

Resisting commodification? Paternal love and narratives of ambivalent intimate consumerism from Scottish and Romanian fathers / Alexandra Macht

Introduction

This article puts forth the argument that in the wider discourse of the commodification of love (Illouz, 2012), paternal love specifically is distinct from romantic love and can actually resist commodification. In this sense, I argue that both Scottish and Romanian fathers, even if they engage in consumerism, they actually have a non-linear and ambivalent relationship with consumerism. Based on data from 47 qualitative interviews, I present how fathers seem to hold critical and nuanced understanding of commodities in their relationships with their children, where love and intimacy (expressed in time spent with children, being there and having fun and doing activities together) are decisively more valued than material goods. This understanding stems on hand from their traditional identification with the provider's role and therefore with the means of production in the family rather those of consumption which women were associated with (McIvor and Johnston, 2004), but also more directly from the relationships they share with their children, who through their agency can guide their fathers to resist or engage with consumerism. If a traditional type of masculine identity built upon strength and emotional stoicism (Jansz, 2000) is becoming discursively outmoded, contradictorily consumerism continues to reinforce breadwinning practices. However, based on actions taken in relation their children, involved and employed fathers try to reconcile their provider's identity with that of the nurturing or intimate father. This role-duality creates identity tensions, while simultaneously it can be hypothesised that such tensions are helpful, as they provide obstacles to the commodification of their intimate lives (Hochschild, 1993).

This happens in a wider context, wherein parenting is assumed to be appropriated by the consumer market (Afflerback et al, 2014) through the discursive construction and dissemination on the market of the intimate culture of family life (Hochschild, 2003). In relation to this, it has been argued that Western-based values, such as the ideal of the love-based family (Padilla et al., 2007), are distributed discursively across the globe through advertisements, media devices, films, and popular psychological material on parenting, such as books and parenting courses. Yet not enough has been written about father's agency in also resisting and not only passively embracing intimate commodification. The present research tried to fill this gap in knowledge.

But involved Scottish and Romanian fathers reconstruct the intimate father's identity through economic practices only to a limited extent, as they are primarily engaged in negotiating the 'corrupting' influence of capitalism in how they express love to their children. This happens as they are teaching their children that values such as warmth and self-confidence, surpass commodities in the establishment of close bonds. To illustrate how paternal love, unlike romantic love, resists commodification in intimate life, I present some of the findings of my research focused on fatherhood and love in two different cultures. Before I delve into this, I have to outline some conceptual differences and the methodology of the research.

Conceptual clarifications

Involved fathers

Any discussion of the role of the father needs to begin with the delineation between the terms *fathers* (the biological or social parent), *fathering* (the everyday practices surrounding caring for a child and enacted by fathers) and *fatherhood* (the *public meaning of fathering*, the social discourse and cultural beliefs regarding fathers) (Featherstone, 2009; Lamb, 2010). Involved fatherhood is a socio-psychological concept which refers to the father's participation in their children's lives through three characteristics: accessibility (whether physically close or proximate); engagement; responsibility; and the more recently added dimension of 'warmth' (Lamb, 2010). Expanding from this is Esther Dermott's conceptualization of 'intimate fatherhood' (2008), which denotes that fathers do not only perform their role through presence, availability and financial provision, but also through emotional involvement. This emotional involvement is dependent on spending 'quality' time and engaging in physical displays of affection with the child through a variety of caring activities. Esther Dermott conceptualizes intimate fathers as fathers who are focused on preserving the quality of the emotional relationship they share with their children and in order to do so, they emphasize positive displays of affection; these help them construct close and long-lasting bonds with their children.

