CASH AND/OR CARE: DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES OF FATHERHOOD IN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

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Abstract

The research deals with the discourses on fatherhood prevalent in contemporary Ukraine and the way they construct actual practices of fathering. In particular, it addresses the questions of what image of proper fatherhood is promoted by the state, to what extent it is influenced by the state-socialist legacy and new Western discourses on "involved fatherhood", and what the role of the state gender politics for shaping the existing practices and experiences of fathers is.

I argue that the process of construction of the "new" father in Ukraine has been influenced by a number of factors, including the Soviet legacy in the system of the social provision, economic development of the country, and the ideas of modernity and Europeanness. As a result, the state discourse on fatherhood integrates two competing images – a traditional view on the primary role of a father as breadwinner combined with ideas of involved fatherhood.

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Introduction

The family, childhood, motherhood and
fatherhood are under the protection of the State.
(Constitution of Ukraine 1996, Article 51)

Fathers entered the official policy agenda in Ukraine in the mid-1990s when the recognition of their parental rights was seen to be an important step towards gender equality in the country. A decade later, government engaged into a new project – promotion of "conscious fatherhood" – aimed at raising men's involvement with their children, which was understood both as their duty and right. But are Ukrainian men ready to shoulder the duties of fatherhood? And what prevents them from full enjoyment of their rights?

The aim of this research is to study the discourses on fatherhood prevalent in contemporary Ukraine and the way they construct actual practices of fathering. In particular, I will address the questions of what image of proper fatherhood is promoted by the state, to what extent it is influenced by the state-socialist legacy and new Western discourses on "involved fatherhood", and what the role of the state gender politics for shaping the existing practices and experiences of fathering is.

I will study the construction of fatherhood through the state politics in the context of post-Soviet Ukraine. I will argue that the process of construction of the "new" father in Ukraine has been influenced by a number of factors, including the Soviet legacy in the system of the social provision, economic development of the country, and the ideas of modernity and Europeanness. As a result, the state discourse on fatherhood integrates two competing images – a traditional view on the primary role of a father as breadwinner combined with ideas of involved fatherhood.

However, the notion of "involved fatherhood" is complex and changing in itself. Lupton and Barclay pointed out that the idea of a "new" and "involved" fatherhood has been

reappearing in the experts' literature from time to time since the nineteenth century, however, it implied different "involvement" ranging from moral supervision in Victorian England to providing a masculine role-model for both boys and girls in the 1930s (1997: 40). That is why before engaging with the question of the state influence on the practices of fathering, I will address the question of what involvement the "conscious fatherhood" presumes.

It is generally accepted that after the collapse of the socialist bloc gender roles in the family and society in the post-state socialist countries have been renegotiated (Ashwin 2000; Kukhterin 2000). However, the studies of the new gender relations focused on the "great retreat" in gender equality in the public sphere and the neo-traditionalist discourse that advocated the return to the woman's role of mother and housewife (Ashwin and Bowers 1997; Siklova 1993). Little has been written on the new definition of man and masculinity, and especially on the place of fatherhood in the image of the "new" man. With the exception of the case of East Germany, where the radical changes in the state politics of fatherhood introduced in the new Lander after the unification have been studied thoroughly (Ostner 2002: 150), fatherhood in the state socialist context and especially changes that took place during the transition period remain largely neglected.

By placing the focus on men and their role of fathers this study can contribute to better understanding of changes in gender politics in post-socialist countries in general, as well as of the redistribution of power within the family and between the new state and a citizen after the fall of the socialist bock. The analysis of the politics of fatherhood in a broader context of family and gender roles may contribute to understanding of how men and women are differently positioned in relation to the state and market.

Following Hobson and Morgan's definition, I understand the term *fatherhood* as socio-cultural coding of men as fathers that involves certain discourses and practices which define the rights and obligations as well as the status of fathers (2002: 10).

The theoretical framework will draw on the body of literature that addresses the question of the interrelation between the state and gender and discusses the ways in which different states both form and are formed by gender relations. Recent studies have recognized that the system of state welfare provision shapes gender relations in social and private spheres either contributing to higher gender equality or sharpening the division between separate male (social) and female (private) domains. At the same time, gender relations prevailing in society are seen as affecting the choice of the welfare state policies[1] (Bergman and Hobson 2002; Lewis 1992; Mosesdottir 1995). However, these mutual influences of social provision and gender regimes have been studied mainly from the perspective of women and their opportunities to combine motherhood and paid work; men, fatherhood and fathering are mainly included as a secondary aspect of analysis. This study may make a contribution to the developing area of studies on masculinities and gender relations in general.

In Chapter One I will discuss theories on gender and welfare states and the ways men are embedded in them. It will provide a framework for the analysis of the reciprocal influences of the welfare systems and distribution of social productive and reproductive work along gender lines. I will also address the question of the dynamics of changes in gender relations triggered by shifts in welfare system.

In Chapter Two I take a diachronic perspective on the development of politics of fatherhood in Ukraine since 1991 and ask how this process was affected by economic changes and discourses on gender equality and European integration. In the last part, the image of "conscious fatherhood" and the way it has been promoted by the state is discussed.

In Chapter Three I present findings of my interview-based research on the practices of fathering in contemporary Ukraine. I explore how young men cope with the contradictory

[1] *The welfare state* refers to "the interventions by the state in the civil society to alter social and market forces" (Orloff 1993: 304). It comprises a set of social assistance and insurance programs, universal citizenship entitlements, and public services.

images of fatherhood supported by the state politics and what discourses are the most formative for their practices of fathering.

1. Methodology

1.1. Discourse Analysis

The study consists of two parts which are based on different sets of data and involve different methodologies – text analysis and interviewing. In the first part, I am analyzing the state discourses on fatherhood using the example of the new manual on child care *Encyclopedia for Parents* by Masalitina (2006) which is published and distributed among all mothers as a part of the state program "baby's package".

A number of feminist scholars have argued that popular child-care manuals are part of a state discourse on motherhood and construct the image of what a proper mother should be like (Chernyaeva 2000; Ehrenreich and English 1979; Grant 1998). Lupton and Barclay have a similar observation concerning the correlations between the dominant state discourse on fatherhood and the images presented in the expert literature on parenting (1997: 35). The fact that the manual *Encyclopedia for Parents* has been distributed as a part of a state-run project makes its connection with the dominant state discourses on motherhood and fatherhood even more visible.

I use the term *discourse* in the meaning of the ways in which phenomena and practices of social reality are both represented and constructed through written, oral or visual texts. Thus I use textual analysis viewing the language as "a *social practice* which actively orders and shapes people's relation to their social world" (Tonkiss 1998: 249). I place the analysis of the images constructed in the child-care manual in a broader social context and look into the state politics on fatherhood – changes in the family law and custody regulations, family support payments, parental leave, etc.

To identify the image of fatherhood promoted in the manual I look for the instances and context of a usage of the words *father*, *husband*; *partner* when used to refer to a male subject; *parents* and more dubious plural form of the personal pronoun "you" (*vy*) which can

refer to both parents (you - father and mother) or to be a polite form of address to one person (you – father or mother). I also paid attention to the visual images illustrating different activities connected with child care.

The text analysis of the manuals should help to specify what the new "involved father" stands for in the state discourse and how it is reconciled with the post-Soviet discourse on a "new" man.

To supplement these data, I included an analysis of some documents, namely the Family Code that was adopted in 2002, main changes in family welfare provisions after April 2005 and the president's speeches on the Family's Day. I also rely on secondary sources (e.g. articles discussing the state family support policy in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Ukraine). This contributes to the understanding of the broader context in which the current discourse on fatherhood is formed.

1.2. Interviewing

In order to see how the images promoted by the state are read by both men and women in the second part of the thesis I rely on the data collected through semi-structured interviews with young parents. The method of semi-structured interviewing gives the possibility to get insights into existing experiences of fatherhood as well as the preconceptions of fathers about their expected roles, and at the same time, the data can be compared across interviews (Bernard 1995: 210; Leech 2002: 665).

I conducted twenty semi-structured interviews with first-time parents (10 fathers and 10 mothers) who have a child born after April 1, 2005. I recorded and transcribed 14 out 20 interviews and took extensive notes on the rest six. The age of the interviewees ranged between 21-27 for women and 22-29 for men; they were all urban middle class professionals holding a college degree. The couples lived apart from their extended families and the mother was staying on the parental leave. The choice of the sample group is based on several factors.

First of all, it includes the families that were eligible to receive the child care manual *Encyclopedia for Parents*. Second, the existing literature on the topic shows that conditions and practices of fathering change through the men's lifespan and with the child's growing independence (Curran and Abrams 2000; Olah *et al*. 2002), as well as with the changes in the employment patterns for both parents and the entry of other children into the family (Lupton and Barclay 1997: 141). To exclude these variables from the study, I focused on the early-stage first-time parenting and existing discourses around it.

I also limited the sample to married couples because the state politics and discourses around divorced and/or non-residential fathers have their own peculiarities (Olah *et al*. 2002: 28) and require a separate study. And finally, I included only middle class families residing in the urban area, since the class and educational background of the participants influence their personal experience and relation to the state. I used the assistance of two pediatricians who worked in different hospitals of Lviv to find the interviewees with the fit profile.

The interviews focused on the fathers' involvement into child care and their perception of the ideal fatherhood. The decision to include mothers into the research was motivated by the desire to get a more accurate picture of the gender roles in the family, father's actual participation in child care and prevailing discourses on fatherhood and motherhood that circulated in the family. Both men and women were asked the same questions (see Appendix 1) with some adjustment where necessary; i.e. the focus of the interviews with mothers was mainly on their partner's performance as father and their ideas of 'good' fatherhood in general. However, men and women were interviewed separately because although, on the one hand, a simultaneous interviewing of a couple could give the partners a possibility to complement each other's accounts of their experience; on the other hand, they could feel restricted by the presence of their partner and subconsciously try to maintain their supposed family role in the discussion (Lupton and Barclay 1997: 152).

