

**The Czech pathway to home-based elder care model.
Discussion of gender consequences.**

Authors: Blanka Plasova, Hana Marikova

Proposal for contribution to ESPAnet Conference 2010 in Budapest

Stream: 4. Gender Equity and Social Policy

Chairs: prof. Steven Saxonberg, Ph.D. and Mgr. Hana Hašková, Ph.D.

Abstract

The contribution focuses on the development of elderly care system in the Czech Republic as a one of post-communist countries. During the communist era, the different kinds of residential elderly care services (similar to child care services) and the institution of home-help care services were introduced. The reason stemmed particularly from the need of full employment. Thus, women were 'pushed' to leave their traditional role of caregivers and were expected to participate in the formal labor market. The support of elderly care provided by members of families/women remained only on low level until almost the end of communist era. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989 we can observe gradual worsening of availability of residential care facilities. Even if the total number of places in residential care services has constantly increased, the coverage of target populations has slowly decreased and also the number of rejected applicants for places in residential care has dramatically increased. As we can see in some related legislative arrangements and official documents, formal institutional care services should be used only in the case of missing or failing of informal providers/family. The home-based elder care model has seemed to be more and more stressed by the Czech welfare state. The arising questions are: (1) Can the Czech families and seniors still choose among some kinds of care? Or, is the right to provide care within family equated with the family's obligation to care of dependent members? Consequently, it is necessary to ask (2) what could it mean for the Czech families - mainly women - in the context of persisting traditional division of work and in the context of imbalance between work and family? Thus, our paper will concentrate on the analysis of elderly care system development and on the discussion of its gender consequences. While finding the answers on these central questions, we will also try to identify critical moments or junctures on the pathway to current elderly care model in the Czech Republic. More precisely, we will take into consideration the most important reforms which were made before the communists came to power, during the communist as well as the post-communist era which can contribute to the explanation of the current model of elderly care and the gender consequences in the Czech Republic.

Contact information:

Blanka Plasova
Masaryk University
Faculty of Social Studies
Department of Social Work and Social Policy
Address: Joštova 10, Brno 602 00,
Czech Republic
E-mail: plasova@fss.muni.cz
Tel: +420 549 495 786

PhDr. Hana Marikova
Institute of Sociology of the Academy of
Sciences of the Czech Republic
Address: Jilská 1, 110 00 Praha 1
Czech Republic
E-mail: Hana.Marikova@soc.cas.cz
Tel. +420 222 220 924