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**WELCOMING THE FIRST BABY: CHANGES IN SELF, COUPLE
DYAD AND INVOLVEMENT OF GRANDMOTHER**

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Welcoming the First Baby: Changes in Self, Couple Dyad and Involvement of Grandmother

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ABSTRACT

The decision to welcome a new baby is one of the most challenging times in a couple's life. After having a baby, the process of transition to parenthood begins where the partners evolves from being a couple to being a family. The transition to parenthood would need a successful adaptation to the new circumstances to achieve to maintain the bounds of a romantic relationship while trying to interiorize the new roles and responsibilities of a baby. Many parents do not only need to open up space for the baby but also for the grandmothers who are involved in childcare. The transition to parenthood includes many struggles for the new parents to handle. The adaptation to their new life, roles and responsibilities would shake the foundations of the couples' harmony. Grandmothers are the primary helpers who share the care of the baby with the new parents to ease their transition. This current study aims to understand the experience of the parents at the transition. Because there is not a research considering the romantic relationship at the transition to parenthood when the grandmother is there to support the new parents in Turkey, this current study would provide an explanation interested in the transition. This thesis contains two main parts. In the first part, literature regarding the transition to parenting will be reviewed. The experience of transition period will be discussed in three main levels: (a) the experience concerning the individuals, (b) the experience concerning the couple relationship, and (c) the experience concerning the family. For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six couples who had their first child. All of the participants are white color workers living in İstanbul, Turkey. By using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis five main themes were revealed: (a) experience a different self, (b) evolving from couples to parents, (c) fathers' support, (d) grandmother is in the house, and (e) acceptance and normalizations of changes and challenges. The results will

be discussed in terms of the existing literature and their clinical implications.

Key Words: The transition to parenthood, having the first child, being parent in Turkey, existence of grandmothers for help, couple therapy, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

ÖZET

Bir çiftin hayatında karşılaştığı en zorlu zamanlardan biri yeni bir bebeği hayatlarına dahil etme kararıdır. Bebek sahibi olduktan sonra çiftin bir çift olmaktan bir aile olmaya doğru evirildiği ebeveynliğe geçiş süreci başlar. Ebeveynliğe geçiş, bebeğe dair yeni rol ve sorumlulukları içselleştirmeye çalışırken, romantik ilişkinin bağlarının korunabilmesi adına oluşan yeni koşullara başarılı bir şekilde adapte olabilmeyi gerektirir. Birçok ebeveyn bu dönemde sadece bebeğe değil, aynı zamanda bebek bakımına dahil olan büyükannelere de yer açma ihtiyacı duyarlar. Ebeveynliğe geçiş yeni ebeveynler için birçok güçlüğü beraberinde getirir. Yeni hayata, rollere ve sorumluluklara adaptasyon çiftin düzeninin temelini sarsabilir. Büyükanneler yeni ebeveynler ile bebek bakımını paylaşan ana yardımcılardır. Bu güncel çalışma ebeveynliğe geçiş dönemindeki deneyimleri anlamayı hedeflemektedir. Türkiye’de büyükanne yeni ebeveynlere destek için yanlarında bulunduğu ebeveynliğe geçiş döneminde romantik ilişki ile ilgilenen bir çalışma olmadığı için bu çalışma bu döneme bir açıklama sağlayacaktır. Bu tez iki temel bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde, ebeveynliğe geçiş sürecini ele alan literatüre değinilmiştir. Ebeveynliğe geçiş süreci deneyimi üç ana zeminde tartışılmıştır: (a) bireysel deneyim, (b) çift ilişkisi açısından deneyim ve (c) aile açısından deneyim. Bu çalışma için ilk çocukları olan altı çift ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Tüm katılımcılar İstanbul’da yaşayan beyaz yaka çalışanlardan oluşmaktadır. Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz beş ana temayı ortaya çıkarmıştır: (a) çiftlerden ebeveynlere evrilme, (b) farklı bir benlik deneyimi, (c) babaların desteği, (d) büyükanne evde ve (e) değişim ve zorlukları kabul ve normalleştirme. Sonuçlar mevcut literatüre bağlı kalınarak tartışılmıştır. Çalışmanın sınırlılıkları, gelecek çalışmalar için öneriler ve klinisyenler için öneriler de tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ebeveynliğe Geçiş, Ebeveyn Olma, Türkiye’de Ebeveyn Olma, Çift Terapisi, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz

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Section 1 - INTRODUCTION

The transition to parenthood is a process that each couple experiences the process with somehow similar conditions though there are many contributing factors which deeply effect how the couple experience being a parent. The partners face challenges which contribute that the evaluation of both individual and couple in the lights of their new roles. Changing roles and bearing the responsibility enhances couple in order to struggle to adapt the new member of their family. With coming of a baby, the couple would also meet the extended relations of others to get social support for child care activities.

The transition would be easier when there is a support for the partners suffering to adapt unfamiliar conditions in their life. Grandmothers are one of the social support to share their all experiences and love for the baby.

This project mainly has the purpose to examine how the transition to parenthood would be effected when there is a grandmother to share all responsibilities of child care. The first article in the dissertation includes the review of literature explaining the changes and factors of the transition period to parenthood. The transition to parenthood is examined from the point of both mothers and fathers. Moreover it is also the subject of the first article to indicate how the romantic relationship would be effected at the transition period. The first part of the dissertation gives some clinical implication to evaluate better the couple experiencing the transition to parenthood.

The second part of the dissertation consists of the article involves literature concerning couples adaptation to both transition to parenthood and grandmother's existence at the transition period. The cultural effect on the transition to parenthood is also reflected in the article. The research questions were (a) What changed in their life after they become a parent? (b) In what ways did becoming a parent affect their romantic relationship?

(c) In what way grandmothers affect the transition to parenthood when they are there to share child care responsibilities?

The transition to parenthood is a process that begins with the pregnancy and end after a few months of the baby's birth (Goldberg, 1988). According to Cowan and his colleagues (1988) transition period can end approximately after 2 years of birth of a baby. Transition to parenthood comes with a lot of significant changes including both individual experiences with regard to self, family, and environment and couple' experiences with regard to division of labor, free time activities, and intimacy (Levy-Shiff, 1999). The dynamics of romantic relationship would be one of the main determinants of the transition to parenthood. It is claimed that socio-demographic factors such as economic conditions, educational level and age have vital impact on the balance of partners' harmony and future of their romantic relationship (Belsky, Rovine, & Fish, 1989; Broderick & O'Leary, 1986; Cowan & Cowan, 1988; Lye & Biblarz, 1993).

Another effect on the transition to parenthood is the social support for the new parents in terms of child care. The transition period would smooth when there are others to help the parents and share child care responsibilities (Boger & Smith, 1986; Myers-Walls, 1984; Walker & Riley, 2001). Generally, the leading role to provide social support tend to belong to grandmothers when she concerns is a baby. Grandmothers mostly take the first line and are available for their grandchild (Guzman, 1999).

There are variety of components which enhances the outcom transition period for the new parents. The bases of the transition to parenthood would be explained by indicating both external and internal components (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). The complex structure of the transition period would be understood by examining the transition into both individual and relationship level.

In this article the transition to parenthood would be discussed from the ecological perspective to understand the maturity of components. To indicate the components the transition would firstly discussed into

individual level and both maternal and paternal adjustment would be criticized. Relationship and family system at the time of transition would be also discussed to understand the components.

1.1.The Transition to Parenthood from the Ecological Perspective

The transition to parenthood involves both internal and external elements which would deeply affect the changes of transition period as both characteristic of individual and relationship plays a vital role

Knauth (2001) advocates the idea that an ecological approach toward the individual and the systems where individual exists might be a perfect manual when the scholars get in the path of inspecting the changes during the transition to parenthood. This idea might be supported through the content of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Knauth, 2001). Bronfenbrenner (1999) proposes an understanding explaining the structure of individuals, family and the other systems they live in with internal and external components. This approach is important because these internal and external components and the systems are investigated through the effects of ideology, laws and cultural norms (Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

By supporting ecological perspective, Knauth (2001) determines factors that predict marital changes. These are gathered under the headings of individual characteristics of the parents, individual characteristics of the infant, relationships within the nuclear family, relationships within the multigenerational family, division of labor within and outside of the home (Knauth, 2001). Besides being determinants for changes, these subjects can be also considered as issues that can change during the transition. For example, individual characteristics of the parents and their relationship in different contexts such as within nuclear family or multigenerational family are likely to alter after another person comes into the family (Shapiro, Gottman & Carrère, 2000).

1.2. Individual Characteristics of the Parents and the Infant

Knauth (2001) claims that there is a relation between marital change and personality which includes behaviors, social and cognitive features. Moreover, existence of the child also changes existing personality features of the parents. For example, Levy-Shiff (1994) reports that parents who are engaged in cheerful activities tend to better control impulsive behaviors.

On the other hand, it is known that personality has an impact on relationships and parenthood process. With regard to ecological understanding, individuals can be seen in the center of all systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Considered the personality traits (Costa & Mcrae, 1985), the perception of stressor and even the reply to stressor also change. For example, highly neurotic individuals tend to articulate that they experience more stress in daily life and tend to be more affected in their interpersonal relations (Gunthert et al., 1999). Moreover, these individuals are more likely to respond to stressors in a more intense way than their counterparts who scored less in neuroticism scales (Gunthert et al., 1999) and they might even have mental health problems (Van Os & Jones, 1999).

Secondly, individual characteristics of the infant can be also a determinant for the marital change. Knauth (2001) reports that infants come into the world with different temperaments and one way or another they influence the attitudes, behaviors and approaches of the parents. Accordingly, crying of the baby can also affect health behaviors of the parents. For example, according to a study conducted by Meijer and van den Wittenboer (2007), crying was main variable affecting the parents' insomnia and it can be worsening insomnia condition of the parents. In the study, it has been also found that there is a decline in marital satisfaction parents have through the effects of crying baby (Meijer & Van Den Wittenboer, 2007).

1.3. Couples' Relationship

Relationships within the nuclear family may function as a determinant for the change. They change in terms of the dynamics of the relationship and there is a relation between features of their relationship before and after the birth (Knauth, 2001). Knauth (2001) claims that, despite the fact, detrimental incidences occur, couples who had more satisfied relationships before the birth are more satisfied with their relationship after the birth when they are compared with their counterparts who are less satisfied with their relationship and marriage.

Besides internal structure and dynamics of a relationship, the topic of relationships within the multigenerational family finds a chance to step forward. Knauth (2001) claims that broader scopes in that nuclear family exists should also be one side of explaining marital changes and these relationships are affected in many ways through generations such as defining the standards of the relationship, behaving regarding some patterns or communicating with different expressions. Moreover, it can be said that even the parents' relationship with the family they come from can determine how the relationship with their children would be (Knauth, 2001).

