitive, or coercive attitudes. They noted their intention to provide a similarly non-hostile, peaceful family environment for their own children. Furthermore, the emotional quality of their own parents' marital relationship was also mentioned by one-third of these fathers, who acknowledged the absence of overt marital conflict, hostility, and anger among their parents when they were growing up. Motivated by these experiences, they aimed to emulate such a caring, positive spousal relationship to maintain an emotionally secure family environment. The intergenerational transmission of peaceful family interactions was equally endorsed among low (23%) and non-low SES (19%) participants.

> There was never any violence or anything like that in my own family, no shouting or conflicts. There was no unrest in the family. As much as possible, I try to create a family environment for my children where there is no violence or conflict.
>
> (ID11, non-low SES, age 43, father of a 4-year-old boy)

> My parents' love for each other plus the fact that they never argued in front of us. Also, they were always respectful with me, and I set out by taking them as an example.
>
> (ID 21, low SES, age 37, father of a 6-year-old boy)

3.1.3 | Autonomy-Supportive Parenting

The interviews revealed a third theme about autonomy-supportive parenting ($N = 7$) that was relatively less frequently endorsed compared to the first two continuity themes. Participants stated that the autonomy support they provide to their children was shaped to a great extent by their family-of-origin, particularly by their fathers' encouragement of self-expression and respect for independence. This theme was endorsed by 31% of the non-low SES fathers, compared to 15% of the low SES fathers. The narratives revealed that non-low and low SES fathers have experienced autonomy differently. Non-low SES participants talked about being given the freedom to make their own decisions. Similar to their fathers, who encouraged them to think independently and make choices for themselves, they wanted to grant such 'cognitive' autonomy to their children.

> For instance, my father raised us in a very relaxed environment, and I appreciate that. He didn't put pressure on us. He guided us but didn't control us. He left us to make our own choices. Of course, you are responsible for showing the right path, but what is right for one might be wrong for another. I am satisfied with the way my father raised me. I made both right and wrong decisions for myself, but I wasn't under pressure or stress. I am happy with that, and I might adopt the same approach.
>
> (ID 8, non-low SES, age 33, father of a 15-month-old boy)

> As I said, I didn't experience pressure like that you have to be a doctor, etc., so I'm thinking of raising my child like that.
>
> (ID 20, non-low SES; age 39, father of a 6-year-old boy)

On the other hand, when two fathers from lower SES background and one non-low SES father who grew up in a disadvantaged background talked autonomy, they mainly described the autonomy they experienced in relation to their fathers' encouragement to learn new skills and 'stand on their own feet', which they aim to pass down to their own children.

> If he falls, I won't pick him up, let him get up himself. If the child calls you when he falls, he'll always call you if you go. But if he gets up when he falls ... Let him learn to stand on his own feet. Because this is how my father raised us. I've been doing this job for 16 years. I've been doing this textile business for 16 years, I've always stood on my own feet. I didn't expect any support from anyone.
>
> (ID 26, low SES, age 31, father of a 5-year-old boy)

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3.1.4 | Negative Parenting Practices

The least frequently endorsed continuity theme pertained to negative parenting. Interviews have shown that certain negative, non-supportive parenting practices were passed down from the participants' fathers to their own repertoire, although they were not fond of this continuity. This intergenerational transmission included expecting unquestioning obedience to rules (two fathers), permissiveness (two fathers) and indifference (one father). The continuity in rigidly enforcing the rules was mentioned along with an emphasis on eliciting respectful manners from children by one low SES participant, whereas a participant from a non-low SES background drew attention to the social norms and concerns about what others will think if the child misbehaves.

> My father showed a despotic style. I also want my children to have manners, to have really good manners, to listen to the elders, and to be respectful. I mean to respect both the elders and the younger ones, that is, to show respect to others. Our father disciplined us very much and very sharply.
>
> (ID 7, low SES, age 38, 5-year-old girl)

> For example, when I was going to do something, there was a proactive preventive style, like, 'oh my son, be careful, oh don't do that.' You know now, things like 'Oh, my daughter, look, don't do that, people will be disturbed, what will the others think of you,' I mean, this is actually something I don't like to do, but I probably do it because I experienced it this way.
>
> (ID 5, non-low SES, age 35, 5-year-old girl)

On the other hand, two participants, one father from each SES, talked about permissiveness and admitted that they sometimes excessively indulge their children similar to their own experiences in their family-of-origin. One participant from a low SES background talked regretfully about the transmission of indifferent parenting. He said that he wanted to compensate for the lack of his father's availability as well as the lack of advice and emotional support, but found himself similarly detached from his children as his own father, primarily due to his long work hours and temporary drug problems.

> Actually, the fact that my father, for example, could never take care of me because we could not see my father properly. I always wanted to show my child the attention that my father did not show me, but unfortunately, I think I am lacking in that regard, I mean, my lack of attention for my child makes me very sad. For example, having such a father–son relationship and treating my child almost similar to him.
>
> (ID 9, low SES, age 31, 6-year-old girl)

3.2 | Mechanisms for Sustaining Intergenerational Continuity

We have identified three themes for intergenerational continuity (see Figure 2).

3.2.1 | Modelling

The participants considered their fathers as male role models who shaped their interactions with their own children. Their narratives also revealed that their beliefs about warm and autonomy-supportive parenting and moral socialisation as beneficial for their children and growth-promoting largely contributed to the enactment of these parenting behaviours.

