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Diplomová práce/ Diploma Thesis:

‘New Fathers‘ and Shared Parenting

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila k tomu pouze uvedených pramenů a literatury.

I declare that this thesis is my own work. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references given.

Julie Dlasková

Abstract

This thesis examines the responsibilities and roles of fathers who practise a shared care arrangement in order to get a better understanding of how traditionally perceived women's and men's tasks are divided between the father and the mother after separation. Special emphasis is given to gender equality in responsibilities and roles traditionally ascribed to women and men, to decide in which aspects, fathers who practice shared care can be seen as 'new fathers'. Previous research projects on fatherhood have indicated that in two-parent families it is typically the mother who takes the major responsibility for private sphere duties such as nurturing or domestic labour, while the father's role lies in providing and financial support (Cohen 1993) (Ranson 2001) (Segal 1990). For this reason the actual existence of the 'new father' in society has been doubted.

In-depth interviews conducted in New Zealand with fathers who were in a shared care situation showed that their responsibilities and roles changed after separation and became equalized between both parents. New circumstances, a gender equal attitude and a wish to be a part of the children's lives made the fathers become responsible for nurturing aspects of parenting and day-to-day care. This thesis suggests that study of 'non-traditional' family arrangements where 'conditions' have changed challenge the current scepticism of the 'new father' and brings new perspectives to the discussion about changes in gender division of roles and responsibilities within the family.

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1. Introduction

The past three decades have shown an increasing interest in new forms and aspects of fatherhood. A number of scholars have attempted to describe and explain fathers' changing roles and responsibilities within families and put these changes into both social and historical context. Not surprisingly, a limited consensus about any of the topics relating to fatherhood has been reached among scholars. We can see theories describing and reflecting the same situations but interpreting them in contradictory ways.

Biological determinists, for example, have warned the public against changing the traditional division of roles between men and women (fathers and mothers). According to them the biological make up of men and women explains their different behaviour and, consequently, the different roles they play within a society. They consider the differentiation of roles within a family to be natural and at the same time efficient for society (Blankenhorn 1995). The biological explanation suggests mothers are naturally expected to nurture their children while fathers are supposed to provide and protect them. The current family is believed to be in crisis by the biological determinists as fathers and mothers do not keep their natural responsibilities but are required to play the roles of one another.

Feminist scholars have also noticed the changing roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and comment on the traditional division of labour (Oakley 1997). But, in contrast to the biological determinists, their advice is to encourage flexibility in role division and thus enable equal, free access to both the public and private spheres, for both women and men. Traditional division of roles, according to feminists, is not perceived 'healthy and natural' but rather a system preventing free choice and free access to the private or public spheres.

Feminists and biological determinists will almost certainly never agree on interpretation of family changes. Their attitudes arise from different, almost conflicting beliefs which results in a different understanding and evaluation of the current family situation. If we draw a scale reflecting theories about fatherhood, fathers' roles and responsibilities, radical feminism and biological determinism would most likely be at opposite ends. However there would also be a number of theories, debates and

movements in between. Though these theories can be distinguished by their variety in themes and conclusions, all of them have one thing in common. All of these theories acknowledge that “some recognisable” changes in the father’s performance has occurred within the last century and are still ongoing. These changes are usually described by the changing roles of fathers (e.g modern fathers are seen as being more involved in domestic labour than fathers from previous generations) and changing responsibilities (e.g. providing vs. nurturing) and characterised by deflection from traditional arrangements in the division of labour.

My thesis examines one of the currently most discussed topics about fatherhood – the theory of the ‘new father’ and touches the underlying question, whether a ‘new father’ is only a theoretical concept, an ‘ideal’ that does not, in reality, exist in the current society or whether ‘new fathers’ are tangible entities realised in today’s society.

The theory of the ‘new father’ is one of those topics broadly discussed by scholars and the existence of ‘new fathers’ is even taken for granted by some of them. The ‘new father’ is usually defined by a greater involvement in the private sphere, which translates to taking care of children and participating in housework. However the extent of involvement the father has to take to become a ‘new father’ has not been agreed upon but certainly discussed. For instance, Hoffman (1999) suggests that ‘new fathers’ exist by claiming that “[...] if you add up all time spent with children, all time spent on unpaid work and all time at work, the total is 13.5 hours a day for women and 13.2 for men.[...] So it’s still not equal, but it’s getting better”. McMahon (1999b) argues that it is not the amount of housework that makes fathers involved but the amount of responsibilities he takes at home. Consequently he proves that mothers have significantly more responsibilities within the home. In fact, the existence of ‘new fathers’ has often been doubted by scholars.

In my thesis, I will present the debate with emphasis on research projects that have dealt with the existence of the ‘new father’. I will look closely at a group of fathers among which ‘new fathers’ should logically exist - fathers who have their children in a shared custody arrangement, in other words fathers who have freely chosen to look after their children on day-to-day basis. I will present an analysis of in-depth interviews I conducted in New Zealand with fathers who experienced shared parenting arrangements.

I will show how this group of fathers deal with their family and work duties in order to get a closer understanding of whether and, if so, in which aspects we can distinguish them as 'new fathers'. Because of the limited research sample size (8 in-depth interviews) the ambition of this research was not to prove or disprove existence of 'new fathers' in this society but to point out the possibility that the study of new, non-traditional forms of fatherhood, can bring about new and important perspectives to the discussion of fatherhood. I will present research on how responsibilities are divided between parents who practice shared care arrangement and what factors influence this division.

2. The New Father

The term 'new father' usually appears in the current literature in two different contexts and is discussed from two different perspectives. The first perspective views the 'new father' as a theoretical concept (ideology) indicating changes in the fathers' roles within a family. These changes are typically represented by a shift from traditional breadwinning to a care-giving role and by a greater involvement in childcare and domestic labour. 'New father' (involved in nurturing and private sphere) is presented in opposition to the traditional father who is the breadwinner and provider. For example McMahan (1999b) characterises a context in which the 'new father' is discussed in the following words: "[...] this term is commonly used in popular accounts to label fathers who are intimately involved in day-to-day care activities with their children. I will use it as a shorthand term for the figure constructed in discourses which speak about men's greater involvement in fatherhood and childcare" (p. 117). The second perspective takes the 'new father' under examination with an ambition to prove or disprove 'his' existence in society and enclose changing roles within a family with emphasis on equality of responsibilities, providing and nurturing roles or time spent on domestic labour within a family. A theoretical framework of fatherhood can give us an idea of how the 'new father' has developed into a topic attracting scholars' attention; research projects on the 'new father' can help us to better understand if the 'new father' is in fact present in

society and if it is not only an ideology to be used when talking about changing roles within a family. Singleton and Maher (2004), for example, doubt the theory always reveals the 'practical' side of the fatherhood: "[C]ontemporary discourses of fatherhood invariably emphasize a man's 'involvement' and 'emotional input'" but "the fact that 'more involved' fathering might have practical and difficult implications (domestic labour) is often overlooked in popular discussions except for glib references about more men being prepared to change diapers (the usual yardstick for 'good' father involvement)" (p. 236).

2.1 The New Father as a Theoretical Concept

It was during the 1970s and '80s when scholars started to deal with the concept of fatherhood, to describe and explain changing cultural patterns of father's roles within the family. "The number and diversity of fatherhood researchers expanded, and efforts to promote the study of fatherhood intensified" (Marsiglio et al. 2000, p. 1173). Scholars started to comprehend and examine fatherhood in the larger socio-political context, taking it in relation with ongoing changes in the family itself (e.g. increasing number of divorces and non-married parents, diversity in family life) but also with changes in work field (e.g. women's better access to paid work, mass male unemployment) (Haywood and Mac an Ghallí 2003) (Whitehead 2002).

Fathers' and mothers' roles within a family were traditionally presented as divided. Mothering was primarily associated with children and nurturing¹. "Parenting was culturally perceived as mothering, in that it implied nurturance, an activity seen as natural to women but foreign to men" (Cohen 1993, p. 2). Fathers' perceived roles within a family were almost exclusively connected to economic production. Being a good father meant having a good job and income to economically support a family. "Fathers connections to their children were portrayed as chiefly financial; good fathers were 'good providers' and good providers made good fathers" (Cohen 1993, p. 2).

The theory of the 'new father' came to the centre of attention as a response to changes in the 'traditional' fathers' approach towards family. "Men's role in the family

¹ See also (Oakley 1997) (Rae 1998) (Marsiglio et al. 2000) (Struening, 2000).

has changed dramatically in recent decades. Today, the father is expected to participate more in the family and caring work [...].” (Rost 2002, p.372). Pleck (1987) characterizes the ‘new father’ and his differentiation from the traditional father in the following words: “He is present at the birth; he is involved with his children as infants, not just when they are older; he participates in the actual day-to-day work of child care, and not just play; he is involved with his daughters as well as his sons” (p. 93). Definitions of the ‘new father’ based on greater involvement or participation in the private sphere are common, but at the same time deficient in defining what amount of ‘involvement’ or ‘participation’ makes fathers ‘new fathers’. These definitions acknowledge changes in the father’s roles within a family but are not instructive enough to be used in research practice. Involvement and participation in a family can take different forms and extents which need, at least, to be specified. Often it is equality in housework and child caring between the parents that is measured to understand the father’s involvement and attitude towards ‘his’ family duties (Rost 2002). Segal (1990) comes to the conclusion that studying fathers’ ‘involvement’ is misleading. She observed that men’s increasing involvement in child care and household tasks does not necessarily consist of taking responsibility for these tasks. Men are more involved but with tasks they ‘like’ not with tasks such as routine house work, Segal argues. It is still the woman who takes the responsibility for managing the household and completing tasks men are not willing to be involved in. According to her it is “quite simply not in men’s interest to change too much, unless women force them to. Neither social nor ideological constraints – and certainly not biological priming – can explain why it should be the case that when men do participate in the home, they choose all the more pleasant and rewarding tasks”. Equality in responsibility for private sphere duties would be an indication of significant changes in the fathers’ roles. The ‘new father’ is present in day-to-day care, takes responsibility for household tasks, his roles and priorities lie in the family. It is not only about involvement in childcare but also an ability to be responsible for tasks traditionally ascribed to women. Ranson (2001) comes to the same conclusion arguing that involvement is often mistaken for responsibility. Involved fathers ‘help out’ with housework or spend time with children, ‘new fathers’ take responsibility for housework or childcare. According to her, even a father who spends an equal amount of time with the children as the mother, is

not equally responsible for childcare (and thus cannot be seen as a 'new father') unless he is willing to set up his work around parenting. If the fathers rely on the mothers' ability to be present every time their children need to be unexpectedly taken care of (typically illness) they do not take responsibility for child care and are thus disqualified from being called 'new fathers'. If the father is only *involved* in a particular domestic work or child care and he is not taking *responsibility* for it then gender equality cannot be achieved. Then, the role of the mother is still the responsibility for house work and the role of father for the out-of-home work. Then the traditional division of roles is still preserved.

Distinction between involvement and responsibility as two separate fields to be studied provoked discussions on whether equality in responsibilities is achievable and desired. While 'greater involvement' enables gendered division of roles as fathers are required to be present in the family 'physically' (not necessarily 'functionally'), 'equal division of responsibilities' significantly modified traditionalist perspectives on the father as a provider and the mother as a nurturer. Feminist scholars call for flexibility in roles traditionally ascribed to men and women but certainly question its existence. For example McMahon suggests: "[...] we have already seen enough contemporary data to be sure that most male work takes the form of help" (McMahon 1999, p. 68). (Research projects discussing existence and forms of new fatherhood are presented in more detail in the chapter "New Fathers under Examination").

Biological determinists came to argue against the idea of equalising roles and responsibilities between men and women; and hence against the concept of 'new father'. One of the current proponents of gender division of roles within a family is David Blankenhorn. His typology ('cultural script') of fathers and fatherhood in current American society presented in 1995, gives us perspectives of the type of arguments the current biological determinists use to support natural division of roles. 'New father' is presented in his paper (1995) in relation to other cultural images of fathers supposedly present in American society in 1990s. To comprehend his understanding of the 'new father' a brief description of the other 'types of fathers' is essential. The first in his typology is 'The Unnecessary Father': He is characterised by not being required to be involved in the family life by the rest of the family members (typically mothers). "The

Unnecessary Father, then, plays a starring role as the chorus in our contemporary fatherhood script. He may be a nice guy, perhaps even a force of good. But he is nonessential, peripheral, 'not that important'. His presence may be appreciated, but it is not required. [...] No one holds him up as either the core problem or the core solution" (p. 76). The existence of 'Unnecessary Fathers' coincides with the question of 'every child needs a father'. Blankenhorn explains that "we have changed our minds on this question" and proves that lots of mothers in current society do not see fathers as being irreplaceable or even needed in the children's lives (p. 75). The second type is called 'The Old Father': "While Unnecessary Father is not needed, the Old Father is not wanted. If the former is never seen as the solution, the latter is always seen as the problem. [...] The Unnecessary Father is someone to forget and to dismiss. [...] The Old Father is someone to remember and to fear. He is important" explains Blankenhorn (p.84). Old Father is a threat, someone not easy to get along with. The typical image of the Old Father is found in the 1950s: "The Old Father of the 1950s was busy remaining physically and emotionally distant from his family" (p. 86). The Old Father is a 'traditional' father in the breadwinning role he plays in a family. However, Blankenhorn does not use 'traditional' father as 'traditional' is used as an equivalent to 'natural' rather to 'old'. 'The New Father': The New Father is both wanted and needed in the family by the broader public according to Blankenhorn. "The Old Father is bad. He is the way things used to be. The Unnecessary Father is irrelevant. He is the way things are. The New Father is good. He is the way things ought to be" (p. 96). The New Father is characterised by taking equal responsibility in private sphere duties. He does not 'help out' with domestic work but shares responsibilities with the mother: "He is nurturing. He expresses his emotions. He is a healer, a companion, a colleague. He is a deeply involved parent" (p. 96). According to Blankenhorn the 'new father' is presented as a 'hero', the only 'right' cultural image of men in the current society. "[...] contemporary scholars seek both to define and to applaud the New Father as a cultural ideal" (p. 97).

