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Teenage Boys as Fathers:
Two Socialisation Perspectives

Amongst the sociocultural transformations of gender patterns referring to masculinity, those associated with performing the role of the father are arguably the most radical. In present times, the social expectations addressed to the "new father" significantly differ from those expected of men having children in the past few centuries, and living up to these expectations not only requires overcoming the stereotype of the father, but also the stereotype of the "masculine man". This, in turn, requires a considerable modification of the socialisation process for gender roles realised with reference to adolescent boys. Without these changes, young men may become helpless when faced with the tasks arising from the newly defined role of the father, especially when forced to assume this role as adolescent boys.

In this paper, I present two very unique types of adolescent boy socialisation experiences associated with the role of the father. The first one refers to a real-life situation where an adolescent boy is to become a real father. In the other one, an adolescent boy merely plays the role of a father as part of an educational programme. These experiences will be presented using data from two studies, the results of which have been re-interpreted for the purposes of the present paper.

Socialisation for the role of a father

In our times, especially in the past three decades, the models of the "father-king", "father-God" and even the "absent father" have become less and less common (Sikorska 2009, p. 192), and a better defined model of a new father has emerged. It represents a man who is involved in the care and upbringing of his child from the moment the child is born, who assists during labour and delivery, and who engages in activities that used to be reserved for the mother, a father who equally shares parenting activities with the mother or, in some cases, also assumes them (as, for instance, during paternity leave).

In this situation, socialisation and upbringing to fatherhood appear to be extremely complex tasks. Is it possible to avoid excessive "feminisation" of the process of the socialisation to reach masculinity, to evade the trap of an "identity incongru-

ous" to the expectations of society, when passing on the model of an involved (including emotionally involved) father who is sensitive to the needs of his small child? The situation is not made any easier by the "moral panic" instigated by individuals on an ideological crusade in the name of the "fight against gender ideology", who regard any departures from the traditional model of gender socialisation as a threat to the "natural", conservative social order as well as a corruption of morals.

The current models of gender roles do not replace the former ones, but emerge next to them, creating a kind of a tension between the traditional and new roles (Kwiatkowska 1999). This, however, does not occur without bearing significant costs, when a man assuming the role of the father is expected to meet many new requirements along with those found in the former model. "The contemporary socialisation narrative seems to have been reflecting the ambivalence between the deeply rooted traditional models and egalitarian standards which are a part of the current expectations" (Paprzycka 2010, p. 34). In the case of boys, this ambivalence is manifested in a twofold way: on the one hand, by nurturing the traits considered typically masculine, and on the other, by introducing traits traditionally attributed to women, such as the features which support the process of an efficient childcare.

The main socialisation agendas, which are the source of gender stereotypes adopted by an individual, include family, school, the Church, peer group and the mass media. As the issues discussed in this paper are limited in this respect, we can, however, only briefly mention the role of the first two.

The socialisation of boys for the role of a father starts in the family. The primary socialisation is the effect of the relationship of the young boy with his father. Today, however, it is difficult to rely on the "models presented by the fathers from older generations, as they have only started embracing parenthood when they taught their children how to comply with social norms (so rather late)" (Szlendak 2011, p. 448). Moreover, in the past, in families with many children, boys often observed the relationship of the father with their younger siblings, observed him assume this role, and they could, and sometimes had to, take care of their younger siblings. In present times, a significant proportion of boys have no such experience, or even no contacts with their own fathers on a daily basis.

School impacts the process of gender typification mainly through the content in textbooks and the information delivered by the teachers (Muszyńska 2004). Ironically, the most conservative models, excluding the changes taking place in the standards ascribed to gender roles, and including the role model of the father, are presented during family life classes (Izdebski, Wąż 2010). School textbooks present family members and their relationships with one another in a predominantly traditional and stereotypical way. "Men are rarely depicted in family roles. And we will surely not see a father taking care of an infant or sick child. The dad found in a school textbook is only present on special occasions" (Wołosik 2011). However, the textbooks that have been released more recently do attempt to overcome gender stereotypes, depict women beyond the family sphere, and show men as part of family life, including taking care of a young child. Teachers are often also susceptible to gender stereotypes, which translates into (often subconsciously, as part of the so-called invisible curriculum), treating male and female students in different ways. This invisible school

curriculum (through the socialisation messages produced by teachers and presented by the textbooks) reproduces gender stereotypes, as well as fatherhood stereotypes.