For ethical considerations, I provided all the necessary description of my project, its structure and aims to the interviewees to make sure that they gave their consent to participate in it knowing in what way and for what purposes the information would be used. To guarantee confidentiality to the participants I will not use the participants' real names and other identifying facts or events in the thesis.

It is also important to note that the analysis of both the manual and the interviews represent my subjective interpretation of data which may be influenced by my knowledge of other research in the same area, theoretical background chosen for the study, and some personal preconceptions. This could have a more direct impact on the interviewing itself because "in an interview, what you already know is as important as what you want to know" (Leech 2002: 665), i.e. based on the research question and the theories applied, I was looking only for certain information. The chosen format of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions partially aimed at overcoming this limitation as it does not have strictly defined questions and allows participants to diverge from the main topics pre-planned for a discussion. Second important factor is my personal background; since I share a number of features with the participants (Ukrainian, urban, same age group), some of them felt reluctant to expound on certain facts which they found to be a common knowledge/practice, presuming that I was familiar with them.

2. Gender Relations and Welfare States

In this chapter I will discuss the ways welfare states shape/are shaped by the family gender relations and fathers' rights and responsibilities. I will start with an overview of the mainstream classification of welfare regimes into liberal, social-democratic, and corporatist and discuss the frameworks used by feminist scholars to analyze the effects each of these regimes has for women. The second part of the chapter will deal with the typology suggested by Lewis (1992) that singles out week, strong, and moderate breadwinner regimes. Although this classification is also centered on the degree of women's financial dependency on husbands, it includes the dimension of men's family obligations and that is why it has been used to analyze the influence of social politics on men and their ability to fulfill their parental duties.

In the last section I discuss the difference between the transition and transformation of gender regimes that may occur in response to new social or economic conditions in the country. To illustrate the complexity of the interconnectedness between the welfare system and gender regimes, I bring the example of East Germany and the changes the politics of fatherhood underwent after unification.

2.1. "Women-(un)friendly" regimes

Feminist research on gender and welfare states focuses on the ways in which the system of state social provision can reduce male dominance and be more "women-friendly", i.e. eliminate the existing sexual division of labor which places the burden of reproductive and care work on women (Orloff 1993: 312). Although the conventional classification of welfare states into liberal, social-democratic, and conservative-corporatist, suggested by Esping-Andersen (1990), has been criticized for its gender-blindness, it often serves as a starting point for the feminist analysis of the links between social services and women's ability to join the labor market.

Discussing the cross-regime differences in social provisioning and their effects for family welfare, Esping-Andersen states that in an attempt to "socialize the cost of familyhood" (1990: 28), social-democratic regimes provide universal social payments and/or public child care facilities which encourages mothers to go back to paid employment and reduces women's dependence on their husbands. Conservative-corporatist regimes follow the principle of "subsidiarity"; the state interferes only if the family fails to support the needs of its members, but otherwise relies on a developed social insurance system. According to Esping-Andersen corporatist regimes usually do not provide services to uphold women's labor force participation and reinforce the women's dependence on a husband who is often the main family breadwinner (ibid.).

Liberal regimes prioritize the market values over "concerns of gender" and thus the intervention into family welfare provision is minimal. Due to a *laissez-faire* approach to the majority of the population, liberal regimes are the least inclined to put constraints on women's labor force participation or to support traditional family arrangements (Orloff 1993: 314). As Zhurzhenko shows in her study, liberal regimes can foster high gender equality in a social sphere because women can seek protection in case of discrimination on the job market relying on a developed judicial system; however, it does not necessarily lead to the redistribution of workload within the family (2002; 143).

Esping-Andersen's regime types help to specify three distinct approaches to family support politics, however, this classification has little predictive power regarding actual women's involvement into the paid labor market, the part-time vs. full-time employment available for women, job segregation, or family arrangements between husbands and wives. The most quoted example is that of Scandinavian social-democratic states which promote different gender regimes. In Sweden women with children are primarily treated as workers and, as a result, an extensive public day-care is developed to enable them to go back to paid

employment; Norwegian state sees women as wives and mothers in the first place and offers few child care services which encourages more women to stay at home (Mosesdottir 1995: 630).

One of the main points of criticism of the Esping-Andersen's classification is that it relies on the presumption that women can choose between work and the household, while as Orloff notes, in most countries paid work and housework are not presented as exclusive activities and women can usually combine a career with their domestic duties. At the same time, "[n]owhere in the industrialized West can married women and mothers choose *not* to engage in caring and domestic labor" (1993: 313). High rates of women's employment do not automatically eliminate sexual division of labor and may preserve gender inequalities within the family. Orloff also states that even if the state policies are directed at reduction of the sexual division of labor, they may support either the development of public services or men's involvement into the domestic work. The choice of a strategy will have different consequences for gender relations in both public and private spheres (1993: 314).

Some alternative typologies of welfare states were developed to reflect the effects of state social provision on gender relations in a more nuanced way. They take into account not only women's access to paid work but also their ability to form and maintain autonomous households (Lewis 1992; Mosesdottir 1995). One of the most comprehensive frameworks for a gender analysis of social policies was developed by Orloff who suggested that besides the two abovementioned dimensions the analysis should include a contribution of women's unpaid work to the family welfare, as well as the degree to which the state takes over a share of reproductive and care work (1993: 312). Orloff also argued that men's claims for social provision are usually based on paid work while women have to rely on their familial or marital roles more often. Since work-based claims usually presuppose higher benefits than those based on motherhood or marriage, the relative treatment of paid and unpaid workers and

the bases of people's claims to services were also specified as important dimensions for the analysis of gender relations supported by a welfare system (1993: 315-316).

2.2. Workers and/or Fathers

Like many other feminist scholars, Orloff discussed the welfare regimes focusing on women's roles they supported; the underlying presumption of such studies is that the system of the state social provision depends on whether women are conceptualized as mothers and wives or as working mothers. Men are treated as workers and citizens and the relations between social politics and their experience as fathers remain implied rather than clearly defined in the literature on gender and welfare. Even when husbands and fathers are discussed in terms of their breadwinning role, the main focus is the economic dependence of women this particular arrangement supports.

The regimes that promote dual-earning families and thus support a weak-breadwinner model are seen as women-friendly; however, as Bergman and Hobson observe, this does not mean that they are men-unfriendly. First of all, the scholars argue that despite the fact that women's participation in the labor market undermines the overall privileged position of men in the society, the statistics of the average work hours, job segregation, time budget, or the women's earnings after divorce do not bear evidence that men have ceased to be main family breadwinners. Bergman and Hobson stress that this holds true even for Sweden – the country which is believed to have developed one of the most consistent women-friendly politics (2002: 92).

The second part of the Bergman and Hobson's argument is that contemporary politics of fatherhood involve multiple dimensions with breadwinning being only one of them. Active fatherhood, promoted in many countries of the West, shifts the stress from fathers' financial obligations to their caring duties. The scholars suggest that to account for the diversity of

existing state ideologies of fatherhood, the rights and obligations of men outlined in the laws on marriage, paternity, custody after divorce should be examined (2002: 93).

One of the few classifications that takes into account men's family obligations was developed by Lewis who singled out three types of possible state-family relations – a strong breadwinner and family obligation regime, a weak breadwinner and family obligation regime, and a moderate regime. In the first case, the state, relying on women's unpaid domestic work, provides scarce social services and childcare facilities, and thus supports the breadwinner-father and stay-at-home-mother family. The weak breadwinner and family obligation regime is supported when the state does not provide family wages for men and aims at involving more women into the labor force, thus weakening the mail-breadwinner model. At the same time, through family support payments and an organized system of childcare facilities the state takes over some of the men's financial family responsibilities. In the countries with the moderate regimes, the state maintains the social support for mothers in order to give them a possibility to go back to paid work after having a child while emphasizing the father's family obligations and promoting more equal distribution of work within the family (Lewis 1992: 160).

Lewis used the examples of Ireland, Sweden and France to illustrate the three types of welfare regimes in her study, however, she admitted that there was hardly a country which would represent a "pure" case of one of the named regimes. The classification based on the strong, weak, and moderate models has been criticized as insufficient to embrace all the existing types of state regimes. Mosesdottir, for instance, has pointed out that it does not account for the differences existing among the countries where the dual-earner model prevails; neither can it be used for such countries as the USA where different models may coexist applying to women from different class positions (1995: 631).

A closer look at Lewis' typology reveals that its major focus is the same as in all previously cited classifications of welfare regimes, namely women's access to paid work and their financial independence. Men's roles are defined in terms of obligations and little if anything is said about the rights guaranteed by the state. Besides, as Hobson and Morgan argue, an analysis of the ways in which welfare regimes shape fatherhood and fathering would have to pay attention to the support provided by the state to help men reconcile their duties as workers and fathers and claim their "right to form a family" (2002: 12). Feminist scholars have showed that the organization of the job market is based on a presupposition that the life of a male worker is centered on his full-time job and his needs are taken care of by his wife (Acker 1991). Any obligations other than those required by the job are seen as illegitimate, including parenting duties. That is why the degree to which the state social provision decommodifies men, freeing them from the dependence on the market, is an important dimension of the politics of fatherhood in relation to welfare regimes.

2.3. Transition and Transformation of Welfare Regimes

Facing new socio-economic demands, states may need to adjust their policies in the spheres of social production and reproduction. This may lead either to a modification or to a change of the welfare regime which, in its turn, can trigger changes in gender relations. However, since state social provision is designed with certain presuppositions about desirable gender relations in family and society, a shift in state social provision can affect gender relations in different ways. Mosesdottir uses the terms transition or transformation to refer to different degrees of changes in the promoted gender regime. Transition may result in a shift from one type of existing regimes to another as well as in a construction of a new one. The adjustments that take place during transformation, however, bring some changes to the mode of regulation of gender regimes, but the underlying principles of the supported regime remain the same (1995: 636).