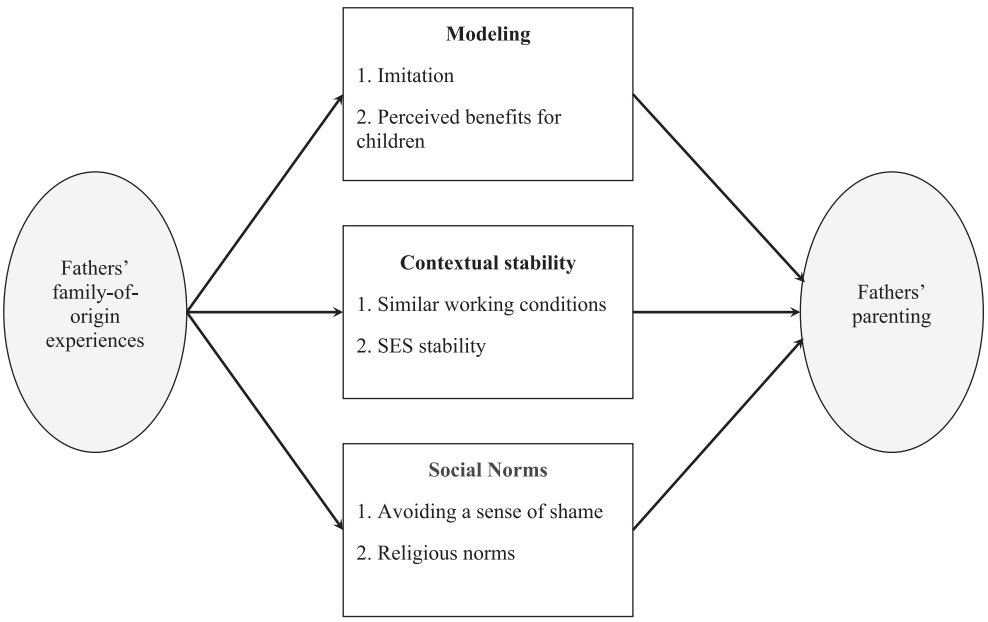


FIGURE 2 | Mechanisms underlying intergenerational continuity in fathering.

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> I'm happy with the way my dad raised me. He didn't put me under pressure or stress. I'm satisfied, and I'll do the same.
>
> (ID 8, non-low SES, age 33, father of a 15-month-old boy)

> I learned this from my mom and dad. I never disrespected my mom in front of my dad, and I try to teach them the same. It will benefit them a lot in their future lives.
>
> (ID 29, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 1-year-old girl)

3.2.2 | Salience of Social Norms

Many participants mentioned that their fathers emphasised the importance of honour to avoid bringing shame to the family and the importance of avoiding punishment from God and adhering to religious values. Furthermore, participants also mentioned their adherence to the social norms that emphasise respectful behaviours and saving the face of the family as a factor to sustain their emphasis on moral values. According to this understanding, if a person fails to comply with social norms, it undermines not only their own honour but also that of their family. Consequently, learning and adopting behaviours that uphold one's honour becomes a matter of utmost importance for the entire family.

3.2.3 | Similar Contextual Background

When fathers remained in a similar socio-economic position as their own fathers, they reported repeating their fathers' parenting patterns. Especially as a result of demanding working conditions such as similar long hours and poor working conditions, fathers stated that they cannot take care of their children.

> My dad always said, "If you want a good future, you have to be willing to take the risk. I have no wealth, no property, no money to leave you. You'll earn your own success." That gave us a fighting spirit and that's a beautiful thing. I'd like to pass that on to my child. After all, I'm not rich either. So my child will also have to find their own way to success.
>
> (ID 22, non-low SES, age 33, father of a 3-year-old boy)

3.3 | Intergenerational Discontinuities

Five themes were discerned with respect to discontinuity in: (1) disengagement, (2) poor communication, (3) authoritarian parenting, (4) disrespect for autonomy, (5) distant-cold father-child relation. The overall endorsement rates of these discontinuity themes and the rates further broken down for low and non-low SES are presented in Figure 3.

3.3.1 | Disengagement

The most often reported intergenerational discontinuity theme was disengagement. When participants compared themselves to their own fathers, almost half of them stated that they spend more time with their children and give more individualised attention by participating in more family activities (e.g., playing, going to the park, having breakfast together). Higher levels of engagement were endorsed by 54% of the low SES fathers and 38% of the non-low SES fathers.