Based on this conceptualization, the present research looked at a specific sample of fathers, who are present, engaged and available in their children's lives, even if they are not necessarily their biological fathers or resident, but are nonetheless reconstructing intimate fathering. Adding to this type of involvement is the analysis of fathers' emotionality, by which I mean 'ways of doing emotions', of expressing their emotions to others (Holmes, 2010). The premise is that the reflexive ways in which men construct their masculine identities are deeply rooted in emotions. For some men, fatherhood continues to be a significant life-transition (Eggebeen and Knoester, 2001), but rather than seeing fatherhood as a new identity, my understanding is that masculine definitions continue to be essential to how men build their father's role. For the purpose of this study I looked at how love helped shape the social construction of the intimate fathering role in how Scottish and Romanian fathers resisted commodification of intimate life. According to Arlie Hochschild (1993) this term defines the steady creation of capital into new areas of family life, previously conceived of as 'private', while consumerism is the act of purchasing a good, which in its basic form is intended for expanse (Apadurai, 2005). If fathers are commodified through selling their work on the capitalist market to support their families, in their intimate lives as they reproduce the intimate father role, they actively resist a focus on purchased goods as a substitute for loving their children.

Paternal love

Drawing from the aesthetic theory of emotions postulated by Ian Burkitt (2014), I understand love to be a complex emotion, which encompasses more than just affection. It is rather an embodied complex of feelings, functioning both at a physiological level and at the level of language, and shaped within the exchanges that two share in a relationship; thus love rather than being a unidimensional strictly positive emotion, it actually is a *complex* of emotions, involving distinct feelings such as worry, joy and it is also circumscribed by power. As such, I considered father's love not as an inherent, 'natural' emotion, but as a socially-created one. One surprising aspect, is that there are almost no sociological studies on paternal love, even if love forms the basis of definitions of caring masculinities (Elliott, 2015). And yet paternal love is significant because it is different from romantic love in that it is normatively non-sexual, enshrouded as it is in the 'incest taboo' (Gabb, 2013), but similar in that it is permeated by power. Both fatherhood and love as dynamic social constructs, share in common the

fact that they undergo changes across cultures, time and in how social actors interpret and practice them in everyday lives.

Masculine emotionality

Emotions matter in an analysis of fatherhood, as they represent core aspects of how gendered relationships are lived (Hochschild and Machung, 1990). They also constitute a primary means to understand how inequalities are not only reproduced, as both affective practice and social practice feed into social actors' personal biographies. This is where seeing the social landscape through an aesthetic theory of emotion (Burkitt, 2014) helps, as a way of interpreting men's emotionality, and consider their identity as fathers to be a deeply relational creation. In parallel to this it has been argued that the construction of the masculine self as a public identity is constantly subjected to the changing processes of modernization (LaRossa, 1997) and that masculinity is a historically mutable construct, which can be mobilized as an economic resource in the patriarchal gender order (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). It is difficult to construct a study looking at men's normative and positive experiences, when men continue to be the majority of perpetrators of violence in the world (Hearn, 2013; Hearn and Šmidova, 2015). However, one of the reasons for exploring father's emotionality, particularly in what is assumed to be a responsible and emotional role, might help to understand how European men relate to others and form intimate relationships, experiences which position them as enmeshed within deeply relational contexts rather than isolated from them (Chand, 2016; Young, 2007; Galasinski, 2004; Ranson, 2010; 2015). For some men, consumption in a capitalist society can be linked with the formation of one's own masculine identity, and certain types of commodified identities can be inhabited at the right price (Illouz, 2012). But as men become fathers they also inhabit an identity-construction that is different from their provider's (and commodified) role. This intimate identity is centred on valuing intimate connections with their children, their partners and other family members. One of the main findings of the study is that fathers have a dual understanding of their emotional identity, where they balance between stoic providing with intimate nurturing. This has come out of a sample of men from two different cultural contexts, the Scottish and the Romanian family context.

Comparing Romanian and Scottish fathers

It is hard to dispute that economy and culture are not intertwined in the everyday practices of social agents and in the creation of intimacy between family members. Material goods have different discursive meanings according to the values of each cultural group and to the meanings attributed by the network of social relations in their environment. Romanian and Scottish families live within different economic systems, even if under the aegis of an uncertain European market. The economic system in Scotland is a mixture of social and free-market strategies (Hood et al., 2003), while Romanian continues to face a slow transition from a shifting post-communist economy to a free-market one, boosted by the growth initiatives of the European Union (Raiu, 2011; Popescu, 2014). The major recent legislative and political shifts that structured the lives of people in both of these countries have been: Romania's entry in 2007 into the European Union (Beciu, 2009) and the 2012 Welfare Reform Act in Britain¹ which has increased austerity measures across the UK, thus affecting Scotland. In Scotland, the Children Act (1995) and other social policies of early intervention and child protection, organise the intrusion of state initiatives into personal lives. While in Romania the reformation of the social system spurred by EU incentives, has attempted some local projects (UNICEF Romania²; The