Ostner's study of the clash of two different welfare systems of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) which occurred after the fall of the Berlin Wall illustrates the complexity of the relations between welfare politics and family gender relations. Before the unification, Ostner writes, East and West Germany supported weak and strong regimes, respectively. However, after unification, it was East Germany's welfare system that underwent considerable changes with a few concessions on the part of West Germany. This resulted in a redefinition of fathers as the main source of income and, in this way, the system shifted to resemble more the strong breadwinner type, complicated by the relatively recent discourse on involved fatherhood (Ostner 2002).

Borrowing Mosesdottir's terminology, the changes in East Germany may be referred to as transition from a weak to a strong breadwinner model. However, if the fathers' role of a carer is analyzed, argues Ostner, the involvement of fathers in child care and other domestic activities turns out to be quite the same before unification – both in GDR and FRG men's share of housework and time spent with children was extremely low. In West Germany it was caused by the complementary nature of gender roles tailored for a working husband and stay-at-home wife. In East Germany gender politics were directed at encouraging women's engagement in paid employment, however, family gender roles were not revised and childcare and housework remained women's domain (2002: 157).

3. Images of Fatherhood in Ukraine: Past and Present.

This chapter explores the state politics that were formative for the family gender roles and the images of fatherhood promoted by the state during the transition. It starts with an overview of the status of individual fathers in the Soviet times and the changes triggered by new demographic policies. This will provide a background for the analysis of the changes in legislation that delineated the new distribution of the state-family and state-father duties in post-Soviet Ukraine; at the same time it will allow me to examine the influence of the Soviet legacy on contemporary politics and to compare it with the influence of the international human rights and gender equality discourse.

Then I will discuss the new gender politics in independent Ukraine. I will argue that the state supports two competing discourses on the father's role of breadwinner and caregiver. This will be followed by a more detailed analysis of the meaning of "conscious fatherhood" in terms of men's involvement into childcare.

3.1. Fatherhood and Gender Equality in the USSR

3.1.1. The State as Patriarch

In the Soviet Union, fatherhood did not become an object of explicit state politics; it was secondary to the project of women's liberation from all forms of patriarchal dependency in the family. While women were defined as workers and mothers, men were seen as workers, soldiers, and citizens and there was no place for fatherhood in their profile. As Ashwin argues, the Soviet state wanted to be an all-powerful patriarch and was not willing to share its influence in the private sphere with men most of whom were meant to remain its sons (2000: 13).

Gender and family politics in the Soviet Union were carried out under the slogan of women's emancipation and directed, in the first place, at the promotion of women's employment. Together with the state support of motherhood, Marxist ideology deemed employment to be the main prerequisite for the independence of women from private patriarchy (Meshcherkina 2000: 106). It is often argued that the mass mobilization of women into the labor market was triggered by economic necessity rather than the commitment to an idea of women's emancipation (Ashwin 2000: 17; Kukhterin 2000: 74; Zhurzhenko 2002: 49). Kukhterin, however, stresses that one of the primary aims of the politics was to challenge the rule of the father-patriarch who limited the influence of the state and the new ideology on other family members (2000: 71).

To weaken the patriarchal family, already in December 1917 Bolsheviks issued two decrees that proclaimed the marriage to be a union of equal partners; among other things women were granted the right to take up paid work and change the place of residency without the husband's consent. The decree also simplified the divorce procedure, which from then on could be obtained on request of either partner, and recognized the rights of children born out of wedlock (Ashwin 2000: 14). Further the state proclaimed the "protection" of mother and child to be its main responsibility and thus made an individual father redundant.

The access to paid work enhanced the financial independence of women[2] and undermined the position of man in the family who could not claim his authority as a sole family breadwinner (Kukhterin 2000: 73). It should be noted, however, that the idea of men's supremacy in the social sphere and their "natural" role of the main family breadwinner was not challenged. Although already in 1945 women constituted over 50 percent of the labor force (Kurganov 1968: 125) and the wage system was designed to support a dual-earner

[2] Through the state support of women's labor participation and the developed system of public child care facilities Soviet and state-socialist countries achieved a high level of "defamilization" of women, i.e. their liberation from the dependence in the private sphere. However, this policy, has been criticized for sustaining the women's dependence on the state referred to as the "public patriarchy" (Zhurzhenko 2002: 144).

family, studies on the Soviet labor market confirm the persistence of the pay gap and job segregation with men occupying best-paying positions in the labor market (Ashwin 2000: 12; Zhurzhenko 2002: 58). Ashwin argues that by limiting the traditional roles of men as husbands and fathers, the state tacitly supported men's privileged position in the social sphere and promoted a new type of masculinity based on the achievements at work and success in public life rather than on patriarchal authority (2000: 13).

Having stripped fathers of their traditional authority of as patriarch and breadwinner, the state politics did not foresee new responsibilities for them.[3] The domestic sphere became associated with women who were expected do full-time paid work and to carry the burden of housework and childcare by themselves, relying for assistance on public services. Together with the total feminization of care and teaching professions (Ostner 2002: 153) and glorification of motherhood (Kukhterin 2000: 72), this marginalized the role of individual fathers even further.

3.1.2. Fathers' Involvement as an Objective Necessity

Changes in the discourse on fatherhood could be observed in the 1980s which was connected with the general shifts in the state gender ideology and family politics. Economic and political reforms during *perestroika* required a certain change in the status of the family, giving it higher autonomy and responsibility for its welfare and children's upbringing. However, it was the dropping birth rates in the European part of the USSR that made the country's leaders pay attention to the family and triggered a revision of the family politics at the beginning of the 1980s. The set of provisions introduced in 1981-82 aimed at encouraging families to have more children. In particular, a one-time allowance started to be paid at the

[3] Having analyzed some aspects of the Soviet family model, Tkach concludes that the role of a man-father was considered to be important only when the family as "dynasty of workers" was discussed. This dynasty of workers, where the son follows his father in the choice of profession, was an example of the father's education of the youth in the family (2003: 209). This example only proves the fact that men were defined mainly in relation to their work and professional career and came into the picture as role-models for their children.

birth of the first child, not the third one as previously; one-year paid maternity leave was introduced (in 1989 it was extended to 1.5 years); mothers were entitled to extended paid vacations, and families could receive an interest-free loan from their employer. Besides, additional investments were to be made into the development of social services which would help women combine their paid employment and motherhood (Zhurzhenko 2002: 56).

Despite the shift to pro-natalist family politics, gender expectations were not challenged much – women were still working mothers with the stress on the importance of motherhood for their personal and for country's wellbeing. The changes in legislation did not specify new roles for men either – through additional childcare allowances, families were compensated for the loss of the wife's salary and thus the additional financial burden for fathers connected with the childbirth was minimized. At the same time, the longer maternity leave reflected ideas about the mother as primary caregiver.

By that time, however, the state's failure to provide sufficient public services which would free women from domestic work had become evident. Zhurzhenko quotes findings of one of the surveys which showed that in 1978, for instance, public facilities helped to reduce women's engagement with household related work by five percent only (2002: 54). This scholar argues that although it declared its commitment to developing a more efficient system of public facilities, the state recognized that it was unable to do this and started to encourage men to take up a share of domestic activities. This gave rise to a slow rehabilitation of the men's role of a father (ibid.).

Men were reminded that they had equal rights and responsibilities for their children's upbringing and that a proper fulfillment of their parental role was their "moral duty and legal obligation", says expert literature on the sociology of family (Soloviev 1988: 5). State propaganda encouraged husbands to take up an equal share of domestic work, not just "help out" their wives with it (Tsymbaliuk 1989: 141). However, an analysis of the Soviet expert

literature of that time, which advocated fathers' involvement with children, shows that the father's role was seen as complementary to that of a mother and was framed according to traditional gender roles expectations:

> It has always been important to organize family's leisure time, especially at weekends and holidays. This is where the father with his male's managerial experience comes into the picture. There is one simple reason for this – mother is preoccupied with other activities which are not of a lesser importance… In other words, while the mother is cooking dinner, father is engaged with children (Soloviev 1988: 13).

Women were seen as nurturers and caregivers while men were to provide mental and physical development. This distribution was explained by differences between the sexes in their inclinations and types of activities in which they were usually engaged (Titarenko 1988: 20).

Analyzing the shifting of gender roles in public and private spheres during perestroika, Meshcherkina concludes that men were reluctant to take up housework or child care because they saw them as "women's job". This idea was shared by their wives who expressed highly traditionalist views on family gender roles, though supporting the idea of gender equality in the public sphere (2000: 106). Thus, despite the changing discourse on fatherhood during the 1980s, which advocated men's involvement into child care and tried to rehabilitate fathering, this involvement was mainly based on the traditional ideas about the father's role as an educator and mentor, rather than a caregiver.

3.2. Changing Images of Fatherhood in Post-Soviet Ukraine

In this section I will trace the changes in the state discourse on fatherhood after the 1991. I will start with the analysis of the welfare provision and I will argue that in the context of the economic crisis, fathers were expected to take up the role of the main family providers,

however, the same economic conditions supported the dual-breadwinner model. The shift to means-based social payments bore little influence on the fathers' role either.

At the same time, under the influence of the European discourse on gender equality, fathers were equaled in their parenting rights with mothers, however, due to the perception of the care work as women's duty, which still prevails in the public opinion in Ukraine, not many of them rush to use their new rights.

In the last section I will analyze the most recent turn to pro-family policies in 2005 caused by low fertility rates. The state started to popularize the idea of "conscious fatherhood" which, I will argue, placed several contradictory expectations on fathers. I will examine the image of the father in the manual for parents *Encyclopedia for Parents* to answer the question what is meant by "involvement" and to what extent the new father is expected to share domestic and care work with his wife. I will argue that the manual is a part of the state discourse on parenthood and the image of fathers depicted there mirrors the state presumptions about the gender role divisions in family.