While one of the participants from the low SES group described the lack of his father's engagement as an *emotional emptiness*, another low SES group participant referred to his own engagement with his children as his *strength* as he enjoys spending time with his family. Another participant reported that the more

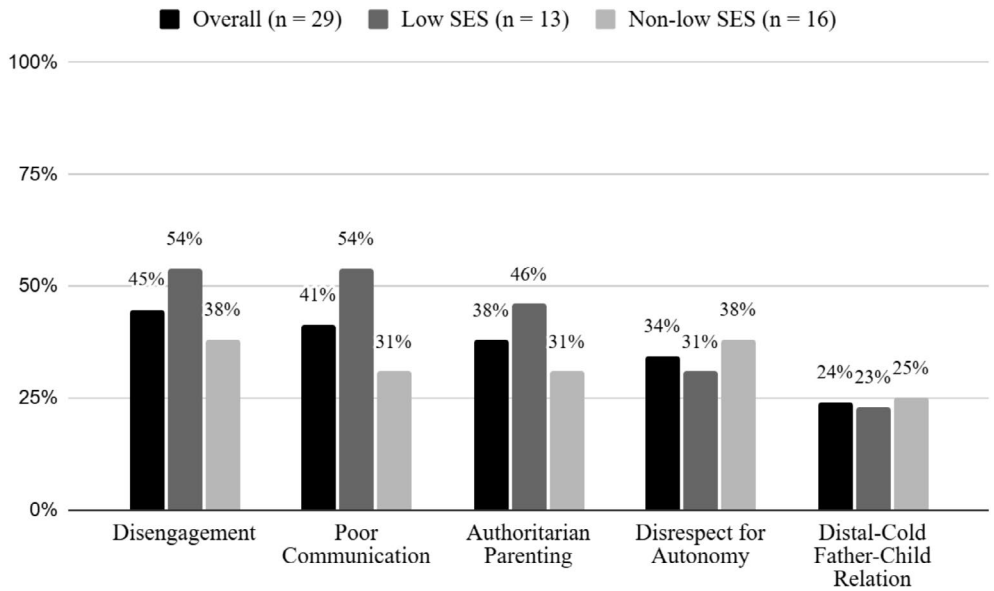


FIGURE 3 | Overall and SES-based endorsement rates of intergenerational discontinuity themes.

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involved he is with his son, the more his son makes him feel like a special person. Both low and non-low SES fathers commented that they make extra effort to spend time with their children despite their work conditions.

> I try to be more involved with my children. My father used to come at ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock, /one o'clock/ ... I worked for six months without interruption. But even then, when I came back at night, I would first kiss my children, and if they woke up, I would tell them a bedtime story. I would do my best to have breakfast in the morning. So it depends on some effort.
>
> (ID 7, low SES, age 38, 5-year-old girl)

> Of course, when you think about the previous generation, they were a bit more distant. I don't want to be like that, to be honest. That's the point I criticize. I don't want to be that distant with my child. I want to spend more time and have fun. I also want to go to the match.
>
> (ID 22, non-low SES, age 33, father of a 3-year-old boy)

Indeed, when our participants were asked to reflect on their own fathering role in the beginning of the interview (*How do you see yourself as a father*?), the most common description was being a caring and involved father who makes sure to spend time with children. In particular, being a playmate, having fun, and having an activity-oriented relationship with children were often emphasised. On the other hand, only a few fathers ($n=5$) talked about how they take care of their children's needs such as managing sleep or assisting with toileting, and notably, four of these fathers belong to the non-low SES group.

3.3.2 | Poor Communication

The interviews also revealed an intergenerational change in the communication pattern as reported by 12 fathers. In particular, there was a shift from an absence to the formation of a father-child dialogue, endorsed by 54% of the low SES participants. On the other hand, the shift was from a simple communication style towards a more responsive and open communication, endorsed by 31% of the fathers from a non-low SES background. There also appeared to be differences in the functions of father-child communication depending on the SES level of the participants. Non-low SES participants stated that with their new communication style they aim to model self-disclosure, and in this way, become a role model for good communication and facilitate their child's communication skills outside the family context. In this way, open communication was seen as promoting benefits for their children.

> I had a very restrained childhood, I lived my problems or joys within myself. I want my children to be more open and share their positive and negative experiences with me and. When a child communicates with his/her family, and when the time and place comes, he/she will also communicate more easily with his/her friends.
>
> (ID 6, non-low SES, age 40, father of a 4-year-old girl)

> I want to have more communication with my child than I have had with my father. I couldn't establish that dialogue with my father. I was good with my mother in that respect, but I couldn't establish the same relationship with my father. I think I should learn from this and be able to talk to my child about everything so that he can take me as an example because what I will talk about is what I know. He will surely see my shortcomings, too. He needs to build on what he sees from me.
>
> (ID 22, non-low SES, age 33, father of a 3-year-old boy)

On the other hand, establishing a dialogue was seen as a way to compensate for the lack of father-child communication for the low SES participants, who see verbal exchange as a sign of establishing closeness with their child.

> I'm not like my own father. I talk to my children all the time, I am in constant dialogue. I mean, I take care to spend most of my time outside of work at home, or outside, with my children.
>
> (ID 7, low SES, age 28, 5-year-old-girl)

> I want them to share some things with me, because I couldn't share much with my father because he was a bit angry. You know what I mean? We stayed a bit distant. But I want to mingle with children, I want to share things with them.
>
> (ID 12, low SES, age 43, father of a 5-year-old girl)

Finally, there was also some emphasis among the low SES fathers to gain knowledge about the child through open communication and dialogue that provided a means for child monitoring.

> I think he should tell me everything. When you look at the previous family types, you know that the son does not tell his father certain things, he cannot eat or drink with him, but these things are behind us nowadays, I would like to know everything, so that I can intervene on the spot and on time.
>
> (ID 15, non-low SES, age 33, father of a 5-year-old boy)

3.3.3 | Authoritarian Parenting

Another intergenerational discontinuity was observed in the shift from authoritarian parenting to moderate control, endorsed by 11 fathers. In the low-SES group, 46% of fathers reported that they adopt less harsh and physically punitive control compared to their fathers, whom they described as using an authoritarian parenting style that included spanking, violence, harshness, hostility, and frightening the child.