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/5/contents/enacted>

² <https://www.unicef.org/romania/overview.html>

Romanian Ministry of Work³), and yet state-intervention in family life is generally minimal and is actively resisted. This is due to a generalized mistrust in the competencies of the government and a belief in the self-governing abilities of parents, considered responsible for protecting the privacy of family life (although, even if some attitudes are changing in the wake of deprivatization - see Cojocaru and Cojocaru, 2011).

I have chosen to focus on a sample of fathers from these two populations because I wanted to a) compare the discourse of father's love in a predominantly traditional, heteronormative Romanian social environment (Oprica, 2008) with one where it is combined with the discourse of gender equality, such as in the Scottish social environment (Breitenbach, 2006; Jyrkinen and McKie, 2012) and search if this influenced men's assimilation of intimate fathering; b) to respect what cultural studies on love (Padilla et al., 2007) and fatherhood (Inhorn et al., 2014) have previously discussed, that emotionality should not be homogenized, but that attention needs to be given to cultural contexts and their customs, habits, traditions and social norms, seeing as there might be differences between what is considered the Western and Eastern part of Europe in the ways in which men express their emotions; and c) in order to trace the spread of emotional capitalism and the intimate father discourse I wanted to keep the study under a European umbrella, in particular as the concept of intimate fatherhood evolved from a piece of research done on a British population (Dermott, 2008).

Methodology

Recruitment and Sample

The findings presented here are based on a data collected between December 2014 and July 2015, as part of my ESRC-funded doctoral research. I aimed to recruit an equivalent number of participants from each cultures, by employing snowball sampling, were participants were recruited randomly through personal contacts (Mason, 2002). When I've exhausted the personal contacts, I supplemented the numbers of participants by employing purposive sampling in order to gather more Scottish participants. The final sample comprised of 47 participants, out of which 33 were married/co-partnered fathers and the rest were single, separated or divorced. Out of these 19 resided in Bucharest and 25 of them resided in Edinburgh, with one participant residing in Glasgow. One Romanian father had double-residency, commuting for work between Bucharest and Edinburgh, and one Scottish father in a similar situation, lived in Edinburgh and travelled to London for work. Also, 46 of the fathers were biological and one Romanian resident father was adoptive. The age range of the fathers was between 28 and 50 years in Romania. The age range and gender of children were between three weeks and 17 years in both countries. Out of a total of 77 children there were 38 girls and 39 boys and there were 41 fathers with one or two children, while only six fathers had three or more children.

To select participants from the Scottish and Romanian populations, I decided to go by 'living and working' in a place in Scotland and in Romania, and decided to recruit from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Bucharest as some of the most populated locations. Father's level of 'involvement' was determined by asking them to take part directly in the study. This was as well supplemented by the recommendations of an intermediate person who helped me reach the fathers in the snowball sampling stage, to check through social confirmation father's involvement. The usual recommendations were: "X is great with his children" or "He's really hands-on, you should interview him". However, father's involvement was also checked

³ <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/>

according to the usual recruitment categories found in previous literature: numbers of hours worked, employment and residency status (Lamb, 2010), even if these details were used contextually, as the main focus on the analysis was their emotional discourses from the interviews. This recruitment strategy might have the downside that by relying on a third party assurances that a father is involved, I might have introduced the bias that fathers are often lauded for quite limited contributions to their children's care. However, this strategy is still preferred than recruiting fathers through maternal gatekeeping, which previous studies on fatherhood have identified as problematic (Lamb 2010; Doucet, 2006; Dermott, 2008). The choice to include men from different backgrounds and occupations was made because I was interested in the accounts of a diversity of involved fathers, not just a specific group, and was apprehensive that men from the same class, culture and profession might describe love in a uni-dimensional way. As such a heterogeneous sample is suitable to a cultural comparison.