The first socialisation perspective – adolescent fathers

Young people present varying approaches towards sexual activity, but they are increasingly becoming more liberal. This phenomenon is quite conspicuous in studies conducted on sixteen-year-olds. Nearly one quarter of the respondents (24%) stated that having sexual relations at their age was normal. More than half (53%) of the respondents shared the view that people of their age may engage in some form of sexual activity, but with the total exclusion of sexual intercourse. Only 13% of respondents assumed a very restrictive standpoint, claiming that persons their age should definitely not engage in any form of sexual activity (even caressing). One should note that the boys presented views which were more liberal, i.e. they were slightly less often than the girls in favour of the statement that "persons my age should definitely not yet engage in any form of sexual activity", and much more often approved of the view that "having sexual relations at my age is normal". The majority of sixteen-year-olds (54%) believed that sex life could begin before the age of 20, with almost one-fourth (24%) having placed this moment even earlier, before reaching adulthood. The boys were twice as likely as the girls to state that sexual activity could be started before the age of 18 years old (Wąż 2008). The results of the research carried out in 2010 show that in the age group of 15–16 year olds, 20.0% of boys and 13.7% of girls had already gone through sexual initiation. In the case of 17–18 year olds, already 45.3% of the boys and 38.5% of the girls were sexually active (Mazur, Małkowska-Szkutnik 2010). One should note, however, that it was mainly the girls that became younger at the moment of sexual initiation. Over the past 20 years (1990–2010), the percentage of adolescent boys after sexual initiation increased by only a few (2–9) percentage points (with a greater increase in the older group), while in the case of girls it rose two or threefold (with a greater increase in the age group of 15–16) (Woynarowska, Szymańska, Mazur 1999; Mazur, Małkowska-Szkutnik 2010).

Sexual activity initiated too early and irresponsibly with no knowledge about contraception may result – in some cases – in premature procreation and parenthood. Fatherhood of adolescent boys has never been at the centre of social attention, nor has it been treated as an important problem of scientific research. It is adolescent motherhood that usually becomes the source of great interest and emotions, and the role of an equally young father is treated at most as an additional obstacle in the life of an adolescent mother (when both parents are very young), and as a crucial evidence of both parents' irresponsibility.

Pregnancy and the birth of a child are significant events in the course of the life of women, events which can either stimulate growth, become a crisis experience, or even a critical event (Skowrońska-Zbierzchowska 2010). This postulate also works in reference to many men, especially adolescent boys. "Divergence of adolescence" or lack of compatibility between the rate of the biological, sexual, mental

and social development we observe in adolescents (Jaczewski 1992), makes it impossible to assume the role of a mature and responsible father. Early parenthood confronts adolescent boys with responsibilities fit for adult people, at the same time blocking their chances of solving developmental tasks typical for adolescence. They are not ready to assume the responsibilities of a father in terms of the mental, emotional, social as well as economic terms. Being under age is also a fundamental legal obstacle to care for a child in a formal sense.

Early procreation statistics for boys are far from complete, as it is the decision of women bearing the child to disclose information about the child's father. Among the men indicated as legitimate fathers by women who gave birth to a living child in 2004, 3054 were under the age of 19 (0.86%), but 17 348 mothers (4.8%) did not provide information on the father. In 2013, there were 1996 fathers (0.54%) under 19 and 14 002 mothers (3.77%) who did not provide information on the father. The situation is even more complicated by the fact that the women who revealed that their child's father was an adolescent were predominantly their peers. The women who did not provide father data were also predominantly adolescent. Let us note/ that the belief that the situation of adolescent parents is common is nothing more than a myth. Adolescent mothers most often pointed to young, but adult men being fathers of their children (GUS [Central Statistical Office] demographic data for 2014).