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> Now let me be honest, we were beaten by our parents when we were little. We do not use violence against our children as much as possible, it is not a solution anyway. You know, knowing that this is wrong, that nothing can be solved with this, we consciously approach it by staying away from it. I get angry, I tell my son not to do it, of course I raise my voice, but there is no violence. We should not be violent ... We have always been afraid of our elders. Mom, dad, but mostly dad. I don't want my children to be afraid of me.
>
> (ID 10, low SES, age 28, father of a 2-month-old girl)

In the non-low SES group, 31% of fathers reported that they avoid authoritarian parenting they have experienced in their family-of-origin. Most of these participants had low educated fathers, and they referred to the rigidly obedience-demanding, cold and distant atmosphere rather than the presence of hostility or power-assertive discipline in their family-of-origin.

> But is there anything I've seen that I don't do? For example: 'Bring water'. That's what we heard when we were kids. Bring water! The child has to bring it. You have to, that's why the child was born. For example, when I look at it, I've never said anything like that to my daughter.
>
> (ID 6, non-low SES, age 40, father of a 4-year-old girl)

Though the participants from both SES groups were clearly against rigid, hostile, and punitive responses, a few of them admitted that they experience some ambivalence about finding the right amount of control, as stated below.

> I am being softer, you know, rather than being too harsh and saying 'this can't happen, this can't happen, you can't do this, son, don't do this! Because I don't want to be too harsh ... Didn't our fathers love us?' Yes, our fathers loved us very much. But at that time, it was as if there was a different line between us and them. I mean, when they asked us something, we wouldn't make them say it twice, we would do it. I wonder whether we give too much, whether we compromise too much.
>
> (ID 20, non-low SES, age 39, father of a 6-year-old boy)

> But when you go to the supermarket and when he whines incessantly, I get angry after a while. Then we say, 'Don't whine, son, whatever you want, I'll take it'. Then I give it to him, there is nothing else I can do.
>
> (ID 17, low SES, age 32, father of a 1-year-old girl)

3.3.4 | Disrespect for Autonomy

The third most frequently mentioned discontinuity theme was a change from disrespecting the child's autonomy towards a more autonomy-supportive parenting ($N = 10$). When reminiscing about their own upbringing, fathers typically stated that self-assertion was not tolerated because they were expected *not to stick out* in a group setting. This was remembered with a sense of resentment and a sense of intrusion to their individuality. In an effort to avoid such an approach, they were giving more support to their children for self-expression and assertiveness as well as leadership.

> I mean, we were a little bit wimpy in expressing ourselves, you know what I mean. I mean, our parents were a little bit wimpy too. They did not raise them to be sociable. Of course, I don't want him to be a wimp. I mean, I want him to know what's right and wrong. They can't just blurt it out at this age ... We grew up a bit introverted. I don't want my child to be like that. I want him be more open and express himself.
>
> (ID 2, low SES, age 33, father of a 5-year-old boy)

> For example, the first thing that comes to my mind is the pressure. When I say being pressured, that is, not to stand out, because they want us not to stand out in any environment. This has automatically created a lack of self-confidence in my personality, which is what I dislike the most, which is what remains on myself. It is the lack of self-confidence that comes from upbringing. I will do my best, I can't be very directive in that sense, but of course, of course, I will definitely pay attention to it in my childrearing because it is the thing that I lack the most, so I will definitely pay attention to it.
>
> (ID 23, non-low SES, age 36, father of a 1-year-old boy)

The endorsement frequency for this theme was similar across the two SES groups (38% of the non-low SES and 31% of the low-SES fathers). Yet, compared to the low SES group, when participants from the non-low SES group commented on the autonomy support, they were more likely to use terms such as *individualism*, *self-determination* and *self-confidence*. Besides self-assertion, they endorsed that they let their children think for themselves and make their own decisions more often than their fathers.

> We try to follow my son's own path. We try to follow what he is interested in, what he is curious about, instead of taking him on the path we have drawn.
>
> (ID 1, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 6-year-old boy)

3.3.5 | Distal-Cold Father-Child Relation

The last discontinuity theme pertained to the father-child relationship quality, such that 23% of the low SES and 25% of the non-low SES participants noted that they show more affection to their children than their own fathers. They all commented on the distant and cold relationship with their own fathers when

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growing up and reported that they are emotionally closer to their own children and show more affection.

> We've always stayed away, so it's like an official relationship between me and my father. Even if my daughter is 50 years old, I want her to give me a big hug. I want her to do the things we can't do. We came from a somewhat harsh family structure because our family was crowded ... When I say harsh family, I don't mean a fight, but the structure and the formal authority.
>
> (ID 28, non-low SES, age 44, father of a 4-year-old girl)

> In my own family, we didn't get much attention from our father. He was a bit old-fashioned, and we were scared to ask him for things. But I always tell my kids, including my daughter, that if they ever need something, they can come to me without hesitation. I see that as part of being a father. I believe a father and child should have a friendship because if you restrict certain things, a child might end up going down a wrong path.
>
> (ID 14, Low SES, father of a 4-year old boy)

3.4 | Mechanisms Underlying Intergenerational Discontinuities

We have identified two themes for intergenerational discontinuity (see Figure 4).