Data Analysis

The methodological framework used to design the research was a socio-constructionist one, emphasizing the importance of language in producing the social reality of individuals, and thereby focused on the creation of social actors' emotional experiences through how they communicate and relate to each other (Burkitt, 2014). The process of data collection and analysis was designed according to a grounded analysis framework (Charmaz, 2013), and discussed at length elsewhere (Macht, 2018). In spite of its useful inductive approach which allowed me to stay close to the participants' data, there were some obstacles in achieving such an analysis, due to a pre-existing way of thinking about my data influenced by my readings and an ongoing reflexive analysis. However, by coding by paragraphs rather than line-by-line, I was able to analytically move through the data in a timely manner. Grounded theory was useful because descriptions of the experience of love were anchored in direct N-vivo codes which shaped the analytical framework. The interview guide began with a focus on their children, as asking fathers initially about their role provoked silences. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and the material was anonymized. The transcripts were printed, organised according to culture and class, and read several times to become familiar with the data. Because the data collected from Romanian participants was in the Romanian language, so as to save time, only the relevant themes and quotes were translated into English. Among the themes which appeared the most often occurring ones were: love is an activity/a verb, love requires emotion work, love is intermingled with power, the unconditionality of love for the child and the conditionality of love for other close family members, and the cultural distinction between warmth and confidence. Themes were then re-checked alongside other relevant data extracts, in the process of constructing arguments. The analysis was done firstly, by hand, using pen and paper so as to familiarize myself with the data, and secondly by uploading the transcripts into the program NVivo, to query the data, conduct word searches and map out associations between themes.

Findings

With a heterogenous sample the findings which have emerged are complex and multifaceted. A number of tensions and ambivalences were identified in fathers' narratives. In relation to this are the themes of the interviews contained in the analytical category 'providing for their children'. Examples of described activities were buying their children food and clothes, keeping them warm, taking them to the doctors if sick, planning family holidays, buying food and toys, signing their children up for sport and taking them to after-school leisure activities,

such as birthday parties and contests, picking them up from school and putting them to bed. According to almost all Scottish and Romanian fathers, love was a form of doing, of caring for their children but not completely in strictly material terms. The goods purchased with their commodified labour were not interpreted as such in their intimate role. If at times, there were some mentions in father narratives that fulfilling the responsibility of care was connected to a moral duty, as the essential characteristics of being a 'good man' and especially a 'good father' (Henwood and Procter, 2003), this was met with another overarching theme in connection to their roles as intimate fathers, that of replacing the narrative of responsibility with that of love, which saw almost all participants in the study saying that they provided not because they had to, but because they wanted to and because they loved their family. To organise the material, I aim to focus on the following categories: shifting roles emotionally, the failure to resist consuming, the emotional value of gift-giving and the distinctions between confidence and warmth in resisting commodification.

Shifting between roles emotionally

To understand how providing was connected to father's emotions, I should first clarify what I mean through a shift between stoicism and intimacy between the father's roles. I shall illustrate with a quote from the interviews with Nicholas and Daniel as they are representative of the many instances of shifting found in fathers' narratives across cultures. As a Scottish, resident father, Nicholas worked in and described the emotional tension of speaking about his love for his daughter in his self-described male-dominated workplace:

I love her hugely, but I would be sarcastic about it (...) I work in an entire male industry (...) so you have to be sarcastic "How's your daughter?" "She's alright but she's very selfish" I would say, hahaha (...) You still have to hide. You wouldn't gush. It's different in the way women and men describe their children. You have to recognize that while she is the most amazing thing in your life, she's not the most amazing thing in everybody else's lives and if you want to talk about her, you have to temperate it with humour. It shows a weakness to be honest (...) if you can laugh and (...) come up with some way of describing your relationship with your child which was both witty and provided an insight - that's how men will discuss their children - then you will be rewarded for that by people going "Oh yeah, that was funny! I see what you mean" (...) Whereas if you would have said "She's the most beautiful thing in the world! Last night I think she said 'doggy' for the first time" they'd go "Hey, yeah, whatever mate". There is a complex code.