At the same time his opinion on the 'new father' is in contradiction with these scholars. He argues that the 'new father' represents a changing cultural image of fathers, but to achieve equality in responsibilities and other attributes characterising the 'new father' is not possible and not even desirable. The 'new father' brings 'genderless'

parenthood as a result of both parents being involved in the same roles; the 'new father' is a missing father according to Blankenhorn: "[...] the New Father, hero of our contemporary cultural script, will only serve to erode further the possibility of effective fathering in our society. For the New Father finally becomes no father, a synonym for the belief that fatherhood is superfluous. He can be best understood as the Unnecessary Father in the future" (p. 102 – 103). Blankenhorn does not agree that differences between the Old and New Father are significant in their consequences and do not stand at opposite poles. "Regarding the importance of involved fatherhood and paternal affection, the New Father of the 1990s is less a repudiation of 1950s fatherhood than an elaboration of it. Yes, the evidence clearly shows that many married fathers today are more closely involved with their children – more emotionally accessible, more demonstrably affectionate, more versed in the daily routines of child care [...]. But this trend in paternity reflects historical continuity, not discontinuity" (p. 107). The 'new father' is a cultural image according to Blankenhorn that ignores biological equipment and differences between fathers and mothers. Fathers would have to be 'trained' to become 'new fathers' as they are not naturally equipped to be so. Blankenhorn points out the current research that shows that men are still predominantly breadwinners in both their practice and belief. Despite the 'new father' as a cultural ideal, fathers do not tend to abandon their providing role in favour of being more involved in the private sphere. "The attitude is actually out there – yes, fathers should be involved. But there is also the attitude out there that fathers should not reduce their commitment to the job, never forget that their primary responsibility is to earn an income" (Rudavsky 1992 cited by Blankenhorn 1995, p. 113). Blankenhorn raises a question "What, then, is a progressive, rational New Father to do?" And answers his question in the following words: "He must change his behaviour. He must work less. [...] Consequently, the core task of the New Father is to abandon the view of employment typically held by fathers and embrace the view of employment typically held by mothers" (p. 113). The consequence of sharing roles is a work/family conflict, according to Blankenhorn rather than work/family synergy: "From a gendered understanding of a father's work to a genderless conception of a parent's work" (p. 114).

Blankenhorn suggests that taking the breadwinning role away from fathers is not healthy for children. He also argues that there is not 'even many women' who would like men to abandon their breadwinning role. Traditional division of roles is therefore not only inevitable but also advantageous.

Theoretical perspectives on fatherhood (both feminist and biological determinist) acknowledge the 'new father' as a proponent of changing attitudes of fathers but his actual presence is questioned.

2.2 The New Father under Examination & Research on Fatherhood

The 'new father' is 'involved', the 'new father' takes responsibility for domestic labour and childcare, the 'new father' does not only 'help out' in the household but accepts private sphere duties as a part of the fathers' roles, the new father's priorities lie in the family and care giving, rather than in work and providing. Recent research on fatherhood has shown an increasing interest in the 'new father', raising the question of whether the 'new father' really exists and whether the changes in the family itself are significant enough to consider the 'new fatherhood' as being present in current society.

Cohen (1993) argues that fathers' roles within the family changed². Traditional perception of the father-breadwinner role is not, according to Cohen, an ideology that would fit into "all men's lives": "For the majority [of the participants], experiences becoming and being fathers stretched far beyond working. Study participants described attachments to the more nurturing dimension of 'parenting' that sounded like endorsements of contemporary, involved fathering" (Cohen 1993, p. 19). Emphasis on the nurturing dimension of fathering is pointed out by Cohen as a factor that differentiated fathers in his research sample from the traditional imagery of fatherhood. Being a good father was not connected solely to providing, but to nurturing and involvement as well. Changing the image of fatherhood towards nurturing aspects of parenting is also stressed in research about young men's perception of their 'future

² His findings came from analysis of 30 semi-structured interviews with new husbands and fathers in the United States. "Interviews examined informants' experiences becoming and being husbands and fathers" (Cohen 1993, p. 4)

fatherhood and domestic life' conducted by Edley and Wetherell (1999). According to this research, the younger generation of men acknowledge nurturing as a part of fathering and expresses belief in equal opportunities³. Expectations and cultural imagery of fathers' roles have shifted from the traditional role model according to both Cohen's and Edley and Wetherell's analysis. Though, both of the research studies also came to the conclusion that the reality is somewhat divorced from the proposed egalitarian ideology⁴. Edley and Wetherell interpreted the generation of young men's eagerness for equal opportunity as a 'rhetorical strategy' to avoid being labelled a 'sexist'. Despite the belief in equality, research participants were not able to imagine equality in roles in practical life. "Over and again, the endorsement of liberal ideals was juxtaposed with talk of 'practical considerations', thereby enabling the speaker to defend the *status quo* while deflecting accusations of sexism or bigotry" (p. 188). Cohen's research argues that changes in the fathers' involvement towards nurturing are not projected to taking at least equal responsibility for child care with their spouses: "[...] estimates of fathers' involvement with their children and responsibility for child care indicate that they spend less time with their children than do mothers [...] all but one were still secondary caretakers when compared to their wives" (Cohen 1993, p.14).⁵ Cohen observed that factors influencing the fathers' involvement were (1) their commitment to fathering, (2) wives needs for "down time" and (3) their work schedule ("[...] men's relationships with their children had to be fitted around their jobs" (Cohen 1993, p. 16). Both of the research studies suggested a changing view of fatherhood towards emphasising nurturing aspects of parenting. In practice, fathers choose varied parenting strategies depending on their

³ Conclusions were based partly on "intensive reflexive ethnography conducted in and around the sixth-form common room of a UK-based independent boys' school" and "tape-recorded and transcribed interviews with small groups of white 17 to 18-year-old male students" (p. 183) conducted during the ethnography part. "The interviews covered aspects of the young men's daily lives, social relations within the common room, their anticipation of their future working and domestic lives, relationships with young women and with male friends, sexuality, popular culture and feminism and social change" (p. 183). The data were collected in 1990th.

⁴ The same clash between imagery and reality was observed in the Czech republic (Čermáková et al. 2000 in Hearn et al. 2006). According to the Czech study, fathers are not "the sole breadwinners in the family and important decisions are often made by both partners together. [...] As regards domestic chores, men play the role of 'helpers' rather than partners despite the pretended desired ideal of equal sharing" (Čermáková et al. 2000 cited by Hearn et al. 2006, p. 121)

⁵ For research using quantitative approach for studying men's nurturing vs. breadwinning roles see for example Goodwin (1999). A significant lack of a nurturing aspect of fatherhood is observed using standardised questionnaires and quantitative analysis.

working time, attitude and the partners' need for 'down time'. Ranson (2001) went further in her research effort⁶ and tried to identify these strategies. Clashes between the providing and nurturing roles were the central focus of her research attention. Ranson's presumption prior to the research was that the father-breadwinner is still the prevailing cultural image of fathers and disbelieved 'optimistic' views on significant changes in the fathers' roles within a family. She explains that greater involvement is not 'enough' to identify the 'new father' and believes that the key characteristic differentiating 'him' from the traditional father is a responsibility for nurturing. Based on analysis of in-depth interviews four strategies of roles and responsibilities were defined:

(1) The first strategy is called "conformity". Fathers who choose this strategy are recognised by putting work first. They often work longer hours, go to business trips outside of town; family and children do not influence the time they spend at work. They accept the breadwinning role and expect the mother to be responsible for household tasks and nurturing. These fathers are traditional in both their beliefs and practical life.

(2) The same traditional attitude is also an attribute of another strategy termed 'qualified conformity': Work is in the first place; the breadwinning role is understood to be the fathers' responsibility, traditional division of roles is preserved. Fathers of 'qualified conformity' are involved in the family to some extent as a result of the mother not being able to maintain the nurturing role by herself (e.g. working full time, more children in the family). Ranson observed that these fathers are typically technically present in the family (e.g. supervise their children while the mother is outside of home) but functionally are missing (do not play a role of a nurturer; do not feel responsibility for care giving). They like spending time with their children unless it interferes with their working life.

(3) The third strategy identified by Ranson is 'strategic accommodation'. This strategy is practiced by fathers who fulfil all responsibilities connected to work but also have a scheduled time to be with their children on a regular basis. For instance take their children to after school activities regular days a week. They typically work regular hours,

⁶ In-depth interviews were held in Canada with 22 fathers who graduated in years 1980, 1981 or 1985. All respondents were married with children up to 16 years old. All of them were full-time employed, 20 of them were the main income providers for the family. Average age was 40 years old. The interviews touched problems of working vs. family life.

usually do not work over-time and are willing to set up their working life around family to a certain extent – for example by choosing a job with favourable working hours. Even though they spend time with their children on a regular basis, their main role is being a provider for the family. They rely on the mothers as the main caregivers for the children. In situations when children are ill or need to be taken to after school activities outside of scheduled time it is the mother who would set up her time. These fathers are ‘active’; they like spending time with their children actively, they feel the importance of being present in the children’s lives, they are willing to set up their work duties around parenting to some extent. But they are not ‘new fathers’ according to Ranson as they do not take responsibility for child care and nurturing, at least not outside of scheduled times.

(4) The fourth strategy - ‘challenge’ - refers to fathers who consider a family as their primary consideration and explicitly talked about how family interferes with their working life (not the other way around, how work influences their time with their family). Family comes first, working time is strictly controlled. These fathers expressed concerns about traditional fathers who prioritize work against their family and talked about themselves as being those who want to change this pattern. They were not worried about losing their job and were confident in their working life.

Both Ranson and Cohen came to the conclusion that the fathers’ roles within the family is primarily providing. Despite the fact that some fathers expressed strong commitment towards their children and wish to be involved in their children’s lives, in reality they did not demonstrate that they would take responsibility for nurturing⁷. Cohen pointed out that when asking about responsibilities, fathers tended to perceive themselves as parents rather than providers and connected parenting with child care. At the same time providing was still their main role in the family. Ranson’s analysis divided fathers’ attitudes into four categories – from ‘conformity’ to ‘challenge’. Despite this, she did not observe any example where the providing role would be swapped for the nurturing role in any of the categories. Even fathers practising a ‘challenge’ strategy were primarily providers according to Ranson. They did want to change and were dissatisfied with the

⁷ See also (Segal 1990) (McMahon 1999) (Struening 2000) (Christiansen and Palkovitz 2001) (Singleton and Maher 2004).

traditional image of fatherhood; they felt that providing is a role automatically prescribed to them. It shows that the perceived image of fatherhood changed but actual practice failed to follow that image. Equality in roles is accepted by some fathers, although in reality it is not recognisable. Singleton and Maher⁸ (2004) investigated fathers' responsibility with the intention to enclose the actual domestic tasks men and fathers take within the family and compared their amount of involvement with the mothers: "Only one male in the sample took on a comparable role as domestic manager; the rest were less responsible overall, despite their own partner's work obligations either as a paid worker or as the one primarily responsible for childcare" (p. 231). Becoming a father encouraged even more differentiation in roles towards traditionalistic division: "Interestingly, few of the men who were engaged in full-time work outside the home expressed a desire to be more involved in child related domestic labour, to try and arrange flexible work schedules or curtail their work hours. Instead, most observed that they and their partners have reverted to more 'traditional' roles since the birth of their child, both in terms of paid employment ('breadwinner' and 'housewife') and the gender division of labour" (p. 232). We can speculate about the reasons. Both Cohen and Ranson would agree that one of the factors is the father's attitude towards the gender role division. Ranson suggests that the main problem lies in the father's unwillingness to take responsibility for traditionally women's tasks⁹. Cohen and Singleton and Maher observed that involvement in childcare was dependent on work responsibilities - childcare must have not interfered with the respondents' working life¹⁰.

In Ranson, Singleton and Maher and Cohen's research projects respondents were recruited based on categories such as their age or their family status. Their goal was to choose representatives of the 'usual' middle class fathers; the vast majority of their research sample therefore consisted of fathers who had a higher income than the mothers, often they were the only income earners for the family. These recruitment criteria were

⁸ Data for the research were collected during in-depth interviews with 22 couples (both separately and individually). "During the interview informants were asked to tell detailed narratives describing a typical week of housework for themselves and for their partner" (Singleton and Maher 2004, p. 229).