3.4.1 | Changes in Sociodemographic Factors

In the narratives shared by our participants, a notable theme is the transition from rural to urban lifestyles among fathers with expanding educational and occupational possibilities. Thus, it was evident that this shift entailed not only geographic mobility but also significant social mobility, as fathers moved from close-knit, community-centred environments to more complex urban societies that offer expanding opportunities. Originally, fathers of the participants had few opportunities for social advancement, as their access to education, the labour market, and skill development was severely limited. Additionally, families functioned as primary units of production, with all members included, contributing to agricultural work. The long hours and demands of farming often reduced parents' involvement in direct childcare, especially for fathers. Reflecting on this lifestyle, a father described his childhood experience as follows:

> We lived in the village until I finished elementary school. My father worked away from home, only coming back every three or four months. Life in the village, of course, isn't like the city; it's different. You feel more at ease, freer—people don't meddle in everything you do. I had a good childhood, with nice friends. In our free time, we'd go to open fields and play ball. I don't think our parents had as much time to focus on us as we do with our kids now, but we'd get home tired, have our dinner, do our homework, and go to bed, without spending much time together.

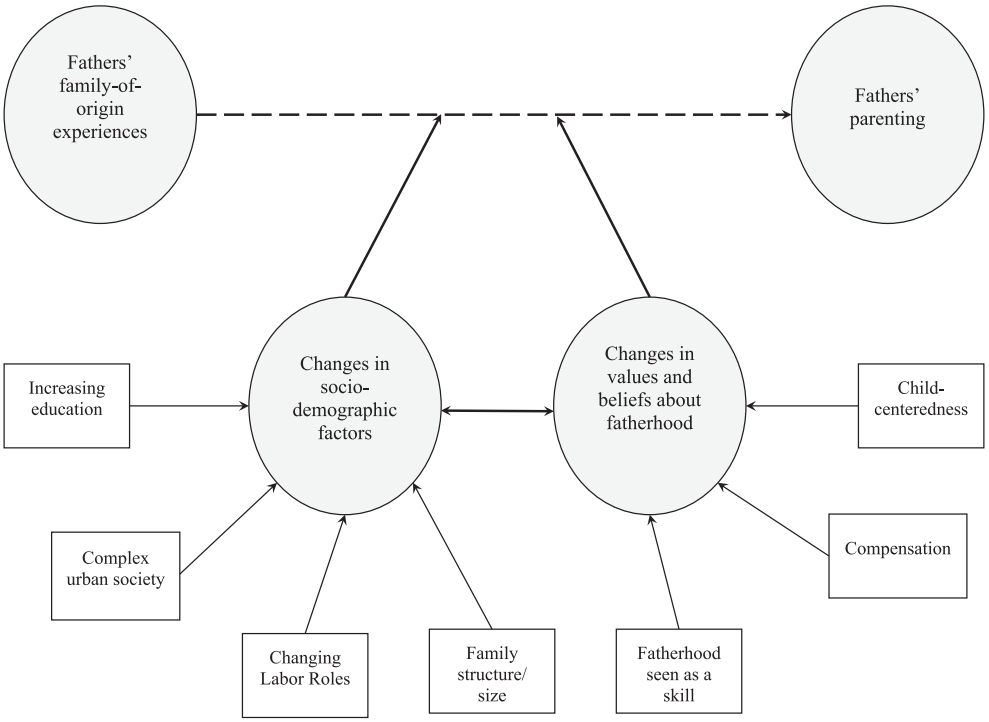


FIGURE 4 | Mechanisms underlying intergenerational discontinuity in fathering.

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> Everyone was busy with their own work. Life in the village is busy too.
>
> (ID 19, low SES, age 35, father of a 6-year-old boy)

> They used to tie me to the cradle and go off to graze the sheep or cows. In my childhood, my parents didn't have time to pay attention to me because of the circumstances. Those were tough times—not just for me, but for many children, especially in the villages.
>
> (ID 25, low SES, age 32, father of a 2-year-old boy)

However, with urban migration, fathers reported a landscape of relatively expanding possibilities: improved access to education, a broader range of career paths, and enhanced opportunities for skill acquisition and professional growth. Additionally, this shift involved a transformation in labour roles, moving from predominantly agricultural work—often demanding intensive labour and even child labour—to the structured urban job market. Here, work options diversify into both white-collar and blue-collar sectors, while children now have the opportunity to attend school, marking a shift in family dynamics and priorities around education and childhood.

The move from multi-generational extended families towards nuclear families was seen as another mechanism that contributed to the evolving expectations of modern parenting, where the focus is on building closer relationships and offering individualised care for each child. This shift has been particularly endorsed by low SES fathers, who noted a decrease in the number of children, alongside a substantial increase in the emotional, financial, and time investment they dedicated to each child. In extended families, grandparents often held a significant level of authority over parents and sometimes also diminished the level of warmth and personal attention fathers could provide. One father reflected on this transformation, noting:

> In the past, there was a lack of dialogue within families regarding their children. In the past, because older relatives were more involved in family life, a father couldn't even call his child 'my child'. My own father may have never truly seen me as his son. I would feel jealous when I saw him showing affection to another child.
>
> (ID 4, low SES, age 41, father of a 4-year-old boy)

3.4.2 | Changes in Values and Beliefs About Fatherhood

It seems that fathers place greater emotional significance in their children than ever before, driven by the sociodemographic shifts noted above. Furthermore, fathers disclosed that having children has increasingly become a conscious choice, actively desired and planned for, rather than merely an expectation or obligation. As a result, parenthood has become one of the most defining aspects of their adult identity, with building a strong, nurturing relationship and spending quality time with children now seen as fulfilling and central to a parent's sense of purpose.