What socialisation experiences are shared by the adolescent boys who became fathers? What factors diversify these experiences and to what extent? An attempt to answer these questions will be made below based on a reinterpretation of the research material from qualitative studies conducted in 2008 and 2009 on samples of 30 women and 30 men who became parents before the age of 18. The results of this research are presented in a monograph devoted to the problem of adolescent parenthood (Izdebski, Wąż 2011).

The analysis of the statements made by men who became fathers as adolescents and the statements of women who became mothers at the same age and presented the reactions and behaviour of under-age fathers of their children, enables us to identify a number of factors that had an impact on the depiction of their socialisation experiences related to this situation.

The first of these factors is the awareness of the partner's pregnancy (that she will give birth to a child). This is a *sine qua non* condition. Without being aware of this fact, the boy could not, for obvious reasons, assume the role of a father. In some cases, however, the girls (often under pressure from their parents) did not inform the boy about the pregnancy or provided this information very late. Sometimes the information about the girl's pregnancy reached the boy from other, often strange sources. The moment the boy found out he was to be a father also bears some significance. Respondents who found out about it at the beginning of pregnancy had more time to handle the problem, or assume the role earlier, experience and prepare for childbirth with their partner, and support her in this difficult period, in which her young age was also a factor.

Another determinant is the type of relationship between the boy and the mother of the child. The majority of them were current partners – "girlfriends" of the

respondents. However, relationships between adolescents are often short and turbulent. In some situations, even before the girl realised she was pregnant, the relationship with the father of the child had ended, and sometimes they were also very conflicted. Relatively often, the girl's pregnancy was also the result of an ephemeral relationship, or even an incidental acquaintance that happened during a party, under the influence of alcohol. So the adolescents were practically strangers.

The type and scope of socialisation experiences related to early parenthood are to a large extent determined by the boy's acceptance of himself in this role, by whether he will use the strategy of a runaway father or deny fatherhood, by the extent to which he is able to rationalize and control the feelings of shock and fear in response to the news about the pregnancy (the feelings which were predominant in the studies conducted), and, finally, by the extent to which he will be involved in the support of the mother of the child during pregnancy and in the care of the child after its birth, as well as the extent to which he will want and be able to participate in this care on a daily basis.

A factor which significantly determines the ability of the adolescent to assume the role of the father is also the way in which the girl and her parents treat him. Even if the young father had a close relationship with the girl and had had the experience of a relatively long adolescent relationship, he cannot count on being accepted in the new role. As a "candidate" for a father, he undergoes a new verification process, in particular conducted by the girl's parents. This evaluation is often to his disadvantage. The new role expects different qualities than the ones appreciated in a boyfriend, who is rather just fun to be with. The evaluation of a boy who was not formerly introduced to the parents of the girl and is virtually a "stranger" to the girl herself, is even more disadvantageous.

In the case of adolescent boys, the attitude of adults (especially their parents and the parents of the child's mother) towards the situation has a decisive influence on whether and to what extent they will be able to take on the role of the father of their child. In practice, they are the ones making decisions about everything or nearly everything. First of all, this determines whether or not a child will be born at all. In the case of the pregnancy of a young girl, abortion is considered relatively often. Although only those whose child was actually born participated in the qualitative studies, abortion was also considered in at least a few cases in this group. Parents of teenagers (and especially the parents of the girls) decide to what extent the young people will assume parental roles, if at all, to what extent they will have the opportunity to exercise these roles together, and to what extent autonomously, and what support they will receive in performing these roles. In practice, then, it is the parents – especially if the mother of the child is very young – who decide to what extent and what type of socialisation experience will be shared by the adolescents, including the adolescent father.

The economic factors, and practically – with no income of their own – the material status of their families, is an extremely important determinant. Not only in terms of ensuring adequate social welfare for the young family, and especially for the child, but also as a basis for building the autonomy of the young people.