3.2.1. Breadwinners despite Themselves?

3.2.1.1. Neo-traditionalist Family of the Early 1990s.

While in the Soviet Union the family policies centered on the promotion of women's employment were secondary to labor policies, the government of the newly independent Ukrainian proclaimed the family to be the core of the nation-building project and the support of family's development was declared to be one of the state's priorities. The state was to create "favorable conditions" for the revival of "family values" which were said to be ruined by the Soviet ideology (Zhurzhenko 2004: 14). However, changes in family support payments at the beginning of 1990s were caused by the economic situation in the country rather than by shifts in ideology. The new Law on State Support for Families with Children (1993) kept

most of the family allowances provided under the previous Soviet legislation. Due to high rates of inflation, however, the value of the allowances decreased considerably. In addition, some other family benefits, like housing program, were eliminated, and a lot of public child care centers previously subsidized by the state were closed down.

All these cutbacks in the package of benefits that had reduced the cost of children put additional financial strains on the family. Since men's advantageous position in the labor market had not been challenged during the Soviet era (Ashwin 2000: 17), and on average women had earned 30 percent less than men at the beginning of the 1990s (Zhurzhenko 2004: 16), it was only "natural" that men were expected, to step in and take up the additional burden of family provisioning. However, despite the predictions of some researchers that transition to the market economy would lead to a return to the male-breadwinner family, women did not leave the labor market *en masse* (Ashwin 2000, Zhurzhenko 2002: 144). As Kiblitskaya showed in her study on working women in Russia, despite the traditionalism of women's expectations, they did not have any intention to leave the labor market voluntarily (2000: 69 cited in Ashwin 2000: 69). And often they could not afford to leave because, as Zhurzhenko argues, families needed both parents to work since the market did not provide family wages and the state could not offer sufficient social provision (2002: 144).

3.2.1.2. Means-Based Social Security

The state family support remained nominal for a long time and was rather a declaration of intentions than an effective system that would reduce the cost of having children. For instance, in 2004 the family allowance for children under three was 42.5 UAH (about US $ 8) per month; the one-time payment at the birth of the child, 360 UAH (US $ 68); support for single mothers, from 32.45 UAH (US $ 6) to 40.48 UAH (US $ 7.7) (Alekseenko *et al.* 2004: 184). Constant delays in payments made the situation even worse. One of the

examples of the state's helplessness in the context of economic deficit can be the Order of the President on The Improvement of the Welfare of Families with Many Children (1999) which did not raise the family support payments for these families, as could be expected, but only required a timely payment of the family benefits and the offset of debts (Zhurzhenko 2002: 154).

In the context of limited economic resources there was a need to optimize the welfare payments shifting from universal allowances to means-based ones. The new approach to the distribution of responsibilities between the state, family and society was spelt out in the government program Children of Ukraine (1996) which specified that the family "should be the main source of financial and emotional support, and psychological security" (as cited in Alekseenko *et al*. 2004: 124). The state took up the obligation to promote the legal and social protection of children and assumed the direct responsibility only for certain categories of children, primarily for those who were raised without parents' support or lived in "problem families". Thus the state officially placed the financial responsibility for the children on the family. In line with this, a new regulation on payment of alimony was adopted which made it more difficult to escape paying it and specified stricter penalty for non-payment (Alekseenko *et al*. 2004: 165).

The reduction of universal social payments and the shift to the means-based benefits as well as the higher independence of families in their decision making from the state that can be observed in Ukraine at present are the examples of the influence of the liberal ideas. However, according to Zhurzhenko, it is the socio-democratic model which is highly supported by the population due to its emphasis on social protection that echoes the tradition of Soviet egalitarianism. Most political parties also declare their devotion to this model; however, while "the left" sees it as a continuation of the state-socialist approaches to the

social provisioning, “the democratic right” uses it to attest the “European choice” of Ukraine (2002: 142).

Whatever approach prevailed during different periods of time, the results for the fathers have been quite similar – they were expected to be family providers. In the context of economic weakness, the socio-democratic system proved to be inefficient and failed to provide sufficient family support. Liberal politics only made the state’s withdrawal from the financial family support explicit.

3.2.2. From Duties to Rights

3.2.2.1. Coding a New Father in the Family Code

The declared aims of the state family policies include not only a guarantee of sovereignty and autonomy of a family’s decision-making concerning its development, but also equality and partnership between women and men in all spheres of life, i.e. providing women and men with equal opportunities in the labor market and in the social sphere, including parenting, and fair division of family duties (Verkhovna Rada Ukrayiny [Verkhovna] 1999). For Ukrainian men this meant a rehabilitation of their right to fatherhood which now became “protected” by law. As a result, fathers were given the same rights as mothers, which unlike the Soviet equality, included the right to be a primary caregiver.

The necessity to provide fathers with the same rights for a reduced full-time working day, parental leave, and different subsidies was voiced during *perestroika*, however, these and other rights were guaranteed to fathers only in the 1990s. Already in 1992 “support for mothers with many children”, for instance, was transformed into an “allowance for mothers/fathers who look after three or more children under 16” (Alekseenko *et al.* 2004: 183). Maternal leave was replaced with parental leave with a job guarantee and pension entitlement which could be taken by either parent or shared; and most of the family benefits

became payable to a "parent who was looking after the child" (ibid.). Further the equality of rights of both parents was stated in the Constitution (1996) and became an underlying principle of the new Family Code (2004), which eliminated any preferential rights in custody, claims for alimony, etc. of either of the parents.

It is exactly the recognition of the men's parenting rights that was seen as one of the most progressive provisions of the Family Code and considered to be a big step forward to gender equality in the country (Konovalov 2004). However, it largely remains a declaration which has not translated into practice. The data for 2006 show that between 95 and 97 per cent of children stay with their mother after divorce, and the custody is granted to fathers mostly only if a mother abandons the child ("Rivni prava" 2006). In public discussions the improvement of fatherhood rights is most often mentioned in relation to the benefits for the child, and is seen as one of the factors that could reduce the number of abortions in the country; its importance for men's self-realization is rarely mentioned (Galkovska 2003; Konovalov 2004; Pavlova 2007).

3.2.2.2. "European Choice"

The recognition of fathers' rights and the broadening of gender equality to the private sphere were influenced by the ideas of equality and human rights promoted by international organizations. The "European choice" of Ukraine became one of the most productive discourses used to explain and justify changes in the family and gender politics. It is summed up best in the opening sentence of an article presenting changes in the family regulations on the web site of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine which reads, "Being on the crossroads between the East and West, Ukraine slowly but steadily walks towards Europe" (Pavlova 2007).

A closer look at the usage of "European" shows that it can be applied to almost any context. Debates around the new Family Code (2002) can serve as an illustrative example of such selective understanding of what it means to be European. First of all, the authors of the Family Code stressed that they used "the best European experience" of regulating family issues and it was compatible with the European legislation (Verkhovna 2000). Substitution of predominantly "imperative norms" fixed in the previous law and opening the possibility to the parties to regulate their disputes without state intrusion was seen to be one of the main achievements of the new legislation (ibid.). This opposition between "imperative norms" dictated by the state and "more democratic" ways of regulating the issues on the interpersonal level represented a denial of the Soviet practices in favor of the "Western" ones.

Not only are most new provisions of the law referred to as "European", including the recognition of the rights of fathers discussed below, some of the more traditional approaches to family are also justified through the same rhetoric. For example, "At this stage the traditional European approach to marriage as monogamous union is preserved" (ibid.). A similar explanation was given in the case of the definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, which meant a denial of same-sex marriages. A "return" to traditionalist ideas about gender roles at the beginning of the 1990s was also framed as Western, argues Zhurzhenko, when the image of a Soviet working woman was opposed to an American "happy housewife" of the 1950s that was chosen as the Western model to be followed (2004: 25).

Perceived as synonymous to modern, "Western"/"European" has been used not only to discuss the new regulations which were adopted in accordance with recommendations of international organizations, but also to deny a connection with Soviet practices even if the new law closely resembled an old one.

3.2.3. Fathers and Babies

3.2.3.1. "Conscious Fatherhood"

Since 2005, family policies has been framed to increase birth rates, the present ones being among the lowest in Europe.[4] The increase of the state support for families with children was seen as one of the key preconditions for the success of the pro-natalist politics. Child allowances were increased considerably if compared with the previous years, although they still did not provide the minimum of subsistence. By the end of 2006, the family allowance for children under three became means-based and could reach 252.5 UAH (US $ 50) per month, one-time payment at the birth of the child, 8,500 UAH (US $ 1,700), and support for single mothers from 209 UAH (US $ 42) to 268 UAH (US $ 53.5). To deal with the issue of housing, the government developed a new system of subsidized loans covering 25 percent of the credit commitment if the family has two children, and 50 percent for the families with three or more children (Alekseenko *et al*. 2004: 187-188).

The new attention to the family was accompanied by the attention to the role of a father who was reminded that fatherhood was both his right and obligation. As stated in the report on Gender Equality prepared for the government in 2006, "one third of Ukrainian children are raised without a father, while about one per cent of families are male-headed", that is why the promotion of "conscious fatherhood" is named among the priorities of the gender and family politics ("Rivni prava" 2006).

Judging from the recommendations developed by the parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality "conscious fatherhood" implied more than financial responsibility for one's children. Among other things, it stresses the necessity to amend legislation "using the experience of European countries" in order to encourage fathers to take parental leave. The

[4] According to the UN *Demographic Yearbook*, in 2004 with the 0.9 births per 100 population, Ukraine had the fifth lowest fertility rates in Europe following Germany (.86), Latvia (.88), Bosnia & Herzegovina (.89), and Lithuania (.89).

committee recommends establishing an official Father's Day and to introduce the "school for daddies" which would prepare men for their fathering role and help to eliminate gender discrimination in the family ("Rivni prava" 2006).