> Nowadays, children are very precious in the family, especially since their numbers have decreased compared to the past. Families usually have just one or two children, maybe three at most, but rarely more than that, which makes each child more valued. Large families with many children are not common anymore. That's my general perspective. I come from a big family with eight siblings, but my nieces and nephews come in pairs or threes. I have only one child myself. In fact, I had her quite late, so she's especially precious to us ... We try to raise her as well as we can, to do the best for her, to give her the best of everything. Maybe that's what every parent wants, but how much you can actually do is still limited. After all, you can't give everything perfectly. We're middle-class people, after all.
>
> (ID 28, non-low SES, age 44, father of a 4-year-old girl)

Fathers' narratives also revealed that children today are seen as fundamentally different from previous generations. In particular, fathers feel that children should be exposed to a wider array of opportunities, which in return create increasing emotional, educational, extracurricular, and consumption demands on part of the fathers. One father expressed this challenge, stating:

> We're constantly searching for ways to adapt—continuously reinterpreting and explaining everything anew to the children of today. There is a significant difference between how we perceived things in the past and how children perceive them now. The way they approach and understand events is still markedly different, and we're working hard to bridge that gap, to adapt our methods to the present. While we acknowledge that what we learned is correct, we also recognize its insufficiency, so we're striving to make it more adequate.
>
> (ID 1, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 6-year-old boy)

Fostering an environment that encourages assertiveness and expressiveness in children is also perceived as one of the new primary responsibilities of parents. Most fathers viewed their children's open expression of feelings, wishes, and needs as essential for their emotional well-being. When recalling their childhood, almost all fathers expressed concerns about their own tendencies towards shyness, passivity, and reluctance to assert themselves. They attributed these traits to their upbringing, particularly the authority and emotional distance of their own fathers. An attempt to compensate was evident in the fathers' discourse as these fathers aimed to create a family environment where open communication is encouraged, and their children feel safe to express themselves without fear of criticism or shame. One father reflected on this challenge:

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> We grew up somewhat withdrawn, partly because of the environment we were raised in. I don't want my child to be like that. I want them to be more open, not closed off. Of course, I want them to express themselves freely. In my own family structure, we don't have anyone who has really advanced much, there's no one like that. I want my son to get an education, and we will make whatever sacrifices we can. That's what I want from son.
>
> (ID 2, low SES, age 33, father of a 5-year old boy)

> We grew up under the wrong conditions, in the wrong environment, and maybe even with the wrong parents. They are the family I took as a model, but I still say the same thing: we are trying to correct their mistakes with our children. We try not to make the same mistakes they did. For example, the simplest example is dialogue.
>
> (ID 4, low SES, age 41, father of a 4-year-old boy)

The narratives also revealed that fatherhood is increasingly viewed as a skill that can be learned and developed. Fathers recognised their parents' role as a natural influence in their own parenting. For example, in areas like making sacrifices for their children, providing for the family's basic needs, and maintaining a peaceful home environment, many fathers acknowledge that they have learned these values from their parents. However, when it comes to building relationships with their children, communicating effectively, and establishing an emotional bond, they feel the need to develop these skills independently, often turning to other sources beyond their own upbringing.

> Of course, we don't have a specific person we directly take as a role model, but naturally, we are influenced by our own parents. However, we need to keep improving ourselves in these areas because there's a continuous change that evolves from generation to generation. When we try to apply what we've learned from there to here, it sometimes feels very funny and inadequate. So, you end up having to change everything, trying to learn more. With this in mind, we try to read, watch, and learn as much as we can. We also try to gather with other parents, people of the same age, to get information and exchange ideas. That's generally how we try to move forward.
>
> (ID 1, non-low SES, age 37, father of a 6-year-old boy)

4 | Discussion

The aim of this qualitative study was to delineate the intergenerational transmission of fathering along with mechanisms of changes and continuities within the context of Türkiye's rapidly changing social dynamics. To date, research on intergenerational fathering across the world has predominantly focused on middle-class men (e.g., Campbell and Gilmore 2007; Juhari et al. 2013). Our study extends this research by exploring how fathers with varying resources such as education, income, and social status navigate intergenerational transmission in parenting. Fathers of children aged 0–6 were of particular interest, as the positive role of paternal involvement has been recognised for critical child competencies during this developmental period when SES-related developmental disparities are also likely to emerge (Diniz et al. 2021).