Extremely difficult material conditions exacerbate the already difficult situation of the adolescent parents, multiply problems, and are not conducive to establishing good relations between them and engaging in the role of parents.

A factor which bears considerable importance is the age of the boy who became a father, as well as the age of the mother of the child. This is not only a determinant of how effective childcare will be exercised in reality, but also the extent to which the young parents will be accepted by their environment, including members of their families. We do not only refer here to the chronological age, but to the actual level of cognitive, emotional, social and moral development. Assuming the role of the father, the role formerly reserved for adults only, may accelerate the process of puberty, but those who are too far away from this stage may find it very challenging to confront this task. It is thus not surprising that not everyone wants and is able to cope with it.

The aforementioned factors, which could impact the depiction of socialisation experiences linked to the role of a father became the basis for attempting to establish a classification of these experiences – the selection of particular types of (too) early fatherhood (table 1).

Table 1. Classification of (too) young fathers

Type of fatherhood	Description
The Fully Legitimised Father	He can fully assume the role of the father as the family(ies) have accepted him in this role and have created appropriate conditions for the young parents to take care of their child together, live together, sometimes even in their own home; this often encourages a great deal of commitment and responsible behaviour, although sometimes, despite favourable conditions, the boy is not able to cope with his responsibilities; the relationship of the young parents is not always able to last.
The Heroic Father	He is alone in his role as a father, often deprived of sufficient help from his parents; he takes everything – the overwhelming responsibilities and circumstances – "on the chin", goes to a gynaecologist with his girlfriend, tries to earn money, gives up many things (friends, parties, sometimes even school....)
The (Almost) Father	He fits into the conditions created by the family (parents), supports the mother of the child, helps her during pregnancy and after childbirth, does not have to be heroic and give up everything that has been important to him so far, and assumes the responsibilities of the father to the best of his strength and abilities
The Visiting, Special Occasion Father	He is allowed to visit the child and the girl as a (reasonably) desired guest, does not have to take responsibility, and is somehow a candidate for a father, a person who wishes to take on this role in the future

Type of fatherhood	Description
The Brother Father	The parents (most often of the girl) "adopt" the child, and assume full care and responsibility for the child, thus assigning the role of siblings to adolescent parents; sometimes a formal adoption follows
The Divergent Father	A boy considered to be an unsuitable candidate for the father and partner of a girl (usually by the girl's parents and sometimes by the girl herself), is isolated from the child and his/her mother; sometimes he attempts to fight to be a legitimate father, but sometimes this situation is convenient for him
The Runaway Father	The boy escapes from fatherhood, renounces the child (and his mother), denies fatherhood, sometimes manifests a hostile attitude towards the girl, often loses himself in partying, tries to forget, and deadens the remorse related to his actions
The Unaware Father	The boy does not know that he is to become a father; sometimes the acquaintance with the child's mother was very brief and he has no contact with her; rarely – he knows the mother, but does not presume to be the father of the child; sometimes this situation is temporary and after some time the boy is informed that he has become a father; depending on his reaction and other determinants, the unaware father becomes a father of another type, either a runaway father or a visiting father
The Potential, "Would-have-been" Father	He has gone through the experience of the girl becoming pregnant, and the decision to have an abortion that (sometimes) is made by others or with his passive participation

Source: own work

As demonstrated, fatherhood which happens (too) early can generate a very diverse pool of socialisation experiences. For the most part these are not experiences which can be considered beneficial for development. This is not surprising – nowadays the role of a parent is so complex and culturally defined that it can be efficiently performed only by adults (many adults also struggle with parenthood, but this problem is not a part of this paper). This does not mean, however, that every situation of premature fatherhood is exclusively the source of negative experiences. Some boys capitalize on it in terms of the socialisation process. This is especially the case when the boys obtain the information about the pregnancy when they are relatively mature, and their parents want and are able to offer a type of support, which enables the boys to actively assume the role of a father and does not challenge them beyond their strength and abilities. The analysis of the life stories of young fathers proves that for some of them the birth of a child and caring for it enabled them to become mature earlier and start building the foundations of a future family.