⁹ Cook et al. (2005) suggests that it is not only men's but also the mothers' willingness and attitudes that impact on division of roles within the family. Ranson 'blames' only the fathers arguing that they can become involved and responsible for nurturing if they wanted to. The same argument is used by Segal (1990) for explaining why fathers are not involved in domestic 'routine' tasks the same way as the mothers.

¹⁰ See also Christeansen and Palkovitz (2001) who study providing as a form of a paternal involvement.

certainly legitimate to learn about the current patterns of fathers' involvement in the family but disqualified fathers with different life experience; namely fathers whose family situation is not 'traditionally' arranged. For instance, income difference between mothers and fathers is often used as a reason for parents not being able to equalise roles. Harald Rost¹¹ (2002) asked the question "what consequences a couple's relative earnings have for a cooperative role structure as well as for the transition to parenthood" (p. 373). His research project is based on the assumption that "wage differences between the sexes are believed to be a main reason for this [the traditional division of labour] [...]. An important consideration is that men still tend to contribute more to the family income than women. This structural condition is critical in promoting and perpetuating a traditional role distribution" (p. 371, 373). His analysis showed that income "significantly influences a partner's degree of involvement in both professional and family work" (p.374 - 375). At the same time, fathers in the sample showed attitudes supportive of an equal division of labour and a belief parents should be present for the children. As suggested by Ranson, it is the attitudes that influence division of roles. Rost extends this theory on the ability of the family to encompass dual career earners. Both situational factors and attitudes are thus an inevitable part of changing patterns of role division. Even though the sample consisted of couples where a woman was the main income provider, roles were not automatically swapped between the parents. "Most of the couples shared parental leave so that neither partner had an extended absence from employment. It was stressed that these arrangements required childcare support from a third person, mainly from grandparents, enabling both parents to work at the same time if necessary. Household work was also deliberately divided. The partners usually made sure that the one who spent more time at home also did most of the housework" (Rost 2002, p. 375).

Rost did not raise the question of who is the manager of such arrangements, who is the one who takes responsibility for child care or domestic labour. Despite this, sharing of domestic tasks and nurturing was mainly dependent on the available time of each of the parents rather than by gender division. This suggests a different strategy for dealing with work/family roles than described by the previous research projects. Study of non-

¹¹ Rost's pilot research project took place in Germany in 2000. 50 interviews were conducted with couples where the woman always earned as much or more than the men.

traditionally arranged families clearly brings new questions to the discussion of the 'new fatherhood'. Situational factors (such as working status, time availability, family status) together with attitude and willingness to alter roles are signs of new forms of role division within the family. Surprisingly there has not been much research done on shared care arrangements where both of these factors are inevitably present. Shared care parenting enables both parents to be present in day-to-day care and nurturing and providing at the same time. The shared care arrangement is often the centre of attention as an alternative form of post-divorced family arrangement and it is studied from the children's wellbeing perspective. Scholars (mainly psychologists) have tried to find benefits or disadvantages of shared care and its impact on children. Research on 'shared care parents' and their division of roles from the perspective of the 'new father' have not been broadly examined yet. Countries where shared custody arrangements are becoming common as a post-divorced style of parenting recently began to study 'shared care families' in order to gain understanding of actual practises in such arrangements. Gill (2004) recently released results of a pilot research study targeting parents who practice shared care arrangements¹². One part of the study dealt with division of responsibilities for different aspects of parenting: "[...] the findings do suggest, as we might expect in shared custody arrangements, that there is a complex blending of shared and divided responsibilities that can be perceived differently at times by the two parents. [...] [W]e see that fathers often reported that responsibilities were shared, while mothers often reported that they took primary responsibility. Neither fathers nor mothers were inclined to attribute responsibility to their former partners. The most noticeable difference was in the responsibility for medical matters, where two-thirds of fathers said responsibility was shared, while three-quarters of mothers said they took primary responsibility. Sports and recreational activities and shopping were the two areas where fathers were most likely to say they took primary responsibility. Finally, for most of the families in our sample, the divorce and the period after the divorce did not bring about changes in the division of responsibilities. Where change was reported, it reflected a general change in the

¹² Research was conducted for the Ministry of Justice in Canada in 2004. The purpose of the study was to explore practises of shared custody arrangements and develop methodologies for conducting further study on shared care parenting. 50 standardised interviews were collected with half mothers and half fathers. The questionnaire consisted of 75 plus 36 follow-up questions; all but one were close-ended).

behaviour of one parent or the other (typically the former partner of the respondent), as opposed to a change in the agreed upon responsibilities in specific areas” (p. 22 - 23). According to this research responsibilities in shared care parenting are divided by item rather than by a pattern of traditionally perceived female and male tasks. One parent might be more responsible for ‘shopping’ while the other for ‘medical matters’. However this research misses qualitative input to understand how division of responsibilities is determined and practised. Disagreement of parents regarding the extent to which they take responsibility for a specific item would also need to be clarified by qualitative research techniques.

Research on fatherhood implies that the ‘new father’ is not present in traditionally arranged families. However, studying non-traditionally arranged families brings new perspectives to the discussion about the existence of the ‘new father’ and includes how the sharing of responsibilities and roles changes when the ‘traditional’ role structure is suspended.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Objectives

The key goal of the research was to gain a better understanding of family roles and responsibilities of fathers who have children in shared custody. The ambition of the research was to describe how this group of fathers deal with work and day-to-day care tasks, how private and public sphere duties interfere with each other, how they perceive themselves in relation to their responsibilities and roles within their families. Special focus was given to gender equality in responsibilities and roles traditionally ascribed to women and men to examine in which aspects, fathers in a sample can be seen as new fathers as discussed in the theory and research practice.

The central objective was to learn about:

- Responsibility for care-giving/ nurturing and day-to-day care in a traditionally female domain.

- Responsibility for providing/ financial support in a traditionally male domain.

3.2 Research Questions

To describe roles and responsibilities fathers take and to decide if and to what extent they can be considered ‘new fathers’, the following questions were to be answered by the research:

- What responsibilities and roles fathers who have children in shared custody take within a family? How they divide their time between day-to-day care and work? What strategies do they use to be able to obtain both?
- How are these responsibilities divided between the fathers and mothers?
- How they personally perceive their roles and responsibilities? Do they consider themselves to be breadwinners, care-givers or both?
- What is the fathers’ personal attitude towards sharing responsibilities and roles?
- What factors influence their responsibilities and roles within a family?

3.3 Hypothesis

Prior research projects have found that women and men generally do not share work and family roles equally. Traditional views, unwillingness of men to participate in household tasks, barriers preventing women achieving higher positions at work, education, and social barriers are some reasons supposedly responsible for disproportionate role division. Traditional roles of women and men within a family are still present and the ‘new father’ is more of an ideology than reality. Although such generalisation about division of roles is legitimate when describing gender changes in a family within society as whole, when looking for new forms of fatherhood, descriptions of general trends is not sufficient. The previous research taught us, that the expectation that we can find ‘new fathers’ in traditionally arranged families is limited. Nevertheless,

it does not mean we can automatically presume that ‘new fathers’ do not exist at all. For example research on dual-career families suggested that changes in division of roles and responsibilities are influenced to some extent by factors as gender equality attitudes (Ranson 2001). Ivey and Yaktus (1996) have found that family history of parental division of responsibilities relates to the perception of family and individual family member functioning. In addition, adult views on family functioning are also related to ‘situational factors’ (or ‘certain immediate conditions’). When partners have the same gender-related attitudes it is likely they will apply these attitudes in practice. However, situational factors can change their behaviour and roles within the family. I believe that a closer look at families where ‘conditions’ have changed, parents practising shared care, give us an opportunity to uncover non-traditional division of roles and responsibilities.

Unlike in traditionally arranged families, parents practising shared care arrangements are supposedly fully responsible for day-to-day care for children on their parenting days¹³. My presumption prior to field work was that the commitment for day-to-day care would not only be situational given by the fact children are having two residences but also freely chosen by the respondents. Research suggests that women are prioritised as parents after parental separation. Children are more likely to be in the mother’s custody after separation (Hoffman and Moon 2000) and the practice of the family court in New Zealand also indicates that children are more likely to be put in the mother’s custody when agreement between the parents is not achieved¹⁴. Fathers who practise a shared care arrangement are likely to freely choose to do so with the knowledge of accepting responsibility for day-to-day care that is an inevitable part of such arrangements. Their attitude towards equality in roles and responsibilities were predicted to be activist as the shared parenting arrangement was more likely to reflect the respondents’ wish for equality in access to their children; shared care arrangements would be a logical solution for those who are open minded to equal sharing and supposedly equal division of responsibilities. I presumed that the respondents would have experience with traditional division of roles from the past when living with the mother of

¹³ Parenting day – a day when children are in the parents’ custody, typically days when children stay overnight.

¹⁴ Evans (2002) observed that fathers often exclude themselves from day-to-day care for children and center on providing responsibilities. Therefore they are not likely to be held by the family court to share custody on an every-day basis.

their children. This experience was assumed to be projected to the current division of roles. Those who were the main 'providers' prior separation could consider themselves as being the main providers after separation as well. Equality in financial support and providing was expected to be dependent on financial status of both parents, an ability to agree on financial division, but also by traditional perceptions of men being providers. However, respondents' perspectives on breadwinning were expected to be rejected, as equality in roles would be closer to their beliefs. It was assumed that day-to-day care and time spent with children would be the priority on the parenting days but compensated by an increasing concentration on work on the rest of the days. It was predicted that there would be differences between the fathers in their responsibilities and roles according to their family history, income or number of parenting days. Other factors influencing the fathers' responsibilities were to be found by the research itself as limited previous data on shared care parenting were available to make presumptions with a reasonable level of confidence.

Overall, both nurturing and providing roles were expected to be present in the fathers' everyday life. Division of these roles with the mothers were predicted to be conditional, dependent on financial independence and time availability of each of the parents and on personal attitudes towards gender equality, family history and number of parenting days as well.

3.4 Data Collection

Research method and data collection primarily needed to be chosen in order to (1) learn about responsibilities and roles in the context of the respondents' every day life and experience; (2) at the same time to be flexible enough to intercept and elaborate any relevant topics that were not expected prior to the interview (mainly topics related to shared parenting as a non-traditional form of a family arrangement that has not been extensively researched from the perspective of division of roles and responsibilities).

8 semi-structured interviews were held in New Zealand in order to fulfil these requirements¹⁵. Interviews were thematically guided to deeply probe for previously set up categories and to enable comparison among the interviews. At the same time, respondents were encouraged to articulate their attitudes and opinions freely and in ‘their own way’ and thus stress important factors that influenced their actions and decisions. Interviewing did not limit time spending on each theme but varied according to the respondents’ ability, relevance and wish to talk about a particular topic. This allowed preservation of continuity in discussions and reflected each respondent’s personal experience¹⁶.

Areas (themes) to be covered by the interviews were decided prior to interviewing and reflected the research questions and objectives. These areas must not be understood as direct questions that were asked, but only as categories that were covered in every interview:

- Family situation and history (status, lengths, relationships, new partnerships, number of children)
- Arrangements prior separation
- Arrangements after separation
- Division of day-to-day care before separation/after separation/now
- Division of financial support before separation/after separation/now
- Work and parenting – how they influence each other
- Values and attitudes towards family, gender equality, shared care arrangement
- Differences between the fathers and the mothers in any aspect of parenting and parental responsibilities

¹⁵ As there are limited research projects on responsibilities and roles of fathers who have children in shared custody, making any definite presumptions prior to research (without an option to alter) could have led to missing out significant aspects of division of responsibilities or roles present in shared care arrangements. Quantitative methods that require establishment of ‘definite’ analytical categories prior to field work would therefore not be suitable for this unexplored research field. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) recognise two types of generated data in qualitative research focus groups and in-depth interviews (as opposite to naturally occurring data as observation, documentary analysis, conversation analysis and discourse analysis). Focus groups were not suitable for the subject area as studying roles and responsibilities must be understood in the personal context of each respondent. Naturally occurring data would not be sufficient as an explanation and the background of the respondents was an integral part of the research questions.

¹⁶ Thematically guided interviews were used by Rost (2002) in research about distribution of professional and family work in dual-career families. This method proved to be flexible and efficient when inquiring into non-traditional family arrangements.

- Factors influencing division of responsibilities and roles
- Social barriers

Previous research studies showed that gaining pertinent understanding of the fathers' responsibilities and roles within a family is problematic. Firstly, respondents' understanding of the terms 'responsibility' and 'role' varies and can differ from the interviewer's definition. Secondly, cultural images of fatherhood and expectations posed to the fathers can shape respondents' answers about personal experience. Interviewing and questions therefore had to be formulated in a way to avoid misunderstanding of terms and to encourage answers 'how the reality is' rather than 'how the reality should be or is expected to be'. The emphasis was given to understanding everyday respondents' lives, how they deal with everyday tasks and consequently to learn about their responsibilities and roles. The discussion guide (see Appendix A) helped to 'cover' all the topics but certainly was not used as a rigid rule. Importance was given to answering the areas of inquiry (themes) rather than the questions in the discussion guide.