To popularize the idea of "conscious fatherhood" and raise the social status of fathers, several projects were introduced by different state bodies. For example, the Ministry on Family, Youth and Sport – which declared a father's role in the family to be one of its priorities – run a project of social advertising "Holding Father Tighter by the Hand" (Z bat'kom za puku mitsnishe). Big posters depicting two silhouettes easily identifiable as a father and little son going fishing could be found in every big city and small Ukrainian town.

In 2005, the Mayor of Kyiv's introduced an award for single fathers who raise their child/children by themselves. Each year during the official celebration of the International Family Day that takes place on Maydan, the central square of Kyiv, ten young fathers are awarded a certificate of merit and 1,000 UAH (US $200). The decision about the winners of "The Single Daddy of the Year" is based on "the father's success in the child's upbringing, his achievements in the social sphere, the child's achievements at studies and extracurricular activities, the family's welfare and living conditions" ("Urochyste nahorodzhennya…" 2006).

Some officials cite their personal examples to popularize the importance of fathers' involvement in the children's upbringing and stress that this is one of the responsibilities of modern men. For instance, in one of his interviews, the minister of Family, Youth and Sport, Yuriy Pavlenko says, "It is very important that a father finds time for communication with his children. That's why, whenever I have a spare moment, I try to use it for communication with my sons. And that's why I often take my wife and children to different events in which I have to participate" (Pavlenko 2006). Similarly, the president, Viktor Yushchenko, usually sets his own example to popularize the idea of conscious fatherhood, "Being a father of five and a grandfather of two I try to spend all my free time, even if it's not more than a couple of hours

per week, with my children. Often we spend this time doing sports and games, we go swimming together, ski, play some ball games and hike. I know that these are the best and the happiest moments for my kids" (Yushchenko 2006).

The above examples show that understanding of father's "involvement" can range from the more "traditional" Hochschildian paradigm where it complements a mother-caregiver (e.g. playing, going fishing) to the role of a father-caregiver who can substitute for the mother (e.g. Single Daddy award, schools for daddies, encouragement of fathers to take parental leave). It is the latter type that represents a new expectation for father's role and can be seen as non-masculine since care work has been regarded women's responsibility. In the following subchapter, to see limits of the promoted involvement, I will analyze the image of a father represented in a parenting manual *Encyclopedia for Parents*, which is a part of a "baby's package" – a set of basic baby goods that, in keeping with a government regulation, every mother is entitled to receive in the maternity house. Since it is a part of a government-run project, I will consider it to be a part of the state discourse on family roles.

3.2.3.3. Popular Expert Literature at the State's Service

That manuals on parenting have always been something more than a collection of rules of hygiene and medical advice on childcare has been discussed by a couple of feminist scholars in relation to the picture of motherhood promoted in them (Ehrenreich and English 1979; Hays 1996). It has been shown that the popular expert literature is one of the tools for institutionalization of motherhood and that the created image of the "ideal" mother is directly related to the general discourses on womanhood and woman's role in society.

While Hays stresses that the most popular U.S. parenting manuals reflect the dominant cultural model of child raising (1996: 52), Herschel and Edith, for example, observed that in the Soviet Union popular literature on parenting constituted a part of the state's propaganda of

what was seen to be proper parenting (1964: 190). A similar conclusion was made by Chernyaeva who studied the ways in which the shifts in state family and gender politics were reflected in brochures and books for mothers published in the USSR between 1917 and 1945 (2000: 123). Chernyaeva showed that changes in the rates of women's labor force participation or state demographic politics were reflected in the expectations about the proper mothering. For example, with the start of industrialization in the 1930s that was accompanied by the mass involvement of women into the paid employment, "a real mother" pictured in the manuals was the one who could combine her "natural" role of a mother and full-time paid work (Chernyaeva 2000: 136).

Since books and magazines for parents are usually presumed to be read by mothers, it may be argued that they cannot be treated as aimed at a direct promotion of fathers' role. Even so, the expected distribution of gender roles in the family and society can be studied on the examples of the changing images of fathers with the same success. For instance, Lupton and Barclay traced the changes of the representation of fathers' role in the child care manuals and magazines published in the Anglophone world since the early nineteenth century to show how these changes mirrored redistribution of family duties in a given period of time (1997: 37).

Following this idea, I will analyze the image of a father in *The Encyclopedia for Parents* as reflecting the ideas about the desirable distribution of gender roles in the family. It is important to note that while I treat the manual as part of the state discourse on fatherhood, I do not make any presuppositions about the influence these images may have/have had on practices of fathering. First of all, as has been previously mentioned, the majority of readers of child-rearing books are mothers, and thus it may be presumed that they are influenced by the new images more than fathers of the children. Second, Hays' study showed that child-rearing advice is taken selectively – women pick and choose the ideas they consider worthy

and discard those which contradict to their own beliefs (1996: 71). Thus the "success" of the new image will depend on the degree to which it is compatible with parents' personal ideas about proper gender roles, shaped by cultural expectations and personal experience.

The Encyclopedia for Parents opens with an introduction[5] that discusses the role of the parents for the child's development and the commitment of the state to "pay attention to the needs of each family" (Masalitina 2006: 2). Throughout the book, the author also prefers to use the generic "parents" instead of "mother" or "father," which presumes the equal involvement of both of them into childrearing. The same effect is achieved by the use of the personal pronoun "you" (*vy*) in plural, which can refer to one person or many people. "Mother/wife" and "father/husband" occur mostly to refer to pregnancy and delivery, for example, recommendations for mothers on how to choose clothes and what to eat during the pregnancy and advice for husbands on the support and assistance they can offer their wife during delivery.

However, some examples disclose that it is a mother who is thought of as a primary caregiver. First of all, the titles of three out of seven chapters mention only mothers – "I am Pregnant", "Preparing for Motherhood", "I am a Mother". Although the chapters mention "parents" in most cases, the use of the personal pronoun "I" in the titles sets the context to perceive the general references like "when you talk to the baby", "Should you have any questions", etc. as directed at mothers rather than both parents. Second, a quick look through the pictures in the manual makes clear that mothers appear in them almost twice as often as fathers. It should be noted, however, that both parents are shown to be involved in similar activities – bottle-feeding the baby, changing diapers, bathing, soothing a crying child, playing with him/her – in other words, fathers are portrayed as participating in childcare and housework as well as communicating with the child.

[5] In an earlier edition from 2005, the introduction took the form of an opening address from the prime-minister.

Husbands are encouraged to attend the school of parenthood together with their wife. A separate subchapter is devoted to the topic of the father's presence at birth which is described as an exciting moment that would bring the father closer to his wife and child. Since this is a new practice in Ukraine, the author takes time to stress that it has already become a usual thing and "many husbands nowadays consider it their duty to help their wife and baby at this crucial point" (Masalitina 2006: 53). On the one hand, the importance of a father's presence is discussed; it is said not only to ensure the wife's psychological comfort, but also to reduce the likelihood of complications during and after the delivery. On the other hand, it is recognized that a number of people still have some concerns against father's presence at the delivery, "In our country people used to think that after observing labour, a husband will not love his wife, will lose his male power or on the whole won't be able to survive this scene" (Masalitina 2006: 54). However, these preconceptions are called an "outdated myth" or "groundless fears". Through the usual vs. outdated opposition, a father's presence during the delivery is pictured as new but acceptable for men.

No other example of a father being "talked into" doing something was found; he is not seen as less willing or capable of taking care of a baby. Mothers are reminded, however, that they should not take all the work on themselves because their husband is ready to take responsibility for the baby and share housework. Thus women are recommended to use the time when the baby sleeps to take a nap as well and not to "worry if dinner is not ready when your husband comes home. Both of you have had a difficult day and today it is his turn to prepare food for both of you" (Masalitina 2006: 74). Mothers should also "[l]et him look after the baby as well: he can feel more anxious and nervous than you when holding the little body, but will become more confident soon" (Masalitina 2006: 69).

These examples reflect traditional ideas about the housework and childcare being exclusively female domain which, as the following discussion will illustrate, are shared by the majority of men and women in Ukraine.

3.2.3.4. Public discourses around fatherhood and gender stereotypes

When one of the most popular TV anchorman, Oles Tereschenko, became a father, this was "the most welcome news of the day" in the evening news. Besides the usual information on the baby's weight and congratulations to the parents, it was mentioned that the father was beside his wife during the eight-hour delivery. Oles confessed that it had not been an easy decision to take; but it was worth it. He really felt as if they both were giving birth to the child, the reporter detailed.

This is one of a growing number of examples of the favorable media representations of the fathers' responsible attitude to his parenting role. Be it a discussion of the importance of the introduction of Father's Day ("Ukrainskim muzhchinam…" 2007), or a personal story of a stay-at-home dad, fathers' involvement into childcare is welcomed. Last year one of the leading Ukrainian dailies published an article about the increasing numbers of fathers who actively participate in the upbringing of their child. Titled "Daddies Become Mothers", the article discusses the increasing number of men who decide to become stay-at-home fathers or to take custody of the child after divorce. It is mentioned that fathers' participation in upbringing benefits the child's development; it also allows fathers "not to become redundant" as it was predicted after the experiments with cloning became known to the public. Thus "the improvements in the fathers' attitude to their children can be nothing but welcomed", says the author and regrets that "this trend can be observed only in the West" (Husachenko 2006).

There is some evidence that the author's pessimism about the willingness of Ukrainian fathers to join the trend is not groundless. Another media product, a documentary *Who Will*

Sing a Lullaby by Rudik (2006) produced with the support of the International Ukrainian Women's Fund and Open Society Institute, depicts the challenges and misunderstanding the men who decided to take parental leave face in the Ukrainian society where child care is still a "woman's job".