The second perspective of socialisation – a simulation of fatherhood

The socialisation experiences of adolescent boys who became fathers described above will now be compared to a situation in which their peers only played the role of a father while participating in an educational programme. It was an early parenthood prevention programme "Be Responsible. Education for Responsibility and Partnership in the Family", which was commissioned by the Ministry of National Education and developed and implemented into educational practice between 2004–2005 by a team of academics of the University of Zielona Góra.

The programme was the Polish version of the American educational and preventive programme "Baby, Think It Over" which aims to prevent adolescents from engaging irresponsibly in sexual activity too early and to minimise the resulting teen pregnancies. The project was based on the use of an infant simulator, which was a doll simulating some of the needs of a small child. The authors of the Polish project abandoned many solutions of the American programme, because they found that it was excessively based on fear. The US programme participants were daunted that the child born may suffer from disabilities, they might have to bear very high costs of child care, upbringing and education, and presented an extensive scale of infant childcare. Even though the studies on the effectiveness of the programme carried out in the United States (Out, Lafreniere 2001; Somers, Fahlman 2001) confirm it is possible to achieve the results assumed by its authors – i.e. the discouragement of early parenthood and the declared postponement of procreation – according to the team preparing the Polish version of the programme there was a real danger that participants in the project could become paralysed by the very thought of the need to take care of and bring up an infant, which could have created a lifelong, negative attitude towards parenthood.

Just like the American prototype, the Polish project was intended by its authors to prevent teen pregnancy. However, the aims, content and method of implementation of the programme were significantly modified. As a result, the strategy of frightening the participants was abandoned in favour of a strategy of providing knowledge about the needs of the new-born child and the ways of handling them properly and demonstrating the enormity of the tasks facing the parents of a young child, the need for a responsible attitude for carrying them out, as well as the joy of parenthood. As a result, the purpose was to maintain, strengthen or form a belief about the values of parenthood and its extraordinary role in human life. The programme included two parts: educational classes (10 hours of teaching) and a simulation of infant care performed for 48 hours (from Friday to Sunday) in the students' family homes. The essence of the project was learning by doing – modifying attitudes and acquiring competences through caring for an electronic simulator of an infant (Wąż 2008).

The programme was implemented in an experimental phase in 24 schools located in three provinces of western Poland: Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie and Dolnośląskie, from September 2004 to January 2005. In the following, 2005/2006

school year it was implemented in 88 schools in the Mazowieckie, Podlaskie and Wielkopolskie Provinces. The participants of the project included students of the last grade of lower secondary schools or the first grade of upper secondary schools.

What were the socialisation experiences of the young boys participating in the programme and taking on the role of simulator caretakers? What factors diversified these experiences and to what extent? To answer these questions we will use the results of the qualitative research conducted along the experimental implementation of the programme. The first, experimental phase of the programme included 636 (33.3% of the total) boy participants. The programme participants filled out a "Caretaker Diary" where they wrote down their impressions after taking care of the infant simulator. Some of them had also prepared longer, free pieces of writing/diaries on this subject. The analysis of these statements enables us to identify a number of factors that had an impact on the students' socialisation experiences related to their role as the caretakers of infant simulators.

As all the students voluntarily participated in the programme (this rule also applied to their parents) and signed a special commitment to exercise responsible "care" of the simulator, in the aforementioned situation the pressure factor was not at all in question. The experiences of the boys, on the other hand, were diversified in terms of the level of commitment with which each student provided the care. In general, we could observe that the students made great efforts to perform their role well. In addition to their statements, it is also evidenced by the results of the simulation recorded objectively by a computer (in the vast majority of cases, students obtained from 90 to 100% accurate responses to the needs indicated by the simulator).