Another important aspect that influenced interviewing was sensitivity of the topics touched upon during the interviews (such as separation issues, child custody, and legal processes in the family court). Trying to understand attitudes and feelings about division of roles (and their progress during time) inevitably brought up memories and emotions about divorce and difficulties connected to post-divorce arrangement. Howard Williamson (1996) shares her own experience with sensitive topics in research practice. She claims that honesty of the respondents must be questioned when dealing with emotions during research practice. She suggests that distance from the researcher does not help: "[...] my view is that empathy, openness and honesty at all stages of research activity, with full acknowledgment of the commitment and passion involved, will produce data and reports which will attract curiosity and interest" (p. 39). Being a neutral and emotionless interviewer during the discussion could result in respondents' answering in the most 'easy' way, 'what is expected'. Interviewing had to be conducted in a way that respondents would be willing to share their feelings and things that 'happened in the past'. A friendly atmosphere and sympathy with the respondent's difficult situations they had gone through projected to openness and willingness to share 'emotions'.

Four respondents were interviewed face-to-face either at their home or work according to their wish. The goal was to let them choose a place comfortable for them to talk about personal topics. Four respondents were interviewed by telephone as face-to-face interviewing was impossible due to distance. All respondents were familiar with the research topic, method and purpose of the study and agreed with being recorded during the interview.

3.5 Recruitment Criteria

The basic recruitment criterion was to find fathers who practice shared care arrangements¹⁷. This arrangement is recognised by the New Zealand law meaning parents can be recognised as shared care parents by the law. In reality fathers can practice shared care ‘unofficially’ without being recognised as equal parents in a separation agreement; and vice versa fathers who are officially recognised as ‘shared care parents’ do not necessarily have to practice such arrangements. Therefore, for the purpose of this study shared parenting was not defined as an official arrangement but by the father’s personal perception of a family situation and the number of their parenting days. As shared care lies in sharing responsibilities for day-to-day care, some of the parenting days had to be week days (school days)¹⁸ and count at least 30% of the nights¹⁹. To find out the family situation prior to the interview, all potential respondents were asked recruitment questions. These questions varied according to type of first contact with the respondents (either phone, email or face-to-face) and my previous knowledge about their family situation. The interviewing itself required respondents to be open to talk about private topics, a bond of trust therefore needed to be established during the first contact. My intention was to avoid a rigid set of recruitment questions but rather naturally and

¹⁷ Joint custody, shared care, shared parenting – all these terms (depending on a particular country terminology) refer to a type of a post-separation arrangement by which both parents have equal or similar rights concerning their child's care, custody, and control.

¹⁸ Exception was given to one respondent who had experienced 50% shared care relatively recently but currently was responsible for his children only on weekends and holidays. His experience ‘why 50% was abandoned and how his responsibilities changed’ was valuable for the research.

¹⁹ “Parents or caregivers may share day-to-day care, splitting the time in a way that works best for the children and the family's circumstances” (Moyer 2004). 30% (4 days fortnight) was set up as the minimum parenting time to assure the idea of ‘sharing’ day-to-day care with the other parent.

‘discretely’ find basic facts about their family. The main areas to cover (recruitment criteria) during the first contact were:

- Number of children and their age(s)
- Overview of family situation (check if the respondent practises shared care and does not live in the same household with the mother)
- Family status (new partnership, single)
- Number of parenting days (to check if the children are not going to their household only for ‘visits’)
- Personal perception of the family situation (shared parenting to be recognised as the actual practice, overall satisfaction with the arrangement)
- Brief description of the arrangement
- Took advantage of a family court to decide about the arrangement (yes/no)

In order to answer the research questions, the respondents must have practised a shared parenting arrangement (assessed by personal perception and number of parenting days) and had at least one child in shared parenting at an age of less than 16 years (the official ceiling of childhood), must not have lived in a household together with the mother but must have been responsible for their children together with the mother. Additional criteria such as age and number of children and use of family court were taken into consideration in order to get diverse types of respondents. Also a range of different numbers of parenting days and family background was desirable to better understand reasons for particular division of roles at the end of the research²⁰.

3.6 Recruitment Process

Half of the fathers were recruited through fathers’ organisations and movements²¹. Emails with a description of the research background and objectives, together with a brief

²⁰ There is no official statistics about shared parenting available in New Zealand (Calister and Birks 2006), respondents could not therefore be selected to represent a particular group of the New Zealand fathers practising shared care. My strategy therefore was to gather the most diverse range of respondents.

²¹ The following movements were contacted: Union of Fathers, NZ Father & Child Society, Parents Against Negative Intervention by CYF, Families Apart Require Equality, Fathers of New Zealand.

description of recruitment criteria, were sent to five organisations active in New Zealand. I asked the particular organisation to resend the email to their members. Those who were willing to participate contacted me afterwards. Reducing respondents only to those who were connected to the fathers' movements was not desirable as their interest in topics of fathers' rights might have influenced their perception of family roles and levels of concern; also their family history and experience was expected to involve dissatisfaction with the law and its practice. Another four respondents were recruited by a snowballing method and were not in touch with a father's movement.

3.7 Sample

The recruitment criteria were not strictly given though diversity in respondents' family characteristics was desired. The following table shows distribution of the basic family characteristics in the sample²²:

	# of children/age	% parenting days	Satisfaction with the arrangement	Family court to decide about the arrangement (yes/no)	Family status	Employment status
1	1 (pre-school)	35%	ideal 50%	yes	single	self-employed
2	1 (primary school)	50%	satisfied	no	single	seasonal job
3	1 (primary school)	35%	ideal 50%	no (no trust in family court)	partnership	full-time
4	1 (primary school)	35%	ideal 50%	no (no trust in family court)	partnership	full-time
5	3 (primary/ high school)	50%	satisfied	no	partnership	full-time
6	2 (secondary school)	30% (formerly 50%)	satisfied	yes	married	full-time
7	2 (primary/secondary)	50%	satisfied	yes	partnership	full-time
8	2 (pre-school)	50%	satisfied	no	single	unemployed

²² Pseudonyms were given to the respondents in the analytical part in order to protect their anonymity. Also any other information given by the respondents that could result in breaking anonymity (such as an exact occupation, names of the children, work place) were not mentioned or were deleted from quotations.

3.8 Process of Analysis

The chosen analytical procedure allowed division of relevant topics into analytical categories and further detailed examination of each of them. Schmidt (2000) explains that “the guiding principle in this analytical strategy is the interchange between material and theoretical prior knowledge. This interchange process begins not only when the data are available in a transcribed form, but at the beginning of the data collection.” Based on theoretical knowledge, some of the final analytical categories were defined prior to data collection with the intent to cover all issues relevant to the research objectives. At the same time, semi-structured interviewing gave an opportunity to discover new categories or redefine the original ones after data collection and develop a new set of analytical categories that would better mirror research objectives of the study and answer the research questions. Transcripts from the conducted interviews were used as a source for these analytical categories. The final set of analytical categories was as follows:

- Responsibility for day-to-day care (in context of family history)
- Responsibility for financial support after separation (in context of family history)
- Factors influencing division of roles after separation
- Attitudes and values - priorities
- Process of getting custody of children (family court)
- Financial dependency
- Masculinity in parenting
- Decision making responsibility
- Responsibilities prior to separation

4. Analysis

4.1 Division of Roles and Responsibilities after Separation

The principle of shared parenting arrangement lies in the sharing of responsibilities for children, meaning neither parent has more responsibility for the children than the other. Parents are supposed to equally divide both traditionally female “private sphere” duties such as day-to-day care, and male “public sphere” duties such as providing for the family financially. One of the respondents compared shared parenting to two separate households, with two sole parents in each, giving both parents the obligation to satisfy all of the children’s needs without the help of the other. Gender division of roles and responsibilities was considered to be in contradiction to the principles of such a shared parenting arrangement. Respondents in the sample believed that the responsibilities traditionally ascribed to men and women are present in both theirs and the mother’s households as a logical outcome of separation and the shared parenting definition²³. Gill (2004) observed that parents who practise shared care usually divide responsibilities; one parent is perceived as being more responsible for some aspect of parenting than the other.

Extension or change of responsibilities after separation was recognised by the majority of the respondents. For example Phil, a father of two children, characterised himself as the main caregiver prior to separation. He used to work half-time and take responsibility for day-to-day care of his children most of the time. The mother was the main financial provider for the family. After separation he had to become financially independent and start working fulltime:

“I hated to go back to full-time employment. So now my responsibilities are that I still do that sort of work but now I work full-time ((laughing)), it’s little bit hard, it’s little bit more difficult but I still do that. On a week about basis, I’m used to it. It’s slightly different for me because I’m working a little bit harder at my job. So at the week I have them I’m still doing all those (tasks) for my children.

²³ Belief in equality and changing attitude of the current men from traditional division of roles to equal division of roles was also recognised by previous research projects on the topic (Cohen, 1993) (Singleton and Maher, 2004).

Another respondent James, reported that separation and shared parenting gave him a chance to be a nurturer for at least some time each week. Prior to separation, his responsibility lay more on providing financially, while the mother was at home with their daughter:

“I think I saw less of my daughter [prior separation] because even though I don’t have her full time I do have her.”

Whether it was responsibility for care giving or going back to full time employment, all respondents were required to change or alter their roles within a family after separation.

4.1.1 Sharing Responsibility for Day-to-day Care

Responsibility for day-to-day care was seen as one that inevitably had to be divided between the parents in the shared care arrangement as a result of children having two residencies. One of the respondents distinguished shared care arrangement from two parent’s households in the following words:

“When you are split parents you both take the same responsibilities, when [name of the child] is with you you’re taking the role of both parents in one house. If you’ve got two parents in one house I guess mum might tend to do one thing with you, and dad other things and when you’ve got one parent in one house then all the things that happen in that house tend to be your responsibility. And then when she goes back to the other house you have no responsibility for her.”

Division of responsibility for day-to-day care was practised by all the respondents and was dependent on the amount of days children spent in each household. In two parent families’ fathers often spent a similar amount of time with children as their mothers did, but are not responsible for day-to-day care. It is more likely that the mother would take time off work and rearrange her working time to look after the children in situations when children are unexpectedly ill and must be taken care of (Cohen 1993) (Ranson 2001) (Singleton and Maher 2004). This role model is not present in a shared care

arrangement as each parent has his or her regular and fixed “parenting” days and everyday children’s needs are thus satisfied separately. “*If my kids are sick on [my parenting days] it’s my problem and so I have to stay with them.*” explained one of the respondents. This feature differentiates shared care families from arrangements where both parents are present. We could argue that the fathers were simply forced to take responsibility for day-to-day care as the mother is not present in the household. But we also have to take into account that shared care is still an uncommon type of post-divorce arrangement²⁴. The shared care situation is, to some extent, a result of the parents’ wish to share (often only a wish of one of the parent who requires the court to decide about the arrangement). While division of roles in both parent families are dependent, amongst others, on the expectations each of the parents brings to the relationship (Cook et al. 2005), shared care is already a result of egalitarian attitude towards division of roles and non-traditional characteristics.²⁵

This conclusion was supported by the respondent’s attitude towards sharing of day-to-day care with their ex-spouses. Help with day-to-day care from the other parent was not usual and typically avoided on purpose by the respondents. The reasons could be distance or lack of communication between the two parents but more usually help with day-to-day care from the other parent was simply not required or needed. Respondents talked during interviews about systems or sets of routines which allowed independency in day-to-day care from the mothers. How detailed the system was mostly depended on the amount of responsibilities away from child care (usually paid work) and the flexibility of working hours. Generally, having a full time job with limited flexibility in working hours required more sophisticated and precise system in dealing with day-to-day care than being unemployed or able to compensate with working hours. Respondents therefore differed in this respect:

²⁴ There is no official statistics available in New Zealand about how many families practice shared care arrangements. According to official statistics 15% of households were solo-parent families in 2001 (Statistic New Zealand 2005) which counts about 25% of all children (15 and under) living in New Zealand.

²⁵ Hoffman and Moon (2000) examined post-divorced arrangements from the gender perspective. Based on quantitative data collected (281 standardized interviews) they came to the conclusion that “when divorcing parent pairs were described with traditional, gender-congruent characteristics stereotypically associated with mothers and fathers, mothers were assigned more post-divorce child care and custody than when both parents were described with non-traditional characteristics” (p. 922).

Mark, a father of school age children, “a very busy person” (how he characterised himself when talking about work), found it convenient to pay a babysitter to pick up his children from school and look after them before he got home from work. Even though he had tried to rearrange his working time so he could pick his children up from school, someone helping him with childcare was more practical:

“On [my parenting days] I drop the kids to school and come to work by nine, so that’s OK. What I was doing previously to that, I don’t know maybe the middle of this year, was that I would leave work here because two kids are in [name of place] at school [...] so I went up there then pick up the high school child who would look after them, drop them up to my place and then come back to work for about an hour. Now I’ve arranged that I’ve got some [someone], who I can use, who can drive, so they pick up the kiddies, go pick the kids up, look after the kids until I get home [...] as long as school is on then I drop them to school. So it’s OK it’s got better since I’ve got people who can actually do the whole job rather than me driving around, being a taxi driver ((laughing)).”