Studies conducted at the beginning of the 1990s revealed a combination of egalitarian and traditionalist views on gender roles in post-state socialist and post-Soviet countries (Alekseenko *et al.* 2004; Zhurzhenko 2004: 24;). On the one hand, women's right to paid employment was not questioned, on the other, the distribution of domestic duties went along gender lines leaving all the housework and child care to women. Results of the continuous research started in 1994 by the Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies (Young Family in Ukraine 1994-2015) show that there has been only a slight change in views on the distribution of spheres of responsibility between men and women since then (Table 1).

Table 1.

Distribution of answers to the question, "All main responsibilities for women should be primarily connected with the family, while for men – with work" by year and sex, %.

	1994			**2003**		
	Strongly agree	Agree in part	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree in part	Disagree
men	43	36	21	42	42	16
women	33	52	15	29	46	25

When the study was launched in 1994, 43 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women agreed with the statement that "All main responsibilities for women should be primarily connected with the family, while for men – with work". Ten years later the same statement was supported by 42 per cent of men vs. 29 per cent of women. Thus men prove to be more

persistent in their traditionalist views on gender roles. The number of people who do not support the women/family vs. men/work dichotomy reveals the same tendency – a 10 per cent growth of the number of women who disagree with the above statement (from 15% in 1994 to 25% in 2003) and a 5 per cent drop in the number of male respondents (from 21% in 1994 to 16 % in 2003).

Another survey that was a part of a government-run project entitled "Formation of Gender Parity in the Context of the Current Socio-Economic Change" revealed that when it comes to the questions of parenting, a majority of men (93%) and women (96%) support the idea that both parents should take equal part in child's upbringing. In addition, 87% of men and 83% of women believe that fathers can be as good and caring parents as mothers. However, the age of a child turned out to be of importance and when the question was placed in the context of looking after a child under three, only 54 percent of men and 58 percent of women agreed that a father can cope with such a task; besides 13 percent of men and 11 percent of women added that they could not imagine such an arrangement for their family (Alekseenko *et al.* 2004: 156).

The same survey showed that despite the expressed ideas of gender equality in family relations, the actual arrangements leave much more work to women and certify that men are mainly reluctant to do the housework or any activities connected with childcare (Alekseenko *et al.* 2004:157). However, 77 percent of men and 68 percent of women stated that they were satisfied with the existing distribution of the housework.

Overall different studies show a growing number of family-oriented men in the post-state socialist countries say Zdravomyslova and Arutyunyan. However, given the above statistics, one may question the reasons that attract men back to the family. As the scholars add, the chances that more men accept the idea of an egalitarian partnership in the family are

almost the same as that a growing number of men want to return to the archaic breadwinner/head-of-the-family role (1998: 57).

Summary

Changes in family and gender politics in independent Ukraine have had multiple effects on the institution of fatherhood. The "protection of women" – the main underlying principle of the Soviet gender politics – was substituted by the ideas of gender equality and human rights. As a result, men were equaled in their parental rights and obligations with women. However, having failed to provide social provision for families with children and shifting to the means-based rather than universal payments, the state put additional financial responsibilities on the family, and in particular on fathers.

Starting from 2005, the state promotes the idea of "conscious fatherhood" which embraces men's involvement in childcare along with his breadwinning obligations. It was formed under the influence of a number of contradictory discourses and aims at promotion of the status of fathers in society where, as statistics shows, egalitarian views on the distribution of rights and responsibilities in public sphere are combined with traditionalist expectations about family gender roles.

4. Fathers, Dads and Daddies: Fathering a Baby in Modern Ukraine.

State politics represent only one of the discourses around fatherhood, which sets certain conditions but does not determine practices of fathering. As has been shown in the previous chapter, the image of involved and responsible fatherhood promoted in Ukraine is countered by gender stereotypes prevalent in the society that favor traditional ideas about the distribution of roles between the parents. The state welfare system does not create favorable conditions to allow men to be involved fathers. Researchers point out the important role of personal experience and the models of parenting set forth by one's own family, conditions created by the market economy, religious beliefs for the men's performance as fathers (Lupton and Barclay 1997: 140; Ostner 2002: 165).

In this chapter I will discuss the existing ideas about and practices of fathering in Ukraine. Drawing on the interviews with ten couples I will examine the actual vs. desirable involvement of fathers into their children's upbringing, their understanding of parental responsibilities, emotional attachment to the child, perception of involvement as non-masculine. I will start with three major types of fathering that can be singled out on the basis of the fathers' participation in child care; however, I will focus on the discourses that could be traced across these groups and seem formative for the men's perception of their role of a father.

4.1. Different Fathering Practices

4.1.1. Why Are They Different?

Some researchers working with the changing roles of fathers in contemporary European countries have claimed that the rigid line which demarcated the spheres of

responsibility of parents is becoming more and more obscure. Due to the transformation of gender relations, "new fathers" come to realize the importance of their participation in the child's upbringing and start to share the activities that used to be defined as mothers' duties (Hovorun *et al*. 2004: 44; Lupton and Barclay 1997: 133). However, as Lupton and Barclay rightly observe, most of the studies suggest that the gender differences of parenting still persist not only in terms of sharing child care activities, but also in terms of attitudes, especially when emotional work is implied (1997: 133).

This is not to say that men and women have different natural predispositions to parenting. Different studies conducted in Australia, Canada and the US of families where the father was the primary care-giver showed that men were as capable of taking up the nurturing role as women, and that their interaction with children was as affectionate and emotionally charged as it would be expected from a woman (Hovorun *et al*. 2004: 44). This corresponds to the ideas expressed by Ruddick who argued that "maternal thinking"[6] pertains not only to women and that mothering can be performed by either parent with equal success:

> A child is mothered by whoever protects, nurtures, and trains her. Although it is a material, social, and cultural fact that most mothers are now women, there is no difficulty in imagining men taking up mothering as easily as women – or conversely, women as easily declining to mother (1990: 172).

Among the most important factors that help men develop emotional ties with the baby and engage in child care in the early stages, researchers usually highlight early physical contact with the baby right after the birth. Those men who were present during the delivery and/or had to take care of the child right afterwards, e.g. because of their wife's temporary disability caused by a delivery trauma, as well as those who attended antenatal classes are said

[6] According to Ruddick to be a mother "means to 'see' children as demanding protection, nurturance, and training, and then to commit oneself to the work of trying to meet these demands" (1990: 33). Mothering is seen as work or practice in which "others' responses serve as an intrinsic and primary measure of achievement" (ibid.)

to be better at "bonding" with the new-born, and demonstrated psychological readiness to take up the nurturing role (Lupton and Barclay 1997).

The most common difficulties that men face on their way to involved fatherhood are the absence of male role models from their childhood that they could rely on and gender stereotypes that depict nurturing or emotional involvement as feminine and thus endangering their masculinity. A lot of fathers, even those who do not adhere to the traditional distribution of parental roles, find it "safer" to wait until the child grows up enough to be worthy of the father's attention and leave all the child care responsibilities to mothers until then (Hovorun *at al*. 2004: 45).

4.1.2. How Are They Different?

Similar conclusions can be drawn from my interviews with first-time parents in contemporary Ukraine. Although in all the families it was the mother who took the parental leave and stayed with the child most of the time, and although all the interviewed men expressed comparable ideas about fathers' role in the children's upbringing which resonated with the general public discourse on conscious fatherhood, fathers' actual participation in the childcare varied noticeably. According to the arrangements between parents, three types of fathers' involvement can be singled out, which I call "father-nurturer", "child's-best-friend", and "helping hand". I will use the examples of Sasha, Yura and Dmytro to provide a brief illustration of the three patterns of fathering before moving to a discussion of the general influences on fathers' performance.

4.1.2.1. Father-nurturer

Sasha, 24, whose daughter was five months old at the time of the interview, represents the only case of what I call a father-nurturer in this study. Although he is not a primary caregiver, he has taken up the "mothering" role finding it self-rewarding. According to both

parents, Sasha can substitute for the mother in any activity and tries to use every chance to spend time with the child. He manages the baby with confidence without seeking advice or assistance from his wife and is proud of being such a skilful parent.

The birth of the daughter was not planned, but Sasha says that the family was ready for it because they had always wanted to have children. It was only the family budget that was not ready yet for the loss of the wife's salary, so Sasha had to find a part-time job in addition to his regular one in a consulting company. Despite the workload, he does whatever is needed about the house or looks after the child on coming back home; since the baby is bottle-fed, Sasha took over night feedings. According to his wife, Sasha never sits without work and she does not have to ask twice if any help is needed. Both of them see these first months exhausting and are looking forward to the time when the baby will be less demanding. However, Sasha finds this experience rewarding and tries to treasure every moment spent together with his daughter.

Sasha did not attend the antenatal courses, however, he was present during the delivery which ended with a cesarean section. He describes this event in very emotional terms as the most decisive for his realization of the new responsibility that appeared in his life:

> When I saw her for the first time, this little weirdly-shaped bundle, after these four terrible hours that seemed to be not hours but days, I was knocked down by the wave of emotions. One expects it to be new life-changing experience, a turning point, but only when I saw her did I realize that nothing will ever be the same. Now that there was this little creature that totally depended on you – it brings a new meaning to everything.

Since his wife was very weak after the operation and could hardly get up from bed, Sasha took a two-week leave from work to help with the baby. "That's when I learned how to hold her, change diapers, put her to bed – how to be a real father." This process of learning is

referred to as a challenge at the beginning, but unlike other fathers who often felt embarrassed when they could not cope with the baby or had to ask for help, Sasha perceived it as a natural process and did not feel any discomfort:

> When the baby arrives no one knows how to do certain things […] mothers have to learn it as well. Then the better you come to know your baby, the easier it becomes. You can tell the hunger cry from hey-you-I-need-my-diaper-changed cry from I'm-bored-from-lying-in-my-bed-all-alone one.