As mentioned, division of labor within and outside of the home can be a determinant which makes the parents struggle with organizing the family (Knauth, 2001). Accordingly, Knauth (2001) claims that cultural effects can create potential conflicts in case problems with division of labor come become prominent. Nomaguchi and Milkie (2003) report that housekeeping activities might be challenging because children apply for demands and particularly women feel occupied with these demands. Therefore, non-egalitarian methods in division of labor are likely to cause marital conflicts (Cowan & Cowan, 1995). Knauth (2001) claims that imbalance in division of labor might be a part of the assumption that gender roles the society created that parents embraced. Cowan and Cowan (2000) claim that mothers seem to take responsibilities related to childcare

and housework while fathers tend to take responsibilities related to earn money and create economic welfare despite the gender roles keep changing. In other words, the approach considering women as caring and loving and men as feeding and providing is common when a family is organized (Kılıçaslan, 2007).

In the next section, literature regarding maternal and paternal adjustment and how different factors such as expectations regarding being a parent and the quality of the couples' relationship impact parents' adjustment will be reviewed.

1.4. Maternal Adjustment after Birth

Even there are fundamental changes on gender role and the division of household labor as more women contribute to family finance, women still shoulder the greater part of caregiver activities (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). When it is considered that expectations have an influence on the experiences, it would be declared that tendency of expectations would affect tendency of experience. Harwood, McLean, and Durkin (2007) raise the question of how expectations affect adjustment especially in the subject of maternal mood and relationship. They addressed that whether there is a relationship between optimistic and/or pessimistic expectations and experiences related to parenthood. According to Harwood and his colleagues (2007), mother's positive expectations related to their child, their own wellbeing, and parenthood would likely be in parallel direction with their real experiences. In other words, their positive expectations exceed what they experience in reality and ease the adjustment period to parenthood. Moreover, if there are pessimistic expectations associated with parenthood, the level of parenthood adjustment becomes low. Also, the study stresses when experiences are not positive compared to expectations, women tend to have more depressive symptoms and low level of the relationship adjustment (Harwood, McLean, & Durkin, 2007).

Family dynamics may differ in the subject of definitions and necessities in Western and non-Western cultures (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; Sümer & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). As it is mentioned before, Turkish culture has been accepted as a mixture of both Western and non-Western culture when recent developments are considered. In a general point of view it might be considered that Turkish culture has a collectivistic structure in the case of traditional families considering family is over individuals. Besides urban population might represent the mixture of collectivism and individualism, so in urban areas in where the number of nuclear families is much more than other places bounds with grandparents and relatives are still remain strong (Seven & Ogelman, 2012). Since majority of mothers living in Turkey are housewives, mothers' social interaction are mainly limited with family members and relatives (Baydar, Akçınar, & İmer, 2012). Moreover in the case of maternal adjustment, the studies showed that at the period of transition to parenthood, support from extended family members, relatives would have positive effect on mothers' adjustment and parenting behaviors (Baydar, Akçınar, & İmer, 2012; Güroğlu, 2010).

According to the results of a study, there is a bidirectional relationship between maternal adjustment and depressive symptoms (Whisman & Uebelacker, 2009). To put it another way; it is stated that if the level of relationship adjustment would tend to decrease, when depressive symptoms would increase. Anxiety is another symptom to take into consideration in the transmission period. According to Whisman, Davila, and Goodman (2011), high level of relationship adjustment reduces potential depression and anxiety. Moreover, it is revealed that women facing lower relationship adjustment might have deep concerns about their partner's emotional or instrumental availability through the transition period. Their concerns including lack of emotional or instrumental support from partner or leaving might trigger anxiety (Whisman, Davila, & Goodman, 2011).

In the literature, there are many cross sectional studies which examined the relationship between adjustment in marriage and depressive symptoms after childbirth. According to these studies, it is claimed that the prevalence of depressive symptoms is increasing not only in the postpartum period but also in the pregnancy period (Whisman et al., 2011). Especially, there is a significant relationship between adjustment in marriage and depressive symptoms in the women during pregnancy period and postpartum period (Whisman et al., 2011).

1.5. Paternal Adjustment after Birth

Expectations regarding the birth of a baby are shaped by cultural definitions that change over time and social change. The definition of being a good and involved father has been evolved through ages. While in colonial period involved fathers contributed to child's moral development, later with the shift in gender roles involved fathers perceived as dominant models who are financial providers of household and who control power (Pleck & Pleck, 1997). Later on, the role of a father changed to involvement in the household activities, share mothers' role as protector, provider, and caregiver (Pleck & Pleck, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993b). This involves the father to be involved in daily activities of their baby like feeding, dressing, putting to sleep, interacting with, being emotionally and instrumentally available, and being responsible (Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

The transition to parenthood in terms of men's expectations and how they experience the transition is influenced by the focus of real life experiences including daily observation, negotiation with partners, and communication with others (Larossa, 1988). According to Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1985) fathers do not have a wish of involvement in childcare activities or household labor as much their partners do. Even though both mothers and fathers have the same ability to care their child, fathers do not have experience as much as mothers so that men consider

that their skills would not be enough to care for a baby (Lamb et al., 1985). On the subject of fatherhood, it is covered that women are more likely interested with the caring of a child; husbands are more likely tend to play with the child (Thomas, Boner, & Hildingsson, 2011). Fathers who are involved in fun parts of having a baby are also the partners who focus on difficulties of becoming parent. Especially, men who had their first child tend to focus on the difficulties of the transition period than women. It is claimed that pessimistic point of view would also be related with economic difficulties. Men suffering economic difficulties during pregnancy and after childbirth are more likely to have experience as a difficult transition period to parenthood. Moreover, it is asserted that men who have high education level are more likely to have thoughts about difficulties of parenthood than others (Thomas, Boner, & Hildingsson, 2011).

Since fathers' are mostly involved in supporting the family financially, and less in childcare activities, their parenthood experiences are rarely mentioned in the literature (Fillo, Simpson, Rholes, & Kohn, 2015). Although women are nearly double times contribute to the childcare than their partners and much better in dealing with the changes coming with parenthood and new roles related to childcare tasks, men's help to childcare would be a negative factor on women's marital satisfaction (Fillo, Simpson, Rholes, & Kohn, 2015). According to Fillo and his colleagues (2015), father's involvement to childcare activities would affect the relationship satisfaction of women. If men's help to childcare would increase, their relationship satisfaction tends to decrease; beside women's relationship satisfaction is not affected by how much they contribute to the childcare. Moreover, there is a negative correlation between the level of men's contribution to childcare and their self-efficacy in terms of childcare. The feeling of new parents about childcare were in parallel with relationship satisfaction, which may be related to the fact that in a general manner women are more familiar and related to the experience of childcare activities than men (Fillo et. al, 2015). Fathers also report that

there is a distance between them and their child in comparison with mother's attachment (Ives, 2014).

The patriarchal characteristic of culture in Turkey would mainly not only shape the definition of parenthood and but also involvement of father's behaviors to a certain level . In Turkey, fathers are populously seen as "breadwinner" for unity of family. They are authoritative characters who are mainly responsible for financial issues of family and family discipline in childrearing activities (İvrendi & Işıkoğlu, 2010). We see that fathers keep affectional orientation in the background because of patriarchal culture in Turkey. By the reason of the fact that fathers withdraw from their child's life as a multidirectional communicator instead a figure involving just financial and disciplinary issues. However, although there are still male-dominant structure in work life, increasing number of working women in Turkey would affect to change patriarchal system, gender norms in the case of parenthood, the role of a father in family dynamics (Berker, Doğruöz & Rogow, 2009).

1.5. Effects of Transition to Parenthood on the Couple's Relationship

There are many studies which address in what way first child would affect romantic relationships and marital satisfaction (Belsky, Rovine, & Fish, 1989; Cowan & Cowan, 1988; Mitnick, Heyman, & Smith, 2009; Van Egeren, 2004). After birth of the first child, both partners experience individual changes such as psychological and physical changes as well as interactional changes such as roles, marital satisfaction, intimacy, and sexual relationship.

1.6. Changes in Roles and Expectancies of Partners

While there are great efforts for adapting to their new roles as parents, there are other roles that they need to keep in the transition to parenthood. The transition period involves steps that partners face

challenging experiences like irregularities and reshaping processes to get forward (Falicov, 1988; Selder, 1989). According to Selder (1989), the transition period would be the period of time when there is a readjustment of conditions if the present conditions is about to change. Readjusted conditions would serve to bound individuals of the new family and to keep sustainable bounds of partners. The main focus of transition period is to make sense new roles, definitions, tasks, and experiences which are about to collapse through new conditions of family. At this point of view, the transition is a crucial process through which collapsed meanings would appear to ensure individuals gain new meanings to sustain their bounds (Selder, 1989). However, it should not be ignored that these changes would cause an uncertainty which leads anxiety to arouse (Carter & McGoldric, 1989; Falicov, 1988; Selder, 1989).

Uncertainty which begins to rise from the very beginning of pregnancy leads anxiety that partners experience because of new roles, significant decision making processes, affectional and communicational changes (Selder, 1989). Individuals meet different parts of life, and experience affects and conducts they have been never experienced before. At this uncertain and unknown process, expectations one has about his/her new life and role have a significant effect on how the transition period will be experienced (Schumacher & Meleis, 1994).

Parenting expectations of both new mothers and fathers are fundamental factors influencing relationship satisfaction at the transition period to parenthood. According to role theory, expectations have a great influence on progress of new role of people (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993a). Through the birth of a child there is a rapid increase on household labor mostly caused by caring for their baby (Deutsch, 2001). Before their new tasks would appear, there might be unrealistic and dysfunctional expectations for how labor will be distributed and how they will be continuing as partners after becoming parent. Moreover, partners may expect that they will continue to have the same conditions and concept as before becoming parent as a couple. There would be an inevitable

disappointment leading conflict affecting mother and father as a couple when the expectations of new parents for the division of household labor are not met, by extension relationship satisfaction may tend to decrease (Khazan, McHale, & Decourcey, 2008). The rapid increase on household labors and changed conditions drag partners to the dissatisfaction caring with relationship adjustment effort.

In a traditional case, while fathers would be seen as financial providers, mothers would be seen as main caregivers and would take care of house. In a traditional culture, new parents' expectations for the division of household are more likely to be prescribed. Therefore violated expectations through the transition period to parenthood are less likely to appear due to defined gender roles in traditional cultures (Belsky & Kelly, 1994). The increasing number of working women and formation of modern society causes men to spend more time on housework and childcare (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). Their involvement in caregiver activities and housework may give rise to change in expectations of women which also may lead conflicts if there will be violated expectations. In the case of violated expectations, the subject of whether the partners' expectations for the division of caregiver activities meets effects on the transition period to parenthood more than the reality of the division. Violated expectations would cause partners suffer from anxiety and view that they experience a tough transition period to parenthood (Harwood, McLean, & Durkin, 2007). Women who involve more in caregiver role than they expected would tend to perceive their marital relationship more negative way than women whose expectations are met (Ruble, Fleming, Hackel, & Stangor, 1988). Considering the gap between actual division and expected division, it can be said that the difference created by the gap is one of the main determining factor for marital satisfaction and psychological transition to parenthood. Parents who have their first child, because they do not have prior experiences that would smooth the transition and would adapt to changing conditions, tend

to underestimate the challenging process of transition (Biehle & Mickelso, 2012).