Similarly to Mark another respondent Chris, a father of school age children, also took use of a third person during occasions when he “needed to be at work early in the morning”. He did not specifically described himself as a busy person but his work sometimes required him to be available at times when his children needed to be looked after:

“[...]if I needed to be at work early, say at eight o’clock in the morning, occasionally I would leave the children either on their own or I would have [a third person] who would drop in and just check with the children they are off to school and that they’d had breakfast before they went and things like that. That was a very stressful time.”

He also would spend evenings working. Day-to-day care for children together with going to work on the parenting days was found challenging by Chris:

“And the evenings that would tend to be that after school we had to take the children to sports [...] or things like that and you’d come home after that, you’d cook tea, you would read to the children, put the children to bed, begin to clean up a little bit and then you would often start the work which I would have to do for work, my preparation work until maybe ten o’clock at night. And so that was a stressful week.”

Chris and Mark both managed to multitask during their parenting days and alternate between day-to-day care responsibility and duties at work.

Opposite to sole care parents who look after children every day, shared parenting enables working longer hours on days without parenting time and thus be available for children and day-to-day care on parenting days. This became a practise of some other respondents. For example Phil, who similarly to Chris and Mark, is responsible half time for two school age children, had more flexible working hours which enabled him to take time off work when children needed to be taken to sport activities or looked after during working hours for other reasons and worked longer hours on weekends or afternoons when his children are away:

“I’m very lucky because my employer is also quite family oriented, so I can work extra hours and take afternoons off to take them to sport events or even a day off for a child. I can take that time out and work the next week, I may work on Saturday or Sunday and I can take that time off. It’s quite flexible and I’m very happy that it’s that way.”

The strategy of putting off work was also practiced by fathers with less than a half time arrangement. James, who looked after his daughter five days each fortnight explained:

“I put the parenting as a priority, so I will arrange my work out and I have a good employer (to set around school) so I can actually do the pick-ups on school days. So I work longer days on the weeks when I don’t have [the child] and on the short, [the child’s] weeks.”

Different strategies to deal with the multi-tasking of roles and especially being available for day-to-day care had been chosen by Matt and John. Matt, a father of two pre-school age children, decided to concentrate on parenting and not apply for a full-time job. At the time of interview, he looked after his children 4 week days a week and went to occasional work on the remaining day a week. Parenting became his “main thing to be doing” and day-to-day care his main focus.

John was in a similar situation, not working on a full time basis, but taking occasional jobs outside of his parenting days. This arrangement changed in summer when he had a job out of town and his ex-partner looked after their child most of the time:

“I’m working on winter over those years for employers, I just did everything [...] It allows me to say I just wanna be here for five, six months. [...] And the thing that interrupts that is the summer season when I’m away [...], so then she is with her mum for that time.”

Even though fathers each dealt with multi-tasking in roles differently, all of them were committed to responsibility for day-to-day care and put it as a priority before work – not the other way around. Matt expressed his willingness to be a caregiver by looking after his pre-school age children for the majority of week days which in turn prevented him from going to work on full-time basis. John decided to work in the summer season and be available for his child the rest of the year. Respondents such as Chris, who adjust their working hours in order to be available for their children also showed a commitment to put parenting as the priority. Even Mark and Chris, who relied on babysitting, took full responsibility for their children on their parenting days; when not being able to be present then by setting up babysitting. What distinguished all of them from ‘active’ or ‘involved’ fathers is the fact that they make everyday decisions about children, arrange their children’s time and take full responsibility for them²⁶. The mothers did not interfere in day-to-day care on the father’s parenting days and did not make decisions for them. Nevertheless, it does not mean that all the respondents would take the same amount of responsibility and the same amount of day-to-day care compared with the mothers. Those respondents, who practised half time shared care arrangements, shared day-to-day care and the care-giving role equally with the mothers. However in the cases where fathers had less than a half-time arrangement responsibility for day-to-day care was not equally distributed. In day-to-day care, parenting time was seen as an essential factor measuring equality in traditionally female roles.

²⁶ According to Ranson (2001) neither ‘active’ nor ‘involved’ fathers can be seen as ‘new fathers’ as they do not take responsibility for child care. They are ‘present’ in the children’s lives but their responsibility still lies in providing.

In the traditionally arranged families, the work is one of the factors influencing fathers' amount of involvement with childcare (e.g. Cohen 1993). Fathers with demanding jobs would be generally less involved with their children than those whose job is less time consuming. We cannot say that relations between work and family completely vanish in the shared care situation or that child care would always come first. However, all the respondents were responsible for day-to-day care and put child care as a priority on their parenting days. We can speculate what would happen if the mother was present in the household, if prioritising child care over work would still be the case. Matt was unemployed and thus could spend 4 week days a week with his children without the help of a third person. If he was employed would he still be able to take responsibility for his children four week days a week? Matt spent more time nurturing than Mark who decided to hire a babysitter after school as his work required him for longer hours. At the same time Mark claimed that if the children were not around he would work even more. Does the working life influence the family life or is it the other way around? As far as the analysis could tell, there is no pattern that would entirely explain ways of alternating between work and family duties. On non-parenting days, however, respondents tended to more focus on work related responsibilities and worked longer hours if needed. Important restraining factors towards identification of patterns in role division, is a tendency of fathers to connect parenting primarily to child care. As a result, when talking about family issues fathers' emphasis is given to involvement to, and commitment towards children rather than work related issues. Cohen (1993) observed the same methodological restraint when talking to fathers who lived in 'traditionally arranged' families²⁷.

²⁷ "If one defines the provider role as requiring a single-mindedness about working and an identification of work as one's primary contribution to one's family, then informants deliberately rejected attachment to this role. There were three manifestations of this rejection. First, when I asked about the 'most important roles' in their lives, men identified more strongly with being a father and husband than with being a worker. Second, they staked no ideological claim on working and providing. When they were sole supporters of their family, they described this condition as the result of the practical circumstances of having very young children and a wife who had recently left the labour force" (Cohen 1993, p 922).

4.1.2 Fathers as Caregivers – Masculinity as a Quality

All the fathers described themselves as caregivers rather than breadwinners and the time they spend with their children after separation was an important issue for them. None of the fathers were in a situation when shared custody and taking responsibility for day-to-day care would be essential (in circumstances where the mother is either not available or not able to play such a role). The shared care arrangement and division of parenting days was either agreed upon with the mothers or decided by the family court. All the respondents pronounced strong commitment towards their children, putting parenting in the first place in their personal value scale. This commitment was mentioned by most of the respondents spontaneously during the discussion. One of the fathers for instance said:

“I would say that parenting is a priority in my life, before work and my relationship with my girlfriend. And I put it down there as number one and I work around that.”

It does not seem to be difficult to come up with reasons why fathers want to be ‘equal’ parents. The obvious one is that parents simply want to be with their children because of the child-parent bond and the relationship they have with their children. These are important reasons because not all parents are in contact with their children after separation or have contact only “once in a while”. In the majority of cases it is the father who becomes a secondary parent in terms of involvement in his children’s lives and “fathers’ contact and involvement with their children [...] diminish dramatically [after parental separation]” (Hoffman and Moon 2000, p.918) Respondents believed that children needed paternal input²⁸ and regular contact with their fathers and found shared care as a way for children to receive it:

“I was concerned because there are many kids that lose their father on a full time basis. It’s a tragedy they aren’t exposed to any man.”

²⁸ This attitude is in line with increasing awareness of the importance of fathers being present in their children’s lives (need for paternal input) described by McMahon (1999, p. 139): “What is the most often stressed in current discussions of fatherhood [...] is that children need their fathers. Plentiful expert opinion and research evidence is on hand to back up any commentator wishing to make this point.”

“The research quite clearly says that a young girl who has had a good relationship with her dad was connected and plenty of input is five time less likely to be a teenage mother.”

While equality in responsibilities was considered achievable after parental separation, parenting style was believed to be different between fathers and mothers, each providing a different example of the “role model”. Consequently, involvement of both parents after separation was seen as important to give children an opportunity to see and learn from both of the role models. Two respondents explained the differences in the following way:

“I’m only gonna be [name] dad and her mum can only be her mum. [...] I suppose you teach them from the male perspective. [...]

“I think me being a man that’s something that’s different [to the mother]. For [my son] just to experience a man being adult, that’s life.

Respondents mentioned various characteristics they believe are essential in being a good father. Some of the characteristics were related to emotional values such as giving love or simply being present, others to the practical side of parenting such as keeping children safe and healthy. All the respondents mentioned one aspect of their parenting style that distinguishes them from mothers; some respondents called it “masculinity”, some “male perspective”, some simply described it in the words “men are different”. Masculinity was mentioned as a characteristic that influences father’s parenting attitude and the effort they put into day-to-day care.²⁹ Respondents themselves were not convinced that it is something they can influence or even control. “*There are obvious genetic and social gender differences and they are expressed in a million of ways.[...] I give her [my daughter] my male energy*” Explained one of the respondents.

²⁹ Masculinity and femininity as qualities is acknowledged by ‘sex role theory’ claiming that “through socialisation [...] males and females are conditioned into appropriate roles of behaviour.” The socialisation process is connected to expectations males and females are about to experience. Acknowledging masculinity by individual men and conscious awareness of masculine qualities is seen as a result of socialisation and the masculine ideal men want to achieve (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003).

While roles and responsibilities were believed to be easily swapped or equalised after separation, masculinity and femininity were characteristics differentiating fathers and mothers as parents and making them irreplaceable.

Awareness of these differences raises the question: In which way they are expressed in every day life and in day-to-day care of children and how do these differences influence roles and responsibilities which are supposedly equal? When respondents were asked to give examples or explain how their masculinity (or male perspective) is expressed in their parenting style, the most common reaction was “*I don’t know*” or “*I’m not sure*” or “*We’re just different personalities*”. In fact, masculinity was not seen as a quality itself but as a source of qualities that are demonstrated in every aspect of fatherhood and form the masculine role model. Therefore thinking about masculine attitude without examples from everyday life led to vague and general statements like “*I give her [my daughter] my male energy*” or “*I think there is a major difference between men and women and [...] I can be very tender with my daughter but it’s in very masculine way*”. However, respondents recalled examples of rules, activities and ways of raising children that were different from the mothers’. Obviously having an opinion from only one of the parents cannot give us a clear picture of all the differences. But it can give us an idea in what respect fathers perceive themselves as being different in day-to-day care to the mothers.

All aspects that supposedly differentiated fathers from mothers were rather traditionally masculine, connected to activities and parenting styles usually attributed to men. It does not necessarily mean that all the differences in day-to-day care would be based on the traditional image of the masculine way of involvement in children’s lives. It can also mean that the cultural image of men and their ascribed characteristics were easier to recall after talking about masculinity than differences between the two households that are not related to gender differences.

One of the most common distinguishing points was time spent on physical activities. Respondents thought that they were the ones who tend to be more physically active with their children:

“I guess I’m the more physically active, do a lot of active things, walking around, running in the park, playing outside. Her mum is quite an arty type of person.”

“I think the physical side of things is definitely one that I’ve offered them.”

Some respondents considered their household rules to be less strict than the rules in the mothers’ households:

“I’m bit more kind of relaxed [...]. We definitely have less rules when they [the children] are here. We have rules here like no hitting, keeping safe and stuff but pretty much these guys can do what they like here and like their mother’s come a few times and been a bit disturbed by that, you know at dinner time, just because we were all just sit around talking, it’s not that formal.”

“I’m very permissive parent by some people’s standards”

Fewer rules were also combined with a wish to teach children how to be independent and successful in life:

“I’m too relaxed as a parent [...] I want [my child] to have lots of options. I like [my child] to have a real childhood, not being very disciplined about making her doing stuff”

“I spoke about independence more, like myself having the wish to support my daughter.”

“I was talking about some of the models at school and something about democracy, raising a democratic child. How to involve them in a decision making process.[...] Give them the feeling of responsibility as well as power.”

Masculinity and the masculine way of raising children was not put into relation with the traditional division of roles. Masculinity or femininity was not seen as a barrier to take full responsibility for all aspects of children’s lives after separation. Different parenting styles were associated with the abstract qualities that each of the parents can provide such as different views, different strategies to solve problems, teaching children to be a man or a woman:

“I believe women teach and learn from cooperating, if you know what I mean, cooperation with each other, they quite easily (learn) in a group situation. I think boys are little bit different, they have to be doing stuff, they have to learn from examples, they have to be shown and explained to do something before they’ll do it.”

4.1.3 Sharing Financial Support

While equality in care-giving roles and day-to-day care was assessed by the amount of parenting days, equality in financial support distribution had two aspects to be taken into account. First is correspondence of financial support and amount of parenting days each of the parents are responsible for as day-to-day care. Financial support and possible financial redistribution was believed to reflect the amount of parenting days each of the parents spent looking after the children. According to the respondents, when care giving and day-to-day care is equally distributed then breadwinning and financial support should be equally shared as well. In practice each parent takes care of every day expenses in his or her household and they share expenses overlapping a household. Chris who had a shared care arrangement for several years reported:

“When we had shared care that time we just had our own costs on the week that we were with the children and we would sometimes share things such as school uniforms or things like that”

Two different models of sharing expenses were chosen by the respondents – either sharing actual expenses for items overlapping common household costs or dividing items each parent is to buy. The same patterns of sharing expenses were identified by research on Canadian families practising shared care (Gill 2004). The outcome of both of these models is to be equally financially burdened.