It is motivation that proved to be the greatest factor in the diversification of the various people's responses. Some boys approached their task very emotionally – caring for the simulator was identified with caring for a real infant – and the role itself was even perceived as a role of a parent. Others showed great awareness of the convention, played the role of fathers, but they were far from identifying the simulator with a child. Still others treated caring for the simulator as an attractive educational task, an opportunity to have fun, to spend time in an interesting way, an opportunity to prove themselves, to test themselves, and to show off to others, etc.

The factor that diversified the socialisation experiences of boys was the attitude of their parents, including the extent to which they became "grandparents" of the simulator, the extent to which they followed the rules of the experiment provided by the teacher, the extent to which they modified these rules (thus increasing or reducing the scope of tasks performed by the adolescent "father"), the extent to which they helped, supported, or helped out with the tasks, the extent to which they themselves were involved, and could and wanted to devote their time and attention. Largely, the point was to see to what extent they created an atmosphere at home that would be conducive to the adopted convention, make the situation less artificial, conducive to the child's activity, and motivating the child to make an effort and persevere in the realization of a difficult task. It was also important to what extent the convention proposed in the programme was adopted by other people, especially other residents in their homes.

The socialisation experiences of the boys who were caretakers of the simulators were also impacted by the reaction of the environment, especially their friends, by how they evaluated the implementation of this task and by the extent to which the student was subjected to social "exposure", the extent to which the situation of the simulation was limited to the closest family members, and the extent to which the group of actors (people observing the student as a "father") was expanding – whether friends and neighbours paid visits to the caretaker's home during the simulation process, and how they reacted to the role he played. Whether the boy wanted or needed to leave the house with the simulator, stayed with it in public places (in a bus, park, shop, etc.), and how others reacted to seeing him with a "child" in a carrier also played a part.

The factors described above, which impacted the depiction of the socialisation experiences of students – participants of the programme – lay at the basis for proposing the classification of these experiences, and selecting particular types of „fathers" – caretakers of the infant simulators (tab. 2).

Table 2. The classification of "fathers" – caretakers of the infant simulators

Type of "father" – infant simulator caretaker	Description
Committed	Identifies with the role of the father of the infant simulator very much, treats it as a child, emotionally engaged in the care
Responsible	Tries to carry out all the tasks related to care, assumes full responsibility, and apart from listening to additional instructions does not accept any help from parents
Student	The simulation of infant care represents a type of homework; he does not "buy" the convention of the project, but is interested in the records of the effects of the simulation and strives to achieve the best/better results
Not self-reliant	Relies on parents to a large extent, seeks their help, support, and even wants them to assume his tasks
Real-life	He is moderately committed to the care of the infant simulator, accepts the convention, but at the same time tries to live his regular life, meet his friends, and have fun.
Hedonist	He considers the simulation of infant care to be a game, an adventure, expresses a specific approach to the convention of the "father" of an infant simulator, and eagerly keeps in touch with his friends to boast about his unique "toy".

Source: own work

The participation of boys in the project was very important for the authors of the programme as it was addressed to girls and boys alike. The idea was to

make students aware that both women and men are responsible for procreation and childcare. The authors of the programme were considerably concerned about boys' reactions to having been invited to participate in the programme and how they would meet the responsibilities of the infant simulator caretaker. These concerns were connected with a long-lived postulate of developmental psychology that adolescent boys are far less socially mature than their female peers. The concern not only referred to the childish behaviour of the participants themselves, but – possibly to even a greater extent – to boys who were not part of the programme and who could ridicule their colleagues who had assumed the role of infant simulator caretakers. In the course of the programme it was proven that these concerns were unfounded. The aforementioned approach of students toward the infant care simulation also contradicts this. The course of the experiment additionally indicated that there is a correlation of responsible attitudes towards procreation and parenthood with the previous experiences of the young people participating in the programme (including boys) in regard to taking care of younger and ill persons or those in need of care.