On the other hand, a study conducted by Hackel and Ruble (1992) showed that one of the parents disconfirm expectancies of the other and this circumstance create conflicts. For example, pregnant women think that burden of labor and child-care will be equally shared (Ruble et al., 1988). However, traditional ways in gender roles might reveal themselves. Moreover, after the birth, couples tend to act more traditional and the mother can be a victim because her expectations for her current state can easily be violated (Dyer, 1962). Accordingly, Dyer (1962) claims that marital satisfaction tends to get deteriorated because of the conflict between gender roles and expectancies for the after-birth. In other words, when expectancies are not met, again, disappointments come to light.

Besides gender roles, Steffensmeier (1982) showed that sex has an impact on sharing responsibilities. For example, when expectancies of pregnant woman are not actualized after the birth, women are likely to be dissatisfied with their relationship (Ruble et al., 1988) and tend to perform their responsibilities in a more dissatisfied way (Steffensmeier, 1982). In the light of the study by Hackel and Ruble (1992), women and men both stated that women are taking more responsibilities of taking care of the child and housework and this changes the perception of women towards their marriage.

Apart from the gender-specificity and designated roles created by the society, some research such as the one by Nomaguchi and Milkie (2003) claims that the housework and demands the children made can be considered as a daily strain the parents are confronted with.

The study by Hackel and Ruble (1992) proposes some moderating and exacerbating variables showing the importance of discrepancies between expectations and reality. For the former, such examples as amount of discussion, couple adaptability and gender-related personality can be given and these have ability to moderate relationship (Hackel & Ruble, 1992). For the latter, work status and baby fussiness can be two of

the examples that can be given and they mostly obtain an exacerbating effect on the relationships.

The study by Hackel and Ruble (1992) is interested more in the dynamics within the family, the relationship of the couple and the baby as the third member of the family unlike the ecological approach of Bronfenbrenner (1999) and Knauth (2001) who did not ignore the expectancies of the parents. They added a new understanding and broadened the field of the changes that can happen in the couples who are transforming to parents. In addition, the study of Hackel and Ruble (1992) is an older work than Bronfenbrenner's (1999) and Knauth's (2001) articles and additional comments can be made regarding the chronological order of these works and their ways to examine the topic.

Considering studies mentioned before, it can be said that Hackel and Ruble (1992) are also interested specifically in the role of amount of discussion about housekeeping responsibilities and couple adaptability. The former is important and Hackel and Ruble (1992) claimed that amount of discussion might be representing for a feedback toward the housework which displays a discrepancy between expectations and reality. This kind of discrepancy which does not fulfill the expectancy might also be an indirect determinant for imbalanced division of work, marital dissatisfaction and actualization of gender-role personality (Knauth, 2001).

Regarding the couple adaptability, Hackel and Ruble (1992) reported that couples who have high adaptability are strictly committed to their expectations. Moreover, according to research by Hackel and Ruble (1992), the discrepancy between reality and expectancies increases in terms of its importance determining their dissatisfaction with their relationship.

In case of the expectancies, gender-role personality depends much on the partners embracing gender roles. As aforementioned, it should be questioned how they hold their gender-role characteristics which are created by the society or how they hold their roles they created by themselves. Accordingly, how they address the issue of the division of

labor is important. For example, if they share the workload in a more egalitarian way and this condition is fulfilled depending on their roles they embraced, the discrepancy between the reality and expectancy will not make any detrimental result for their relationship, and even amount of discussion they had as their reaction to this imbalance will not be a conflict because their commitment to their expectancies is in a moderate level (Hackel & Ruble, 1992).

Apart from these factors, work status and baby fussiness might be associated with the changes in the period of transition in terms of their effects on expectancy disconfirmation of the partners in the relationship. Accordingly, regarding these two variables, Hackel and Ruble (1992) claim that women with full-time job and fussy babies have strong reactions to the disconfirmed expectancies and, depending on their assumption, they claim that these variables exacerbate the relationships and indirectly effects marital changes.

As mentioned before, from an ecological perspective, Knauth (2001) also mentions the importance of the division of labor outside the home. As an example, Levy-Shiff (1994) reported that couples are likely to be less satisfied with their marriage when the obligations that the parents, especially women, should meet for the sake of work and home clash. Accordingly, Knauth (2001) claims that the content of communication between partners experiencing a transition period in their relationship like being parents might aggravate this clash and dissatisfaction with the marriage is likely to be declined. Moreover, from an ecological perspective, Bronfenbrenner (1999) stated that conflicts and communication problems make themselves more explicit when the increased levels of stress related to job, which comes from the system whose scope covers the family.

From the perspective of Hackel and Ruble (1992) which examines the impact of expectancy disconfirmation, changes are directly affected by expectancies and they are measured as dependent variables. Potential measurable variables considered as changes were suggested in the study of

Hackel and Ruble (1992). Accordingly, they suggested marital satisfaction, emotional and sexual intimacy, conflict, division of labor and, finally current positive and negative experiences with their marriage. These components are also considered as main changes in other studies by Knauth (2001), Nomaguchi and Milkie (2003).

1.7. Activity and Intimacy

Belsky and Rovine (1990) reported that if partners spend more time doing home-related activities and caring the infant and spending less time in leisure activities, marital dissatisfaction is likely to increase.

Accordingly, Feeney and his colleagues (2001) suggested that after the birth, couples have difficulties to find a chance to chat, speak as friends and attend joint activities. Moreover, the content of spending time mostly changes after the birth instead of the amount of time they spend together and the content is mostly based on caring the infant and households as mentioned before (Feeney et al., 2001).

After the birth, couples tend to care less about each other and they show decreased amount of intimacy, feeling and care (Cowan & Cowan, 2000). Moreover, Huston and his colleagues (1986) reported that couples tend to speak less about their personal wishes and concerns and express their feelings less.

Transition to parenthood also affects the couples' sexual relationship. Cowan and Cowan (2000) reported that, during prenatal period, couples might tend to think that babies can hurt and tend to avoid sexual behaviors. Accordingly, after the birth, there can be such problems as physical and emotional (Cowan & Cowan, 2000). For example, women who have newly become parents can get physically hurt or they cannot take pleasure from the intercourse because they think that their physical appearances are not good enough for any intercourse and so on (Cowan & Cowan, 2000).

1.8. Marital Satisfaction during the Transition Period to Parenthood

As mentioned before, marital satisfaction might be considered as a main indicator for any change in relationships of the couples or for the change itself before and after the birth. Baumeister and Vohs (2007, p. 541) defined marital satisfaction as "... a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person.". Moreover, they added "The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and with the marriage partner." (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007, p.541).

Like every other concept, marital satisfaction has its own dynamics and mechanism; it covers several factors that can change depending on the context. In the work by Baumeister and Vohs (2007), critical knowledge about research related to marital satisfaction were suggested. Accordingly, as components and mechanisms, Baumeister and Vohs (2007) covered the topics of cognition, physiology, interaction patterns, social support and violence and, subsequently, compiled contextual factors such as spousal personality characteristics, spousal mate guarding, spousal susceptibility to infidelity, mate value, children, and additional factors. In conclusion, it can be said that marital satisfaction is affected from many concepts.

First of all, Baumeister and Vohs (2007) emphasized that cognitive constructs are important. Accordingly, the evaluation of the other's behavior in a relationship in terms of its benefits and costs change with the perception of the individual and it is stated that, when marital satisfaction is discussed in detail, decline in marital satisfaction shows up if costly behavior is assigned to the partner and any other variable is ignored (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

Besides cognition, Baumeister and Vohs (2007) stated that physiology is important and regular contact of couples can be in parallel with their physical welfare. Accordingly, they mentioned when couples

who are satisfied with their marital engagement are compared to those with dissatisfied marriage, the former's physical well-being are more synchronized at last (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

Cognition and physiology of the couples are mostly considered as the internal mechanisms of the members of a relationship. Thus, they can be explained in terms of their concern about individuality. Moreover, some components such as interaction patterns of couples, social support they give each other and physical violence they exerted to each other require more social contact and diverse from their individuality and directly affect the other (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

Interaction patterns of couples might display an association related to marital satisfaction. Baumeister and Vohs (2007) state that demand or withdrawal for interaction can cause dissatisfaction when the members of the relationship try to interact immoderately. Moreover, their way of communication matters and, for example, indirect discussion related to conflicts might be embodied as anxiety towards the child and eventually this can detrimentally affect the development of the child (Knauth, 2001). This might be the most suitable example for the topic.

Support, especially social support, the couples show to each other is also another topic that scholars should cover because it shows positive functioning in terms of marriage (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

1.9. Being Parents in Turkey

Motherhood, as global spectrum of its definition, is considered being person who is credit with nurturing and caring for their children in every way in terms of moral and material demands (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998; Fillo, Simpson, Rholes, & Kohn, 2015; Genesoni & Tallandini, 2009; Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2009; Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Parker & Wang, 2013; Thomas, Boner, & Hildingsson, 2011). Mothers in Turkey mainly involve affectional availability, both verbally and physically, for their child rather than fathers. Although there is an increase

on the number of women working for contributing to family finance, the male-dominant characteristic in Turkish culture leads women taking the lion's share of responsibilities for household labor (Doğruöz & Rogow, 2009). Even though, increasing burden on women, in terms of financial and household labor, head fathers toward involving domestic work and childrearing activities; mothers are seen still the main responsible for child care (Erkal, Çopur, Doğan, & Şafak, 2007).

According to studies examining identity of mothers stated that being a mother is perceived as a component of women's identity in compression with status at job and marital status (Rogers & White, 1998). Mothers in Turkey have the leading role on child care activities (Erkal, Çopur, Doğan, & Şafak, 2007) which resources from the definition of women's identity as a mother (Rogers & White, 1998; Walzer, 1998). Furthermore, fathers in Turkey are perceived as mainly responsible for financial issues for family rather than taking care of the baby (İvrendi & Işıkoğlu, 2010).

1.10. Effects of Grandmothers as a Babysitter on New Parents

After having baby both man and woman would acquire a full-time work as a mother and a father. In the subject of baby caring, generally woman is the main caregiver for their baby and take huge part of the responsibilities as mentioned before. However the increasing number of employed woman and the change on perception of labor division lead people to find new solutions to handle their new roles. As a caregiver, grandmothers are may be the first choice come to mind because of many advantages. At the period of transition to parenthood, new parents need any kind of help to adapt to their new situations. Grandmothers who are safe and familiar source for new parents would be the better option to pass the most difficult part of transition. Liliane Floge (1985) claims that majority of working mothers who need someone to provide daily care for their baby when they are at work tend to choose relatives as caregiver

rather than other options. The reasons of this choice is advantages of relatives such as convenience of arrangements with relatives, financial comfort etc. (Floge, 1985). Recently, babysitters are the main needs of working mother who cannot have time to care all day. The main features working mothers searching caregiver for their baby are being truthful, hygienic, affectionate, and protector (İnan & Doğan-Temur, 2010). These features mainly are associated with grandmothers who would easily be available for their grandchild. The availability of grandmothers would ease the difficulties of the new parents (Guzman, 1999).