A model of equal spending and financial support was not present in all the respondent’s households. Those who did not practice fifty percent shared care subsidised the mothers financially. James, Tony and Tim supported the mothers financially as an outcome of not being equally responsible for day-to-day care.

The second aspect taken into consideration when assessing equality in the financial support role is financial redistribution performed by the legal system. Significant differences between salaries can lead to financial redistribution (one of the parents has to financially support the other) even when a half time shared care arrangement is practiced. One of the respondents who had to subsidise his unemployed ex-partner explains:

“Basically if you do share care each partner is assessed as to their income and then you pay a proportion of your income to the other person.[...]”

He found it unfair as they were both equally responsible for day-to-day care and continued:

[...]But that’s sort of strange. It’s been quite stressful in terms of the fact that she [my ex-partner]’s getting paid the benefit which is not a lot and so she doesn’t have any to spare. I’m paying what I think is pretty substantial money to that revenue which is supposed to, which the government uses to help pay her benefit but if there’s a bill involved, you know, if there is expenses for the children [my ex-partner] is kind of saying ‘look I don’t have any money’ so I end up paying most of the bills as well as paying the child support. So I’m paying twice and in a way I feel like I’m paying twice. [...] I find it quite difficult because [my ex-partner] doesn’t see that her benefit has anything, any relationship at all, with the money that I pay in revenue and yet, so that money just sort of somehow gets out of my bank account and disappears or is not acknowledged and so when expenses come it’s like I’ve got no money so I’m gonna do, how would I deal with that?”

Matt did not have to subsidise his ex-partner but believed that the law system should more reflect the practice of shared parenting and allow the parents to share parent’s benefits. At the moment it is his ex-partner who is on the parent’s benefit and he does not have access to this money despite being a caregiver for the same amount of time. He felt he was being disadvantaged by the law:

“Because it’s just how it works and only one parent can be on it [parent’s benefit]. It seems pretty arbitrary I’m quite unsure about the law. [...] The law, according to like if you’re choosing to not have kids at day care and be with them and kind of getting excluded from working a forty hour week, you know, like the law, legally you have to arrange the set up so that one person is available for the family and one person is available to be at work. Totally in contrast [to shared parenting]. It changed last year or the year before I

think it was, shared parenting is more accessible, things like the family support or social welfare kind of thing that's a little bit behind.”

John, supposed that it is fair that mother of his child receives all the money from child support as she has to be responsible for the child in the summer season when he is out of town the majority of the time and cannot look after his child:

“She's down as the sole care giver or something like that. She has offered to share that [domestic purpose benefits] with me. It's very difficult I think to get an arrangement where the government would say 'OK we'll pay you half and half'. And because of the tour guiding I've always felt that evens it up a little bit if [my ex-partner] just gets that money and I don't.”

Tim had a lower income compared to his ex-partner and even though they shared every day expenses, his ex-partner was paying more. At the time of interview, he considered an option to become financially supported by her:

“We have an account, it's the only account that we've left and we both have access to it. [...] In terms of money, she's got the higher salary and mine would probably be half of what hers is. I'm looking into the process of going to child support, so she may end up paying me money [...] She's in the position when she would have to pay.”

Dividing financial responsibility was determined by the financial situation of each parent as well as government redistribution done out of the family (e.g. child support benefits). In this respect, respondents differed in the amount of responsibility they take for providing. Previous studies about traditionally arranged families brought financial support to the centre of attention when talking about fathers, arguing that the breadwinning role and time spent at work influence their involvement with the family. In this research, the traditional providing role was acknowledged by the respondents though rejected at the same time. In this respect, fathers in the sample had similar attitudes to fathers studied in dual career family research (Rost 2002). Dual career families, according to Rost, divide family duties according to the time each of the parents spend working outside of home. A similar way of thinking about equality in division of roles was recognisable in this research but taken the other way around. When responsibility for

day-to-day care is equally divided then financial support should be equally divided as well, according to the respondents. At the same time, such equality was not achievable due to different income levels of each of the parent and the legal redistribution system. Dual career families can alter between day-to-day care and providing and divide these responsibilities within a household. In shared care, both parents have to take responsibility for day-to-day care independent of income or working duties of each parent.

4.1.4 Decision Making Responsibility

As presented previously, day-to-day care and financial support were not always equally distributed between the parents. Interviews showed other aspects of parenting that must be taken into consideration when talking about responsibilities. We have learnt that every day decisions about children are made in the residence the children are currently staying. But there is also a variety of children's needs that must be fulfilled cooperatively and a variety of decisions that must be discussed and agreed upon by both of the parents. These decisions go beyond every day care; can be related to the children's future school they will attend or even shorter term decisions such as what after-school activities they will be involved in. Shared care should give both parents the same rights in making these types of decisions about children and at the same time expect parents to agree upon them. Responsibility in decision making and "having equal say" was considered an essential part of equal parenting. Some respondents did not recall any difficulties with making decisions together with their ex-partners in terms of having an equal say. In these cases decision-making about the children was often informal reflecting circumstances and wishes of both parents. Other respondents had to go through a process of negotiating and other respondents recalled situations or periods of time when they felt disqualified from having an equal say. One of them was Chris:

"That time we had a dispute about guardianship we have on and off disputes about child support. One of the issues is at what age to involve the children in negotiating access arrangements or holidays or things like that between us, you know. My position is that their mother and I should come to an agreement

and then discuss that with our children. It's her view at the moment that often she and the children should discuss matters and when they reach agreement they should come to me with the agreement."

4.2 Factors Influencing Division of Roles and Responsibilities

Various explanations have been used by scholars for division of roles and responsibilities within a family: Family history (Ivey and Yaktus 1996), attitudes of the parents (Segal 1990) (Cohen 1993) (Ivey and Yaktus 1996) (Ranson 2001) (Rost 2002), personal expectations (Cook et al. 2005), situational factors (Ivey and Yaktus 1996) or work duties (Cohen 1993) (Ranson 2001). Shared parenting is different from traditionally arranged families as it does not allow parents to divide responsibilities within the household. Equal responsibility for parenting and roles related to parenting was seen as a goal in the shared care situation. In reality such equality was conditional. Some respondents such as Mark or Matt expressed concerns about financial inequality; some respondents did not practise an arrangement when day-to-day care would be equally divided as a result of less than fifty percent of parenting days. However different respondents were in their family situation, factors influencing their responsibilities and roles were often similar. It is important to note that factors that had an impact on the division of roles and responsibilities need to be understood in relation to the respondents' family history and current situation and not as universal patterns applicable to everyone. I will present all relevant factors mentioned by the respondents and use examples to illustrate the ways these factors affected division of roles and responsibilities. But this does not mean that other respondents did not go through the same situation without it having an effect on their parenting roles. Respondents were not given a list of factors to comment on but were rather encouraged to explain and recall things that might have been relevant to their division of responsibilities or roles. Some factors are also dependent on one another. For example disagreement between parents after separation can lead to a family court process to decide about responsibilities. Also arrangement of custody for children had changed over time for most of the respondents, and factors influencing division of roles thus became unclear or too complicated to cover in some cases. But we

can identify factors that played some role in responsibility and role distribution after separation.

Factors suggested by the previous research projects mainly reflected traditionally arranged families. Nevertheless, the majority of the factors were also relevant to respondents in this research (e.g. attitudes and values, situational factors), some of them differed slightly (e.g. time spent working was not relevant but income and financial substantiality of each of the parents was) and some new ones were defined (responsibility and roles prior separation).

4.2.1 Attitudes and Values

Being equally responsible for children after separation is dependent on the willingness of the parents to enter into a shared care situation and their ability to agree on division of responsibilities. Shared parenting was considered the fairest arrangement after parental separation by the respondents and was appreciated for giving both mothers and fathers the same rights and obligations towards their children:

“I mean it’s generally for couples to set up [division of roles] for themselves. In the cases of separated parents I think the rights and responsibilities should be the same.”

“If there is no reason why the father and or mother shouldn’t share I believe that’s the way it should be to start with. To me it’s logical, it’s the best logical way.”

Preference of shared care to the other family arrangements was clearly expressed by all of the respondents. All believed that responsibilities should be the same for both of the parents.

Some of the respondents reported a negative attitude towards shared care from the mothers, which influenced the arrangement and consequently responsibilities within a family.

“I wanted that [half-time shared care] but [the mother] resisted that, and so, you know, she’s basically in a situation where she has more power, I mean, in terms of a parent. To get that shared care I would have to go through the family court and that would create no doubts acrimony which impacts on [...]

my daughter, so I'm not prepared really to rock the boat because I don't think it serves my relationship with [the] mother and in some ways, you know, if [the mother] would (be forced) to give equal care, [...], she would resent that and that would kind of, in some way kind of trickle down [my daughter] as well."

4.2.2 Law and a Family Court Decision

Three of the respondents from the sample took advantage of the family court as an institution to decide about custody for children after separation. All of them went through the family court in order to get a half time shared care arrangement because they were not in agreement on this issue with the mothers. Unwillingness of the mothers to have a shared care arrangement prevented the respondents from looking after the children fifty percent of the time. As we do not have the mothers' opinions or reasons for their objections towards shared care we can only speculate. Some reasons mentioned by the respondents were related to 'power issues' or a belief by the mothers that children are more secure with them. In fact, those fathers who used the family court did not find the disagreement the core factor defining the subsequent family arrangement and division of roles, but rather the family court process itself. Concern about their impartiality has been expressed during the interviews:

"[...] naturally for the court in its history and in its culture, the court will say well, a child should be with mum the majority of time and only some time with you."

"I battled for long time in the legal system trying to get my children and the system is very biased towards men.[...] I'm very lucky because I had all these records I needed like parent teachers meetings. [...] How she [the ex-partner] got it? She didn't need that information. I was one who had to provide it. I don't know why."

Two of the respondents were successful in the family court and achieved half-time shared care arrangement despite the mother's disagreement. One respondent was in the process of getting half-time custody at the time of the interview. Either way, family court was an institution influencing division of responsibilities and roles by its orders or suggestions.

Tim took responsibility for his daughter 5 days per fortnight at the time of interview. He reported he had never been in a relationship with the mother, never lived with her and therefore was not recognised as a guardian by the law when his daughter was born. In practise, he was excluded from the decision making process for her.

“In New Zealand, if you’re not living with the mother when the child is born you’re not counted as a guardian.”

In her early childhood, he agreed the daughter would stay at her mother’s. The main reason was the age of the daughter:

“No, when she was very little no [I didn’t want to have shared care], that’s hard because of feeding every few hours and all the rest of it. It’s certainly something that would be difficult to replace. That’s the problem with children when they are young [...]. You can’t have a child overnight because of the feeding.”

At the same time, he expected that the arrangement would change to shared care when the daughter got older but the mother objected:

“I thought that it would be a shared care arrangement, it didn’t occur to me that anything else would try to, that she [the mother] would try to stop it but she did.”

Eventually the mother found a part-time job and Tim could take responsibility for his daughter on these days, she had objections to “full shared care” and, at the time of interview, Tim was going through the family court in order to get full shared care.

Chris’s responsibilities and roles within the family had changed several times, from breadwinner to the main caregiver and to a shared care arrangement. His ex-partner did not agree with a shared care arrangement and Chris decided to negotiate with her with the help of the family court:

“She asked for a protection order and took the protection order against me and a result of the protection order, I was surprisingly not allowed to have contact with either her or the children. [...] we had a mediation conference in family court [...] and then we went to a shared care situation.”

The family court also advised him and his ex-partner to take counselling sessions in order to better arrange responsibilities between them:

Chris: "I've asked family court to take that matter and they called counselling. That we should go counselling about those issues."

Moderator: "That you should agree there on what's gonna happen on holidays and"

Chris: "Yep"

Phil was dissatisfied with having his children less than half time and went to a family court in order to have his parenting time increased:

'Well, it wasn't that easy [to get half time shared care arrangement], initially it was it started as me having the children every second weekend and then I increased that through negotiation to have them every weekend. [...] My goal had always been to have it shared fifty-fifty. It's been a bit of battle. I ended up in family court and a year, maybe 14 months in family court trying to placate my ex-partner to the point when she was willing to share the children a little bit more.'

Two respondents reported they preferred to avoid the family court and compromise in their requirements to obtain "fifty-fifty" arrangement because they did not believe in its impartiality:

"You'll be lucky under the court if you go through that process of getting your child for once a fortnight."

"I don't believe that the family court is very supportive of shared care and (.) they are not really supportive of men and their family responsibilities, they are less supportive than of women taking their responsibilities."

4.2.3 Financial Dependency

The legal system also regulates financial distribution or redistribution. Providing responsibility is therefore not always distributed equally. In cases, when one of the

parents is unemployed or has a lower salary than the other, the other one subsidises him or her. As we saw in the chapter about division of financial support, some respondents appeared in such situations. Interviews showed that financial redistribution is a result of broader circumstances. One such circumstance is unequal parenting time and is compensated for by financial redistribution. The other circumstance that can be recognised from interviews is division of roles prior to separation.