The complex code Nicholas refers to is the 'guy code', described by Michael Kimmel as "(...) a collection of attitudes, values and traits that together composes what it means to be a man" (p.45, 2009). The guy code is believed to be the relational basis upon which men interact with other men and is guided primarily by the emotional disconnection from what might be considered 'feminine' emotions. When Nicholas's love for his daughter does not correspond with the feeling rules imposed by the guy code, he resorts to sarcasm as a way of doing emotion work to match the standards of detachment required by his male co-workers. Therefore, Nicholas shifts from love to stoicism in his switch from intimate fathering at home to the breadwinner role at work. By contrast, Daniel a Romanian resident father

who works as a creative manager in a company, describes what paternal love means to him by referring to his son welcoming him home on arrival from work:

I don't even know how to express it, it's something I feel for him [sighs] simply put I just can't wait to see him, even if he's angry. When I come home from work I never know if he's angry or happy, if he wants to hug me or he's been upset with his mom, but I just can't wait to come home and see him. And yeah it really charges me up for the next day.

Daniel describes here how spending time at home with his son can re-energize him and prepare him for work, as he shifts emotionally in the transition from work to home, from stoicism to love. Other similar patterns have emerged from the narratives in relation to making changes at work (with some giving up extensive work hours to be more present and a few taking on more hours at work to provide for the growing family). Whatever the strategies adopted, emotional shifts were taking place which spurred men to change their relationship to breadwinning. In this context struggling to become an intimate father was linked to the justification and expression of paternal love. An emotionally-mediated continuum between the spheres of the public and private emerged within which resistances could be enacted; this provides a useful backdrop to introduce the next theme.

The emotional value of gift-giving

Paternal love is supported only to a certain extent by consumption; it actually provide the emotional support to resist commodification. For many Scottish fathers, giving gifts was tied in with deeply emotional moments in which fathers could express love. For Tim, a non-resident father, offering his son a new PlayStation carried the symbolic 'exchange value' (Baudrillard, 1998) of shared time playing together in the future:

I remember the day I got him a PS4 [Playstation 4] the newest one out, and I think he'd only seen it and he had a Playstation 3, but I'd sold it and got him a PS4. And the first thing he noticed was "Dad where's my Playstation? Where is it gone?" "Look over there" and he was like "What's it doing over there?" and I was like "Nah, nah, look in the box" and he sat there and saw a PS4 and it was just like an instant "Ahhhhhhh!" [makes excited expression] and it was like unwrapping Christmas presents. He ran and he grabbed me and was "Oh daddy I love you so, so much! Can we play the Playstation, daddy?"

Bogdan, a Romanian and resident father, describes as well how purchasing his son a toy that he desires, involves patience and negotiation. This communicative process exceeds the act of purchasing and having the financial ability to immediately fulfil a wish, and expands into valuing the emotional quality of his relationship to his son:

(...) it matters a lot if he says to me „Look dad I would like to have something that another child has, please can you help me?" When he tells me this, I need to start taking action. Maybe not immediately, but as we go along, in time, I would like to solve them [his son's wishes] all. And this is why I said I want it to be a friendship, not beyond the father-son relationship of course. Because then I think you perceive love

differently.

This seems to fall in line with what David Cheal wrote, that “a gift is a ritual offering that is a sign of involvement and connectedness to another” (1987, p.152), and therefore a gift becomes more than a material object. In addition, Florin, another Romanian, resident father reveals that he is teaching his daughter through gift-giving, how to share:

I give her various gifts, like a little Kinder egg, but these are usually the things she asks me to bring her, and so I bring them to her. We share them together. I tend to eat more, she’s grabbing a bite, and she’s learned that - which surprises me, I wasn’t expecting it - she gives me more than she keeps for herself which is good.

These are just some of many examples described in the narratives. Offering gifts seems gave most fathers the opportunity to express their love and to socialize their children according to specific cultural values. It has been argued that mothers engage in consumption rituals which reflect ‘nesting’ and ‘giving’ in relationships with their children, and that there are symbolic meanings that mothers associate with these consumption rituals, such as a sense of relational continuity (Afflerback et al., 2014), but this can be seen in fathers’ accounts as well.