Section 2 - DISCUSSION

Overall, the transition to parenthood might be considered as a phase that couples in a relationship are experiencing when a child is added into their relationship and their routines (Mitnick, Heyman & Slep, 2009). Knauth (2001) explains this process by highlighting the features of the environment the change possibly occurs and components. In her article, Knauth claims that there are many changes and obstacles that the parents are confronted with during this transition and this transition will be more distinguished than it is in any other phases in the family life cycle (Knauth, 2001). Moreover, the balance the couples had before the parenting process begins may lead to break the balance (Cowan & Cowan, 1995) and, to some extent, Knauth (2001) adds that their daily life ranging from their social life to their physical health and their relationship might be affected.

Accordingly, it can be said that many governments take this process into consideration. For example, in their meta-analysis, Mitnick, Heyman and Smith Slep (2009) mentioned that US government has invested huge amount of money to enhance healthy relationships in new parents. Many other governments also try to make contributions these new parents through their investments and think that relevant interventions should be made (Mitnick, Heyman & Smith Slep, 2009). This can be considered as an indicator showing that transition to parenthood became vocal all over the world and took its place on the governmental agendas.

Changing roles is another point which need a great effort to maintain a good adaptation at the transition to parenthood. Readjustment of present conditions to adapt a life with a baby are important to keep communication and bond between the partners (Selder, 1989). There are changes which creates uncertainty leading anxiety arouse (Carter & McGoldric, 1989; Falicov, 1988; Selder, 1989). It is vital to overcome this challenges for partners to adapt the new realities in their world. Furthermore expectations from each other in the subject of being a couple

and a parent would another factor that effects on the process of transition (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993a). The disappointment emerging by unmet expectations of partners would cause a decrease on relationship satisfaction (Khazan, McHale, & Decourcey, 2008). Therefore the step to adapt changing roles and the context of expectations at the transition to parenthood plays a fundamental role.

At this complicated period of the transition, grandmothers also is a key issue on undertaking responsibilities of the baby. The social support for the new parents who struggle to handle their new roles and responsibilities while try to keep the other of their relationship would increase the chance of get a successful transition period (Boger & Smith, 1986; Myers-Walls, 1984; Walker & Riley, 2001). Thus grandmothers effect when they are volunteer to share the child care activities need to be stressed in literature.

2.1. Clinical Implications

The review demonstrates that the complexity of the transition to parenthood for the couple experiencing being a parent. Fluctuation of one's life is a resource of stressors. The couple who are within the ace of the fluctuation in their life in consequence of having a baby have similar stressors. Moreover, keeping the balance while the changes creates fluctuation is crucial for the relationship. The couple faces many challenges at the transition to parenthood. Thus, it is important to be sensitive to the adaptation to the changes at the transition period as a couple therapist. Developing particular interventions which taking the stressors into consideration would be effective to help the couple at this period.

When working with couples, the individual case need to be taken into consideration by couple therapists. While the transition to parenthood involves two partners of a relationship at the same time, there are also

different experiences as a new mother and a new father. The transition to parenthood need to be discussed into individual experiences.

For a couple therapists, it is important to pay attention that zeitgeist would have a significant influence on relations. Social changes are one of the most effective factor which have influence on relationships. Particularly we need to stress that in Turkey the social structure is exposed to a rapid and continuous changes (Ataca & Sunar, 1999). The changing social norms and implications would have also effect the definition of relationship for the society. With the continuous changes in society, it is important to be able to catch and attend the changes for a couple therapists.

As a consequent point, couple therapists need to take the social environment into account when working with a couple. Especially at the transition to parenthood, social support is significant to overcome the challenges of the process for couples. In Turkey when the cultural norms are considered the bounds of relatives would lead to strengthen at the time of a need for social support and there are more close relationship with extended family than before.

Section 3 - The Transition to Parenthood for the Newly Parents When The Grandmother is there for Help

Having a child is an important phase in a family's life cycle (Walsh, 2012). Right from the beginning of the transition to parenthood both men and women take over a serious responsibility as being a parent. The major part of literature concerning the birth of the baby explore conditions in terms of child development. In that sense, we know that the process of being a mother and a father for the parents has a huge impact on child's development (McHale, 2007). Moreover it is also a key point to understand family system in the aggregate in terms of understanding at the individual base (Minuchin, 1985). At this juncture working together as a new parent, which also refer to co-parenting, is another significant matter of fact at the transition period to parenthood.

In this study the main focus would be the experiences of parents at the transition to parenthood and how the transition occurs when there is a support from grandmother. Heretofore, the adaptation process in terms of transition itself and grandmothers' existence would be discussed. Furthermore the role of the culture on the transition would be looked in the way of Turkish cultural definitions.

3.1. Couples' Adaptation to Transition to Parenthood

Co-parenting is defined as applying mutual parenting strategies by sharing leadership and supporting each other as parents (McHale, 1995). Verbal and nonverbal communication between mother and father in their parenting responsibilities, providing consistency, and having predetermined rules when there is an issue concerning their baby's problems represents effective co-parenting behaviors (Cowan & McHale, 1996; McHale, Lauretti, Talbot, & Pouquette, 2002).

Co-parenting is not just about dyadic interaction between a mother - a child and a father-a child but also about marital interaction and family interaction as a whole. Therefore when studying the transition to parenthood, researchers need to understand not only parent-child relationship but also how this transition affects and is affected by the marital interaction and also how it is affected by others who enter into the system

Transition to parenthood starts with pregnancy and at 3 months postpartum the infant starts to be involved in family process by trying to establish eye gaze patterns containing meaningful reactions (McHale, Fivaz-Depeursinge, Dickstein, Robertson, Daley, 2008). These reactions of the baby contribute to parents' transition to parenthood by establishing engagement and patterns of coparenting.

There are many important variables that affect how this transition period will evolve for the family. First, the relationship between the parents is closely related to their adaptation to parenthood. According to Belsky (1990) there is a positive correlation between the quality of the marriage and the quality of the relationship between parent and child. The process of transition from a couple to a family lead couple to struggle to accommodate the needs those appear with the coming of a baby (Wallace & Gotlib, 1990). The needs of the baby lead new parents to discuss how they will adapt the changes and parental agreement or disagreement in child rearing, such as who is going to take care of the baby when they are at work, shows their adaptation quality to parenthood (Simons, Whitebeck, Conger & Melby, 1990). This agreement in child rearing also lead to affirmative, favorable home environment and marital satisfaction (Deal, Halverson & Smith, 1989).

3.2. Couples' Adaptation to Grandmothers as Cocaregivers

Grandmothers play vital role on the adaptation of couples at the transition to parenthood. Therefore, besides opening space for a baby,

many couples also need to adapt their environment and relationship to include others who will help them in childcare. This need is even more emphasized as more women enter the workforce.

The adaptation of the new parents and their relationships is basically related to the resilience of family which would buffer the stressors and decrease the potential dysfunctioning, and also support the adaptation process (Walsh, 2012). Resilience in the family would provide a base to develop new abilities to meet future challenges and insights to reassess the priorities and pursuits of life (Walsh, 2012). It is also claimed that the family resilience when the time of a crisis would provide a strong investment in favorable relationship. Family members struggling a crisis together would stimulate an enrichment for their relationship (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985; Walsh 2012).

Although co-parenting is mostly perceived as a term regarding just parents, Mchale and Irace (2011) stress that co-parenting also involve individuals who support parents and share responsibilities of the child care. It is difficult for new parents to trust someone to commend to their baby's care. At this point, familiarity comes into prominence for new parents. When the topic is child care, it is shown that a significant part of parents choose relatives as a cocaregiver (Flodge, 1985). Thus grandmothers' role on the transition to parenthood cannot be ignored.

Some factors that new parents demand favor grandmothers as cocaregivers. One of these factors is the availability of grandmothers for the baby's need (Guzman, 1999). A familiar and available option among all unfamiliar options would rank first for new parents. According to Presser (1989) there are also economic motivations to favor grandmothers to help with childcare. Grandmothers as cocaregiver for the infant reduce the economic burden on new parents.

Grandmothers as cocaregivers are great resource for the new parents but they also bring a challenge. There would appear a problematic of the quantity of taking role on child care activities and its effect on new parents. It is shown that if both mother and grandmother shares main role

on baby's care and are in charge equally, the family functions better than unequal share of role and responsibility (Chase-Lansdale, Gordon, Coley, & Wakschlag, 1999). In addition to this, the studies show that there is a negative correlation between level of balance between grandmother - mother and level of disengagement (Kretchmar & Jacobvitz, 2002).

3.3. The Role of Culture in Transition to Parenting

When the subject is a family, it can be said that there are various implications and meanings for family in Western cultures and non-Western cultures (Sümer & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). The Turkish family dynamics originated from a collectivistic culture which is characterized in generally by Eastern culture. For a traditional Turkish family, precedence of family is much more important than individual. Even there are current changes on cultural dynamics which emphasize individualistic benefits, interdependence still remains as a traditional feature (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007).

While collectivistic benefits are more dominant than individualistic benefits, it might be expected that the relationship of extended family members are strong both emotionally and physically (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). Along these lines the status of grandparents in a Turkish family dynamics cannot be disparaged. The researchers showed that mothers' social relations are largely limited with their extended family members because most of mothers in Turkey are housewives (Baydar, Akçınar, & İmer, 2012). Limited relations, environment and searching a familiar support lead new parents to grandmothers to get help. One of the study concerning the relationship between relatedness to extended family and parenting style shows that support by the extended family protects mothers' positive parenting behaviors when struggle with economic problems In other words mothers who get support from their family are more likely to show supportive and warm behaviors toward their child (Baydar, Akçınar & İmer, 2012). According to Güroğlu (2010), mothers who get emotional

and childcare support from their own mothers are less likely to use punishment and show demanding behaviors toward the child.

3.4. Purpose of Study

The experiences of couples when the period of the transition to parenthood affected by existing condition has a vital effect on both couple's relationship and family cycle. In addition to the transition from being a couple to being a parent, the partners also need to face with main changes in their harmony. Indicating the changes appearing at the period of transition is a vital requirement to understand the system of transition to parenthood for a couple therapists.

The main purpose of this current study is to address the issue that couples experience at the period of transition to parenthood in İstanbul. Qualitative research method is used by the reason of the necessity of using exploratory research in our subject and the nature of our study.