Our results revealed that being a moral guide is a sustained intergenerational fathering role, predominantly endorsed by Turkish fathers from lower SES families, whereas autonomy support and open expression of affection are two sustained parenting practices, mainly among more educated, non-low SES fathers. A small percentage of fathers acknowledged continuity with negative parenting practices. Modelling, salience of social norms, and contextual similarity across generations emerged as mechanisms of sustained fathering. Of the five discontinuity themes that emerged, discontinuity in disengaged style, poor communication, and authoritarian discipline were more frequently endorsed by low SES Turkish fathers, whereas discontinuity in autonomy disregard and cold-distal relation with children was endorsed similarly across both SES groups. Shifts in sociodemographic factors, along with changing values and beliefs about fatherhood, were identified as change mechanisms.

With respect to intergenerational continuities, we found that the father's role to act as a moral guide was sustained primarily in low SES families. Similar to their own fathers, low SES participants advise their children to engage in respectful and considerate actions that gain social approval and avoid actions that might embarrass the family more often than non-low SES participants. This advice acts to reinforce the value of preserving the family's social standing through the child's behaviour. Similar to our finding, there is ample evidence for intergenerational continuity in father's role as a moral guide from other non-Western countries (Ee et al. 2022; Juhari et al. 2013; Sriram and Sandhu 2013; Wang and Chang 2012) and Western countries (Diniz et al. 2023; Feldman 2023). Yet, the present study shows a differential transmission of fathers' moral guidance, reflecting different functions across SES groups. For non-low SES fathers, moral guidance centred on being a good person, while low SES fathers emphasised social approval, dignity and family honour, more frequently referencing social norms and religious rules. In Turkey, especially for low SES groups, social norms include not only the concept of honour but also the religious values associated with it (Cross et al. 2014).

Unexpectedly, we also found that a higher percentage of low SES Turkish fathers expressed a decreasing authoritarian parenting style, greater engagement in parenting and more open communication with their children compared to non-low SES fathers. Involvement in their children's lives was defined by low SES fathers as being a playmate, spending time with activity-oriented things such as outings to the park or walking excursions, and engaging in communication, consistent with the typical father role documented in previous research (Cabrera et al. 2014; Diniz et al. 2021). Thus, rather than adhering to a traditional form of masculinity focused solely on

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work and social circles, these low SES fathers seem to prioritise family, reflecting a notable shift as identified in previous research, mainly with middle-class Turkish men (Beşpınar 2016; Boratav et al. 2014; Ördek and Aktaş Arnas 2020; Pekel-Uludağlı 2024; Ünlü-Çetin and Olgan 2021). However, involvement in child care and household chores did not emerge as a common practice, neither in the low nor non-low SES groups, similar to recent studies conducted in Türkiye (Kuscul and Adamsons 2022; Ünlü-Çetin and Olgan 2021). It is possible that caregiving behaviours such as feeding and bathing the child were mentioned less given the broader age range of the children in our sample. Yet, one can also speculate that low gender equity beliefs and gender-based hierarchy still prevail among Turkish fathers as in many parts of the Majority World (Rush and Seward 2015) and contribute to a traditional division of labour and appear more resistant to change.

The overall continuity and discontinuity pattern detected among the low SES fathers suggests that they are instilling traditional moral values in their children within an affectively involved parenting context. Thus, low SES fathers' socialisation pattern reflects a mixture of traditional norms to strengthen collectivistic values along with child-centred parenting that includes open communication, individualised attention, and greater involvement in the child's life. Furthermore, low SES fathers' narratives revealed that they engage in open communication to facilitate their child's self-disclosure, with an ultimate aim to enhance parental control. Thus, even a shift towards independence-oriented parenting may still serve collectivistic functions in low SES families. We argue that this emerging socialisation pattern fits better with the family type of psychological interdependence that entails a dialectic synthesis of relatedness and autonomy (Kağıtçıbaşı 2007) rather than the social change theory (Greenfield 2009, 2016) that predicts a transition from collectivist to individualistic values as a result of social change.

The mechanisms driving this convergence towards the psychological interdependence family model were in line with the premises of the FCT. These included the transition from rural to urban lifestyle and from multi-generational extended families to two-generational nuclear families with fewer children that emerged as the predominant mechanisms, exclusively for low SES fathers, along with improved access to education. In particular, the years of schooling attained by Turkish men have increased dramatically over the past 50 years, and education is closely tied to socioeconomic status in Türkiye, as the primary pathway to upward social mobility. We found that those low SES fathers enrolled in secondary or higher education acknowledged the benefits of warm, autonomy supportive fathering rather than punitive parenting practices. Our findings were also consistent with previous intergenerational research that revealed better employment, education, and life experiences of fathers contributing to better life trajectories in the younger generation (Ayçiçeği-Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı 2010; Ee et al. 2022; Juhari et al. 2013; Neppl et al. 2009). Greater shifts towards a child-centred parenting among low SES Turkish fathers can be contrasted with existing research, particularly from the US, where about half of the low SES fathers are unmarried and typically do not reside with their children in the same household, restricting their degree of involvement in their child's life (Jang et al. 2016).

Besides changes in sociodemographic factors, our results also revealed changes in fathers' values and beliefs about fatherhood as change mechanisms. Fathers, particularly those from the low SES group frequently compared themselves with their own fathers and expressed frustration over the lack of interest and involvement they experienced growing up. Consistent with the literature, although work conditions constrained low SES fathers' involvement and time spent with their children (Diniz et al. 2023), many of them reported maximising their limited time with their children, trying to offset the lack of father-child interaction they had experienced in their family of origin. This finding was in line with the compensation mechanism documented in previous research with fathers from Türkiye (Boratav et al. 2014), the US (Shannon et al. 2012; Shears et al. 2006), Singapore (Ee et al. 2022), and Israel (Sagi 1982). This accumulating evidence suggests that previous negative life experiences act to motivate fathers to be more present and involved in their children's lives. Yet, the extent to which fathers' social support network, psychological well-being, marital relationship quality, and the spouse's parenting style facilitate this compensatory fathering warrants future research.