4.2.4 Roles and Responsibilities Prior to Separation

Roles and responsibilities in both-parents families give space to division of roles; one parent can be more responsible for one aspect of parenting, for example nurturing and day-to-day care, while the other is a provider responsible for financial support. Separation and shared care parenting can be a catalyst for the division of roles to be changed or altered. Changes are achieved mostly by communication and an ability to agree on new divisions of roles and family arrangements, done either with the help of government institutions like the family court or by the parents themselves. Some respondents reported that division of roles prior to separation interfered with agreements between the two parents after separation.

Phil reported himself as a person who was responsible for financial providing before separation while the mother was at home looking after their daughter. He did not have shared care straight after separation but visited his daughter regularly at the mother's place. He felt disadvantaged after separation because of the mother being the main caregiver. His daughter became "closer" to her:

"Because I was the one who was working. I would've been quite happy to be home being a dominant parent. So when the things broke down I said well I didn't have much of choice and well."

The other factor for him not having a full half-time arrangement was the age of his daughter. He wanted to participate in parenting more after separation but he thought he was excluded from it because his daughter was "too young". He appreciated though that he could see her more after separation than most other fathers:

“I think I saw less of my daughter[prior separation] because even though I don’t have her full time I do have her. I think, I’ve heard from some guys they are close to the kids because, I think it was often because they were older.”

He gradually managed to get 4 parenting days per fortnight. Even though he wanted more parenting days, his daughter was emotionally dependent on her mother and did not want to spend more time apart. His breadwinning responsibility, how he perceived it, was responsible to some extent for him not being equally involved in day-to-day care after separation.

James, similarly to Phil, was in a situation where his child was being breastfed when he separated with the mother. She was the main caregiver and after separation he was put into a “liable parent” category. His ex-partner was on domestic purposes benefit and he subsidised that through the legal system:

“[...] when I split with [the mother], she was still being breast fed, so I mean I couldn’t have her overnight and stuff like that, she was still quite little too. [...] But because I was in a liable parent category of course the financial side had to be regulated and my ex-partner was on the domestic purposes benefit, so when that happens you automatically, the IRD collect your money. So we had to be involved with the system [...].”

Division of roles was perceived by these respondents as a contributing factor to not being able to equalise responsibilities after separation. When asked why they were not involved in nurturing role before separation the major reason was seen as the age of the child and necessity of one of the parents to be a breadwinner and support the family financially. The same explanation for parents not being able to equalise roles was presented by Segal (1990). According to her, this is partly a consequence of women being less well paid than men; though the other consideration would be a lack of willingness of men to change. In this respect, traditional division of roles was acknowledged and experienced by James and Tony. At the same time, the reason for the traditional division of roles was found in cultural conditioning and male role model image:

“[...] our cultural conditioning and our expectations of the male roles in society. So men are expected to go out and provide and still do, often at the expense of their parenting and I think the stereotypical images of men portrayed in the media are really negative. You have ads you know with fathers trying to change nappies and things they can't, so men are generally either portrayed to be psychopaths or useless, you know? There are very few models of men as, you know, kind of caring, compassionate warriors, fathers, you know. It's mostly, you know, psychopaths or idiots. You know emotionally distant.”

4.2.5 Situational Factors

Some of the parents appeared at a stage in their lives when they did not want to take care of their children on a full-time or a part-time basis. These situations were connected to changes in the life of one of the parents:

“We agreed that I would have them full-time and the reason for that was largely that my ex-wife [...] wanted time to sort out issues in her own life and so for period of [...] I had almost exclusive care of the children and she'd have the occasional night with the children in her own home.”

Another respondent also found himself in a situation when he did not want to take responsibility for care of his child:

“I wasn't quite as capable of having [my child] all the time [...] I was quite depressed it was very difficult to feel like I could do an adequate parenting job. So it was kind of parenting but with support.”

5. Conclusion

This thesis examined responsibilities and roles of fathers who practise a shared care arrangement in order to get a better understanding of how traditionally perceived women's and men's tasks are divided between the father and the mother after separation. Special focus was given to gender equality in responsibilities and roles traditionally ascribed to women and men to examine in which aspects, fathers who practice shared

care can be seen as 'new fathers'. The previous research projects on fatherhood indicated that in the traditionally arranged families (two parent families) it is typically the mother who takes responsibility for private sphere duties such as nurturing or domestic labour while the father's role lies in providing and financial support (Segal 1990) (Cohen 1993) (Ranson 2001). Ranson (2001) identified several strategies of how fathers deal with division of roles: the traditionalistic ('conform') group of fathers who are committed to work and the breadwinning role, they can be 'technically present' in the family but 'functionally' are missing; 'active' fathers who set up their working life around parenting to some extent, spend regular time with their children but perceive their role in breadwinning; fathers (challengers) whose attitude is to be 'involved' in the children's life and are dissatisfied with the traditional imagery of fatherhood. Other scholars observed that reasons preventing equal division of responsibilities or greater involvement of the fathers in the nurturing role can be family history (Ivey and Yaktus 1996), attitudes of the parents (Segal 1990) (Cohen 1993) (Ivey and Yaktus 1996) (Ranson 2001) Rost, 2002), personal expectations (Cooke et al. 2005), situational factors (Ivey and Yaktus 1996) or work duties (Cohen 1993) (Ranson 2001). Overall, observing fathers in the traditionally arranged families brought scepticism to the discussion about the existence of the 'new father'. 'New fathers' are supposed to take responsibility for the nurturing aspect of parenting, are involved in the family and prioritise children related responsibilities over work related responsibilities. For instance Cohen (1993) observed that while the traditional imagery of the father-breadwinner is moving towards father's greater involvement in children's lives, in practise fathers are still more often breadwinners than caregivers and are less involved with their children than the mothers.

Studying fathers who practise shared care arrangements, and thus have regular parenting days on which they are responsible for their children, brings new challenges to the discussion about the 'new father'. In the shared care arrangement division of responsibilities between the mother and the father is not clearly separated by traditional women's and men's tasks. Participants of this research showed a willingness to equally divide responsibilities and refused traditionalistic division of roles. Fathers and mothers are, according to the respondents, obligate to obtain both breadwinning and nurturing roles after separation, if the number of parenting days is equally distributed between

them. No matter how responsibilities were distributed prior to separation, shared parenting is built on equality and all differences are supposed to disappear according to the respondents. Equality, however, did not mean 'substitutability' as each parent brings certain 'qualities' and role models to their children's lives, namely 'masculinity' and 'femininity'; role division and equal responsibility for both traditionally women's and men's task was perceived as an inevitable part of shared care arrangement. Fathers' egalitarian attitude towards equal division of roles and responsibilities and belief in gender equality was already observed by the previous research studies and was proved to be not fully followed in practise. Singleton and Maher's analysis (2004) of couples showed that traditionalistic division of roles often deepen after the first born child regardless of attitudes prior to parenthood. Respondents in this sample, however, proved to be responsible for day-to-day care during their 'parenting days'. They were also able to arrange their working time around parenting, not the other way around. Their approach was to avoid or not even consider getting help from the mother while the children were in their custody. Parenting days were taken as days to be primarily a nurturer, to satisfy all the children's needs before work duties. Even those respondents whose ex-partners were unemployed or less work loaded, reported that what happened on their parenting days was fully under their responsibility. Some of the fathers compensated a loss of their working time on the remaining (out-of-parenting) days. Fathers in the sample were not 'active' or 'involved', they were 'responsible'. In this respect the amount of day-to-day care and the nurturing role was entirely dependent on the number of parenting days. Respondents also believed that financial support must be shared and complement the distribution of parenting days. Those fathers who had less than a fifty percent arrangement were willing to subsidise their ex-partners; those who practised fifty percent shared care were strongly for equal division of expenses for their children. But responsibility for providing was also dependent on each of the parent's substantiality. When income of the parents significantly differed then the government equalised this difference by redistribution - one of the parents subsidised the other.

This research has shown that fathers who practise shared care can be seen as 'new fathers' in the respect of being involved in responsibility for nurturing and day-to-day care. Other aspects such as a positive attitude towards equal division of responsibilities,

or willingness to set up work around parenting, indicates that fathers in the sample can be called 'new fathers'. Each of the respondents took a different amount of responsibility for either financial support or day-to-day care with the mothers. As suggested earlier, distribution of responsibilities and roles was dependent on number of parenting days and financial substantiality of each of the parents. But the underlying factor influencing this distribution was attitude and willingness to share responsibilities. The shared care arrangement would simply not have been possible without such an attitude. Nevertheless, we have to raise the question, if equal division of responsibilities is a goal (attitude) or rather a way to be a part of the children's lives after separation. It is questionable to what extent this attitude is conditionally determined by separation. A wish to be a part of the children's life can be the prime reason for willingness to take equal responsibility for both breadwinning and nurturing role as an inevitable part of 'being involved'. The majority of the fathers in the sample also reported to be breadwinners prior to separation. This indicates that changing conditions (separation) also changed roles and responsibilities with fathers being more involved to the nurturing role. It is, however, not clear what the restrictive condition preventing fathers achieving desirable distribution of roles and responsibilities was. Did the respondents change their attitude from traditional to egalitarian after separation? Or were they restricted from achieving equality because of other circumstances during the relationship with the mother of their children? The respondents tended to perceive the relationship as the restrictive factor, even though some respondents mentioned that they were satisfied with being a breadwinner prior to separation. Two respondents were also never in a stable relationship with the mothers of their children and expressed a wish to be equally responsible for their children. To confidently answer those questions and to identify patterns common to fathers who practise shared care (rather than individuals, as in this sample) more interviews would have to be conducted. Also interviews with both fathers and mothers could clarify what particular responsibilities are performed by either the father or the mother.

This research has shown that studying shared care arrangements can bring new perspectives to the discussion of the 'new father'; it has shown that attitudes towards division of roles and responsibilities can be changed by conditions. Thus studying the relationship of conditions to attitudes could be an interesting field for further

examination. Studying masculinity could also be a further step towards a better understanding of the fathers' perception of their roles within a family. This research indicates that fathers' belief in their 'masculine' qualities drove their wish to be a part of the children's life. The importance of decision making responsibility ('having an equal say') and the legal practice became important factors influencing responsibility after separation. These factors were not relevant or simply not taken into account when studying responsibilities and roles in traditionally arranged families but were present in the shared care parents' division of roles.

6. Summary

6.1 Summary in English

'New father' is a term used in the current literature to describe recent (and still ongoing) changes in the amount of the fathers' involvement in private sphere duties such as nurturing or domestic labour as well as changing cultural imagery of current fatherhood (shift from traditionalistic imagery of a 'distant' breadwinner to a nurturing aspect of parenting). Despite scholars' agreement that fathers have 'changed' in the past century, the existence of the 'new father' has been questioned. Research on fatherhood revealed that fathers are more involved in traditionally women's tasks (nurturing, domestic labour) than fathers from the previous generations, but are far from being equally responsible for these tasks with the mothers (Cohen 1993) (Goodwin 1999) (Ranson 2001) (Singleton and Maher 2004).

However, studying non-traditionally arranged families proved to be significant in examining fathers' roles and responsibilities within a family. A change in conditions (e.g. mother becomes the main provider for the family) can change traditional division of labour between women and men within a household promoting equalisation in matters of providing vs. nurturing (Rost 2002).

In this thesis, fathers who practised shared care were focussed upon to determine their actual responsibilities within a family and to decide if and in which respect they can be called 'new fathers'. 8 in-depth interviews were held in New Zealand in 2006 with

fathers who had their children in a shared custody arrangement to find out about their actual day-to-day life, roles they take within a family (and importantly in relationship to their children), attitudes and values and family history. Analysis of the interviews has shown important differences between this group of fathers and fathers presented in previous studies dealing with fatherhood.

Firstly, fathers who practice shared care can be seen as ‘new fathers’ in regard to being involved in responsibility for nurturing and day-to-day care. Secondly other aspects such as a positive attitude towards equal division of responsibilities, or willingness to set up work around parenting indicated that this group of fathers does not rely on the mother to be responsible for these traditionally mothers’ tasks. Distribution of responsibilities and roles was mostly dependent on number of parenting days the children stay at each of the parents’ and financial substantiality of each of the parents. Underlying factors were attitudes and willingness to share responsibilities and in some cases also the ruling of the family court on post-divorce arrangements.

This research has shown that studying shared care arrangements can bring new perspectives to the discussion of the ‘new father’; it has shown that attitudes towards division of roles and responsibilities can be changed by conditions. Thus studying the relationship of conditions to attitudes could be an interesting field for further examination.