Earning a higher income is not necessarily reflected in how materially generous fathers can be with their children, but in what they symbolically associate with the gift-giving act. For example, Lewis, a Scottish, resident, was keen to emphasize that his parental responsibilities to his daughter included setting up a trust fund and tending to her future financial stability. He situates gift-giving in relation to transmitting to his daughter the value of appreciating material goods:

It’s nice to see when she actually takes time and appreciates things, yeah...I think if she’s really happy about something, she’s really good about saying “Please” or “Thank you”. It was her birthday last week (...) but she’d open loads of her present and stuff and she just turned around at us and said “Thank you, mummy! Thank you, daddy!”. Things like that mean a lot, that she’s appreciative of stuff. That’s been a core value that I had to appreciate things, and when I see that in her it’s really not exactly gratifying, but also reassuring as well. That all those values are persistent and that she carries these values, that will help her through her life.

Lewis explains that the immaterial value of gratefulness, that he is trying to teach her in the act of gift-giving, is what matters above the material aspect of the commodity itself. However, in a capitalist system, fathers could then transfer to their children, through gifts, certain expectations regarding wealth and worth (Pugh, 2009).

And yet not all fathers described gift-giving as a successful endeavour, particularly as their provider’s role was diminishing in the family. Among Romanian fathers, a couple of separated fathers, such as Sergiu describe how living up to the role of the provider has ‘back-fired’, in the sense that it created expectations for material provision which he couldn’t fulfil anymore due to a shift in employment after his relationship with his wife ended:

I realize I can’t love like a mother. But the fact remains that I have tried all the time to make a lot of money to send it to them. Even now I need to give them three quarters of my income.

What I did most of the time is ask for extra-hours at work, to work as much as I can and give them more. I don't know if this means love. Maybe it means duty. But I feel that this is what I should do, because they are my children (...) My daughter had a reaction that completely shocked me. The last time I visited them (...) I had a piece of luggage and she was waiting for me at the station "Uhm you only brought one piece of luggage?", "Well, was I supposed to bring you 2 pieces of luggage with gifts?" But she's a child, she's just 11 years old. I try not to judge her, but that was the way she reacted.

For Sergiu, resisting commodification as he was shifting from providing to intimacy incurred a cost, that of disappointing his daughter's material expectations. His separation from his wife, did not produce a simultaneous change in the habit of mediating his relationship with his daughter through goods, a thing he experienced on an emotional level as his provider's role was challenged, which leads me to the failure to resist which emerged from some interviews.

Failing to resist

A few fathers also mentioned how a resistance to commodification failed. As such a veiled feeling of guilt had to be emotionally managed, as Ian, a Scottish resident father of two children exemplifies:

I would always rationally tell myself "Kids are just happy spending time with their parents. It doesn't really matter where". Annabel is just happy going to the shops with me, doing boring mundane stuff. They don't really care about going to Disney world or not - other than the fact that they heard their friends talking about it. Ultimately, they just want to spend time with their mum and dad, yet [his emphasis] we still do it [laughs] You know, we feel we should do it [buying them things] (...) it's definitely an expression of love that way. Yeah, it's almost a compensation culture.

Ian's tone is not one of optimistic adherence to consumption, but of defeated acknowledgement. However, he tries to link buying his children things to love because of the 'compensation' of not being able to trade-off as much from providing with more emotional involvement at home. His experiences echoes to a small extent what Rosalind Carr (2008) referred to as fears about the corrupting commercial nature of capitalism were prevalent in Scotland ever since the 18th century. Scottish men's construction of a specific type of identity – martial masculinity – relied upon virtuous, rational and respectable ideals of conduct, which were used against the corrupting character of capitalism. It was believed that the constant quest for the acquisition of wealth had little to do with the sanctifying power of bravery in front of death and danger, defending the nation and keeping frugal in times of war. Men's purchase power gained through work was filtered through the virtuous beliefs of providing for the family, which was done mostly in the interest of their offspring; or briefly, what gave providing its virtue and value was love.

However, not all fathers felt guilt, some felt pleasure in providing. For Liviu [Romanian, WC, resident] the money he earns from his salary is negotiated with his wife and specifically spent on his children, whom he finds hard to refuse:

Ultimately you do it [providing] for them. A very good portion of my salary goes to them and you don't sit and think „Oh wow, how much am I spending?”. Just like my wife sometimes says „Why have you bought this and that?”. You get them things. I feel like I can't say ‚No' to them, no matter how much things cost. My wife sometimes intervenes and says „Why did you get two of these, when we only need one?”. But I don't mind. „Here, take” and I can't say No to them [laughter] I want to do a lot of things for them, yes.