What were the socialisation experiences shared by the students participating in the programme? The very fact that boys were entrusted with the role of the sole (apart from the assumed parental support) responsible caretaker of an infant simulator meant that these experiences could be viewed as specific, in line with the model of a "new father" who actively participates and engages in the care of an infant child. However, despite the efforts made by the authors of the programme, the situation remained artificial, and even with the adoption of the convention proposed in the programme by the student and his parents, the circumstances reminded of that of a single parent. Nevertheless, we can state that the total of socialisation experiences which accompanied the infant care simulation were very beneficial, and contributed to the development of responsibility, a trait which is not only indispensable in the process of exercising care over an infant, but is also an essential component of a mature adult personality.

In individual cases, however, the students' experiences varied, which was reflected in the identified types of "father" – caretaker of the simulator. The most valuable developmental experiences were acquired by the boys, who "bought" into the convention of the programme and obtained optimal support from their parents. The experience proved less valuable for those boys treating the project merely as homework or fun, boys' whose parents were not sufficiently involved in the care or whose parents, on the contrary, attempted to help out with everything.

Differences between the two socialisation perspectives

It appears to be important to try to compare the socialisation experiences acquired by adolescent boys in the atypical roles of fathers and caretakers of an infant simulator in the summary of analyses performed here. A synthetic picture of this comparison is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Differences between the two socialisation perspectives

	Real fatherhood	**Simulated fatherhood**
Socialisation mechanism	Learning by doing	Learning by doing
Naturalness	Natural situation, and a set of social actors (mother, father, child, grandparents)	Artificial situation, educational task, care of the infant simulator, its appearance and operation are an attempt to overcome artificiality, the lack of key social actors – the girl – the child's mother and her parents
Social Exposure	Very extensive; the boy is judged not only by family members, but by the whole social environment; in many cases this evaluation is highly critical	Moderate; usually limited to the members of the closest family, sometimes only parents; approval is expressed towards the task carried out by the boy
Degree of autonomy	Forced situation – determined by life, and often by someone else (e.g. the girl's parents)	Voluntary situation – independent decision to join the project (although parents' approval was also necessary)
Level and type of emotions	High, usually negative emotions, stress	High, usually positive emotions, eustress
Adult/parental support	In many situations adults', and their own or their girlfriend's parents' support is missing	Support of own parents acting as "grandparents", also indirect support from the teacher
Duration	A long-term or lifetime role	A role very limited in time, taken up only during the project, for a few days
Possibilities and extent to which one assumes the role of the father	In many cases no possibility to undertake the responsibility (assume the role of father) and/or making it difficult by the mother of the child and/or her parents – isolation, rejection and/or unwillingness to assume the role (denial, escape)	In all cases assuming the role and acting as a father with more or less commitment

Source: own work

Both cases show an extensive efficiency in the change of attitudes, as we are dealing here with the most effective socialisation mechanism, i.e. learning by doing (own activity) (Zimbardo, Ruch 1971, p. 559). However, the group of experiences

characteristic for both socialisation perspectives is different. In the first case – of real fatherhood – the effectiveness is determined by the naturalness of the situation, high social exposure, and long (lifetime) duration. In the second case – of the infant simulator "fatherhood" – by autonomy (voluntary decision making), positive emotions, the support of adults, and the possibility to assume the full range of roles.

However, the most important advantage of the second perspective of socialisation is its constructive, educational character. It was arranged in order to prevent adolescent boys and girls from having to assume parental roles. The evaluation of the programme, including deferred evaluation (Wąż 2014), makes it possible to conclude that this is possible. It turns out that in such a "sensitive" area related to sexual activity it is possible to carry out an educational action with a positive impact on the total of the socialisation experiences of the adolescents. It can be once again pointed out that the reasoned educational impact can modify the famous saying of Cicero: *Usus magister est Optimus* ("experience is the best teacher") into one of – "an experience wisely designed by adults is the best teacher for the young".

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Summary

Teenage boys as fathers: two socialisation perspectives

This article is an empirical exploration of early fatherhood as a real life experience and an educational experiment. The author reveals the regulative role that "simulated" fatherhood plays in the construction of the concepts of boys as fathers.

Keywords

teenager, fatherhood, socialisation, early fatherhood, identity, adolescent, adolescence

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