He admits that it is still not usual for Ukrainian men to be "active" fathers, but for him it is rather a sign of their immaturity. A willingness to build the relationships with one's wife on egalitarian terms and the readiness to take responsibility for the family are described as inalienable features of a modern man. Similarly to the popular discourse, "modern" often sounds synonymous with "Western" since in his definition of a modern man and modern father Sasha relies on examples of his cousin who lives in Canada and his sister-in-law from Germany that are contrasted to "our" traditional attitudes:

> We are used to seeing a slave in a woman. A lot of men leave all the work to her and say that they don't know how to go about the tiny baby and that they can hurt it. But it is the easiest way, to say that you don't know how to do it. If they looked out of their window, they would see that it's the 21st century outside and it's high time for some men to understand that parents do not raise their daughters to become somebody's maids any longer. No woman in Germany would stand it, but a lot of Ukrainian women still do.

The couple admits that their friends may make some jokes about Sasha's involvement into the looking after the baby, however, they do not think that the jokes mean to be stingy or disapproving. On the whole, Sasha often feels his friends' support and respect for his devotion

to the child. However, he does not think that they would understand his decision to become a full-time dad should he choose so because “that would be already too much for them”.

4.1.2.2. Child’s-best-friend

Yura, 24, the father of a fourteen-month-old boy, is one of the four fathers for whom the role of the child’s best friend appeared to be the most appealing. Fathers in this group engage with their child upbringing at a later stage when it becomes “interesting” to play with the baby. They compare there experiences of fatherhood with “returning to their own childhood” where even reading a fairy tale is turned into a performance with every animal having its own voice. Neither housework nor childcare belongs to a father’s profile for them, which is why they find it difficult to “bond” with the baby during the first year. A baby is rather a family guest who causes trouble and is left to the wife’s responsibility. The little child can be compared to a caterpillar that is to turn into a playful butterfly, and the fathers from this group seem to wait patiently for this moment to come.

Yura’s wife describes him as very supportive during the pregnancy and quite impatient about the birth of the child, however, she says that when the baby arrived and the family faced new challenges, he “got disillusioned very quickly”. After the birth of the child Yura’s life underwent very little change.

Before the birth, Yura did not attend the antenatal courses because “they were for mothers and there was no other man there”. However, he was quite curious to know what was taught there and asked his wife to tell him what was discussed there every time she was back from a class. After the delivery which also ended with a cesarean section, they asked Yura’s mother to stay at their place for a while and help with the baby. Later the couple decided that since the wife was breastfeeding, there was no point for the father to get up for the baby at

night. To get enough sleep and be able to go through the working day Yura moved to another room for almost four months.

It was the mother who took up almost all the childcare and housework and like all other fathers in this group, Yura never stayed with the baby alone when it was under ten months. His wife explained that,

> Even when he was alone with the baby in the room, he was always calling me for help […]. So I had to be there, he didn't know what to do. I can tell from the smallest signs when he [the baby] wants to eat, to sleep, to pee; and Yura spends less time with him, so he doesn't know these things so well.

Not having enough experience with the baby, Yura expressed anxiety and some fear when he had to manage it.

> A child is such a thing which you wouldn't like to break, you can hurt it. I wouldn't risk doing something wrong, so it's better to be on the safe side… As the child grows up, learns some basic things, it becomes more interesting. I can take her for a walk, for example. I also get more used to it, learn some things and professionalize as a father. So the interaction between us becomes higher.

When talking about his little son, Yura uses a neuter pronoun referring to the baby (*tse* – it/this) as to an inanimate object. This is all within the norms of the language, however, he never uses this form when talking about his son at the present moment. As Lupton and Barclay note, for some fathers it takes a while to accept their baby as an individual since they find little emotional response from them (1997: 124).

He describes the time spent with the child as "interesting now" and gets carried away telling stories about their ride in a car, watching *Tom&Jerry*, reading fairy tales, etc. While telling those stories he makes plans for how to make it even more interesting in the future and what other things they could do together:

> He [the baby] likes cars – big and small – and he has dozens or, maybe, hundreds of them. Maybe I'll buy him a toy motorcycle and he will ride it in the yard… I always tell my wife that when he gets a bit older, she will have more free time because I will take him for a ride more often, we will wash the car together, and do things like that.

Yura's wife observed that he was not afraid to display emotions when with the baby at home, but felt very uncomfortable in public:

> When we went to the church and our son started crying, he passed me the pram and said, "you take care of him". He felt uncomfortable when people saw him with a crying kid. But now he can calm him down himself, even in public.

In general, as seen from the interviews with the fathers from this group, the lack of interaction of fathers with their children in the first months results not so much from their reluctance to spend time with the baby but rather from the fear to show that they may not be able to do something in the right way and need guidance from their wives. It creates a vicious circle where the little contact does not allow fathers learn how to manage the baby while not knowing how to manage the baby discourages them from taking up childcare. A usual justification that comes both from fathers and mothers is that a father could change the diapers or prepare some food, but as Yura puts it, "the mother spends more time with him and knows how to do it better".

Thus the involvement for these fathers changes as the baby grows up. They see all the nurturing activities as women's domain and wait until the baby is old enough to be worthy of their attention. Otherwise their engagement into housework is very limited and corresponds to traditional ideas about men's and women's roles. One of the mothers described, "I was rocking the cradle hours on end, and my husband had some new work every other day – to

tighten loose bolts". Men try to avoid the activities that can be seen as feminine and stress their role of breadwinner as well as the importance of paid work for their self-realization.

I think it is important to mention here that wives in this group do not put too much demand on their husbands, believing that a father has little to offer during the first year of baby's life or that mothers are "naturally better" at child care.

> A good father should be able to replace mother in almost everything. Mine is not like that, maybe because I do everything myself. I wouldn't trust him a lot of things. For example, I cook for her [daughter] separately and I mince meat or fish for her – I wouldn't let him do it. So a father should be able to replace mother more than partially.

However, they insist that later their husbands should engage into the child's education. Although they voice some disappointment with the existing arrangement, they see it as temporary because, on the one hand, they see the growing willingness of their husbands to spend time with the child and their deeper emotional ties, and on the other hand, they plan to go back to their paid work when the baby turns two or even earlier and pass some of the childcare duties to the kindergarten.

4.1.2.3. Helping Hand

Most fathers fall into the third category which I call "helping hand" and which represents patterns of behavior and attitudes stretching on the scale between a father-nurturer and father-playmate. Despite being quite active fathers, they remain in secondary roles and are helping their wives rather than substituting for them.

Dmytro, 25, the father of an eight-month daughter, works in an international corporation. He did not attend the pre-natal classes because "they were for mothers", neither was he present at the delivery. When the baby arrived, he expressed some anxiety when

caring for her at first and thus preferred to help out with the housework. However, he developed strong emotional attachment to the child and complained that his paid work did not leave him enough time for the family:

> The only disadvantage – now I have to stay at work ill 7 p.m. and come home sometimes too tired to be a good father. At my previous working place, I had fewer working hours, I could spend more time with my daughter.

As the baby grows and starts "responding" Dmytro enjoys spending time with her even more and takes up the role of a mentor who tries to teach the baby through games: "What did we do last Sunday? I was teaching her some new words. I like teaching her, she is so smart".

Despite being very reserved, Dmytro, according to his wife, feels comfortable exposing emotions when he is with the baby and there is nobody around:

> I had hardly heard him sing, usually saying "I sing out of tune; I don't have a good voice for it". But he sings for her lullabies, I told him to sing "Nese Halya Vodu". Once even his mother when heard him singing was very surprised and said that she had never knew that he had such a nice voice.

In general, men in this group say that they can do any domestic work, if there wives need help, and look after the baby, if they have time for it.

4.2. Discourses on Fathering: Cash vs. Care

Although the above examples show that the actual practices of fathering vary considerably, most of the parents were quite unanimous in their definition of a good father. He should "spend time with the child" – was by far the most frequent answer mentioned by both men and women. And although this could imply a number of different activities, from bathing and putting the baby to bed to going out for a walk together, more often than not the answers revealed that how the time was spent did not really matter as long as it was spent together with the baby.

Just “being there” to help raise the child or to set his example seemed to be the best thing a father could offer to confirm his love and responsible attitude. It was directly or indirectly contrasted with the father’s responsibility to earn money, which was important, but could not justify father’s absence. Describing his childhood one of the male-interviewees complained, “My brother and I did not see our father but on Sundays. He worked, he had lots of money – his pockets were always packed full with it, but there was no father around.”

Dmytro’s example also has shown that some fathers see their responsibilities of providing the living and of participating in the upbringing as competing and acknowledge that the latter is more important than the former. Mothers also named their husband’s work to be impeding for their “real” involvement, “He works Saturdays, so he spends only Sundays with the child. What kind of participation in the upbringing is it? The father should be there, should teach the child, educate him, set his own example”.

The last quotation can be also seen as representative of the expectations concerning father’s involvement. “Teaching” and “educating” either through “explaining things” or “setting his own example” were named as the most important roles for fathers. At the same time, childcare, if mentioned at all, is discussed as “helping” the wife or “being able to substitute the mother in almost everything”. Thus it is the mother who is considered to be the primary caregiver while the father’s duty is education of the child.

This division of roles between parents is visible in a sharper contrast if the responsibilities of a “good mother” are added to the analysis. First of all, unlike a father for whom the time that he should spend with the child and the particular duties are not specified, a mother is expected to “give all her time to the child” and “the child should be in the first place for her”, as some parents said. Most of the listed duties are reduced to nurturing with only one mother mentioning that in addition to making sure that “the baby should have the

diapers changed on time, be fed and not to cry […] a good mother has to play with the child, to develop her/him."