Our qualitative data also revealed that about one-third of the fathers in our sample, who grew up in an emotionally-expressive and autonomy-supportive family, continue to show their love and affection to their children as well as respect their independence. These continuity themes were predominantly endorsed by fathers from the non-low SES background. Those non-low SES fathers have seen value in expressing their affection to children to ensure increased intimacy in their relationship and taken their fathers as a role models. This result was in line with the modelling hypothesis that predicts stronger father involvement for those who have positive experiences in their family of origin (Sagi 1982). Indeed, past research has noted that the degree of paternal involvement experienced in the family of origin predicts fathers' current involvement in their children's academic activities and availability (Ünlü-Çetin and Olgan 2021) and general engagement (Juhari et al. 2013; Sagi 1982).

In our study, there were also fathers from the lower SES background, who passed down autonomy supportive parenting from their family of origin and those who discontinued autonomy-disregarding parenting. Low SES fathers' enhanced opportunities for skill acquisition and professional growth in the urban context and increasing wealth and resources decreases material interdependence on their children, leaving more room to foster their autonomy as suggested by Kağıtçıbaşı (2007). Yet, extending previous research, our results have shown that the meanings attached to autonomy differed by fathers' SES background. Namely, fathers from middle and high SES backgrounds want to see autonomy in their children as being assertive and having the power to influence others by getting ahead of them. On the other hand, fathers from low SES regard autonomy as the capacity to stand on one's own feet and solve one's own problems to facilitate financial independence.

Finally, our findings have revealed that five fathers, corresponding to 17% of the participants, continued with negative parenting that involved obedience-demanding practices, permissiveness

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and indifference to a child's needs. In particular, fathers who displayed permissiveness or indifference, mirroring their own fathers, often worked long hours and felt unable to adequately attend to their children. This continuity in negative parenting aligns with prior longitudinal studies and meta-analytic reviews (Schofield et al. 2013) that show moderate intergenerational continuity in maltreatment, harsh parenting, and neglect. Such continuity can stem from modelling one's own father (Dishion and Patterson 2006) and/or from contextual stability such as stressful living circumstances (Kerr and Capaldi 2019). On the other hand, 11 fathers, corresponding to 38% of the participants, have endorsed a shift from negative parenting, in particular from hostile and punitive parenting to moderate control, similar to past research with fathers from Türkiye (Boratav et al. 2014; Sunar 2009; Yalçınöz 2011), Israel (Bar-On and Scharf 2016) and Pakistan (Sarfaraz et al. 2021). These emerging findings suggest that as fathers' education level increases, they are more likely to adopt values that emphasise nurturing a close relationship with their children through warmth, rather than relying on fear-based control.

5 | Limitations and Strengths

The current study has a number of limitations. First, the use of convenience and snowball sampling in two metropolitan cities may limit the generalisability of the findings, along with the focus on fathers from only two, and warrants replication of our findings in other regions of Türkiye. Second, fathers' retrospective accounts of their upbringing compared to their current child-rearing practices could introduce recall bias. Third, some interviews were conducted online during the COVID-19 restrictions, which may increase time spent at home and influence father's involvement with their children. Fourth, low SES fathers that we reached in this study do not represent the most disadvantaged tier, as many have moderate education and stable, regular-income jobs. As a result, fathers facing more severe economic hardship remain underrepresented in this research. Finally, focusing on children aged 0–6 restricts the applicability of findings to older children.

Despite its limitations, given the scarce evidence on fathering from the Majority World countries, particularly among low-SES groups (Diniz et al. 2023), this study offers valuable insights into the intergenerational transmission of parenting practices among Turkish fathers, comparing low- and higher-SES backgrounds. Focusing on fathers with young children aged 0–6 years is essential, as the nature and extent of father involvement often vary with the child's age (Parke 2019), and early childhood is a critical period for developing foundational social and developmental skills (Brownell and Kopp 2007). While quantitative approaches reveal a moderate degree of continuity in fathering but offer less detail on specific dimensions such as warmth or autonomy, qualitative approaches, however, illuminate the mechanisms behind intergenerational continuities and discontinuities by contextualising fathers' perspectives within their socioeconomic backgrounds. This study has contributed to the literature by illustrating the role of socio-economic factors along with changing values and meanings that guide fathers' decisions to maintain or alter parenting practices.

Author Contributions

Feyza Corapci: conceptualization, investigation, writing – original draft, methodology, writing – review and editing, formal analysis. **Fatma Umut Beşpınar:** conceptualization, methodology, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, formal analysis. **Rümeysa F. Çetin:** methodology, writing – review and editing, visualization, formal analysis. **Nebi Sümer:** funding acquisition, conceptualization, investigation, writing – review and editing, formal analysis, supervision.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Peer Review

The peer review history for this article is available at https://www.webofscience.com/api/gateway/wos/peer-review/10.1002/icd.70021.

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