Following research questions were explored to reach a better understanding of couples' experiences in transitioning to parenthood:

- (a) What changed in their life after they become a parent?
- (b) In what ways did becoming a parent affect their romantic relationship?
- (c) In what way grandmothers affect the transition to parenthood when they are there to share child care responsibilities?

Section 4 - Method

4.1. The primary investigator (PI)

I am 34 years old, married for 6 years and having plans to have a baby in the near future. I am also a student living in İstanbul, Turkey in the clinical psychology graduate program, couple and family therapy track in and I am the primary investigator for this study. I have been observing

many friends and their couple relationship after their baby was born for a long time. Therefore before I have my own baby and as a student in this graduate program, I have developed a sincere motivation to have a research about this topic. My main concern in this research is understand couples by looking at the experiences after their first baby and how there is a change in their system. By the time of conducting of this recent study, I believe that I have developed a strong insight as a therapist and as a woman in relationship by working on romantic relationship at the period of transition to parenthood.

4.2. Participants

For this current study, six couples were interviewed to have a line on. To be suitable for the purpose of the study, these participant couples' age ranged from 31 to 44. The participants of the study were in the middle socioeconomic group and have bachelor degree. All of six couples married for 3-7 years and have children aged 12-17 months old. They all had children within their plans (Please see Table 1. for the demographic information of participants). All participants receive support from their family to care their baby.

4.3. Settings and Procedure

Before starting the data collection procedure for the study, an ethical approval was received to conduct the setting from Ethics Committee Board of Istanbul Bilgi University.

To reach the participants, the primary investigator used snowball method. At the first place, the study was declared to acquaintances to reach appropriate candidate. The PI clarified the qualifying criteria to be a participant for study to acquaintances by phone calls.

The volunteers were informed about the study and interviewed in terms of qualified criteria of the study by phone calls. The PI and the

elected volunteers appointed the arrangement mutual appropriate date and place.

A pilot study was conducted by the PI as preparatory to the current study. Before the interviews pilot study lead up to control questionnaire.

As a first step of the study, the PI presented the informed consent form and then the procedure of the interview explained to the participants. Interviews, in depth analyses of predetermined questions by PI, lasted approximately 1,5 hours. The predetermined questions of the study concern the experiences as a parent, the romantic relationship, and the main changes of participants after having baby.

The main focus of the questions of the study is composed to understand couples' experiences at the transition to parenthood. The questions of the study include three main subjects. The first one of the topics is the changes in partners' life after becoming a parent in terms of their daily life activities and their personal experiences. The second part of the questions is related to the changes in romantic relationship in terms of intimacy and responsibilities. Lastly the questions of the study aim to address the role of grandmothers in partners' life at the transition to parenthood.

4.4. Data Analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the changes and the experiences of the participants during the transition to parenthood (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Eatough & Smith, 2017). IPA is a system concerning personal lived experience in a depth way (Eatough & Smith, 2017). IPA provides researchers with the chance of catching the elaborative interpretation of the participants' experiences through indicating personal point of views of participants and personal patterns (Cooper, Fleischer & Cotton, 2012).

The interviews were recorded and kept as audio record. Audio records were transcribed in a typed document to analyze. The

transcriptions of the interviews were coded into document after data collection was done. Analyzing of this transcription of the interviews and notes taken during interviews by PI were done attentively through repeated readings from the beginning of coding. PI conceptualized the transcriptions of the interviews with repetitive readings. MAXQDA Software was used to constitute the skeleton of the transcription of the current study. After individual examination of the data of the study, the data was discussed with the advisor of the study in terms of the consistency and the meanings. Through the discussions with the advisor, the findings lead to form the main themes of the results.

4.5. Results

As a results of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the interview transcripts, five main themes emerged, namely, experience a different self, evolving from couples to parents, “pulled away, then pulled even closer”, father’s support –“he is there for the baby and the mother”, grandma in the house -“having the grandma in the house is really a good thing?”, acceptance and normalization of changes and challenges. The quotes are labeled as M5 (mother of the 5th couple interviewed), F2 (father of the 2nd couple interviewed) etc. and with their age for that readers who would like to follow the experiences of specific participants.

4.5.1. I am a different person now

After the baby is born, many parents experienced many changes in their sense of self. The change is clustered in two areas, seeing the big picture and increased sensitivity for others and the world.

Seeing the big picture. Many parents talked about changes in their personality after having a baby. Seeing the big picture with bringing a human being in the world: they have become less materialistic, less

egocentric and more emotional, sensitive, and responsible some parents see change in themselves, some see a change in the other. Overall, they are content with these changes that make them better people.

I used to have many obsessions about daily issues. Now I understand that it is just so silly. I used to be a very materialistic and not anymore, I see people discussing about many issues and I feel sorry for them because the matters they talk are not really big issues. They only think they are. (M1, 35)

One of the participants stated that “My wife was too individualistic in the first few years of our marriage. After the baby she now can say ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. She changed a lot in her personality after she gave birth to our girl.” (F2, 36) “I discovered another part of my husband. He was a kind and loving person anyway but after the baby was born, you discover that part, the part that is very concerned and rigorous.” (M1, 35) Another participant stated that “I am a happier person now, my perspective to many issues changed so much, I am more optimistic, I am so grateful for that.” (F2, 36)

After I gave birth to my daughter, I felt more grown up. I just thought I have a very big responsibility as I will be a role model to her. So I became a more considerate person. I think about my behaviors and its consequences most of the time as how these all will affect my baby. (M6, 33)

I was more politically involved in many protests. I used to dream that I would bring my baby to meetings. I started becoming more realistic I guess, I am more in peace protesting things passively because I have a baby now. I am responsible for my child’s life. I keep concerning the issues but I shifted being passive

from being active but my concerns increased. I used to be braver because I have fears for both myself and my child. (M3, 38)

Increased sensitivity for others and the world. Many parents stated that they are now more sentimental to other people who are in need, especially children. The parents started having more interest in world issues as they are raising a kid now in this world.

I am now more sensitive towards Syrian kids. The beggars, especially the children, I pity for them. I started thinking that they are not that lucky as us and they have no standards to live the live other way around. (F1, 34)

“I cannot watch any TV programs anymore. They are too much for me. I cannot stand a beggar especially when they have their kid in their arms.” (M1, 35) Another participant stated that “I was not a kid person; I became one after we had our girl.” (M1, 35)

I think about the Gypsies and their children. They are on highways begging people for money. The kid is just crying in his mother’s lap. I never used to think like that before. He is not the one who chose to be that kid, he did not choose that mother and he did not choose to be in streets begging. My daughter might have been in the same position and that makes my heart ache so much. (F6, 36)

One of the participant mother stated that “I cannot watch all these physical and sexual abuse stories with kids. I feel more agitated much more than before after our baby. It is just too much.” (M5, 33)

4.5.2. Evolving from couples to parents

Pulled away, then pulled even closer. Throughout the interviews the couples enthusiastically talked about their experience how they evolved from being couples to parents. This transition happened in three phases. First the couples experienced a period where they were pulled away from each other with the arrival of the baby. In the second phase they were “pulled even closer” as they experienced more closeness and enrichment with the new ecosystem at home. The final phase the couples talked about is the transition period where each partner felt the transformation and united even closer in a more enriched home environment.

Pulled away. In this phase the couples talked about two subthemes. These are changing roles with the arrival of the baby and experiencing the priority of the baby.

Changing Roles. Almost all parents expressed that their roles in the family changed dramatically after the baby was born. Having the baby at home brought many new duties and responsibilities to both parents. As the baby care requires new responsibilities, both mother and the father started doing new things that they have never done before like taking care of a baby. In the adaption period the couple was just a mother and a father at home, trying to get used to this new life and trying to do their best in performing their new responsibilities and duties at the same time. For example, one parent said that “All our lifestyle changed, our routines changed, our habits changed. A new perspective came into our lives.” (F2, 36)

Priority of the baby. While roles changed almost automatically for each parent, all parents experienced their kid as their priority. The baby became the center of their world as they expected. One mother stated, “She was the center of our world.” (M4, 31) The parents willingly had all their time with their baby and that brought distance to the couple relationship.

One mother stated “My whole life changed after our baby arrived. I started spending every second of my time with my daughter after work.” (M6, 33). One father also stated that “I willingly withdrew myself from all activities and spend all my energy with my son.” (F3, 37)

Pulled even closer. In this phase, many couples experienced richness in their role, and thus felt even closer to each other, felt more like a family as they got used to having the baby at home. Many adapted very

well with the newborn and they experienced more marital harmony including the third member to the family.

Enrichment of the new role “I am a parent now!”. Almost every parent, talked about how they felt more evolved with the new member. Many talked about the richness of the experience of becoming a mother and a father. They emphasized that this new role makes the family unit richer and family ties enhances with this big change.

Yes, we have been partners so far, but now my wife sees me as a father, and behaves me with this dignity and respect, and I see my wife also as a mother of my kid and that makes me feel more respect and love towards her and that brought us closer. (F2, 36)

Increased Marital Harmony. Many parents stated that now they are family. One mother put this in words as follows:

“Before the baby we were acting more as individuals in our marriage. We became a true family after our baby, a true harmony came to our home. We were two friends and we are three, we have fun and we really like spending our time together.

Having a baby girl brought light, color and energy to our life. It is so amazing how you have an impact on a baby. Now I am a mother and she is an “empty slate” as they call it. It is my sculpture. I give shape to it and the baby takes whatever you give to her. That is so amazing and incredible and brings so much joy and enrichment to our world.”(M3, 38)

“The baby brought our family a meaning” one father said.
(F2, 36)

From Challenge to Transformation as a Couple. Almost all parents acknowledged the fact that the baby brought a very tough challenge. However, as they were going through those challenges, they also experienced a transformation in their relationship. Affection and empathy for each other increased and they started to experience less conflict, better communication and they also learned to cope together as a couple.

Affection and empathy for each other. Although it was difficult in the beginning, the couples developed more affection and empathy for each other after they had a baby. After the parental roles settle down and the couple get used to the baby, the affection and empathy is even more.

Our affection to each other is much more now. I think about him, his health. His psychological condition is important. I was more individualistic before the baby, but after then I care about more for my husband. I encourage her more to hang around with his friends, I like him seeing going to fishing. That is what he really liked before the baby. I am more willingly child centered now. That brought us a new bond with my husband, we are more affectionate with each other now. (M1, 35)

Less conflict, good communication. The parents started having better communication after the baby. Both parents put effort into getting over when there is a communication problem because they feel like they should not waste their limited time with each other with problems.

After the baby, we got closer with my wife. We used to have different problems and we used to discuss them with many angles. Now the baby is our center point and we do not want to spend our energy to anything else. We spend our time together as much as we can. (F1, 34)

Before the baby, we used to have quarrels and we used to stop talking to each other minimum a day and sometimes two. After the baby is born, we rarely have big arguments. We do not have time, energy for it and all our energy goes to our kid. So our conflict level went down drastically, so yes, we can say we communicate better now. (F5, 44)

Learning to cope together as a couple. All the couples feel that after 8-12 months of the birth, they feel stronger as a couple, they have a better understanding of how to deal with many issues about the baby, about the marriage, about the challenges. They start containing each other more in a different level.