6.2 Summary in Czech

Výraz ‘nový otec’ je v literatuře používán pro otce, kteří jsou více zainteresovaní do výchovy svých dětí a starost o domácnost a zastávají více „ženských rolí“ než otcové „tradiční“ jejichž hlavní role vůči rodině je ji finančně zabezpečit. Teorie ‘nového otce’ se také často objevuje ve spojitosti s celkovou změnou kulturní představy o otcovství – od tradičního ‘distančovaného’ otce k otci ‘novému’, který pečuje o své děti a stará se o domácnost. Ačkoliv málokdo pochybuje o tom, že otcové současné generace jsou více zainteresovaní do výchovy svých dětí než předešlé generace otců, existence ‘nového otce’ je často zpochybňována. Výzkumy, které se změnou rolí otců v rámci rodiny zabývají, ukazují, že otcové obvykle nejsou zodpovědní za chod domácnosti či péči o děti

ve stejné míře jako matky a (stejně jako otcové tradiční) cítí svoji primární odpovědnost ve finančním zabezpečení rodiny (Cohen 1993) (Goodwin 1999) (Ranson 2001) (Singleton and Maher 2004).

Výzkumy rodin 'netradičně' uspořádaných však naznačují, že k podstatným změnám v rozdělení rolí mezi partnery může dojít společně se změnou objektivních podmínek a rodinné situace (například výzkum rodin ve kterých matka měla vyšší příjem než otec ukázal, že v těchto rodinách dochází k rovnostářskému rozdělení rolí mezi ženu a muže, tedy rozdělení nezávislé na 'genderu' ale na časových možnostech každého z partnerů (Rost 2002).

Ve své diplomové práci jsem se zaměřila na skupinu otců, kteří mají děti ve střídavé péči (tedy na otce v 'netradičním' rodinném uspořádání) s cílem zjistit, jaká je jejich role v rámci rodiny, za jaké aspekty rodičovství jsou odpovědní a zda je můžeme považovat za otce 'nové'. V rámci výzkumu bylo dotázáno 8 otců z Nového Zélandu, kteří měli alespoň jedno dítě ve střídavé péči. Analýza hloubkových rozhovorů ukázala výrazné rozdíly mezi touto skupinou otců a otci prezentovanými předešlými výzkumy.

Otcové, kteří se výzkumu zúčastnili, byli odpovědní za každodenní chod domácnosti a péči o děti v době, kdy děti byly v jejich péči. Otcové se nespolehali na matky svých dětí v každodenní péči o děti, byli otevření rovnému rozdělení typicky ženských a mužských rolí a byli ochotni přizpůsobit svůj pracovní život povinnostem spojených s péčí o děti. V tomto ohledu tak můžeme tyto otce považovat za otce 'nové'. Rozdělení rolí v těchto rodinách bylo především závislé na počtu rodičovských dní a míře finanční nezávislosti každého z rodičů. Podmínkou pro střídavou péči pak byla ochota k rovnému rozdělení rolí a v některých případech i rozhodnutí rodinného soudu (family court).

Tento výzkum ukázal, že změna rodinného uspořádání může změnit i rozdělení rolí mezi mužem a ženou v rámci rodiny. Výzkum rodin, které mají děti ve střídavé péči a rodin, kde došlo ke změně objektivních podmínek se tak může stát důležitou součástí diskuze o 'nových otcích'.

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Appendix A - Interview Guide

Interview should be semi-structured covering the main sections suggested below. Questions under each section are for orientation purposes only and will vary due to discussion flow.

Introduction (*warm-up*):

- Can you tell me something about you? Occupation, age, hobbies, family status etc.

Family Background (*To learn about the respondent's family background – children, partner, ex-partner, etc*):

- How many children do you have? How old are they? Sex/characteristics?
- Do they live in the same household as you? How often are they with you (how much time a week/month/year)?
- Who else is responsible for your children? Who else looks after them? Your partner, their mother, grandparents, baby sitter?
- Who else lives with you in your household? Are you married, in partnership?

Custody arrangement (*To understand how the shared custody is actually applied and run. Aspects influencing the practice*):

- Can you describe how the custody of children is actually arranged in your case? Can you describe the situation?
- How often do you look after the children? Which days/weeks?
- What about holidays/birthdays/Christmas?
- Why is it arranged this way? (*To understand what aspects influence the arrangement – e.g. time flexibility, special responsibilities*)
- Has the arrangement changed any time since divorce? How? Why?
- What about situations you/or your ex-partner can't look after the kids e.g. can't pick up the kids from school certain day, can't take them for a weekend. Does it

happen sometimes? When? What was the situation? How did you solve it? *(to understand who from the partners is more flexible and why)*

Decision making process: *(to understand motivations for shared custody)*

- Why did you personally decide to arrange the custody this way after divorce? Can you describe the decision making process? What factors (barriers) were taken into consideration? What other arrangements were discussed/taken into consideration?
- Who came up with the idea of shared custody? What did you personally think about it? What went through your mind? What were your worries? What about the mother of the children? What did she think about it? How did you both discuss it?
- Did someone else (lawyer, friends, family) helped you with the arrangement? How? What did they say/ recommend?
- What do you think about shared custody now? Has your opinion on shared custody changed? How?

Ideal:

- Are you satisfied with the arrangement? Why/why not?
- How would you like it to be? What would be the ideal situation for you in terms of custody of children?

General opinion on shared custody *(To understand respondent's opinion on share custody now and 'before' and overall attitude towards post-divorced arrangements. To learn about general advantages and disadvantages of shared custody as perceived by the respondents)*

- Imagine there are people who have never heard of shared custody.
- If you were to explain to them what shared custody means, how would you describe it to them? What would you say based on your own experience? Advantages/disadvantages?
- Would you recommend them to make the arrangements the same way if they get divorced? Why? Under which circumstances?

Responsibilities

Before divorce:

- If we get back in time, when you, your children and their mother lived together in one household. What did your typical day look like?
- Let's now talk about responsibilities. You as a parent have responsibility for your children, nevertheless some people believe that each of parent usually takes responsibility for different aspects of children's lives. How is it in your case?
- What were you responsible for in the household? What was your wife responsible for?
- How did you arrange everyday activities? Why this way?
- How much time did you/wife spend with your kids? What did you used to do with them?
- How did you/wife take care of them?
- What housework did you/wife do? How often? Why you/wife?
- Who was responsible for the budget in your household? Why?
- *(other questions to be asked to find out how responsibilities were shared/not shared)*

After divorce:

- How did this change after divorce? In which way is it different now?
- Did you take some new responsibilities? Did mother of your children take some new responsibilities? What responsibilities? Why?
- Who took the responsibilities after divorce?
- How does your typical day look like when the children are around? What do you do during the typical week day/ weekend?
- If new partner: How did it change with your new partner?

Fatherhood

Values

- Overall, if you were to imagine the ideal father, how would you describe him? What characteristics would he have?

- Are there any barriers in society that prevent fathers being an ideal father you've just described? What are the barriers?
- What does it mean to be a father in this society?

Responsibilities

- In your opinion what should be the main fathers' responsibilities in terms of raising children? Does it differ from mothers' responsibilities? How?

Appendix B – Diploma Thesis Proposal

TEZE DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

Bc. Julie Dlasková

Konzultant práce: Mgr. Ivan Vodochodský

Předpokládaný název: Vliv střídavé péče na role otců v rámci rodiny

Střídavá péče o děti je založena na stejné míře odpovědnosti obou rodičů za emocionální i materiální zabezpečení svých dětí a jejím cílem je umožnit rozvedeným párům rovný přístup k výchově dětí. Takové uspořádání ve svém právním výkladu neukládá ani jednomu z rodičů větší míru odpovědnosti či povinnosti jak tomu je zvykem v případě jiných právních forem rodinného uspořádání po rozvodu rodičů (ve většině případů jsou děti svěřovány do péče matky).

Ženy jsou tradičně ty, které se starají o výchovu, zastávají „pečovatelskou“ roli v rámci rodiny, zatímco muži zastávají roli „živitelskou“ a rodinu zabezpečují finančně. Výzkumy ukazují, že ačkoliv ženy i muži mají snažší přístup do privátní i veřejné sféry, „tradiční“ rozdělení rolí je v domácnostech stále realitou (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001, McMahon 1999, Ranson 2001, Morgan 1996). Rodiče rozvedení zase ve většině případů nemají rovnocenný přístup ke svým potomkům a k výchově svých dětí. Střídavá péče,

založena na rovném rozdělení rolí, by teoreticky měla přispět ke změně tradičního uspořádání ve prospěch přijímání větší odpovědnosti za různé oblasti při výchově dětí. Ve své diplomové práci se zaměřím právě na změnu těchto rolí a to u otců, kteří vychovávají své děti v rámci institutu střídavé péče. Otce jsem si vybrala záměrně, protože jsou to právě oni, kteří jsou v takové situaci „netradičně“ postaveni před pečovatelskou úlohu.

Ve své práci budu vycházet především z literatury, která se zabývá přeměnou forem otcovství a teorií „nového otce“. Výraz nový otec je v literatuře používán pro otce, kteří jsou více zainteresovaní do výchovy svých dětí a zastávají více „ženských rolí“ než otcové „tradiční“. Nicméně neexistuje konsensus, do jaké míry musí být otec zainteresován aby se stal otcem „novým“. Stanford (1998) například uvažuje o změně forem otcovství a „novém otcovství“ v souvislosti s časem, který otcové tráví se svou rodinou: „Je stále více mužů, kteří se vzdají své práce ve prospěch rodiny nebo změní své pracovní návyky tak, aby nebyli archetypálními distancovanými otci, kteří jsou doma pouze o víkendech.“ Nebo za „zainteresovaného“ otce můžeme považovat takového otce, který „je zainteresován do každodenní rodičovské péče a uvědomuje si její důležitost“ (Palm, 1993). Ve své práci vysvětlím, že nový otec by měl být definován v širším smyslu, ne podle míry zainteresovanosti ale podle míry odpovědnosti, kterou za výchovu dětí má. „Zainteresovanost otců“ je často chápána jako počet hodin, které otec stráví se svými dětmi (např. Hoffman 1999). Důležitý je však nejenom čas ale i kvalita péče v tomto čase a míra odpovědnosti. Je rozdíl mezi časem stráveným koukáním na televizi či hraním venku a stejným časem povídáním si s dětmi či obstaráváním každodenní péče (Marsiglio 2000).

Představím výzkumy, které se aspektem odpovědnosti při péči o děti zabývají. Některé z nich existenci „nových otců“ vyvracejí (Beck 1995, Ranson 2001), některé se naopak přiklání k názoru, že někteří otcové jsou skutečně odpovědní za výchovu svých dětí natolik, že je můžeme považovat za „nové otce“ (Rost 2002). Pomocí hloubkových rozhovorů s otci, kteří na sebe dobrovolně vzali odpovědnost za výchovu svých dětí, tedy s otci, kteří mají děti ve střídavé péči, se pak pokusím zjistit, zda v jejich případech můžeme hovořit o „nových“ otcích.

Sběr dat provedu na Novém Zélandě, kde v posledních letech probíhá vládní kampaň prosazující střídavou péči jako rovnocenné rodinné uspořádání po rozvodu rodičů. Překvapivě ale neexistují přesné statistiky o tom, kolik dětí žije po rozvodu rodičů ve střídavé péči. Callister (2006) upozorňuje, že dotazníky používané ke zjišťování rodinného uspořádání zjednodušují a plně nereflektují reálné rodinné uspořádání. Například děti, které tráví většinu času u matky, jsou ve statistikách vedeny jako by neměly otce. Přitom jejich otcové se mohou podílet na jejich výchově a každodenní péči až z 50%. „Významná část otců kteří se starají o své děti tak zůstane [ve statistikách] ‘neviditelná’” (Callister, 2006). Pokud jsou děti ve střídavé péči, rodiče jsou ve většině výzkumů (např. i při sčítání lidu) požádáni vybrat toho z nich, u kterého děti tráví více nocí. Přitom za střídavou péči lze považovat i situaci, kdy u jednoho z rodičů tráví 40 a u druhého 60% času. Předpokládá se však, že přibližně 5-10% dětí žije v rodinném uspořádání, které lze považovat za střídavou péči (New Zealand Families Today, 2004).

Hlavní otázky výzkumu:

- Jaký vliv má střídavá péče na role otců v rámci rodiny a na odpovědnost vůči dětem? (Důraz na změnu ve vykonávání typicky ženských a mužských rolí – „pečovatelská“ vs. „živitelská“.)
- Jaké jsou hlavní příčiny (faktory) změn rolí v rámci rodiny a odpovědnosti v rodině? (Co vede otce ke změně rolí v rámci rodiny?)
- Jakým způsobem jsou role rozdělené mezi matku a otce? (Rozdílný přístup obou rodičům ke zdrojům – např. příjem, čas - může mít vliv na rozdělení rolí).

Metodologie:

Jako metodu sběru dat použiji hloubkové rozhovory s otci, kteří vychovávají alespoň jedno dítě v rámci institutu střídavé péče. Rozhovory budou částečně strukturované zaměřené na biografické vyprávění (změny v průběhu života) a změnu postojů a hodnot.

Předpokládaná osnova:

- Východiska výzkumu (teorie “nového otce”, společnosti “bez otců”, výsledky jiných, podobných výzkumů)
- Změny rodičovské role otců (historická perspektiva, současná situace, bariéry atp.)
- Důležité pojmy výzkumu (odpovědnost v rodině, nové formy rodinného uspořádání po rozvodu – např. nová partnerka, faktory ovlivňující role, které otec zastává v rámci rodiny – ideologie, zdroje, časová vytíženost. A další)
- Cíle výzkumu
- Metodologie
- Výsledky
- Závěr

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