Confidence (încredere) and warmth

If previously I focused on certain similarities between themes, now I would like to discuss the cultural differences which emerged, in how fathers prioritized love in resisting commodification. Involved fathers' self-evaluations of loving their children were perceived as having some weight in how children then extended this love into their wider social environment, which went beyond consumption and material practices. Fathers considered the expressions of their love in both direct ways (such as kissing, cuddling, and talking to them) and indirect ways (such as offering models of affectionate conduct by first displaying it to their partners in front of their children). The difference was that some Romanian fathers said that loving their children meant bestowing them with the confidence to do things (încredere in sine) and to be bold (încrezător/toare). While some Scottish fathers believed that they were teaching their children to show affection, warmth to other people, both inside and outside their family group. As Ray [Scottish, WC, resident] says 'I hope what I'm doing is teaching him everything in life, how to approach everything and everybody'. Ben, a Scottish resident, a father of five, gives such an example:

I was actually in my daughter's school the other day [...] and I could see my daughter playing with her friends and then the teacher came in. He is a really nice guy, and the moment the teacher arrived, she ran up and gave the teacher a hug. And I said to the teacher 'It's fine to hug my daughter 'cause I know there is a lot of nonsense out there about that' [...] I think love for her is something that is safe and an empowering feeling [...] The love she has for her family is obviously very intense and focused but she recognizes also that you can have relationships that [are] based on love in a different way (...) on trust and understanding, recognition and empathy and you can have these in a teacher and student relationship too you know, in a primary school [...] I think that's a very important gift to give your children and it's kind of a side product from just doing what you do naturally: to love them, make them feel secure and look after their needs and respond to them. I was quite impressed by the way she was just openly affectionate, but in a very appropriate way.

Some Scottish fathers believed that expressing love to their children, encouraged their children to be more emotionally open and friendlier in their social environment. They argued that by instilling in their children, feelings of protection and comfort in the home, their children would eventually extend their affection to other people in their wider social circle, passing on the emotional resources received in the family, as Thomas describes:

(...) by instilling a sense of respect and care and warmth, for instance you know. Say he has to go to bed then (...) "How can that happen so that he's ok with?". Whether this is about his favourite blanket or whether it's about his toy or whether this is about making sure that there are activities that he likes to happen before he goes to bed (...) So it's more like how can we get there in a negotiated caring way?

The close-knit, sense of 'cosiness' that most Scottish fathers described in their families, stood according to them in contrast to Scottish cultural norms for emotions, often referred to as 'repressed', 'dour' and 'disciplined'. In comparison, specifically five Romanian fathers answered that they believed their love would help their children gain confidence to do things in life. The remaining fathers explained the idea of confidence in connection to the Romanian verb 'a se descurca' or 'to find one's way around'. One of the strategies through which Romanian fathers could bestow confidence was through being there for their children, and setting a positive example as Ion elaborates upon:

First of all it gives him more confidence in himself. We are the ones who have to give him enough confidence so he can do things, and if he has confidence in himself he will experiment in life. If he doesn't have that, he will be like a parrot or I don't what - there are people like this. My philosophy in life is that you have to be there so he can gain confidence in himself, in what he thinks, in what he says, in what he does. So he can begin to grow into an adult.

Therefore, the family's collective identity appeared as more important than just that of the father's in the transmission of love as an emotional resource which might resist commodification. Another strategy of love instilling was through communication, by modelling their own confident behaviour to them in social circumstances, as Ciprian exemplifies:

They now have confidence, and I really like the trust they put in us. I hope the model that they see in their parents will help them – you know, the way we relate to each other, and to them - and to apply this in society, what they see and what they learn. Some things they don't learn from us, but they come home with them from the kindergarten, so from outside, and then we try to teach them how to react, what to do, in a fair way, or as good as can be for them and for the others. I can't say to them „It doesn't matter what the other person is doing. You can do whatever you want" but „Ok, let's see what someone else is doing, what the problem is, what happened, and solve it".