Both men and women clearly define mother's responsibility as that of nurturing and caregiving. However, men tend to describe it in more general terms. Instead of telling what a good mother should do, they usually specify personal characteristics that should pertain to a mother seeing her as "caring", "patient", "compassionate", "kind", "loving", and "hardworking". Thus, it may be argued, that they perceive mothering as requiring some feminine qualities. One of the fathers even used the term "motherly instincts" when talking about a good mother, "First, all her motherly instincts should be ok, that is the child should be in the first place for her and then everything else. And it is difficult to add anything to it."

It may not be surprising that all the interviewees talked about the mother's nurturing responsibilities at length if one takes into account the profile of the participants of the study – families with little babies where mothers stay on the parental leave and take the primary care of the child. However, it should be noted that describing a "good father" in general, both men and women sometimes stepped out of the narrow boundaries of their child's age and named the characteristics that can be important in the future (for example, "respectable", "the child should be proud of him"). The features of a "good mother" were in direct correspondence to the baby's age. This fact can also support the conclusion that in general father is thought of as entering the child's upbringing at a later stage and taking care of a little baby is not considered to be an important part of his involvement.

Want To Be European? (in place of conclusions)

Although "A good father is a good father everywhere," as one male-interviewee said, "there can be a difference between an average Ukrainian and Western fathers," said another and explained:

> Our parents want to interfere more, want to 'discipline', in the West, I guess, though I've never been there, parents and kids are more autonomous, more equal in their rights. Our kids know their place and look up at/to their parents; there on the contrary…

Half of all references to "the West" or Europe had this idea of higher equality of rights, mainly gender equality. And although more women paid attention to it, men shared this view too:

> In the West a woman cannot be considered servants, gender roles are not so rigid there while in Ukraine we see the traditional distribution of duties in the majority of families – husband earns money, wife does shopping. Well, husband can also shop with her if they need to carry a lot of bags from the shop (*laughing*).

Another topic that was brought up in the context of "West" was that of fathers and child care. Like Sasha in previous section, other interviewees mention that European fathers are "kinder" and "joking all the time" while ours are very reserved. "Maybe we were just raised like that," said one mother.

Five out of twenty interviewees noted that fathers are in a "better respect" there. They can have fun and enjoy being fathers. As one of the male-interviewees put it he would like to participate in all those "'father&son ballroom dances' and other ridiculous things they do together on the Father's day", only that there is no Father's Day in Ukraine yet. No one mentioned any financial responsibilities of fathers, all the comments were about care, not cash. The state support was also discussed in the context of encouraging men to become involved fathers with little reference to the social payments or any other type of family benefits.

> From what we know, maybe the main difference is that the state that encourages fathers' involvement. They organize pre-natal courses for the couple where

> fathers also do some exercises, have to wear a belly to feel themselves pregnant. In our country no one encourages fathers to attend those courses. They are called “Shkola materynstva” – School of motherhood – what father would go there?

It may be concluded that despite the fact that the distribution of the childcare and housework duties between parents is specific for every family, the participants in the study expressed similar views on the “proper” fathering. Fathers’ involvement into the child upbringing is highly valued while their immediate participation in the childcare is seen as an exception rather than the rule. Since the interviewed parents did not live with their extended families and could not rely on the help of their relatives, husbands had to help their wives with the housework; however, emotional attachment and nurturing were considered to be feminine features.

Conclusions

So what is the state politics of fatherhood in contemporary Ukraine? How has it changed since the country acquired its independence? And how does it influence the practices of fathering? Having acquired its independence in 1991, the Ukrainian state endeavored on large-scale social and economic transformations which could not leave the family and gender relations unaltered. Since the Soviet ideology of women's emancipation together with all the achievements in gender equality lost its legitimacy, and the feminist movement in the post-socialist countries was not popular enough to lay the basis for new gender politics, it was the ideas of Western democracy and human rights that were proclaimed a starting point for the modernization of the state family and gender politics.

Under these new politics, the post-Soviet men acquired new rights and responsibilities. The family and civil law have been amended to reflect the equality of parental rights of men and women. The system of welfare provisions is said to be framed to compensate the parent who looks after the child his/her temporary loss of income rather than to substitute for a father. To rehabilitate the status of a father in the family and society, the importance of the father's involvement for both child's development and men's self-realization was stressed and caring attitude to children was promoted.

More subtle ways to construct the new discourse on "conscious fatherhood" were used to legitimize the man's role of a father including social advertising and the expert and popular literature on parenting. Along with the projects launched by the Ministry on Family, Youth and Sport and other state offices, the images of involved fatherhood were popularized by NGOs and mass media. At the same time, gender stereotypes about the distribution of family roles still combine traditionalist and egalitarian views – despite being seen as highly desirable, fathers' involvement into childcare is perceived as exception rather than norm. The scope of

responsibilities for women remains broader embracing family and paid work, while men are predominantly defined in relation to their professional career.

One of the conclusions of this thesis is that practices of fathering do not live to the expectations of the promoted involvement. And here one should probably note that to say that fatherhood is socially constructed does not mean, however, that the practices of fathering are determined by dominant expectations. State, society, and family set certain examples and delineate boundaries of what is considered to be acceptable practices. Models of parenting set forth by the society and family are internalized by men and women and further shaped by their personal values and views, as well as by the values and views of their partners.

However, another conclusion that I can draw from this research is that gender regime is embedded into the state politics and means more than the elimination of the preferential rights to custody. One should remember that the state politics directed at promotion of the involved and responsible fatherhood is quite recent in Ukraine and the first changes in the status, rights and duties of fathers were connected with the temporary withdrawal of the state from the family and child care support because of its economic weakness rather then with changes in legislation influenced by the discourses on gender equality. This new role was that of a breadwinner. *Only* the main family breadwinner, some researchers may say, because the majority of women remained in the labor market. And this is absolutely true, but what about families where one of the parents has to stay on the parental leave and look after the baby? The truth is that when my male-interviewees on hearing the question – "Would you consider taking the parental leave instead of your wife if she earned more than you?" – snapped back "I cannot imagine where she could earn more than me," they probably were quite sincere.

Despite all the declarations of good intentions, the presumptions about women as working mothers and men as workers are still underlying all the institutions. There is still no unanimity about the development of family politics which nowadays unite several sometimes

contradictory discourses – Soviet discourse on egalitarianism which presupposes "protection of women", traditionalist ideas about the "natural" women's roles of a mother and wife and men's role of a breadwinner, liberal discourse of the family's autonomy and responsibility for its own welfare, and notions of gender equality promoted by women's movement and, in the first place, by international organizations.

I think this last aspect – influence of international organizations on the discourse of fatherhood is one of promising areas of further research. Organizations of fathers are still not numerous in the region; most of them have international funding. The relationships between donors and regional organizations is always complex, and in the context when the discourse on fatherhood has been shaped in terms of its Europeanness, a study on the contribution of the international organizations into the development of the ideas of involved fatherhood in Ukraine could give answers to some questions and maybe to raise some new questions.

Fathers and men can have different, sometimes contradictory, relations to a welfare state. Hearn stresses that politics of fatherhood is usually directed at middle class men while men belonging to different minority groups (ethnic, sexual, etc.) can be denied benefits offered by the system since their practices of fatherhood can be defined as deviant in contrast to the 'hegemonic' one (2002: 253). The focus on the earlier stage of first-time parenting and the exclusion of the experiences of non-marital and non-residential fathers is one of the major limitations of the research. Thus I only studied the experiences of married first-time fathers who live in the Western Ukraine; the differences that may exist across groups with different educational, ethnic, or religious backgrounds remains unexplored, and this should be taken into account before any generalization about the role of the state and other discourses in construction of fatherhood in Ukraine is made.

Appendix

Interview Guide

Cash vs. care. What is the actual involvement of fathers in the child-care? How is the housework/child-care duties divided between parents?

- What were your first thoughts when you found out that your wife (partner) was pregnant?
- Had you always imagined/expected being a father?
- To what extent did your daily routine change after the birth of the child? Could you describe a typical working day?
- Could you describe your typical weekend? What did you and your wife do this weekend?
- Could you give me an example of a time that you were looking after the child alone?
- What is it like providing care for your baby? Have your involvement changed over time?
- Are there things that you really enjoy doing and things that you really don't like doing?
- Does your paid employment have an impact on your role of a father?
- Have you considered the possibility of taking the parental leave instead of your wife? (Under what circumstances could you choose to stay with the child instead of your wife?)
- Did you have any prior experience of looking after a little child?
- Which of your personal qualities, skills and prior experiences help you manage the responsibilities of fatherhood? (What qualities are important for being a good parent?)
- Have you learnt anything new from your experience of being a father?

What discourses on "proper" fatherhood are the most influential: family, friends, mass media

- Did you try to 'prepare' for the birth of the child/for fatherhood? How?
- What has been the main/most helpful source of information about parenting? (Did you attend pre-natal classes, read books, talked to other parents-to-be/friends/your parents/medical workers, etc?)
- Who do you ask for assistance if you need help with the child?
- Do you find the parenting manual(s) informative/helpful? In what way?
- Do you discuss the issues related with the child with your friends/colleagues at work?
- Describe your relationships with family/friends/colleagues at work since the baby arrived.

What is the picture of "ideal" fatherhood? What/Who serves as a role-model?

- How would you describe a 'good' mother?
- How would you describe a 'good' father? (What a good father should/shouldn't be like?)
- What does "involved fatherhood" mean to you? How does it work in you life?
- In your opinion, have the expectations and practices changed since the generation of your parents?
- Do you think there is a difference between being a 'good' father in Ukraine vs. in some Western country?

What is the desirable/undesirable level of state involvement into the child-care?

- What is the level of state support for families with young children in our country?
- What (else) do you think the state could do to support young parents?

- Have you already tried to envision any sort of future for your child?
- What sort of relationship do you want to have with him/her as he/she gets older?
- What is the most important or significant about bringing up a child?

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