One of my lecturers at university once said. 'Marriage is like a jazz waltz. You can make a mistake but your partner recovers it, and none of the audience understand that mistake' We now understand each other so much, from a gesture, from a mymic. We deal with many challenges as we are a strong unit now and we are just good dancers. (F3, 37)

4.5.3. Father's Support, He is there for the baby and the mother

In almost all families father's support is very active. Those families experience father's support in three areas. Support of the father for childcare, having more responsibility then before and father's support to mother's wellbeing.

Support of the father for childcare. All the mothers in this study appreciate the efforts of the fathers' support for the childcare. As all mothers are full time working, father's support looks like essential to them. The fathers are very sensitive to this issue and very willingly helping for the childcare.

My husband shows his affection through whatever he can do to help me at home. Sometimes I get up at night to breastfeed the baby and he gets up with me and accompanies me. He does not think 'I am going to work tomorrow.' He says 'My wife is awake in the middle of the night and there is a need to soothe the baby after she is fed, so I am there for my wife to support her, and ease her tasks with the baby. (M1, 35)

My husband takes the baby to bed every night. It is his duty now. After he comes home after work, he is the one playing with

the kid. My husband always knew his responsibilities, and that did not change after the baby. He is a responsible man. (M2, 35)

My husband changes the diaper, feeds our girl and help me bathe her. When I was at home full time, I used to do many of these tasks. Once I started working again, I needed his support and he was willing to help me with all childcare. (M5, 33)

Having more responsibility than before. Fathers had much more responsibility after the baby is born. The fathers in the study are willing to have more responsibilities. This makes them feel stressed but also they were proud of themselves for taking more responsibility as this can be seen from their body languages and gestures during the interviews.

I am the financial provider, yes my wife is also working and is just in a break for the kid, but I am the working engine of the house. I had many difficulties in my own workplace after 15 July at universities. I have to work harder, earn more, so that I will stay as the breadwinner of this house. (F1, 34)

While fathers burden much more responsibilities than before they also reported that they have concerns about their child's future which they try to build from the first moment of his/her life.

I am more worried about now about my son's future. That is why I need to make more plans, think about strategies. Hope God will give us many years to live, but who knows. We need to be prepared for everything. I need to do much more than before for my family, for my kid. (F2, 36)

Father's support to mother's wellbeing. Some mothers expected from their partners to support their wellbeing and some dictated. Some women in this study thought that this is obligatory, while some thought that is nice to have. But we can tell that father's support to mother's wellbeing is essential to all women. One father stated that he used to treat her wife like her baby and he is doing that to both mother and the baby. The wife was accepting this support softly.

I had a baby actually before our baby. My wife was like a baby to me and she always is. I used to nurture her, feed her, and take her outside. Now I do it with both my wife and with our new born. (F1, 34)

One mother demanded that support; "I think the father's main task is to deal with the mother's psychology, to comfort her in every means. It is his job." (M3, 38)

Fathers in two families are very proactive in dealing with the problems and supporting the wellbeing of the mother.

We had quite a few problems with my husband's mother. I was quite emotional in the first weeks. My husband was so understanding and he supported me so well, he had long talks with his mother, and we got over our problems quite easily with my mother in law and my husband supported that. (M2, 35)

My wife had a very difficult pregnancy. I had to support her even more through the end of the pregnancy. There were some health issues when the baby was born. So I was there with my wife supporting her at my best, trying to ease her and increase her comfort. (F4, 33)

4.5.4. Grandma is in the House

Grandmothers are mainly welcomed in the families. Some families chose the grandmother as they had financial difficulties and some prioritized reliability. Having the grandmother as a caregiver have effects on three areas: The effect of grandmother on each partner, the effect of grandmother on the child and the effect of grandmother on the couple relationship.

The effect of grandmother on each partner. All mothers and fathers stated that having the grandmother in the house is a positive experience and they do not regret it at all. In this subtheme there are two sides of how the partners are effected. First they have an increased appreciation and gratitude and second they feel better and safer as grandmothers are the caregivers.

Increased appreciation and gratitude. The support of the grandmothers is in two ways. First, when the mother is at home with the baby after birth, many grandmothers stayed with the family to support the family in many aspects such as cooking, cleaning and baby care. That

lasted a few weeks in some, and one or two months in the others. Once the mother is adapted to the baby, as the mother is using the paid leave, the grandmothers left. They came back to support the grandchild after the mother started working again. Both two phases were mainly appreciated by couples.

My mother in law and father in law stayed with us for 2 months after birth. Suddenly you started to see much more often to each other than before It was quite difficult to live with them because it is an unfamiliar manner of life but we are so grateful to them, because we could not pass that period that easily if they would not be with us. (F4, 33)

My mother in law was with us after 6 months. She is such a life saver. She helps us with so many things, kid, cooking, house work. I cannot think a day without her, especially when I went back to work. I am really happy to have her here with us. There are many handicaps yes, but many more advantages. I appreciate what she does for us. (M3, 38)

Feeling better and safer. Almost all parents stated that having the grandmother at home makes them feel better and safer.

I have read from many resources that there are so many differences between a grandmother looking after the kid and a nursemaid. When you compare all the positive and negative sides about it, I am really happy that grandmother is with her. Because I think her grandmother gives her full love and a nursemaid would not, actually could not do it. I think we could have found no one else for our kid that we would trust so much. (M1, 35)

We have no doubt about our child when we have to leave. It is a big chance for us. My mother in law lives only 500 meters away. She is here all day, helping out with anything and everything. We hear many bad news with nursemaids. I feel so good that she is with her grandmother and that makes me feel so calm most of the time. (M5, 33)

Can a grandmother take care of a baby that well. Almost all of the parents believe that there are many positive sides of having the grandmother as the caregiver. But they also talk about the negative effects of that on child. So in some ways some parents say “Oh yes she can”, and some parents say “Of course she can’t”. Some parents also stated that in one aspect, grandmother looked after the baby very well, and in other aspect she did not.

The existence of grandmothers is controversial issue for the parents because there would appear both positive and negative sides of sharing responsibilities with grandmothers. Some of the parents thinks that grandmothers are able to take care of their baby thank to their experience while some of them find some of their methods wrong. The participants stated that: they love, play but it’s hard for them to teach things as we would do or set boundaries, generation gap.

Oh yes, she can.

The grandmother understands us very well. She is a very experienced person in life and it is our chance to have her with us. She plays so many different plays during the day with the baby. She cooperates with us about raising methods. We used to have organic meals once we were babies, but in these days it is not the case. We have advices from our child doctor and she directs us what the baby should eat or not, and the grandma does whatever we tell her to do. She does not question our methods, and she shares her wisdom when necessary but we can communicate and understand each other perfectly. So we are very happy with her. (F3, 37)

We are so happy that the grandmother is looking after our baby. We are so grateful for the grandfather also. They play with kids and they all have so much fun together. There are tales, stories, songs. Once we arrived home, our baby was folk dancing, we could not believe in our eyes. So it is so good for our baby's physical and psychological development. A nursemaid could not do one third of this. (F4, 33)

Another father stated that "For the future development of our child of course there is a difference between upbringing provided from a babysitter and a grandmother who care our child with a love from her hearth." (F5, 44)

Of course she can't.

I think we will experience the bad consequences later in life. The grandmother is too sentimental and she cannot draw the boundaries with the kid. I see them and all of a sudden all sugary stuff is in baby's mouth. That is not good for a one year old baby. But there is no way you can make the grandmother understand that. (F1, 34)

The grandmother is a primary school graduate, I know that for sure that she will give all her love but is that enough? So we know that she cannot teach many things to her, so we will try to cover that. (F2, 36)

One of the participants stated that "She behaves our kid from her experience, but this experience is old technology. She could have been very useful yes if she was a child psychologist but that is not the case." (M5, 33) Another stated that "So first of all, grandmother and grandfather they both old and physically it is not easy to care a child." (F4, 33).

More Time and Energy for Ourselves and our Relationship.

Almost all couples talked about the positive sides of grandmothers on couple relationship. There are two main areas that affect the relationship directly. First the parents have more energy for the baby and for themselves, for the couple relationship. This is due to grandmother's great effort in handling housework, cooking and caregiving at the same time. Also couples have more time for themselves and they can enhance their couple relationship.

We come home after work and all the housework and cooking is done by the grandmother. She does that when our boy is asleep. So that helps us a lot. As soon as we arrive home, we have quality time with our boy and with each other. (M3, 38)

She is so thoughtful about the baby and our life. She brings organic cheese from Çanakkale, she makes the yoghurt at home, she feeds the baby so well. She thinks about all her meals and ours for nights, she knows we come home late tired after work. So we have nothing less important to deal with at nights, we spend our time as a family, with my kid and my husband. (M4, 31)

We have no anxiety to leave the baby if we want to go out at nights. We do not prefer it that much though. Sometimes we feel like it and the grandmother is very supportive that we have some couple time together. So we are so relaxed outside, because we know our boy is in good hands at home. (F3, 37)

I have no doubts about how my mother takes care of my baby when I am at work. She is such a hard working woman, even when I am back home, she just encourages me to spend time with my kid and husband. She never stops at home and all she thinks is to help us more and more. That effects our couple relationship quite a lot. She lives with us for the time keeping and she gives her best for us so that we can spare maximum time for each other with my husband and with our baby. (M6, 33)

4.5.5. Acceptance and Normalization of Changes and Challenges

All families had this kind of interview first time in their life. They talked freely and in a naïve way about their experience. All families have gone through quite an experience. During the interviews and during the decoding time, the researcher examined the parents from a different perspective. Their body language, gestures and mimics, tone of voice and the way of speaking tells the researcher that there is an acceptance and normalization of changes and challenges in these themes. There are three main cluster in this theme. “It’s though for everyone, but we got over it just fine”, “Of course it will change, the sex life and outdoor activities” and lastly “we are good enough parents, aren’t we?”

It’s though for everyone, but we got over it just fine. Many parents believe that this period is quite challenging for everyone and they were quite proud of themselves about how they got over this period. “There are many friends of us who had very difficult times, they had many problems, we also had some problems but not that much, we got over those problems quickly thanks to my husband.” (M2, 35)

First when my paid leave was due, I was very enthusiastic about going back to work, even though I do not like it very much. To go to work was just a break and it was so relieving. But after some time during the day, you start missing your baby, and in the end you run to your baby. Many mothers might feel like that, don’t they? (M3, 38)

You have dreams when the baby is born. You would like to do anything and everything with her. But it is not the case. Dreams give way itself to reality. In reality you have problems with many issues and you need to get over them one by one. (M3, 38).