Ciprian blends a collective and inter-related account of 'we' (as parents) in relation to his children, with a conventional masculine focus on 'problem-solving'. In this case it is the model set by the

couples' own emotional exchanges deemed to be more important in guiding their children's emotionality, rather than just the father's emotional repertoire. To conclude, why would Romanian fathers value confidence and Scottish fathers value warmth as forms of resistance? One potential explanation could be that the Romanian fathers I have spoken to, were raising their children to navigate the rather new, competitive capitalist landscape by instilling them the boldness to tackle socio-economic challenges in life. While Scottish fathers, even if they do so as well, they seem to emphasize primarily the transmission of social capital which expands their children's range of social relationships. Through this it could be that fathers are securing for their children an advantageous class positioning through "the hereditary character of monopolized chances and of social prestige" (Elias, 1939/2000, p.445). However, it's important to underline that father's beliefs were not all uniform, due to the heterogenous composition of the sample, and I have shown were there were emotional resistances there were also failures to resist engaging in consumption.

Discussion

In this article I have argued that paternal love is a distinct form of love from the general discourse of romantic love, which can resist commodification. In spite of the spread of discourses of 'nurturing' or 'intimate' fathering, for the majority of men in the world, the breadwinner role continues to be the main contribution of their caregiving. It has been previously stated that such an image is replaced by expectations of displays of caring masculinity (Elliott, 2015), which for the countries in the Global North, are aligned to a progressive idea of modern manhood. I argue that in the spread of the discourse of intimate fathering, the intimate father's role in relation to love is interpreted and adopted in different ways. As I have shown in both the Scottish and the Romanian culture this discourse was met with an emotional ambivalence, as they shifted from stoicism to intimacy, which paradoxically helps fathers resist commodification. In this sense men are not either intimate fathers or solely providers, they switch between these two roles of providing and nurturing, in flexible ways according to their social context. Eva Illouz (2012) asserts that wider aspects of globalization have changed how we experience and construct romantic love in postmodern times. In her view romantic love is constructed as a commodity, bought and sold on the global market, as economic arrangements construct certain ways of being and of feeling. As such, love is used as a stable resource in the construction of the 'good' self. However, even if this might be the case, a myopic focus on romantic love disregards that other types of love might actually resist commodification.

In this sense, the findings of this research seem to build upon Eva Illouz's argument that romantic love is commodified, but it develops a new perspective through a very particular relationship focus. Illouz's discussion focuses on the workplace and romantic/sexual relationships which are a very different type of relationship compared to fathering. If it is true that roles and identities are increasingly commodified, then parental love falls more in line with Hochschild's notion of experiences which resist and elude commodification. Therefore, the research does provide some support for the fact that arguments about the commodification of love, need rethinking if they are to be applied to paternal love and fathering in different cultural contexts. Cultural and local variations are useful in that they show different strategies to oppose the global capitalist commodification of intimate life (Apadurai, 2005). While some Romanian fathers might have a higher margin for enthusiastically adopting' capitalism, as it is a new and progressive economic form, they paradoxically have the advantage that by comparison with the 'old' communist regime they can be especially reflective about it. On the other hand, Scottish fathers do not have a 'lived' term of comparison, and in this respect they might find critical resistance more difficult.

One shortcoming of the study is that the children and the partners of the involved fathers were not also interviewed. This would have provided different insights into the social construction of father's love, and would have checked the fathers' narratives, especially since it has been shown that fathers report more closeness than children do (Waller, 2002) and that they tend to over-report their engagement in domestic work (Baxter and Hewitt, 2008). It needs to be mentioned that this research takes simply one of the many views in which fatherhood can be researched. In the wider population, not all men are fathers, and not all fathers are involved. In addition, more research is needed to capture the connection between mothering and fathering in relation to how processes of commodification broadly affect family relationships. If Western motherhood has been recently examined in its reproduction of consumption as a practice of love (Jennings and Brace-Govan, 2014) then understanding Scottish and Romanian fathers' love as a resistance to commodification, might provide a useful analytical counterpoint to this trend.

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