

Fathers in Czech families and households with a focus on caring fathers

Abstract

The male role in the family and household has undergone a long evolution, accompanied by a number of changes in its status, until today, when we are faced with the requirement to exercise active fatherhood. A history of fatherhood is therefore included, highlighting the most important milestones in the development of the father's role - from the time when the only function of the male in the animal kingdom was reproductive, through patriarchal fathers, to the demand for equal involvement of men and women in childcare and the home, which is linked to caring, active or new fatherhood. Alongside this, relevant sociological research is presented that situates this topic within the societal issue of gender equality. Its importance is also discussed in the field of family policy, with the main concern being the equal distribution of unpaid work and the reconciliation of family and working life for both sexes. The family policy instruments that aim to achieve this are thus presented. One of these is parental leave, which was made available to both parents in 2001. Efforts to increase men's involvement in childcare through parental leave were supported in 2019 by a directive of the European Parliament and the Council, which mandated the introduction of a non-transferable part of parental leave. The analytical chapter therefore examines the characteristics of men who take parental leave in the Czech Republic. Subsequently, the thesis focuses on men's real involvement in domestic work and childcare, which is compared with that of women. Statements on the possible combination of work and family and attitudinal questions on gender roles are also observed. In addition to support for finding a balance between family and work life, the psychological importance of the child's relationship with both parents is also highlighted. In the context of the long-term high level of divorce in the Czech Republic, the increasing fragility of partner relationships and the persistent entrusting of children to the exclusive care of the mother in the event of the breakdown of a partnership, this is a topical issue that is alluding to the trend of active fatherhood. For this reason, part of the thesis is also devoted to single-parent families, especially divorced fathers who are caring for a child. The attitudes of Czech society towards children's needs and divorce are also analysed.

Keywords: fatherhood, development of the paternal role, parental leave, caring fathers, reconciliation of family and work life, single-parent family, post-divorce care

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