Another participant mother stated that “We are now celebrating getting over all these difficulties with the baby.” (F3, 37)

Of course it will change. Many parents are quite sure that sex and outdoor activities go down as this is normal with every couple who have their kids.

Of course sex will decrease.

We cannot say it is a decrease in lust, there is an emotional change with the baby, all the stressful days also effected this. That is ok, it is getting normal each month. No problem, I mean I evaluated this as no problem. (F4, 33)

Participants claim that they are deeply aware of the fact that there will be a decrease in terms of intimacy. “It was like a though regimen, we barely did it during pregnancy, not at all in the last trimester, and very rare in the first few months. That was quite hard.” (F1, 34). One of participant fathers stated that “My wife is outside the home for 12 hours a day when she is working, so it is wise to spend the time with the baby, we can postpone our sexual activities, that is what I think.” (F5, 44). Another stated that “You don’t have to do it, just to do it right? Sex can wait.” (F5, 44)

Of course outdoor activities will decrease.

I used to take care of myself more before the baby, I used to love going to shopping, going to hairdresser, having a cup up coffee with friends. It is not like this ever. But that is what it is for the moment. She is still a baby. (M6, 33)

We were an outdoor kind of couple. We love discovering new places. But now I am a mother, and I am ok with that, it is just right to be home most of the time, isn't it? The baby love helps me feel that is ok. (M2, 35)

Emerge of a motivation to be a good parent. The parents have a high sense of achievement of being a good mother and good father. Trying to be good parents was perceived so much by the researcher during the interviews. "We used to have egalitarian way of doing housework, after the baby I find myself doing things faster and efficient. There are more tasks to be completed and less time, right?" (F1, 34)

The parents had more motivation and energy after the baby. They carry their parental role in a serious way. "We are more motivated for life now. We have many plans for our boy. It is as if we had no target before the baby, now we have many things to achieve for our boy." (F3, 37)

One mother wanted to discipline her baby just the way she knows and she started dictating to her own mother as she was reading many books and researching about child development. "My parents tried to discipline my baby in their own way. I did not let that happen; I just did not." (M4, 31)

As the parents put the baby as their priority, they behaved in a manner to support this, the main motivation for this mother was not to

make the baby cry and make the baby happy most of the time. "My baby is my priority. I always put her in the first place. I am very careful not to upset her, I care about her happiness and her joy." (M5, 33)

One father stated that he is now overprotective about his baby. He recalls one dream. "After the baby was born, I was killing people to protect my girl in my dreams, it was quite freaky, but that comes with fatherhood, right." (F6, 36)

Section 5 - DISCUSSION

The study is conducted to examine the changes that new parents experience during the transition to parenthood. Five themes emerged from the interviews with six couples. The first question of the research was interested in their experiences as a parent. The first question was: What changed in your life after you became a parent; and how did becoming a parent change you as an individual? Most of the participants expressed that when the baby comes to their life there emerge a process of evolving from couple to parent. Participants mentioned that in the first part of this process they pulled away from each other when they struggle with the adaptation of their new roles. Changes roles and responsibilities cause people to rotate the focus on the individualistic adaptation problems which cause being pulled away. The priority of baby is also another focus of people at transition to parenthood. The romantic relationship becomes ignored at the first period of evolving from couples to parents. When the couple handles the first process the participants claim that in terms of their relationship they pulled even closer than before. When they adapt to being parent they gain the notion of being a "mother" or a "father" which enrich their individualistic role so that they both experience the enrichment they can share a mutual concern. At the second part of the process of evolving from couples to parents the participants mention that there is an increase on their marital harmony causing being pulled closer. At this period the new parents' adaptation carries them from challenge of transition to

parenthood to transformation as a couple. After their transformation as a couple our participants reported that there is an increase on the affection and empty for each other. What is more, after the adaptation there is less conflict than before the transition to parenthood and their communication quality would even better than before. The participants reported that they show mutual coping skills as a couple against the problematic situations than before.

The current study showed that the transition to parenthood is also means a transition of self. The participants mentioned about another process of transition. They stated that there is an experience of a different self after becoming parent. Their new roles and responsibilities lead them to transform who they are in terms of sensitivity for others and the world. There is an increase on sensitivity for other around them which is caused by experience of taking care of their child.

The experience of parenthood is an experience which a couple has expectations from each other as the person who has relationship. In this current study the second question was: How did becoming a parent affect your relation; how was your relation affected in terms of intimacy; how did this affect your relation in terms of duties and responsibilities; what kind of an experience is this for you when the grandmother share creaking of the baby; and how did your mother's care taking affect your relation in terms of the harmony? Another theme that emerges from the data is maternal dominance at sharing the baby's responsibility. As before mentioned, women are seem to be in charge when the issue is about having child. However changing conditions lead fathers involve to take responsibility to take care of their baby. The participants reported that fathers support at the transition to parenthood has a vital role to ease the adaptation process. It is important both for couple and child to know that the father is there for them. Our participants stressed that fathers support the family in all aspects of responsibility of having child. Moreover it can be seen that fathers not just help the family to handle child care but also

support mothers' wellbeing. The results showed that fathers not just present them facilities but also participate them to evolving to a family.

The last question concerned the effects of grandmothers at the transition. For the new parents, there are other supports to come over the challenging unfamiliar environment. Grandmothers are another support for the new parents. The grandmother effect can be indicated as three levels; effect on new parents, effect on child, and effect on the relationship of couple. The participants stated that the existence of grandmothers to share the responsibilities of child care increase their appreciation and gratitude. They feel much more thankful than before evolving to a parent from a couple. Furthermore the new parents claimed they feel better when the existence of their mother for help and safer when she supported them to struggle with child care responsibilities. However they do not agree on the support of grandmothers in terms of child development. Lastly the effect of grandmother on their relationship is also positive features. The participants stressed that with the existence of grandmother to support for child care, they have more time for their relationship. They share the roles and duties with grandmother so that they have more time and also energy to keep the relation as a couple. It is revealed that the new parents have more energy for themselves and also for their baby when the grandmother is there for help. Furthermore the attendance of grandmother to their home is not because of a desperate need, it is a favorable choice for them to take care their baby.

Lastly the results revealed the positive sides of these transition to parenthood for the new parents. Our results showed that there is a positive acceptance of the changes in their life. They reported that the couple activities will decrease but the process brings much more thing than it takes away. They stressed that they are aware of the fact that the sex will decrease the outdoor activities will die away. They have the notion of normalization that the parenthood is a demanding role which will damage the old system of the couple. However it is crucial to state that the couple issues would easily be ignored with coming of the baby. The issues seem

to lose its significance while there is an effort to open a space for the baby in couple's life. Yet this ignorance might lead grater issues in time, so it is important to intervene in couple's issues at the very beginning of transition to parenthood to keep the bounds of the relationship.

Clearly, having a child changes the relationship routine permanently. Intimacy is another point that is interfered by coming of the baby (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). After being parent, it is more rare to have a sexual relationship with a baby an also a grandmother in the house. While in the literature there are many research showing the decrease on marital satisfaction through the decrease on intimacy parents (Belsky & Pensky, 1988; Cowan & Cowan, 1988), in this study it is revealed that there is the normalization of how the intimacy will be interfered by the baby. The participants reported that they are aware of the fact that their lives would be changed by coming of the baby, so that they would prepare themselves to overcome the decrease on intimacy which will keep the romantic relationship alive. However it should not be forgotten that our participants are the people who just had their first baby and met being a parent. A longitudinal study need to be conducted to reveal a comprehensive understanding.

Moreover, there is another critical point concerning normalization of the new life that parents face. The participants of the study are white-collar workers. According to the results of the current study, there is also normalization to give a break and go back to work. Fathers' and also grandmothers' support is the main base to ease the period which woman has struggle with take care the baby and all of the other duties she need to handle. Thus, we can easily see that the new mothers participated to this study counterbalance the process by normalization of all changes and difficulties. Despite, researches showed that at the transition to parenthood there is a decline on relationship satisfaction (Ballard, 1996; Belsky & Rovine, 1990; Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Glenn, 1990). Additionally, the effects of being a working mother would not be appear at the beginning of the transition period. There is not a difference in terms of psychological

well-being of new mothers at the beginning of the period of being a parent (Klein, Hyde, Essex, & Clark, 1998). Thereby the results of current study, which showed that mothers ease the process of being a parent while there is still a burden of balancing work and home, may rise the new question how long new mothers will normalize the process. There is also the question; does the normalization or the grandmothers help comfort mothers at the beginning of the transition and how long it takes. To get answer these questions a longitudinal research needs to be done.

The current study reveals how having a child impact both on individual and partners' relationship. Being parent leads personal transformation which is because new parents experiences unique conditions. These unique experiences also lead worries for the well-being of the baby, partners and their relationship (Biehle & Mickelson 2012). In the current study it is shown that having a child increase individuals' sensitivity. The increased level of sensitivity would be the cause of worries of new parents about affectional and financial baby issues and the future of their relationship. However, these worries which might stem from the unfamiliarity of the transition period.

New mothers and fathers would have worries for their relationship satisfaction after being a parent. While the unfamiliarity is a point what might be affect the status of new parents, the expectations need also be discussed to understand the transition to parenthood. The expectations about being a parent have a great influence on the whole process of transition. It is important to head the disparity between the expectations of individuals about being a parent and the role that they actually need to assume off. The violation of expectations which linked with the disparity between the image and the reality leads to dissatisfaction for new parents (Khazan, McHale, & Decourcey, 2008). According to the results of the current study, there is a normalization of how having a child would have an effect on their relationship. The participants have a foresight which leads normalization of changes, caused by the transition, of how their relationship would be affected after being parents. The normalization the

results of the current study revealed mainly serve to decrease the violation of expectations of partners at the transition period, which also leads increase the relationship satisfaction. In the literature discussed before in this article it is more likely to occur the violation of expectations rather than the normalization of the changes. A longitudinal research would lead a way to understand the state or duration of the normalization process Hence, more research is needed to resolve this issue.

5.1. Clinical Implications

Findings of the study reveal that the transition to parenthood is a process that couples would experience an evolution for their relationship. With the arrival of the baby, the parents step out into the challenge to overcome the changes which run upside down the order of the couple. They find themselves in a struggle to adapt the new order which is totally unfamiliar for the new mother and father. They experience that their relationship goes through the transformation from a dyadic relationship to a triadic relationship. According to Houseknect (1988), the transition to parenthood is one of the normative and progressional transition that almost 90% of the couples experience. Dohrenwend and his colleagues (1978) stated that having a baby is ranked as the sixth among 102 stressful life events. It is important to know that stressful life events would hard to express. While working with couples, therapist need to be aware the fact that the couple need to learn how to communicate at the time of a crisis to cope with stressors in their life.

For the new parents while there is a struggle to adapt the new conditions, there is also gainings for them. The transition to parenthood is also a period the social support has a significant impact on partners. The parents who get social support is less likely to show negative parental behaviors toward their child (Güroğlu, 2010). Moreover, the support getting partners from each other has also a vital role for this transition period. They also experience to build bounds with the new person of their

family. The new parents find themselves in an enrichment of their new role given by the baby. In the interviews of this study, the participants reveal mostly positive side of the transition to parenthood. For therapists, it should be noted that subjective experiences would not lead to estimate or predict the others.

The participants reported that they were prepared and aware of the fact that the transition to parenthood will be though for them. It is clear that the participants normalized the process even the worst part of the transition. They are also fine with all the changes and challenges which come with the baby. Furthermore the participants reported that it is their choice not an obligatory situation that the grandmother shares the child care responsibilities with them. We can easily see that there is a successful adaptation to the transition to parenthood. Therapist need to note that cultural factors have a significant effect on how the results would shape. So that estimated factors would be considered in the ecosystem of the participant family.

As a final note, being parent is such a transition that both parts of a relationship should be involved. Being a parent inserts an extended definition for both men and women. In the interviews, even our participants did not perform that, there is a dominance of women on the topic of having baby. Therapists should draw attention that the transition to parenthood by definition would affect on the two sides of the relationship.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

The current study was conducted to indicate the changes occurring after having children. The sample of the study consist of six couples who had their first child and experience the transition to parenthood. The sample size of the study was appropriate to IPA. All of our participants are from İstanbul, Turkey. The homogeneity of the sample is also appropriate for the used method in the current study. Although it is proper for the

method it cannot be said that the sample represent all regions of Turkey. The participants of the study lived apart from their extended family. They all have their first child recently. Similarly they all got grandmothers support to take care of their child. Socioeconomic abilities of the participants do not differ from each other significantly. These factors which are not critical different from each other for our sample would have an effect on results so that that might be better to enrich the sample for the future researches.

Moreover even the sample of the study is appropriate for IPA, there appears a limitation which prevents to reach better understanding for the study. All of the participants of the study are supported by grandmothers to care their child. The sample of the study is a selective sample because people who think it is not necessary to get help from grandmothers would not be volunteer to participate the study.

The focus of the questions of the study is the main changes and challenges at the transition to parenthood from being a couple. Thus the questions of the study are about personal and dyadic experience of the transition instead of triadic relations. This limitation would be a basement for a future research in the topic of psychology.

For our study, the grandmothers' existence for the couple at the transition period is concerned. However the grandmothers are not the only related person when there is a new member of the family for an extended family. It cannot be mentioned the effects of extended family members on the transition. The effects and existence of the other members of an extended family member, like a grandfather who would be volunteer for taking care the baby also, would be conducted as a research in future.

All in all the study might not be a represent of all regions of couples living in Turkey and who had their first child, but it has fertile results to show a path for future researches.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ KLİNİK PSİKOLOJİ YÜKSEK LİSANS

BÖLÜMÜ

Bitirme Tezi- Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu

“ İlk Bebekten Sonra Çift İlişkisindeki Değişim”

Değerli katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Çift ve Aile Terapileri Yüksek Lisans Programı bünyesinde bitirme tezi olarak, Yard. Doc. Yudum Akyıl danışmanlığında psikolog Ceyla Taner tarafından yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı Türkiye’de çocuk sahibi olmanın çift ilişkisine etkisi hakkında detaylı bilgi toplamaktır. Bu form siz araştırmaya davet edilen katılımcımıza detaylı bilgi vermek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Lütfen bu formdaki bilgileri detaylı bir şekilde okuyunuz. Açık olmayan herhangi bir bölüm ya da aklınıza takılan herhangi bir soru olması halinde araştırmayı yürüten kişiden detaylı bilgi talep edebilirsiniz.

Araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak, çalışan ve ilk bebeklerine sahip olmuş çiftler ile görüşmeler yapacağız. Bu kriterlere uygun olmanız sebebi ile araştırmamıza davet edildiniz.

Çalışma işlemleri/ Gönüllülük

Araştırmaya katılmaya karar vermeden önce araştırmanın neden ve nasıl yapılacağını anlamanız çok önemlidir. Araştırma tamamen gönüllülük esasına göre yürütülmekte olup araştırma hakkında bilgi aldıktan sonra katılmayı reddedebilir ya da araştırma sürecinde istediğiniz zaman çekilebilirsiniz. Araştırmaya katılmayı reddetmeniz ya da araştırmadan çekilmeniz halinde herhangi bir ceza ya da elde edilecek herhangi bir yararın kaybedilmesi söz konusu değildir. Katılımı onayladıktan sonra sizinle 2 temel soru etrafında yaklaşık 1-1.5 saat süren bir görüşme yapacağız.

Kişisel Bilgilerim Nasıl Kullanılacak?

Gizlilik

Siz katılımcı çiftlerden sadece deneyimlerinizi, duygu ve düşüncelerinizi paylaşmanız beklenmektedir. Görüşme boyunca açık ve samimi olmanız, araştırmanın verimli olabilmesi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Siz bilgi formunu okuyup onayladıktan sonra çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz “ Çocuk sahibi olmanın çift ilişkisine etkisi” hakkında 1-1,5saat süren bir görüşme yapılacaktır. Görüşme sonrasında yapacağımız değerlendirmelerin eksik olmaması açısından görüşme esnasında izniniz ile not tutulacak ve ses ve video kaydı yapılacaktır. Tutulan kayıtlara sadece araştırmayı yapan kişi ve danışmanı tarafından ulaşılabilecektir, 3. Şahıs ve kurumlarla asla paylaşılmayacaktır. Tüm kayıtlar şifrelenerek korunacaktır. Araştırmadan bitiminde tüm kayıtlar tamamen imha edilecektir. Araştırmada herhangi bir isim ya da özel bilgi birebir asla kullanılmayacak, tüm kimlik bilgileri anonimleştirilerek gizli tutulacaktır. Araştırma sonuçları çalışılması planlanan tez kapsamında değerlendirilecek ve olası herhangi bir başka yerde sunulması ve/veya yayınlanması durumunda tüm kimlik bilgileri gizli tutulacaktır.

Çalışmaya katılmanın olası riskleri nelerdir?

Araştırma boyunca size kendi aileniz ve partneriniz ile birlikte kurduğunuz yeni aileniz ilgili sorular sorulacaktır. Çalışmanın amacı siz katılımcıları yargılamak ya da değerlendirmek değil sadece anlamaktır. Bu anlamda görüşme boyunca sizi eleştiren ya da sorgulayan sorular sorulmayacak ya da yorum yapılmayacaktır. Sorular doğru ya da yanlış cevap beklemeksizin hazırlanmış sorulardır. Sohbet esnasında size ağır ve/ya fazla gelen herhangi bir soru/yorum olursa mutlaka araştırmacıyı durdurmanız ve ihtiyacınızı söylemeniz beklenmektedir.

Çalışmaya katılmanın olası yararları nelerdir?

Araştırmaya katılmanın size hemen dönecek somut bir faydası bulunmamakla beraber, sorulan sorularla birlikte düşünme fırsatı yakalayabileceğiniz bir süreçte kendinize ve ailenize dair farkındalıklar yaşayabileceğiniz düşünülmektedir.

Soru ve Problemlerinizi için;

Araştırma sonunda e-mail adresinizi bırakmanız halinde, araştırma sonunda elde edilen sonuçlar hakkında bir bilgi sizinle paylaşılacaktır.

Araştırmamıza katıldığınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Çalışmaya Katılma Onayı

Bu bilgilendirilmiş onam belgesini okudum ve anladım. İstedğim zaman bu araştırmadan çekilebileceğimi biliyorum Bu araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum ve bu onay belgesini kendi hür irademle imzalıyorum.

	Katılımcı 1	Katılımcı 2	Araştırmacı:
Adı- Soyadı:			
İmza:			
Tarih:			

APPENDIX B

Tables

Table 1. Summary of Demographic Information I

		Age	Education level	Occupation	Married for
Couple 1	Mother 1	35	Bachelor	Bank Employer	7 years
	Father 1	34	PhD	Professional Dancer	
Couple 2	Mother 2	35	Bachelor	Teacher	6 years
	Father 2	36	Master	Information Technology	
Couple 3	Mother 3	38	Bachelor	Executive Assistant	3 years
	Father 3	37	Bachelor	Teacher	
Couple 4	Mother 4	31	Bachelor	Lawyer	5 years
	Father 4	33	Bachelor	Electrical Engineering	
Couple 5	Mother 5	33	Bachelor	Finance	5 years
	Father 5	44	Bachelor	Sales Manager	
Couple 6	Mother 6	33	Bachelor	Electronics and Communication Engineering	2.5 years
	Father 6	36	Bachelor	Electrical And Electronic Engineer	

APPENDIX C

Demographic Information of Participants

Questions for Demographic Information

How old are you?

What is your educational status?

What is your profession?

Are you working at anywhere for the time being? How long did you have an interval after your baby was born?

How long have you been married?

How long did you flirt before marriage?

How old is your baby? What is the gender of it?

In which year of your marriage did you have a baby?

Did you plan to have a baby?

Who is taking care of your baby?

How long has s/he been taking care of your baby?

What are the educational status of your parents?

Do your parents work? What are their professions?

Where are you from?

Are there anything else you would like to add about your family?

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1) First of all, I would like to ask you about your experiences as a parent?

1.a) What changed in your life after you became a parent?

Can you tell us about your daily life before and after you became a parent? At weekdays and at weekends?

What was the most important change for you in these two days you told us?

1.b) How did becoming a parent change you as an individual?

How did your viewpoint on life change?

2) I would like to ask you some questions on the effects of your becoming a parent on your relation? In your opinion, how did becoming a parent affect your relation?

2.a) How was your relation affected in terms of intimacy?

2.a.i.) How did you show your love to each other before your child was born, and how is this now?

2.a.ii) How did you address each other before your child was born, and how is it now?

2.a.iii) How often did you spend time together in your relationship before you had the baby?

What did you do to spend time together?

How often do you spend time after you had your baby?

What are the activities you do together?

2.a.iiii) How did this affect your sexual life?

2.b) How did this affect your relation in terms of duties and responsibilities?

How did you share your duties and responsibilities (especially chores) before you became a parent?

How did you share the chores after you had the baby?

How did you share the caretaking of the baby? Do you have anybody to help you for this?

- 2.c) You mentioned that your mother took care of your baby since s/he was born. What kind of an experience is this for you?
- 2.d) Does your mother's caretaking have any effects on your relation? If yes, how?
- 2.e) How did your mother's caretaking affect your relation in terms of the harmony?
- Did you have arguments before your baby was born?
- On which subject did you have arguments? How did you end these arguments?
- How is the situation about your arguments now?
- How do you cope with these conflicts?
- 3.) What did having a baby bring to your life in positive terms?
- 3.a) In this context, what are your acquisition in your relationship?
- 3.b) What are the acquisitions of your mother's/mother-in-law's caretaking for you, for your relation and for your baby?

Anything you would like to add: