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**‘Mommy, why daddy is not at home?’ The case of parental
leave in Sweden and Canada**

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Abstract

This thesis is devoted to the analysis of the gender (un)equal uptake of parental leave and the current situations of fathering in Sweden and Canada. The main task of this work is to present the understanding of why fathers do not engage in care-taking as much as mothers do. The theoretical part of this work focuses on feminist theories that explain the lack of engagement of fathers and further factors that explain the unequal uptake of parental leave. Whereas the practical part analyses the uptake of parental leave by fathers in Sweden and Canada. In the last chapter, the theoretical understanding discussed in the first part of this thesis are applied to the case studies. The results of this work show that there is a need to tear down the socially constructed gender attributes via right policies accompanied by right programmes, regional and international cooperation and enhance the “family-friendliness” of all organizations in order to increase the equality in care-taking.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| UN | The United Nations |
| CEDAW | The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women |
| ILO | The International Labour Organization |
| OECD | The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OAS | The Organization of American States |
| CoE | The Council of Europe |
| EU | The European Union |
| ESC | The European Social Charter |
| IACHR | The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights |
| ADRDM | The Charter and the American Declaration of the Right and Duties of Man |
| CIM | The Inter-American Commission on Women |
| SISDEHM | The Integrated System of Women's Human Rights Indicators |
| IAP | The Inter-American Program on Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality |
| UIA | The Unemployment Insurance Act |
| EIA | The Employment Insurance Act |

INTRODUCTION

The gender (in)equality has been long discussed. Nonetheless there is no completely gender equal society in the world. There is a long list of issues that obstruct achieving gender equality, stemming from the socially constructed gender attributes of what is male and what is female. Perhaps the biggest difference between men and women is that women are the sole parents that are able to bring a new life to this world. Controversially this big contribution to the society renders them vulnerable.

In my previous work, I have studied how the notion of life-giver, mother and thus the representation of culture and nation, render women perfect target for the gender-based violence.¹ Apart from that, the male gender attribute of money bringer also demonstrated to be problematic and contributing factor. It is because if men become poor, they feel as failure and are often rejected by their wives, which makes it justifiable to rape.² My conclusions pointed to the need to address the social constructs and destroy the gendered expectations. Thus, the motivation behind writing this thesis is to redress the masculinity in terms of the responsibility to bring money home and parenthood, as I see it as a perfect way to tear down the existing gender expectations. In my opinion, if fathers are seen as an equal parent, responsible for their children just as much as the women are, parenthood can become gender neutral and it could potentially unburden the notion of maternity and also of the money-bringer men and change the long-established discourse.

Apart from that, women are affected unequally by the maternity and consequent parenthood. In many countries where patriarchy is still predominant, women are seen as primary care givers and it is expected of them to stop their careers and go on a parental leave, while men are seen only as secondary care takers. Thus, this creates an impact on the labour participation of women, while men can continue their career pursuit uninterruptedly. As a result, I think it is important to discuss the unequal uptake of parental leave. If the practice is more equalized, I believe the

¹ Klaudia Bamhorová. Bachelor's dissertation: Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts. Metropolitan University Prague. 2018.

² Maria Eriksson Baaz, and Maria Stern. "Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)." *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2009): 495-518.

effect could be seen on the overall gender structures in the society that would in change have impact on the disruption of the previously socially constructed attributes and thus have potential for instance to decrease the gender-based violence.

In many countries men have the right to go on parental leave, but they simply do not. In a believe that having fathers on parental leave can tear down the existing gender expectations this work will attempt to answer the following question: “Why men do not use their right to go on a parental leave?”. Since men’s rights are established within the legal provisions, the problem seems to go beyond the legal solutions and there is a need to address the socially constructed gender attribute. These attributes are being studied on a theoretical level and thus, I will simultaneously answer the following question: “What are the theoretical conceptualizations explaining the separated gender roles in the parental leave?”

Once the theoretical understanding of the issue is accomplished, I will further research: “What is the potential of the right policies to close this gender gap in care-taking?” In order to answer this question, the efforts of the government will be discussed. Then to continue reviewing the potential of the right policies, another question has presented itself on “What is the impact of the international organizations on improving the gender balanced uptake of parental leave?” The international organizations are important part of today’s globalized world where policies are being decided not only on national level, but as well internationally. I have chosen to discuss the impact of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the Organization for the Economic Co-operation and Development and the regional organizations the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organization of American states.

In order to test the theoretical understandings and the impact of the policies and international organizations, this work is going to study the uptake of parental leave by fathers in Kingdom of Sweden and Canada. Both countries are known in their respective regions as progressive when it comes to the social policy. Nonetheless Sweden enjoys even better reputation. Thus, this work will further evaluate on the question: “What can be learned from successful transition towards more equal care-taking in Sweden?”

1 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 Methodology

The issue of gender inequalities concerning parental leave is going to be studied through a multidisciplinary lens. The unequal uptake of parental leave is a problem that is multidimensional, thus it is impossible to reflect on all the conceptualizations. Nonetheless, I am going to draw conclusions based on the concept of the social constructs of gender, theories on feminism, alongside with the research of different policy approaches to bridge the gender gap in care-taking will guide this work.

In order to understand the issue of gender division when it comes to parental leave, I will analyse the issue on five levels. Firstly, the individual level will be discussed in the theoretical part, where I will explain why men as individuals participate in the upbringing of their young children only as a secondary parent. Secondly, on the group level (man as a member of its societal circle), the influence of one man's environment on his decisions will be evaluated via a study of the organizational culture. Thirdly, I will evaluate the role of a state in the practical part in challenging the unequal participation of fathers. Fourthly, on the regional level, I will examine the importance of regional organizations, same as on the fifth - international - level (international organizations) and I will compare their impact. Only the organizations which have the ability or the potential to influence the care-taking policies of their members will be analysed.

Following the theoretical part, I will discuss the issue of parental leave on the case studies of Sweden and Canada. The comparative case study provides an opportunity to compare the best practices and hopefully will shed a light on what can be learned from any of these two countries. Firstly, the development of the parental leave policies will be discussed for the purposes of general understanding of how policies evolved over the time. Secondly, the policy changes in the form of campaigns and attempts to reconstruct masculinity will be analysed. Thirdly, the effect of the previous two will be demonstrated on the current parental leave provisions and the gender equality situation. Then, the effects of the organizational culture will be discussed, to see how the environment influences the individual behaviour within the specific countries. The case studies will be finished with the analysis of the impact of the regional and international

organizations on the above-mentioned states. It also gives for a unique opportunity to compare the regional institutions and their impact.

This work builds on primary and secondary sources. The international treaties, official websites of the governments of Sweden and Canada and the contributions of the academic scholarship in the form of books and journals are the cornerstone of this work. However, mostly secondary sources are going to be used, the feminist scholarship that has been studying this issue, has offered sufficient understanding of the topic. I have encountered some issues in accessing of specific Swedish legislative provisions, nonetheless I could access the webpage of government's authority (Swedish Social Insurance Agency) and scholarship which presented the legislation that I needed in English and therefore it served as a good source. Overall, the sources that has been used in this work seems to be widely supported as authors recall each other's works and build their analysis upon them.

1.2 Key Definitions

In this work I refer to maternity, paternity and parental leave. Maternity is the period of time that mother dedicates to stay home with her child. On the contrary, paternity leave indicates the time that father stays at home with his young child. The parental leave does not specify the sex or the gender of the care-taker. It is the time that is designated for both parents and sometimes this time is to be divided by parents as they please. Other times it can be regulated, saving some time for the other parent.

1.3 Limitations of the work

This thesis focuses on parental leave from the perspective of gender differences. Thus, issues concerning the length of parental leave in general are not being discussed into depth. Moreover, the work is limited to the research of the participation in care-taking of cisgender straight men. However, I acknowledge that the struggle that LGBTQ couples face, in order to access the parental leave or in terms of the rejection of society, is often even more problematic, the scope of this work does not allow for the elaboration of this topic. Neither the specifications are made regarding single or divorced fathers.

2 THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

This chapter will be dedicated towards the various theories and concepts that can explain the causes of discriminatory (indirectly towards women) parental leave practices. Since the issue of parental leave is the one of discrimination, meaning being assigned in the many cases to women only, the discussion will be held around gender.³ Gender reflects on the presumptions and socially constructed attributes about what is considered masculine or feminine. The feminist scholars took the concept of gender as their main field of inquiry and thus the following part will discuss their main findings.

Nonetheless, in some countries the parental leave has been already granted to both parents, for instance in Sweden or Canada. In some instances, the men still do not tend to use it.⁴ Thus, the discussion will evolve further to discuss why men do not use their right to stay home with their children and thus participate in care-taking. The attitudes of organizations, such as corporation towards facilitating or discouraging fathers to take the parental leave will be the core of this part.⁵

In the third part of this chapter, I will discuss the importance of the law. I consider the law to have potential to create impacts on people and the way they percept their rights and/or obligations. It is thus necessary to examine how much can social policies impact gender equality in the society.

In the following subchapters the concept of feminisms, masculinity, heteronormativity will be discussed to see what influences fathers on individual level not to go on parental leave. Then I will examine the societal level that influence fathers' decision-making through looking at

³ "2 in 3 Infants Live in Countries Where Dads Are Not Entitled to a Single Day of Paid Paternity Leave." UNICEF. June 13, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2019. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/2-3-infants-live-countries-where-dads-are-not-entitled-single-day-paid-paternity>.

⁴ "Paternity and Parental Leave Policies across the European ..." 2016. Accessed May 14, 2019. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1600/RR1666/RAND_RR1666.pdf.

⁵ Tobias Axelsson, *Men's Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research p.11

attitudes and organizational culture. Lastly, in order to see how we can address the issue of unequal uptake of parental leave the importance of good policy-making will be discussed.

2.1 Feminism

The movement of feminism has been known since the mid-nineteenth century and has evolved since. Regardless of the changes within this movement and its development, it has always addressed the inequalities that have scourged the women and made them second-class citizens. Especially the inequalities resulting from legal discrimination, then addressing economic hardships and the uneven position of women in the society. Feminists base their findings on the analysis of the society, looking on the socially constructed gender attributes.⁶

Theory of feminism is of utmost importance when explaining the unequal practices that women and men encounter while taking a parental leave because it is yet another story of inequality between men and women. In order to analyse this discrimination, the feminist concepts of masculinity and femininity will be discussed as they represent how “perfect” man or “perfect” woman should behave. Thus, the concepts of what are the expected social roles of man and women will be discussed in the following chapter.⁷

2.1.1 Masculinity, Femininity and Heteronormativity

Feminists explain the role of women and men in the patriarchal society and how their roles further imbed the inequalities in those societies. They look at what are the expectations of the society in general to be fulfilled by the society’s “perfect” members. Hence, in the patriarchal society the ideal of a woman is not a bread winner, but a mother and a person that takes care of home and her husband. It is precisely this idea of “femininity” that render a woman as a sole parent that should take care of her child and thus stay on a parental leave.⁸

⁶ John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens. *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations*. Oxford University Press 2014, United Kingdom p.258-273

⁷ Margaret W. Sallee, "A Feminist Perspective on Parental Leave Policies," *Innovative Higher Education* 32, no. 4 (2007), doi:10.1007/s10755-007-9049-5

⁸ Gillian Pascall. "Male Breadwinner Model." *International Encyclopedia of Social Policy*. Accessed May 15, 2019. <http://cw.routledge.com/ref/socialpolicy/male.html>.

Such ideal femininity is further nurtured by the functionalists and rational choice theory. The “rational” is considered for a woman to take care of her children as this role fits her better, because it is natural. However, this argument is treated as unsuitable to explain social change and neglects the historical, political and social transformations.⁹

On the other hand, according to the breadwinner model the social constructions of masculinity render man a money-bringer. It is not expected of him to take care of his children (apart from providing financial safety), nor to cook, neither do chores. This forms the idea of masculinity. In the patriarchal society, if a man fulfils this ideal masculinity, it grants him certain status, certain power to be exercised over women. Nonetheless, if man decides to deviate from these roles, he would be considered “feminine” and he would lose his “status of a real men”.¹⁰

The expected performance of the socially constructed norms is called heteronormativity. The societies tend to be preserved through heteronormative behaviour and it is very difficult to challenge it. This is the reason, why men do not tend to stay on paternal leave, even if they can. It would mean the deviation from what is normal, and it would challenge their status of a “proper” man among their social circles.¹¹

Following the reasoning of heteronormativity, in the patriarchal society, fathers are not supposed to stay on parental leave and if they do, they might risk disrespect and mocking. Now that the socially constructed gender attributes have been discussed in the issue of parental leave, it is possible to move back to the study of feminism and its various branches.

2.1.2 Liberal Feminism

The first wave of feminism, also called the liberal feminism was addressing the legal inequalities of women, such as voting rights.¹² Despite it has been the first wave and it might

⁹ Tobias Axelsson, *Men's Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research p.17

¹⁰ Gillian Pascall. "Male Breadwinner Model." *International Encyclopedia of Social Policy*. Accessed May 15, 2019. <http://cw.routledge.com/ref/socialpolicy/male.html>.

¹¹ Tijen Butler, "What 'heteronormativity' Means and Why We Live in This Kind of Society," April 11, 2019, , accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/04/11/heteronormativity-definition-societal-examples-and-why-its-harmful-to-lgbt-community/>.

¹² John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens. *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to*

seem like it is over now, liberal feminists globally continue their work to bring about legislative changes to the issues that are causing inequalities.¹³ I think it is important to address the legal issues not only when they put women in disadvantage such as voting rights being granted only to men, but also when the lack of legal provisions concerning men, such as right to paternity leave put women in disadvantage, for instance when she has to stop her career pursuit when she wishes to start a family. Thus, it is still of utmost importance to discuss the legal inequalities that men are facing being denied the right to stay home and its implication on the professional lives of women. Not only professional, but also rendering women as primary care-takers, thus reaffirming the socially constructed gender attributes. As a result, liberal feminists aim for the equal treatment and the amount of time for both parents to be used.¹⁴

Almost two centuries have passed since the liberal feminists have started their work, yet many societies are still lacking the legal provisions that would stand for absolute gender equality.¹⁵ Nevertheless, internationally, in the many developed countries it is not possible to find cases of explicit direct discrimination against women, but it is rather of indirect nature. Indirect discrimination against women, means that even the gender-neutral practices and laws can affect them disproportionately.¹⁶ Following this logic, if fathers do not go on parental leave, women are indirectly affected as they would have to bear the burden on parenthood by themselves.

On the international scale, the effort of international organization towards ending gender inequality in all spheres of life has been visible. For instance, all human rights treaties have encompassed the topic of discrimination, which is strictly forbidden.¹⁷ Nonetheless, women

international relations. Oxford University Press 2014, United Kingdom p.258-273

¹³ Donna Goodman, "The Untold Side of Second Wave Feminism: A Multinational, Politically Diverse Movement," Liberation School. Accessed June 10, 2019, <https://liberationschool.org/feminism-and-the-mass-movements-1960-1990/>.

¹⁴ Margaret W. Sallee. "A Feminist Perspective on Parental Leave Policies," Innovative Higher Education 32, no. 4 (2007), doi:10.1007/s10755-007-9049-5

¹⁵ "Gender Equality." United Nations. Accessed May 16, 2019. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/gender-equality/>.

¹⁶ "Submitting Information to the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice." OHCHR. Accessed May 15, 2019.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/SubmissionInformation.aspx>.

¹⁷ *Human Rights in the Administration of Justice: A Manual on Human Rights for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers*. New York: United Nations, 2003. Accessed June 16, 2019.

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training9chapter13en.pdf>. p.631-679

and men are still being discriminated on bases of their sex in many circumstances, parental leave not being the exception.

On the other hand, there are countries in which the parental leave and money allowance is granted equally to fathers, but they are hesitant in using such opportunity, for instance in all the countries of the European Union.¹⁸ Thus, it is possible to say that in such cases, the legal feminist theory exposes its limitations. In this fashion, achieving legally equality – a goal of liberal feminists – is not enough to achieve the gender equal society. In order to find the cause of this particular inequality, this work will continue to discuss another branch of feminism, the one that goes beyond the legal equality.

2.1.3 Radical Feminism and Hegemonic masculinity

Radical feminism is known to discuss the power dynamics within the society. Women united in 1970s to stand against global patriarchy as a common enemy and it did not matter what class, race or culture you were from. Women stood up against oppression with the aim to liberate themselves from the midst of patriarchy.¹⁹ They believed in the complete change of society and transformation of the socially expected gender attributes.²⁰

Following the line of argumentation of radical feminists, in the patriarchal societies, the “perfect” heteronormative men are on the top of the social pyramid, enjoying power in the society, or we could say hegemony. Thus, this type of ideal masculinity is called hegemonic.²¹ In order to maintain the hegemonic position, men oppress women in various spheres of their life, among others motherhood. It is because care-taking is considered a feminine practice.²² The homogenic masculinity is often in opposition with femininity, thus men distance

¹⁸ "Paternity and Parental Leave Policies across the European ..." 2016. Accessed May 14, 2019.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1600/RR1666/RAND_RR1666.pdf.

¹⁹ Amy Saracino, "Radical Feminism," *Feminist Perspectives on Media and Technology*, accessed April 3, 2019, <http://www.yorku.ca/mlc/sosc3990A/projects/radfem/radfem1.html>

²⁰ Donna Goodman, "The Untold Side of Second Wave Feminism: A Multinational, Politically Diverse Movement," *Liberation School*, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://liberationschool.org/feminism-and-the-mass-movements-1960-1990/>.

²¹ Connell, R. W. *The men and the boys*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (2000).

²² Andrea Doucet and Robyn Lee, "Fathering, Feminism(s), Gender, and Sexualities: Connections, Tensions, and New Pathways," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6, no. 4 (2014): , doi:10.1111/jftr.12051. p.363

themselves from the parental leave. As a result, a feminist Betty Friedan, argued against portraying women as stay-home mothers, as it limited their possibilities and potential.²³

The notion of hegemonic masculinity is essential for this research as it is one of the causes of the gender inequality not only when it comes to parental leave. Thus, it will be further analysed within the case studies in two different countries that have very different levels of gender equality.

2.2 Attitudes and Organizational Culture

Oftentimes, the attitudes of people towards paternity leave mirrors the gender relations embedded in the society. The heteronormativity presents challenges for a father to make a choice to go on a parental leave. It is because men/fathers have to face their societies, friends and peers. As a result, men do not choose to take a parental leave since the society as a whole might not consider it as a normal behaviour.²⁴

Another factor that has been found to influence the behaviour of fathers is what image creates the organization they are working at. Trice and Beyer define the organizational culture as “ideologies, which are emotionalized, shared sets of beliefs, values, and norms that both impel people to action and justify their actions to themselves and others.”²⁵ Among these sets of beliefs and values belong also the questions related to gender and parental leave. Haas and Hwang examined companies’ responsiveness to fathers through two further theories.²⁶

First theory is the one of separate spheres that suggests that public sphere of work and private sphere of family are separate. The authors explain that one sphere is more connected to men (the work sphere) and the one of family to women and as a consequence the organizations do not feel the need to encourage or help their employees in participating of taking care of their

²³ Amy Saracino, "Radical Feminism," *Feminist Perspectives on Media and Technology*, accessed April 3, 2019, <http://www.yorku.ca/mlc/sosc3990A/projects/radfem/radfem1.html>

²⁴ Harrison Miller Trice and Janice M. Beyer, *The Cultures of Work Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1993). p.75

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Linda Haas and C. Philip Hwang, "Gender and Organizational Culture," *Gender & Society* 21, no. 1 (2007);, doi:10.1177/0891243206295091.

children – the reality which creates discriminatory structure.²⁷ That leads to the conclusion that work and family should be regarded as a one sphere instead of two, in order to create a change in the system.

The separate spheres theory coincides with described femininities and masculinities that has been discussed above. Thus, it is of utmost importance to address this core problem, that is reinstating the heteronormative presumptions causing gender inequality. Following this reasoning, I believe if the labour organizations started addressing the issues of fatherhood more openly and with support, it would have a positive effect on fathers participating in the care-taking of their children, thus breaking the socially constructed gender attributes and decreasing gender inequalities.²⁸

The second theory that Haas and Hwang rely on is the hegemonic masculinity that I have mentioned already. Nonetheless, the conclusion that they present is that men, being the power keepers, have more opportunities to get a better pay and/or promotion. Thus, it makes more “sense” that women are to be dedicated to family life, reinforcing the embedded masculinities and femininities.²⁹

Another author – Tobias Axelsson – further discusses the “father friendliness” of organizations.³⁰ He discusses it in the context where men are already granted some type of paternal leave. He distinguishes between three types of behaviours towards fathers: passive opposition, conditional support and active support. He names the most common type to be passive opposition, which means that organization recognizes fathers’ temporary parental leave, but is opposed to long duration of such leave. Conditional support implies that the organization recognizes the father’s presence in the family and develops some parental leave policies. The last one is the active support policy that translates to the creation of many policies, treating the issue with significant importance.³¹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Tobias Axelsson, *Men’s Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research p.11

³¹ Ibid.

Furthermore, Bygren and Duvander have further discussed why men do not use more of the time resulting from their right to parental leave even if they can.³² They have tested four hypotheses in order to find out the factors influencing the length of the stay of father with their children.³³

Firstly, whether men will be more prone to stay longer on parental leave if the workplace has higher representation of women. The logic behind this hypothesis is that because employers are used to manage longer periods of leave that women are taking, it will be easier for men to take longer leave. Furthermore, they expect overall positive attitude towards parental leave. Unfortunately, this hypothesis could not be confirmed with clarity and apart from that, the study found that workplaces dominated by women are mostly public (the state-owned companies will be discussed briefly within the chapter four).³⁴

Second hypothesis is built on the presumption that the parental leave will be longer if a father is employed in the public sector. This rationale is caused by the explanation that the public sector is not profit driven. Thus, if an employee leaves, the public company is not as threatened as a private one would be by the absence of one person. This hypothesis has been confirmed.³⁵

Third hypothesis reflects on the size of an organization. The presumption is that the bigger the workplace is, the more are fathers prone to take longer leave periods. This trend can be explained by the fact that companies are not having any problems with finding a replacement. This hypothesis has been confirmed as well.³⁶

³² Magnus Bygren and Ann-Zofie Duvander, "Parents Workplace Situation and Fathers Parental Leave Use," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68, no. 2 (May 2006): , doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00258.x.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

The last hypothesis states that the longer other men within the organization have been on their parental leaves, the longer will their colleagues be on the parental leave. As the previous two hypotheses, this one has been confirmed as well.³⁷

To sum up, the organizational behaviour seems to be an important issue to focus on when addressing the issue of paternity leave. The role of organizations is thus very important in closing the gender gap when it comes to care-taking. As the result the organizations should promote father-friendly policies, empower women and support the change in the society.

2.3 Social and cultural background

Apart from the influences of organizational culture, there has been some research done on how important the social and cultural background is when it comes to fathers' leave. Thomas Johansson and Roger Klinth have researched why men in Sweden use their rights to parental leave only partially, even though a lot of campaigns have been created to address this inequality and change the heteronormative male image.³⁸ They have examined the behaviour within the following groups: therapist men, immigrant men, male network and evangelic men.³⁹

Therapist have been compassionating with men and the change that has been required from them. They acknowledged that if man fails to fulfil the obligation of "proper" father, he could feel defective or insufficient. Thus, they would have preferred not to rush the change. They also focused on situation of individual men, as well as male network and immigrant men.

On the other hand, the evangelic men looked at the issue of paternity leave as a concern for the whole family, not individuals. Instead of focusing on the individual, it was more of a discussion that concerned the whole family. From the interviews, it could be observed that children and their needs were not a decision-making factor to go on a parental leave.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Thomas Johansson and Roger Klinth, "Caring Fathers," *Men and Masculinities* 11, no. 1 (2008): , accessed April 9, 2019, doi:10.1177/1097184x06291899.

³⁹ Refers to men who participate in creating gender-equal society.

⁴⁰ Thomas Johansson and Roger Klinth, "Caring Fathers," *Men and Masculinities* 11, no. 1 (2008): , accessed April 9, 2019, doi:10.1177/1097184x06291899. P.59

Additionally, the group of immigrant men have highlighted other issues, such as unemployment or social exclusion. The economic hardships and problems of social inclusion thus need to be addressed, in order for these men to participate in the care-taking of their young children. Moreover, these are not the only impediments for fathers to not use their paternity leave. For instance, the fact that men earn more than women can also influence the decision-making of families.⁴¹

Social and cultural differences are important to study, as people from various background see the issues in a different manner. After finding out what particular groups view as a problem, it becomes easier to address their concerns. To sum up, it is of utmost importance to create a variety of campaigns and motivations, so all the fathers are to be engaged in the family care-taking.

Nonetheless, Johansson and Klinth have also agreed that the biggest difficulty to achieve gender equality and enhance the participation of fathers in child caring are possibly found in working life. The behaviour of organizations thus has to be regulated, so they do not impede the engagement of fathers in child care. Thus, the importance to change the policies for enhancement of the fathers' participation and overall gender equality is going to be discussed below.⁴²

2.4 The importance of Law and Policy-making

The law has been a powerful and important tool to bring an order to the society since ancient times. As a result, the law has been shaping the way people function within a society. Various legal codes have been regulating human behaviour for the flourishing and well-functioning of the created social structures. The social policy, where the issue of parental leave is included, belongs to the responsibilities of law-makers too. It is important to grant fathers with parental leave as “the first year of parenting is one in which gender roles are especially pronounced.”⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid. p.53-55

⁴² Ibid. P.59

⁴³ Andrea Doucet and Robyn Lee, "Fathering, Feminism(s), Gender, and Sexualities: Connections, Tensions, and New Pathways," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6, no. 4 (2014): , doi:10.1111/jftr.12051.

Thus, this time is essential for breaking the socially constructed attributes and addressing the gender inequality.

So-called legal parenting⁴⁴ encompasses every legal regulation that falls under this issue, for instance the duration of leave and allowance. As Kaul explains, the interest behind creating the parental leave policies is the health and welfare of mother and child, securing participation of women in paid work and recently the rights of fathers.⁴⁵ It is of utmost importance to not only give the rights to fathers but also to emphasize their importance and duties in child care. Only then, the improvement towards gender equality can be made and the career of women would not need to be sacrificed.⁴⁶

Over time, the development and perforation of law into public and private domains or “juridification” of life has intensified.⁴⁷ Coming back to the sphere theory (as discussed by Haas and Hwang⁴⁸), that explains the perception by organization of parental leave as a private sphere and thus their lack of the need to address the special working arrangements. Thus, if the organizations are unwilling to provide special working arrangements for fathers, they must be put the pressure on. Such a pressure could be a legal provision created at the governing level of the state. Perhaps that would be the only effective way to bring the public/private division of work and care-taking to an end.

Similarly, the European Institute for Gender Equality addresses the importance of proper policies aimed at balancing work and family life in order to achieve equal and effective participation of women in the labour market.⁴⁹ They further elaborate on this issue and state

⁴⁴ H. Kaul, ‘Who Cares? Gender Inequality and Care Leave in the Nordic Countries’, (1991) 34 *Acta Sociologica* 115.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Chiongson et al., "Role of Law And Justice in Achieving Gender Equality," World Development Report 2012 Gender Equality And Development, 2011, , accessed April 9, 2019, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/Chiongson-law-and-justice.pdf>. p5

⁴⁸ Linda Haas and C. Philip Hwang, "Gender and Organizational Culture," *Gender & Society* 21, no. 1 (2007):, doi:10.1177/0891243206295091.

⁴⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality, Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Area F (women and the Economy): Reconciliation of Work and Family Life as a Condition of Equal

that: “the economic independence is a prerequisite for enabling both women and men to exercise control over their lives and to make genuine choices.”⁵⁰ Thus achieving the gender equality is also essential factor for well-developed labour market. That has further impact on the overall functioning of national, regional and global economy. This should motivate both states and organizations for the improvement in the policies regarding parental leave, among others.

The Nordic countries, such as for example Sweden, have very good understanding of all the positive consequences of providing their population with parental leave and encouraging fathers to take part in care-taking.⁵¹ These countries introduced quotas for paternity leave, or in other words the time of parental leave that can be used only by fathers and is non-transferable to mothers.⁵² In this way the sharing of family responsibilities has been boosted and gender attributes have been questioned.

Apart from non-transferable time policies, the allowance of parental leave is an important decision-making factor for going on parental leave, because the salary is of big importance to men.⁵³ In the countries where the salary is substituted less favourably, men use their right to take parental leave in smaller extent.⁵⁴ In the study of Sowards, Yeatts and Zottareli conducted on Swedish and United States cases, the authors demonstrate that besides the barriers to equal parenthood presented by the socially constructed gender attributes and the unfavourable organizational culture, men: “take their parental leave in such a way as to minimize reductions

Participation in the Labour Market: Final Report (Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2013), , accessed April 7, 2019, doi:10.2839/88222. p.8

⁵⁰ Ibid p.10

⁵¹ OECD. "Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life (Volume 4) | READ Online." OECD ILibrary. 2005. Accessed May 07, 2019. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/babies-and-bosses-reconciling-work-and-family-life-volume-4_9789264009295-en

⁵² Tobias Axelsson, *Men's Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research p.6

⁵³ Margaret W. Sallee, "A Feminist Perspective on Parental Leave Policies," *Innovative Higher Education* 32, no. 4 (2007), doi:10.1007/s10755-007-9049-5 p.183

⁵⁴ Andrea Doucet and Robyn Lee, "Fathering, Feminism(s), Gender, and Sexualities: Connections, Tensions, and New Pathways," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6, no. 4 (2014): , doi:10.1111/jftr.12051. p362

in family income.”⁵⁵ Hence, it is very important to create desirable social policies in terms of money allowance in order for to boost the participation of fathers in care-taking.

To sum up, it is important to discuss the value of newly created policies when trying to bring a social change. The sole fact that the law is binding means that people and/or organizations ought to obey it. Therefore, the supposition is that if respected, it can translate to a promise to transform the behaviour of society. The legislative powers within the world, either national governments or regional and international organizations with certain powers can advocate for the change and bring it to life.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical conceptualizations that have been elaborated on among the feminist scholarship. The topic has presented itself as a very complex one. It has been discussed from the points of view of constructions of gender, organizational culture and behaviour, the men with different social and cultural backgrounds and the policy perspective.

The claim of liberal feminists for the need of equal laws in order to eliminate the gender imbalance has been examined and can be partially agreed on. From the fact that even though fathers have a right to go on a parental leave and they do not tend to use it, the equality in law shows inefficiencies. Even though the law is very important, it does not seem to address the problems that radical feminists have been discussing. The concept of hegemonic masculinity and “struggle for power” on individual level is a real precondition for parents dedicating parts of their lives to their young children. Apart from that, on the societal level, men face pressure from their peers to live up to heteronormative norms. Hence, there is need to deconstruct parenting as something feminine or masculine as well as address further inequalities such as the pay gap and the problem of opportunities.

It is of utmost importance to create good policies aiming at establishing the gender equality and economically prosperous state, so men feel encouraged to participate in care-taking of their

⁵⁵ Parental leave and father involvement in child care https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.its.uu.se/stable/41603829?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

young children and women can be unburdened and pursue their careers. Furthermore, the policies have to regulate the organizational behaviour as well, so the organizations do not stand in the way of engaged fathers. Next, the policies have to also address the allowance that is offered to parents on their leave, as this seems to be another factor discouraging fathers. The Nordic countries serve as very good example how can men participate more in care-taking.

3 DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Apart from discussing the importance of law and good policy-making on the national level, it is important to discuss the role of international organizations to see to what extent the respective members adopt collectively constructed norms. For the purposes of this work, I will discuss the policies developed by the United Nations (UN) – especially the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Labour Organization (ILO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). On the regional level the Organization of American States (OAS), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) as it is the unique regional organization. Their roles are expected to be important in the creating the international binding treaties and/or their advice towards the governments of their respective member states.⁵⁶

3.1 United Nations

The UN is one of the most important international organizations of all times, encompassing various issues related to human's well-being. Thus, addressing gender inequality is an inevitable and integral part of the UN mission. The CEDAW is the committee that focuses solely on all issues related to discrimination of women, thus the parental leave is not an exception. The Committee oversees the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.⁵⁷

In the preamble of the Convention, the Committee recognizes the importance of both parents in raising of the children and acknowledges that the change of constructed roles of women and men in society and family. Moreover, Article 5 discusses the responsibility of both men and women in raising and healthy development of their off-springs.⁵⁸ Then, Article 11(2) focuses

⁵⁶ I have decided to look at the policies developed by these particular organization, due to their wide-acceptance as promoters of economic and social human rights (among others).

⁵⁷ "Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women." OHCHR. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18 December 1979, A/RES/34/180. para 5.

on prevention of discrimination against women, especially to ensure their right to work.⁵⁹ Within the same article in the section (b) states that the contracting states shall: “introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances.”⁶⁰ Thus a maternity leave becomes a human rights obligation for the contracting parties of the Convention.⁶¹ The above mentioned provisions show that the care-taking should be responsibility of both parents and that discrimination against women is prohibited.

3.2 International Labour Organization

The ILO is one of the agencies of the UN and it is the most important organization for the labour related issues.⁶² It consists of so called tripartite – governments, workers and employers and it creates a social dialogue in between them.⁶³ As a result of this dialogue the conventions and recommendation are being drafted. A part of their focus is on so called “care economy” where the parental leave concerns belong. The ILO recognizes the unequal division of childcare and the hardships that result from uneasy task to combine work and family care.⁶⁴

In order to change the gender inequality and address the problematic social constructions regarding family life, the ILO issued the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (C156) in 1981. In the preamble, the Convention calls for: “the need to create effective equality of opportunity and treatment as between men and women workers with family responsibilities.”⁶⁵ In the Article 3, it emphasizes the equal treatment and opportunities for both male and female workers and also puts obligations on the Member States: “each Member shall make it an aim of national policy to enable persons with family responsibilities who are engaged or wish to engage in employment to exercise their right to do so without being subject to

⁵⁹ Ibid. para 11.

⁶⁰ General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18 December 1979, A/RES/34/180. para 11.

⁶¹ <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/recognising-maternity-leave-as-a-human-rights-obligation/>

⁶² "How the ILO Works." How the ILO Works. Accessed April 5, 2019. <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Maternity Protection and Work-Family Policies (The Care Economy).". Accessed April 5, 2019. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/care-economy/parental-leave/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁶⁵ Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (C156), 23 June 1981. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C156, preamble

discrimination.”⁶⁶ As provided by the C156, the ILO establishes the international legal provision which should motivate the Member States/ respective national organizations to prevent discrimination in care-taking.

3.3 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Another important international organization is OECD, that has focused on issues of work and family life. The overall goal of this organization is to “achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy”⁶⁷ as its stated in the Article 1 of the OECD Convention. OECD’s focus on gender equality can be seen by creation of so called Working party W6 effective between 1974-1998 on the Role of Women in the Economy that helped shaped lots of the organization’s work to be more gender conscious.⁶⁸ Next the organization issued reviews called Babies and Bosses aimed to reconcile work and family life. It is the comparative study on the best practices of the countries on parental leave and other issues related to parenting and work and it also includes recommendations.⁶⁹ Moreover, OECD issue the work called Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now, where it highlighted the importance of addressing the inequalities to close the gender division of labour.⁷⁰ To sum up, from the fact that the OECD has economic focus and it discusses the issue of equal care-taking, it sends strong message to its Member States that the gender equality is impediment for the economic development.

⁶⁶ Ibid. para 3(1)

⁶⁷ Convention on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 14 December 1960. Accessed April 7, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/general/conventionontheorganisationforeconomicco-operationanddevelopment.htm>

⁶⁸ Rianne Mahon. "Articulating a Feminist Agenda Within the OECD: The Working Party on the Role of Women in the Economy" *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*22, no. 4 (2015): 585-609. Accessed April 9, 2019. doi:10.1093/sp/jxv037.

⁶⁹ OECD. "Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life (Volume 4) | READ Online." OECD ILibrary. 2005. Accessed May 07, 2019. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/babies-and-bosses-reconciling-work-and-family-life-volume-4_9789264009295-en

⁷⁰ OECD. "Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now." OECD ILibrary. 2012. Accessed April 10, 2019. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now_9789264179370-en#page207.

3.4 Role of Regional organizations

3.4.1 Council of Europe

The most important organization in the European context for the protection of human rights is the Council of Europe (CoE). As a result, it also discusses and develops legislation regarding inequalities, for instance concerning the social policy. The legal instrument under which a violation of economic and social rights can be claimed on the behalf of national organizations is European Social Charter (ESC). This charter is considered to be so called “Social Constitution of Europe”⁷¹ Despite of the existence of this legal instrument, the adoption and fulfilment of the legislation is primarily a responsibility of the respective Member States.

In the revised version of ESC of 1996, apart from the Article 8 that protects only the maternity, we can find a provision that aims to protect workers with family responsibilities. Article 27, part 2 states that parties to the convention undertake to: “provide a possibility for either parent to obtain, during a period after maternity leave, parental leave to take care of a child, the duration and conditions of which should be determined by national legislation, collective agreements or practice.”⁷² Even though the emphasis is put as well on the equal treatment of both men and women, the provision is reliant on its implementation of the respective nations. The downside of this charter is its complaint mechanism. The complaint cannot be made individually to the European Committee of Social Rights that adjudicates on these cases. That leaves these rights to be enforced on the will of national organizations.

3.4.2 European Union

The EU is the one of a kind of regional organization. The level of power that it can exercise over its 28 Member States is unprecedented. The complicated structure of common market, free movement of goods, services and people and a common currency have not been yet seen in the world. As a result of these “shared” areas, common legislation is needed to secure its smooth functioning. Thus, the EU has also the legal power to exercise upon its Member States. It is not only the protector of the economically strong region, but the EU also cares about the

⁷¹ "The European Social Charter." European Social Charter. Accessed April 11, 2019.
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter>.

⁷² Council of Europe, European Social Charter (Revised), 3 May 1996, ETS 163.
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168007cf93>. Para 27

fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens. Thus, the margin for creating the legislation to help end the gender gap in employment practices is rather wide, the social security depends on the legislation of Member States.⁷³

The first effort directed towards fathers by the EU occurred in the beginning of 90s. The Child Care Recommendation has been issued to “encouraging men to assume an equal share of family responsibilities.”⁷⁴ This recommendation calls for promoting of the involvement of fathers in child care “to enable women to have a more effective role in the labour market.”⁷⁵

Moreover, the Council has adopted the Parental Leave Directive 96/34 in 1996, that has been later updated in 2010.⁷⁶ This directive entitles both, women and men the right to parental leave and emphasizes the equal opportunities, equal treatment and advises that at least one month should be non-transferable to other parent.⁷⁷ That means that this directive is suggesting fathers to stay home and take care of their children.

In addition, in 2000 the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was signed and ratified. It encompasses social rights among others and it is of utmost importance as the Member States must act in conformity with it. This charter includes the protection of family and professional life. In its Article 33, it is stated that family shall enjoy legal, economic and social protection.⁷⁸ The second part of this article highlights the importance of family and professional life and sets forth the right to parental leave.⁷⁹ However, it calls only for paid maternity leave, not discussing the paid paternity leave and thus provides limited motivation for fathers to go on a parental leave.

⁷³ "Shared Competences." Accessed May 2, 2019. <http://en.euabc.com/word/832>.

⁷⁴ Eugenia Caracciolo Di Torella. "Brave New Fathers for a Brave New World? Fathers as Caregivers in an Evolving European Union." *European Law Journal* 20, no. 1 (January 2014): 88-106. Accessed April 11, 2019. doi:10.1111/eulj.12033.

⁷⁵ Council Recommendation 92/241/EEC of 31 March 1992 on child care: *OJ L 123*, 8.5.1992. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31992H0241>. para 6.

⁷⁶ Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC: *OJ L 68*, 18.3.2010. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32010L0018> clause 2, 2.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 18 December 2000 (C 364/1). http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf. para 33.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Furthermore, the European Commission issued the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015. In this strategy, the Commission acknowledged that women still have to bear unequal impact of parenthood on their labour participation.⁸⁰ Thus, the Commission promised to approach the gaps related to paternity leave and come up with solutions.⁸¹

The Strategy for Equality has been a part of a bigger strategy called Europe 2020. The achievement of gender equality is important for the EU to fulfil the labour capability in the region and enhance the labour force as an asset for “growth and social cohesion.”⁸² It emphasizes the need to act by the Member States to create new forms of work-life balance,⁸³ without a doubt the improvement of parental leave policies is one of them.

Another document strengthening the equality of men and women as a fundamental value of the EU and interconnected to the previous two strategies is called the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020). The Pact reflects the ambition to end the gender gap within the region. It puts emphasis on improving work-life balance for women and men and female participation in the labour market.⁸⁴ It again reaffirms the need of variety of parental leaves for both parents. Thus, the proper parental leave policies are a precondition for achieving the gender equality and such accomplishment seems to be a precondition for the economic prosperity and development. In conclusion this Pact as well as the EU’s Strategy represent only the soft law opposed to the Directive that is legally binding.

3.4.3 Organization of American States

In the American region, there is not such an institution as the EU, that would have so much power on influencing the policies. Nonetheless, the Organization of American States (OAS) is the most important regional organization that focuses among other issues on safeguarding the

⁸⁰ European Commission. *Strategy for Equality between Women and Men: 2010-2015*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011. Accessed April 11, 2019. <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c58de824-e42a-48ce-8d36-a16f30ef701b/language-en>. p.12

⁸¹ Ibid p.14

⁸² European Commission. *Europe 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. Place of Publication Not Identified, 2010. Accessed April 11, 2019. [http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET EN BARROSO 007 - Europe 2020 - EN version.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf). p.16

⁸³ Ibid. P. 17

⁸⁴ Council conclusions of 7 March 2011 on European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020): *OJ C 155, 25.5.2011*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52011XG0525%2801%29>

human rights in the region and development. The action is based on political dialogue, cooperation in implementing the reforms and follow-up mechanisms.⁸⁵

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is one of the organs of the OAS. The aim of the organization is to promote and protect human rights in the region.⁸⁶ IACHR is the guardian of the American Convention on Human Rights. Nonetheless, this convention includes one article on economic, social and cultural rights and that is the one of progressive development.⁸⁷ This article nevertheless refers to the OAS Charter that incorporates the Protocol of Buenos Aires as the goals to be achieved under this article on progressive realization. The Protocol thus elaborates on social rights. For instance, under its Article 43, section h, the Member States agreed to: “Development of an effective social security policy”⁸⁸ under which the parental leave falls. The Protocol nonetheless fails to discuss gender equality as such or the care-taking issues.

Apart from the Convention, the IACHR is enforcing two other treaties. The OAS Charter and the American Declaration of the Right and Duties of Man (ADRDM). The OAS Charter recognizes social justice and social security as the bases of lasting peace.⁸⁹ When it comes to the content of this Charter, related to parental leave, it is not different from the American Convention on Human Rights.

The ADRDM has offered some coverage when it comes to parental leave. The Articles VI encompasses the right to family and protection and Article VII states that: “All women, during pregnancy and the nursing period, and all children have the right to special protection, care and aid.”⁹⁰ Furthermore, this declaration also involves an Article on social security. Under Article

⁸⁵ OAS. "Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." August 01, 2009. Accessed April 12, 2019. http://www.oas.org/en/about/what_we_do.asp.

⁸⁶ OAS. "Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." August 01, 2009. Accessed April 12, 2019. <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/what.asp>.

⁸⁷ Organization of American States (OAS), *American Convention on Human Rights, "Pact of San Jose", Costa Rica*, 22 November 1969. <https://www.cidh.oas.org/basicos/english/basic3.american%20convention.htm> para 26.

⁸⁸ Organization of American States (OAS), *Protocol of Amendment to the Charter of the Organisation of American States ("Protocol of Buenos Aires")*, 27 February 1967. http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-31_Protocol_of_Buenos_Aires_sign.htm. para 43, h.

⁸⁹ Organization of American States (OAS), *Charter of the Organisation of American States*, 30 April 1948. http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/docs/inter_american_treaties_A-41_charter_OAS.pdf. Para 3, j.

⁹⁰ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), *American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man*, 2 May 1948.

XVI: “Every person has the right to social security which will protect him from the consequences of unemployment, old age, and any disabilities arising from causes beyond his control that make it physically or mentally impossible for him to earn a living.”⁹¹

The terminology of the ADRDM is rather problematic. Even though the provisions on parental leave and social security are part of this provision, their scope is troublesome. This convention supports heteronormative gender norms, if it provides protection only for mothers and neglecting fathers. I also see it rather problematic for fathers to claim their paternity leave under the social security article. It would be perhaps possible if we establish that having a child is a disability that prevents one from earning a living.

Another agency of the OAS is the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM) that aims to establish the gender equality in the region. The CIM supports Member States to comply with the commitments, promote equal participation of women in all spheres of life and also advises them.⁹² They have developed the Integrated System of Women’s Human Rights Indicators (SISDEHM) for an evaluation of the barriers to achieve gender equality in the countries.⁹³ Among other issues this system monitors the right of women to work. They also issue 5 years plans. The current Strategic Plan 2016-2021 lays out the goals that CIM wants to achieve. One of the two main objectives is to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination.

CIM’s work reflects its resolutions and declarations and also the Inter-American Program on Promotion of Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality (IAP).⁹⁴ The Program puts emphasis on gender equality and the mainstreaming the gender perspective to all aspects of life. However, it lacks any specific provisions on work-family life or parental leave.

https://www.oas.org/dil/access_to_information_human_right_American_Declaration_of_the_Rights_and_Duties_of_Man.pdf, para 6,7

⁹¹ Ibid. para 16

⁹² Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). *Securing Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in the Americas*. Accessed April 12, 2019. [https://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/FolletoCIM\[Jun2015\]-EN.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/FolletoCIM[Jun2015]-EN.pdf). p.10

⁹³ Ibid p.24

⁹⁴ OAS. "Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." OAS. August 01, 2009. Accessed April 12, 2019. <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/plan.asp>.

Nonetheless, the work of this organization is rather limited. It has struggled with the limited resources, not only financial but also human.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the lack of political will of Member States and the lack of promotion of this agency creates more hardship for its good work. On the other hand, it is the only organization of its type in the region, thus it is of utmost importance to mention it and it has undoubtedly the potential to be developed.

3.5 Chapter summary

To sum up, international organizations provide incentives for states through legally binding treaties or non-binding resolutions and recommendations to adopt certain policies. The biggest international organizations tend to have an important position in international politics. Thus, the participation of member states in collective decision-making processes can have a considerable impact. Nonetheless, the policies tend to be very broad as their membership is also very diverse. However, there is often lack of political will or the non-implementation of a treaty simply comes with a low price to pay.

Regional organizations tend to have closer reach to the countries, since they share common characteristics, so it can be assumed that the potential of a positive influence is higher. However, when comparing the European system with the Inter-American one, it is safe to say that the European system is much more developed and specific when it comes to gender related issues since the European states decided to endow significant decision-making powers (decisions implemented through for instance directives) in comparison with Inter-American system. It also seems that the Inter-American region is far behind the European one, nonetheless, the effort can be seen in addressing the gender issues. However, the efforts are of a more general nature.

The evaluation of the work of these international and regional organizations is important for the chapter on case studies. The impact of these organizations on the assigned states will be analysed to see how they shaped the domestic policies in order to examine how much difference can the international organizations make on creating of the gender equal parental leave policies.

⁹⁵ Inter-American Commission of Women. *Strategic Plan 2016 -2021*. Washington, DC, 2016. Accessed April 12, 2019. <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/CIM-StrategicPlan2016-2021-EN.pdf>. p.6

4 CASE STUDIES

This chapter will discuss the status of parental leave in Sweden and in Canada. Both countries are considered to be welfare states with good policy making and good accounts of gender equality.^{96,97} It could be said that they are sort of leaders in good governance for their respective regions.

Both case studies will follow the same structure. I will discuss the development of the parental leave provisions, the campaigns that might have been used to help the cause and discuss the concept of masculinity. Then I will look at the current parental leave and gender equality situation and organizational culture to see how the former set of issues have influenced these. To finalize the subchapters, I will comment on the impact of international organizations on parental leave policies.

4.1 SWEDEN

Sweden is a welfare state, with a very supportive social system. The highly developed social democracy is distinguished by its “generous benefits, universal coverage, publicly provided benefits, solidarity and equality”⁹⁸ It is the unique country when it comes to the discussion of gender equality and related topics, among others also the parental leave. First of all, the parental leave in Sweden is gender neutral, meaning that the duration of the parental leave is not specifically exclusive for mothers as it is often the case in other countries.⁹⁹ Secondly, the Swedish quota system means that certain period of parental leave is reserved exclusively for

⁹⁶ Andreas Berg, “The Rise, Fall and Revival of the Swedish Welfare State: What are the Policy Lessons from Sweden?” IFN Working Paper No. 873, 2011 <http://www.ifn.se/wfiles/wp/wp873.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Matthew Daniel Sanscartier, “A Brave New Citizenry: Exploring Canadian Welfare State Retrenchment through Changing Citizenship” University of Manitoba, 2015. https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/bitstream/handle/1993/30666/sanscartier_matthew.pdf?sequence=1.

⁹⁸ Gregg M. Olsen, “Labour Market Policy in the United States, Canada and Sweden: Addressing the Issue of Convergence,” *Social Policy & Administration* 42, no. 4 (2008): , accessed May 2, 2019, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9515.2008.00607.x.p.334

⁹⁹ Tobias Axelsson, “*Men’s Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*”, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research

the other parent in order to motivate the equal participation of both parents in care-taking.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the values of solidarity and equality are nicely reflected within these policies.

4.1.1 Development

Hundred years ago, Sweden was not so progressive when it came to parental leave. For instance, the maternity leave was unpaid, or women could be dismissed when pregnant.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, I will present the road that Sweden has followed in order to become one of the most progressive states in questions of maternity leave. Not all the amendments and changes to the legal acts will be discussed, only the ones of the most relevance for this work, to provide an overall image of how Sweden got to where it is now.

The 1960s and 1970s influenced the policy-making when it comes to parental leave as the labour demand was considerably high in these decades.¹⁰² Furthermore, the public sector run mostly by women broadened.¹⁰³ As a result the state encouraged women to participate in labour market in order to satisfy the labour demands.¹⁰⁴ The higher participation of women in the labour market led to the creation of the new parental leave policy.¹⁰⁵

Following the increased labour demand, the government tried to improve its system of publicly provided child care to unburden women of obligation to stay home with their children. In the 1950s the number of kindergartens increased. In the following decade, kindergartens became publicly available. Such developments represented one step towards Sweden's goal to implement a dual earner family model (both parents, irrespective of gender participate in labour market without being burdened by care-taking).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Andrea Doucet and Robyn Lee, "Fathering, Feminism(s), Gender, and Sexualities: Connections, Tensions, and New Pathways." *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6, no. 4 (2014): 355-73. doi:10.1111/jftr.12051

¹⁰¹ Maria Stanfors and Cecilia Larsson, "Family Policies: Sweden (2014)," PERFAR, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.perfar.eu/policy/family-children/sweden>.

¹⁰² Ann-Zofie E. Duvander, Tommy Ferrarini, and Sara Thalberg, *Swedish Parenteral Leave and Gender Equality: Achivements and Reform Challenges in a European Perspective* (Stockholm: Institutet För Framtidsstudier, 2005), accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.iffs.se/media/1118/20051201134956filU8YIJLRAaC7u4FV7gUmy.pdf>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Maria Stanfors and Cecilia Larsson, "Family Policies: Sweden (2014)," PERFAR, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.perfar.eu/policy/family-children/sweden>.

Secondly, in order to fulfil the dual earner model, in 1974, Sweden as a first country ever has introduced a gender-neutral parental leave policy.¹⁰⁷ It consisted of 26 weeks of paid leave and 90% wage replacement for women or men. The reform was a necessary step towards the improvement of both, the gender equality balance within the family but also within the market participation.¹⁰⁸

Even though the reform was widely supported, the period of leave and the risk of the fact that only women would keep going on a parental leave created space for further discussions and improvements in the care-taking policies.¹⁰⁹ In the following years, the duration of leave expanded to seven months in 1975, to nine months in 1978 and to twelve months in 1980, however with the lower benefit in the last three months.¹¹⁰ The duration has undergone further changes within the years.

Apart from the length of the parental leave, the concern that men still would not participate enough in care-taking has lived up to its expectations. In the 1990s the number of fathers that stayed on parental leave has amounted only to 10 per cent.¹¹¹ In order to tackle this issue, the Swedish government introduced so called first “daddy month” also previously mentioned as Swedish quota system. That means that some of the parental leave time, is reserved for fathers.¹¹² This new element to parental leave was introduced in 1995 and in 2002, the duration

¹⁰⁷ Ann-Zofie E. Duvander, Tommy Ferrarini, and Sara Thalberg, *Swedish Parenteral Leave and Gender Equality: Achivements and Reform Challenges in a European Perspective* (Stockholm: Institutet För Framtidsstudier, 2005), accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.iffs.se/media/1118/20051201134956filU8YIJLRAaC7u4FV7gUmy.pdf>. p. 2

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p.8

¹¹⁰ Maria Stanfors and Cecilia Larsson, "Family Policies: Sweden (2014)," PERFAR, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.perfar.eu/policy/family-children/sweden>.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Fath Andrea Doucet and Robyn Lee, "Fathering, Feminism(s), Gender, and Sexualities: Connections, Tensions, and New Pathways." *Journal of Family Theory & Review*6, no. 4 (2014): 355-73. doi:10.1111/jftr.12051

of the total parental leave of 16 months, the second reserved month for the other parent was added.¹¹³ In addition, the third daddy month has been added in 2016.¹¹⁴

Moreover, the government tried to further improve the gender equality balances at home and on labour market by establishing gender equality bonus in 2008. The bonus represented a monetary incentive for parents to distribute the parental leave equally.¹¹⁵ The more equal the pay is distributed the higher the bonus is, up to 50 SEK each daily.¹¹⁶ Some argue that such an incentive is much better than forced quotas or “daddy months”.¹¹⁷

4.1.2 Campaigns

Apart from the legislative efforts to motivate Swedish father to go on a parental leave, the Swedish government, more concretely Swedish Social Insurance Agency and labour unions have launched various campaigns to support the cause. By creating various campaigns, they were able to shape public opinion towards more favourable perception of fathers to take parental leave. These campaigns started in mid 1970s and produced a measurable impact.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, only by the sole fact that parental leave in the context of caring fathers has been discussed helped to reshape the attitudes of the general public. Men have been openly discussing their paternity leave and the reactions of the public towards them being on paternity leave.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Maria Stanfors and Cecilia Larsson, "Family Policies: Sweden (2014)," PERFAR, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.perfar.eu/policy/family-children/sweden>.

¹¹⁴ Ann-Zofie Duvander and Mats Johansson, "Does Fathers' Care Spill Over? Evaluating Reforms in the Swedish Parental Leave Program," *Feminist Economics* 25, no. 2 (2018), doi:10.1080/13545701.2018.1474240.

¹¹⁵ Maria Stanfors and Cecilia Larsson, "Family Policies: Sweden (2014)," PERFAR, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.perfar.eu/policy/family-children/sweden>.

¹¹⁶ Tobias Axelsson, *Men's Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Roger Klinth, "The Best of Both Worlds? Fatherhood and Gender Equality in Swedish Paternity Leave Campaigns, 1976-2006," *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* 6, no. 1 (2008), accessed May 5, 2019, doi:10.3149/fth.0601.20.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

At first, the campaigns were aimed at masculine ideals and tried to connect the idea of being a male care-taker with the heteronormative assumptions.¹²⁰ These campaigns did not try to hide the conflict, but rather put it to the spotlight and then try to find a way how to resolve it, for instance by outlining the advantages that parental leave presents for fathers.¹²¹ Such advantages were for instance new abilities acquired during the period of maternity leave like ability to handle people.¹²²

4.1.3 Restructuring masculinity

Apart from promoting the parental leave as beneficial for gaining new sets of skills, the campaigns played with the image of masculinity. For instance, Klinth has written that: “male values like work orientation, competitiveness and autonomy, pictures of sport stars, fast cars and well-trained male bodies were included in campaign materials.”¹²³ This has also been true in the campaign of 1976 organized by the Social Insurance Agency when they hired a weight lifter for the promotion of fatherhood.¹²⁴

Nonetheless, the initial period of campaigns that lasted till the beginning of the new millennium, have not aimed at full equality of parenting, only at increasing men’s involvement in care-taking.¹²⁵ They put emphasis on the complementary role of the fathers, their exclusive and particular part in care-taking. It evolved around the notion that men would become “more of a man” and not feminized.¹²⁶ Thus, these steps can be labelled as the process of masculinizing the child care, instead of creating fully equal image of parenting.

¹²⁰ Tobias Axelsson, *Men’s Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Roger Klinth, "The Best of Both Worlds? Fatherhood and Gender Equality in Swedish Paternity Leave Campaigns, 1976-2006," *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* 6, no. 1 (2008), accessed May 5, 2019, doi:10.3149/fth.0601.20.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Tobias Axelsson, *Men’s Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research p21

¹²⁶ Roger Klinth, "The Best of Both Worlds? Fatherhood and Gender Equality in Swedish Paternity Leave Campaigns, 1976-2006," *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* 6, no. 1 (2008), accessed May 5, 2019, doi:10.3149/fth.0601.20.

However, the masculinizing of childcare does not necessarily lead to changes of social structures. In addition, the process of “shaming” of the previous generation of fathers was meant to contribute to the process of restructuring of the heteronormative roles. Such an “innovative” fathering model was created to oppose the old one - the previous generations of fathers were: “preoccupied with their work, incapable of expressing feelings, and uninterested in housework and childcare.”¹²⁷ The new model was intended to create an image of father who would feel as more “accomplished” in his care-taking role.

In spite all of these efforts, the paternity leave has still been only an opportunity, not a requirement. Although, it was still only a possibility, the emphasis on the personal gains and self-development that have been promoted by the campaigns, were meant to make the parental leave more attractive. Not only the ability to handle people, but the campaigns have also put emphasis on emotional benefits resulting from care-taking and a new skill to solve unexpected problems.¹²⁸

The model of fathers as secondary care-takers was replaced shortly after the year 2000 by the model of equal importance of care-taking.¹²⁹ As a result, new campaigns emphasized gender equality, benefits for children resulting from equal care-taking and addressing why men do not use their right to parental leave.¹³⁰ For instance, in 2005, the Social Insurance Agency introduced a new campaign “Half each!”.¹³¹ The goal was the equal care-taking, not only a possibility to go on a parental leave. The shift in discourse was visible in not only mentioning the benefits for men, but also for women, such as a chance to pursue a career. Thus, this campaign aimed to suppress the discussion about the differences of men and women have been abolished within the parental leave problematics.¹³²

¹²⁷ Roger Klinth citing Foraldradighet, 1991; Ny rid. Ny man?, 2000 in "The Best of Both Worlds? Fatherhood and Gender Equality in Swedish Paternity Leave Campaigns, 1976-2006," *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* 6, no. 1 (2008), accessed May 5, 2019, doi:10.3149/fth.0601.20.

¹²⁸ Ibid,

¹²⁹ Tobias Axelsson, *Men's Parental Leave in Sweden: policies, attitudes and practices*, 2014, Wenen, Joanneum Research

¹³⁰ Roger Klinth, "The Best of Both Worlds? Fatherhood and Gender Equality in Swedish Paternity Leave Campaigns, 1976-2006," *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* 6, no. 1 (2008), accessed May 5, 2019, doi:10.3149/fth.0601.20.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

Nevertheless, the gender (im)balance in the campaigns aimed towards equal usage of parental leave has been changing over the time. On the road from masculinizing care or complementary model towards shifting the ideals of masculinity or equal care-taking model, lots of social constructs about what is masculine or feminine have been eliminated and thus contributing to achievement of overall gender equality.¹³³ The change in the concept of masculinity has occurred through masculinizing care.¹³⁴ Thus, it is important to conclude that right laws alongside with intensive and well-thought campaigning have power to influence the gender relations in the society.

4.1.4 Current parental leave provisions

Nowadays, parents in Sweden are entitled to 480 days of parental leave per each child.¹³⁵ The pay of the first 390 days depends on one's income, and the last 90 days, so called days at the minimum level amount to compensation of SEK 180 per day.¹³⁶ This is the basic scheme that further varies, depending on when the child has been born, as in Sweden it is possible to benefit from these days until the child is attending the primary school.¹³⁷

If the child was born before 1 January 2014, parents get half of the 480 days each, where 60 of those days are reserved for each parent and thus are non-transferable.¹³⁸ On the other hand, if the child was born in 2014 or 2015, each parent receives 195 days plus the 45 days at the minimum level.¹³⁹ However, the 60 days are non-transferrable in this case as well. The biggest change concerns the parents of the children that were born in 2016 or later. Whereas, the benefit

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Nancy E. Dowd, *The Man Question: Male Subordination and Privilege* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2010), accessed May 5, 2019, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/reader.action?docID=865987&query=.p.112-114>

¹³⁵ "Parental Benefit," Forsakringskassan, accessed May 5, 2019, https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatpers/foralder/nar_barnet_ar_fott/foraldrapenning/!ut/p/z0/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8ziTTxcnA3dnQ28_U2DXQwczTwDDcOCXY1CDc31g1Pz9AuyHRUBTbm8uw!!/.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ "Parental Leave Act (Föräldraledighetslagen)," Regeringskansliet, accessed May 5, 2019, <https://www.government.se/government-policy/labour-law-and-work-environment/1995584-parental-leave-act-foraldraledighetslagen/>.

¹³⁸ "Parental Benefit," Forsakringskassan, accessed May 5, 2019, https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatpers/foralder/nar_barnet_ar_fott/foraldrapenning/!ut/p/z0/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8ziTTxcnA3dnQ28_U2DXQwczTwDDcOCXY1CDc31g1Pz9AuyHRUBTbm8uw!!/.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

days and the days at the minimum level are the same as in the case of children born in 2014 and 2015, the difference is in 90 non-transferable days. Thus, the daddy months have increased to three.¹⁴⁰

4.1.5 Current gender equality situation

Gender equality is one of the political pursuits of Sweden, where the government calls itself feminist and the feminist foreign policy is being pursued.¹⁴¹ Feminist feature of Sweden can be observable in the composition of its government in which 12 out of 22 government ministers are female.¹⁴² The government has also created Swedish Gender Equality Agency to boost gender mainstreaming in all aspects of policy-making.¹⁴³ The political gender equality is still not perfect, but there is 44% of women in national parliament and thus ranks on the first places of The Global Gender Gap Report 2018.¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, Sweden has been assuring the equality in the workplace, providing safeguarding mechanism of Swedish Equality Ombudsman that people can use if they are being discriminated against.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Swedish business world is dominated by men and the pay is still not equal. Moreover, every third woman works part-time, and it is not only due to lack of relevant jobs, but also due to care-taking of her children.¹⁴⁶

The obstacles stemming from the unequal care-taking has been addressed by the creation of daddy months and their gradual increase. In 2017, the year after the third daddy month has been introduced, fathers have used 27,9 % of their total parental leave.¹⁴⁷ The quota system has also had a favourable consequence on care-taking of older children when sick. Duvander and

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ "Sweden and Gender Equality." Sweden.se. April 10, 2019. Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://sweden.se/society/gender-equality-in-sweden/>.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ World Economic Forum: "The Global Gender Gap Report 2018" Accessed May 07,2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

¹⁴⁵ "Sweden and Gender Equality." Sweden.se. April 10, 2019. Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://sweden.se/society/gender-equality-in-sweden/>.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ "Dads in Sweden Took More Paternity Leave than Ever in 2017." The Local. January 17, 2018. Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://www.thelocal.se/20180117/dads-in-sweden-took-more-paternity-leave-in-2017>.

Johansson have suggested in their study that if fathers take part in early care-taking of their children, it will result in more care-taking activities such as taking care of one's sick child, thus unburdening mothers.¹⁴⁸

Nonetheless, the fathers' participation in care-taking of their children has increased, the women are still burdened with majority of unpaid household work. According to the OECD statistics, women in Sweden spend 49 more minutes per day in unpaid work, that amounts to housework, shopping, child care etc.¹⁴⁹ This reflects that women are still bearing a heavier burden in the society when it comes to care-taking.

In conclusion, Sweden has ranked as a third most gender equal country in the world in 2018.¹⁵⁰ It is rather close to achieving political equality that could possibly have an effect over the economic equality and issues connected to it such as care-taking and women's unpaid work. However, a lot is still to be done as fathers are using only about a third of their parental leave and are not participating on care-taking on equal foot.

4.1.6 Organizational culture in Sweden

Sweden has put a lot of effort to become gender equal in all spheres. As organizational culture represents an obstacle for fathers to go on parental leave, every company in Sweden has to submit an action plan¹⁵¹ for equality since 1992.¹⁵² As a part of the plan is to focus on how the company will facilitate men to take part of care-taking of their children.

¹⁴⁸ Ann-Zofie Duvander and Mats Johansson, "Does Fathers' Care Spill Over? Evaluating Reforms in the Swedish Parental Leave Program," *Feminist Economics* 25, no. 2 (2018), doi:10.1080/13545701.2018.1474240.

¹⁴⁹ OECD. "Employment: Time Spent in Paid and Unpaid Work, by Sex." Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54757>.

¹⁵⁰ World Economic Forum: "The Global Gender Gap Report 2018" Accessed May 07, 2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

¹⁵¹ Due to limitations of this work, the actual effectivity of the action plan has not been researched. Nonetheless, it is an important element to mention as it shows the effort of the government to tackle the possibly negative behaviour of organizations.

¹⁵² Linda Haas and C. Philip Hwang, "Gender and Organizational Culture," *Gender & Society* 21, no. 1 (2007), doi:10.1177/0891243206295091.

Despite of the fact that around 90 % of fathers take the parental leave, they only use less than 30 % of it.¹⁵³ Unfortunately, the research conducted on organizational structure is rather outdated. Nonetheless, the numbers suggest, that men still face difficulties related to the attitudes of their workplace. However, with the increasing political participation of women, and tangible goals for achieving economic equality within 10 years, the change is about to hit the organizational culture as well.¹⁵⁴

4.1.7 Influence of International Organizations

The international organizations can have an impact over a country, for instance when issuing international treaties or when recommending good practices. Sweden is a member of the international organizations that has been discussed in the previous chapter – the UN, the ILO, the OECD and the European regional ones. Nevertheless, Sweden has been very progressive with its own policies on parental leave, the international community via international organizations that employ the very best experts, can still have some positive impact on its policies.

Within the UN, among other treaties, Sweden has ratified the CEDAW Convention in 1980.¹⁵⁵ It sets the parental leave as human right obligation and emphasizes the equality of men and women. Apart from that, Swedish government has also ratified the C156 – Workers with Family Responsibilities convention in 1982.¹⁵⁶ The C156 calls for equal treatment and opportunities of men and women. Nonetheless, in these years Sweden has already started its journey to equal parental leave. Both conventions bind it internationally to continue doing so.

Next, the OECD is an important organization to be discussed as its interest in the parental leave policies and gender equality suggests that the parental leave is more than topic of feminism and has important economic implications. The fourth volume of OECD Babies and Bosses –

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ "Sweden and Gender Equality." Sweden.se. April 10, 2019. Accessed May 07, 2019.
<https://sweden.se/society/gender-equality-in-sweden/>

¹⁵⁵ "Status of Treaties." United Nations Treaty Collection. Accessed May 07, 2019.

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en.

¹⁵⁶ "Ratifications of C156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)." Ratifications of ILO Conventions: Ratifications by Convention. Accessed May 07, 2019.
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312301.

Reconciling Work and Family Life that concerns Sweden has been published in 2005. The organization recommended Sweden to decrease the gender differences when it comes to using the parental leave by granting the bonus for equal distribution of leave and/or prolong the non-transferable leave period, thus quota system.¹⁵⁷ Both of these measures have been introduced, especially the bonus has been introduced in a short period after that.

On the regional level, Sweden has signed and ratified the ESC, and has even accepted a collective complaint procedure.¹⁵⁸ The procedure is a special mechanism that checks on the states whether they have fulfilled their obligations, resulting from ESC. This mechanism is available to non-governmental organization and trade unions to complain to the Committee of Social Rights.¹⁵⁹ It serves as a tool to enforce the rights states vouched to. It is important to mention that only 15 states have accepted this type of procedure. Nevertheless, there has been no Swedish complaints deliberated under the Article 27.

When it comes to the EU, it is inconclusive to say whether it has had some sort of influence over the Swedish parental leave policies as they have been developed earlier on than European directives and recommendations. However, there is nothing wrong with that, as the good example can make a difference over the policies of other Member States.

Perhaps the added value of the EU in the questions of parental leave is that now these policies are being recognized on regional level. Thus, if anything goes wrong in Sweden and the rights are being denied to their citizens, the EU offers the citizens some sort of security as it has powers to enforce its treaties and directives. Nonetheless, the Swedish parental leave policies are still superior to the European ones.

¹⁵⁷ OECD. "Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life (Volume 4) | READ Online." OECD ILibrary. 2005. Accessed May 07, 2019. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/babies-and-bosses-reconciling-work-and-family-life-volume-4_9789264009295-en#page14.p.14

¹⁵⁸ "Signatures & Ratifications." European Social Charter. Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter/signatures-ratifications>.

¹⁵⁹ "European Social Charter Complaints Procedure Briefing." CRIN. Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://archive.crin.org/en/guides/un-international-system/regional-mechanisms/european-committee/european-social-charter.html>.

4.1.8 Chapter conclusion

To sum up, Sweden has one of the best and most equal parental leave policies in the world.¹⁶⁰ However, it has not always been the case. The change has been driven by the need to include more or all women to labour market and to boost gender equality, which has been a long goal of Swedish government.

The parental leave policy started to evolve 35 years ago, but it has changed a lot ever since. From 180 day to current 480 days and from voluntary distribution towards the three months reserved for the other parent, so everyone has to participate. However, the legislative efforts were not enough.

The Swedish government had to start almost a propaganda campaign directed to Swedish men in order to abolish the old socially constructed norms of maternity. Whether it has been public debates or strong men propagating paternity amounting to masculinization of child care, the efforts have paid off, because father's use of parental leave has increased and consequently the opportunities for women on the labour market.

Moreover, Swedish government has corrected its previous masculinization of parenthood campaigns when it introduced more equal approach towards men and women and starting to propagate also the benefits for mothers and children. Perhaps this approach was only possible thanks to the previous wave of campaigns as already those have deconstructed the traditional male ideals.

The successful transformation of traditional masculine attributes has become a huge achievement of Sweden. Nonetheless, the government has to work more to change the organizational structures and attitudes as those are possibly still a barrier for fathers to make a full use of parental leave that corresponds them.

¹⁶⁰ Libby Kanne, "Sweden Is Apparently Full of 'latte Dads' Carrying Toddlers - and It's a Sign of Critical Social Change." Business Insider. April 04, 2018. Accessed May 12, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/sweden-maternity-leave-paternity-leave-policies-latte-dads-2018-4>.

Moreover, on the way towards gender equal parenting, some international organizations have been found to be helpful, for instance the OECD. The suggested policies have been considered by Sweden and later adopted. On the other hand, it is encouraging to see how one country can influence the bigger structures, such as the EU, if it has good policies.

4.2 CANADA

In this subchapter I am going to discuss the parental leave policies in Canada. This federal state is a good example to study as Canada is nowadays considered to be progressive welfare state, providing social security to its citizens.¹⁶¹ It is also looked upon as an exemplary gender equal country within its geographical region, with balanced representation of women in the congress and an openly feminist prime minister.¹⁶² Apart from that, Canada's parental leave and father's participation in care-taking has changed considerably in the past decades, thus the achievement of the more gender balanced society renders it for a good case to study. It is important to mention that the federal government has power to establish and regulate Canadian social policies since 1940 Constitution Act.¹⁶³ However, the province of Quebec has their own parental leave benefits.¹⁶⁴

4.2.1 Development

Only 50 years ago, paid parental leave was only a dream in Canada on federal level. Not even mothers were protected by the social security that would provide them with an income replacement. With the feminists fighting for the equal employment opportunities the development of maternity protection evolved.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Allan Moscovitch. "Welfare State." The Canadian Encyclopedia. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/welfare-state>.

¹⁶² Status of Women Canada - Communication Directorate. "The Government of Canada's Gender Results Framework." Status of Women Canada. March 19, 2019. Accessed May 22, 2019. <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/grf-crrg/index-en.html>.

¹⁶³ "The Constitutional Distribution of Legislative Powers." Government of Canada. July 25, 2018. Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/services/federation/distribution-legislative-powers.html>.

¹⁶⁴ Social Development Canada. "Employment Insurance Maternity and Parental Benefits." Maternity and Parental Benefits - Canada.ca. January 18, 2019. Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/maternity-parental.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Women's Movements in Canada: 1960–85," The Canadian Encyclopedia, September 12, 2016, accessed June 03, 2019, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/womens-movements-in-canada-196085>.

Before 1970s, paid maternity leave was granted only by a small number of individual employers.¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the increased number of women participating in the labour market required a change in the policies.¹⁶⁷ It is of utmost importance to discuss the development in legislation as it has been established that liberal feminists put emphasis on the protection of women's rights by the law.

First paid federal maternity protection was introduced under an Unemployment Insurance Act (UIA) of 1971.¹⁶⁸ The benefit was set for a duration of 15 weeks for mothers. The change came two decades later, in 1990s, with the amendment of the UIA, when the maternity benefit was prolonged by 10 extra weeks of parental leave.¹⁶⁹ The weeks could be divided between both mother or father. Thus, this can be seen as a first incentive towards more gender equal care-taking.

The successor of the UIA was introduced in 1996 as an Employment Insurance Act (EIA). It included part-time workers and regulated the hours worked required to obtain the parental benefit. Nonetheless, the important part of this bill is its *amendment n.* from the 2000 increasing parental leave benefit from 10 weeks to 35 weeks.¹⁷⁰ Those weeks could be distributed voluntarily between mother and father. The benefit has been set up to 55% of earnings.¹⁷¹

In December 2017, a new change has been introduced to the EIA. In order to make the arrangements more flexible for the families, the possibility to extend parental leave at lower

¹⁶⁶ Jane Pulkingham and Tanya Van Der Gaag, "Maternity / Parental Leave Provisions in Canada: We've Come a Long Way, But There's Further to Go," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers De La Femme* 23, no. 3 (June 2004), accessed June 1, 2019, <https://cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/viewFile/6246/5434>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Katherine Marshall, "Benefiting from Extended Parental Leave," *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 4, no. 3 (March 21, 2003), accessed June 1, 2019, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-001-x/00303/6490-eng.html#Ref_HRDC_1996.

¹⁶⁹ "Archived - Highlights of Major Developments in Labour Legislation (1990-1991)." Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Accessed June 1, 2019. <https://cirhr.library.utoronto.ca/sites/cirhr.library.utoronto.ca/files/documents/HighlightsMajorDevLabLegis1990-1991.pdf>.

¹⁷⁰ Katherine Marshall, "Benefiting from Extended Parental Leave," *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 4, no. 3 (March 21, 2003), accessed June 1, 2019, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-001-x/00303/6490-eng.html#Ref_HRDC_1996.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

benefit became possible.¹⁷² From there on, the families can extend their parental leave to 61 weeks. However, the benefit is cut down to 33% earnings.

In 2019, the reform has been introduced with an explicit aim to improve gender equality in Canadian society and to contribute to Canada's growing economy¹⁷³. The Employment Insurance Parental Sharing Benefit prolongs the parental leave by 5 or 8 weeks (for extended parental leave model), if the second parent takes a part in care-taking.¹⁷⁴ For instance, Quebec has already introduced similar policy already in 2006,¹⁷⁵ and the reports from 2016 demonstrate that 80% of fathers have stayed or are planning to stay on parental leave and use the benefits, whereas in the rest of the Canada, the number was only 12%.¹⁷⁶ It can be assumed that such policy, similar to the one discussed in the chapter focused on the case of Sweden, has a potential to serve as a tool to disrupt the expected social roles, and current perceptions of what is masculine and feminine.

Quebec is also a province where the parents use the most child care services. It is because it has developed a well-designed and funded child care program, already since 1997.¹⁷⁷ It has been a first province with such an approach. Nonetheless, there is not a pan-Canadian strategy for childcare, instead it is left upon the provinces to regulate its social and educational services. The problem is that the childcare can cost up to \$1800 a month, but some low-income families can file requests for subsidies.¹⁷⁸ However, often there is a long waiting list for the parents.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷² Social Development Canada. "Employment Insurance Maternity and Parental Benefits." Maternity and Parental Benefits - Canada.ca. January 18, 2019. Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/maternity-parental.html>.

¹⁷³ Social Development Canada. "New Five-week Parental Sharing to Start in March 2019." September 26, 2018. Accessed June 1, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2018/09/new-five-week-parental-sharing-to-start-in-march-2019.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Department of Finance Canada. "Canada's New Parental Sharing Benefit." 2018. Accessed June 2, 2019. https://www.fin.gc.ca/n18/docs/18-008_6-eng.pdf

¹⁷⁵ Emploi Et Solidarité Sociale Québec. *Québec Parental Insurance Plan*. Québec, 2008. Accessed June 1, 2019. http://www.cgap.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/CGAP_depliantRQAP_en.pdf.

¹⁷⁶ "Father's Day... by the Numbers." Statistics Canada. June 28, 2017. Accessed June 2, 2019. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/smr08/2017/smr08_218_2017#a4.

¹⁷⁷ Martha Friendly, Canadian Early Learning and Child Care and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, 2006), accessed June 2, 2019, <https://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/op22.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸ "Who Pays for Child Care in Canada?" Finding Quality Child Care. Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://findingqualitychildcare.ca/child-care-in-canada/who-pays-for-child-care>.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Thus, the malfunctioning or non-existing national day care system can be assumed to contribute to the hardships of parents, especially mothers and force them to stay at home, instead of participating in the labour market.

To sum up, the parental leave is gender neutral in Canada, thus not discriminatory to any gender. As a result of the fact that fathers have not been using their right to parental leave, the state decided to add 5 weeks to fathers/second parent only in order to boost the participation of fathers. On the other hand, the downside of Canadian care-taking system are the day cares. Sweden has introduced those as the first step towards the model of dual-earning families. Yet, the day cares in Canada still have shortcomings and thus have negative effects on parental leave and gender equality as such.¹⁸⁰

4.2.2 Campaigns

It appears that Canada has not launched campaigns to boost father's participation in care-taking. From my point of view, it is not surprising as the five-week parental leave saved for fathers has just been introduced. Nonetheless, the legislative changes itself have a potential to boost the public discussion and disrupt some of the gender-related social constructs and create a more favourable public opinion.

In comparison, in Sweden the first "daddy month" has been introduced 24 years earlier than in Canada. The quarter century ago, the patriarchy has been much stronger than it is now. Thus, with gender equality spreading in many aspects of life, the consequence could perhaps be that propagating campaigns are not as much needed as they were before. Another scenario could as well be that with a new provision to boost fathering, the campaigns are about to come. In Sweden the campaigns were important to change the image of father from the secondary care-taker to the primary.

¹⁸⁰ Lindsey McKay, Katherine Marshall and Andrea Doucet. "Fathers and Parental Leave in Canada: Policies, Practices and Potential" in Jessica Ball and Kerry Daly (eds). *Engaging Fathers in Social Change: Lessons from Canada*, Vancouver:UBC Press:2011.

To sum up, campaigns can be a useful tool to create an impact and enhance the participation of fathers in care-taking. From the fact that Canadian “daddy’s weeks” are so new, Canada should wait for the impact of the new measure and see whether there are any topics that need to be addressed and debated within its society to successfully implement this policy. Nonetheless, the bear fact that the daddy weeks have been introduced shows the commitment towards improving the gender equality at home and in the workplace, as stated the Minister of Status of Women Maryam Monsef.¹⁸¹

4.2.3 Restructuring masculinity

From the fact that there have not been any governmental campaigns targeting the socially constructed gender norms within the topic of parenting, the masculinity has not been challenged within the narrative of care-taking on public scale. Nonetheless, fathers are more engaged in care-taking nowadays that they have been few decades ago.¹⁸²

Similarly, as in Sweden, the narrative around the roles of father has changed towards the end of 20th century.¹⁸³ From the breadwinner model of fathering that does not include much of emotional support and commitment in care-taking about one’s young children, the reality has changed towards a more engaged father.¹⁸⁴ The new model of fathering includes more involvement not only physically in taking care of one’s child, but also emotionally. Thus, the fathers became to be portrayed rather equally to mothers.¹⁸⁵

Despite of apparent equality, the researchers have spotted the differences between the narratives and practice of fatherhood in Canada.¹⁸⁶ For instance, Wall and Arnold, have evaluated a popular magazine in Canada, particularly the section on parenthood. They found out that in

¹⁸¹ Social Development Canada. "New Five-week Parental Sharing to Start in March 2019." September 26, 2018. Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2018/09/new-five-week-parental-sharing-to-start-in-march-2019.html>.

¹⁸² Glenda Wall and Stephanie Arnold, "How Involved Is Involved Fathering?" *Gender and Society* 21, no. 4 (August 2007). Accessed June 2, 2019, doi:10.1177/0891243207304973.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Jane Sunderland, "'Parenting' or 'mothering'? The Case of Modern Childcare Magazines," *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 4 (July 1, 2006). Accessed June 2, 2019, doi:10.1177/0957926506063126.

¹⁸⁶ Lyn Craig, "Does Father Care Mean Fathers Share?" *Gender & Society* 20, no. 2 (April 1, 2006), accessed June 3, 2019, doi:10.1177/0891243205285212.

spite of the narrative of “new father”, the word “parent” reflected mostly on women as well as the pictures of mothers were much more often than those of fathers.¹⁸⁷ From the fact that mother are more often depicted as a parent than fathers who, in contrast are considered more of a “second-class” parent, their hegemonic position within the patriarchal society stays unchallenged.

In another study concerning the masculinity and fathering conducted by Doucet, it is explained that instead of paternity leave changing the social constructs of gender, fathers are reinforcing their masculinity through some activities or building a new more masculine narrative of care-taking. When men being interviewed they stressed that they are still men, or enjoy observing women in gym, by which they stressed their manliness/masculinity. Some other men found themselves new physical activities to participate in, in order to discard any possibilities of being feminine in their new role of care-taking. Thus, men are trying to hide behind physical activities, coaching sport teams of their children, understanding home as house to be built or rebuilt to balance the feminine version of care-taking. By denying the feminine roles, they are reinstating their masculinity and/or giving a new façade to the parental leave.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, it is impossible to think that parental leave has no changing effect on men. The same study demonstrates that men learned new things while taking care of their children. For instance, men admit to “softening”, learning how to share feelings and finding time for reflection.¹⁸⁹ Fathers have also admitted that care-taking is very difficult job. Thus, paternity leave gives a chance for fathers to understand the hardships women go through as they can experience it first hand and with added time for reflection, “women’s work” can be at least valued more. On the top of that, Doucet states that men that stayed on parental leave remain involved in the care-taking of their children later on in their life too. As a consequence, women do not to disrupt their working regime so much, because they can now share the burden.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Glenda Wall and Stephanie Arnold, "How Involved Is Involved Fathering?" *Gender and Society* 21, no. 4 (August 2007), accessed June 2, 2019, doi:10.1177/0891243207304973.

¹⁸⁸ Andrea Doucet, "'It's Almost Like I Have a Job, but I Don't Get Paid': Fathers at Home Reconfiguring Work, Care, and Masculinity," *Fathering* 2, no. 3 (2004): , accessed May 28, 2019, <http://www.andreadoucet.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/fathering04.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

To sum up, perhaps the role of fathers in Canada stays complementary and mothers still carry the majority of the burden. Nonetheless, the positive effects of shared parental leave on the overall gender equality cannot be denied. With the new reform of 5 saved weeks for fathers, I am positive that the impact will be even greater and perhaps the gap between the masculinities and femininities can be bridged one day soon.

4.2.4 Current parental leave provisions

As I mentioned in the previous section, since 17 March 2019, change in parental leave policy has been introduced in order to boost father's participation in care-taking. This new Employment Insurance Parental Sharing Benefit prolongs the parental leave by 5 or 8 weeks (for extended parental leave model), if the second parent takes a part in care-taking.¹⁹¹ The minimum time the other parent has to contribute in care-taking is five weeks. Thus, the increase has been made from 35 to 40 weeks or from 61 to 69 weeks (for extended parental leave model), if the parental leave is shared.¹⁹²

Currently, on the federal level, parents have up to 35 weeks (standard) and 61 weeks (extended) of parental leave plus additional 5 (standard) or 8 (extended) weeks if they share the care-taking.¹⁹³ Thus, the 5 extra weeks are explicitly saved for the other parent. The benefit for the standard parental leave is 55% and for the extended one is 33% of earnings.

4.2.5 Current gender equality situation

Canada has surprised many when the state appointed first-ever gender equal Cabinet in 2015.¹⁹⁴ The gender equality and mainstreaming has become a commitment that resulted in various new

¹⁹¹ Department of Finance Canada. "Canada's New Parental Sharing Benefit." 2018. Accessed June 2, 2019. https://www.fin.gc.ca/n18/docs/18-008_6-eng.pdf

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Social Development Canada. "EI Maternity and Parental Benefits: What These Benefits Offer." March 20, 2019. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Jessica Murphy. "Trudeau Gives Canada First Cabinet with Equal Number of Men and Women." The Guardian. November 04, 2015. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/04/canada-cabinet-gender-diversity-justin-trudeau>.

policies, for instance in 2016 the decision to analyse all budgetary changes from the gender-based point of view.¹⁹⁵

Moreover, in order to improve the economic, political and social standing of women the government of Canada has introduced a new Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE).¹⁹⁶ Within the equal work-related topics, the WAGE fights for the equal pay, as well as for the splitting the care-taking obligation. Its creation brings hope to bring gender mainstreaming to all spheres of life and boost the overall gender equality situation in the Canada.¹⁹⁷

The obstacles stemming from the unequal care-taking has been addressed by the creation of a parental leave time explicitly saved for fathers. From the fact that the initiative has been created only some weeks ago (March 2019), thus there are no data on what impact this new measure has created. Nonetheless, the province of Quebec has introduced this measure already in 2006. The results have shown that in a year before the change 32% of fathers in Quebec went for paid parental leave, whereas a year after the reform 83% of fathers used their benefit.¹⁹⁸

Even though the participation of father in care-taking has increased, after all the women spend much more time taking care of household.¹⁹⁹ The unpaid work represents a burden that women have to bare. The OECD statistics provide an insight for this problem, signalling that Canadian women dedicate 76 minutes more to unpaid work per day, than men.²⁰⁰ In a week that amounts to almost 9 hours of unpaid work. This reflects the gender imbalances that Canadian society is still facing.

¹⁹⁵ OECD. "Gender Equality in Canada Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting." 2018. Accessed May 27, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Gender-Equality-in-Canada-Highlights.pdf>.

¹⁹⁶ Status of Women Canada, Communications and Public Affairs Directorate. "Status of Women Canada." June 02, 2019. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/index-en.html>.

¹⁹⁷ Status of Women Canada. "Creation of the Department for Women and Gender Equality." January 09, 2019. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/status-women/news/2018/12/creation-of-the-department-for-women-and-gender-equality.html>.

¹⁹⁸ Lindsey McKay, Katherine Marshall and Andrea Doucet. "Fathers and Parental Leave in Canada: Policies, Practices and Potential" in Jessica Ball and Kerry Daly (eds). *Engaging Fathers in Social Change: Lessons from Canada*, Vancouver Press:2011.

¹⁹⁹ OECD. "Employment: Time Spent in Paid and Unpaid Work, by Sex." Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54757>.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

In conclusion, Canada ranked as sixteenth most gender equal country in the world in 2018.²⁰¹ It is still rather good ranking. Nonetheless, there is a need for a lot of effort to be put to closing gender gap as such. One of the ways to achieve the goal should be to boost the father's participation of care-taking, such as through the use of campaigns and/or by increasing the allowance money for parental leave as practiced in Sweden. By encouraging fathers to become more than a secondary parent, it should be possible to challenge the gender presumptions in the society.

4.2.6 Organizational culture in Canada

The effort of Canadian government to increase the participation of fathers in care-taking and closing the gender gap is evident by issuing a new change of 5 new daddy weeks. Nonetheless, fathering is not traditionally included in the typical masculine activities. Thus, deviation from perceived traditional roles causes the breach of heteronormativity. As a result, fathers are sometimes being penalized if they find themselves under the organization or superior that perceives parental leave as uniquely the job of women.²⁰²

In its present condition, a study shows that the organizational culture - referring to family-friendliness of the organizations - in Canada is often a burden for fathers that wish to take parental leave.²⁰³ The qualitative study of McKay, Marshall and Doucet points towards the malpractices occurring in the companies. For instance, fathers reported negative stance of their superiors towards them taking time off from work in order to care of their children. There has also been a case when a father took the leave when it best suits the company (when the pace was slower), instead of taking the leave when it would be best for the family.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ World Economic Forum: "The Global Gender Gap Report 2018" Accessed May 07,2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

²⁰² Mireille Silcoff. "'The Daddy Quota': How Quebec Got Men to Take Parental Leave." The Guardian. June 15, 2018. Accessed May 26, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/the-daddy-quota-how-quebec-got-men-to-take-parental-leave>.

²⁰³ Lindsey McKay, Katherine Marshall and Andrea Doucet. "Fathers and Parental Leave in Canada: Policies, Practices and Potential" in Jessica Ball and Kerry Daly (eds). Engaging Fathers in Social Change: Lessons from Canada, Vancouver.UBC Press:2011.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

On the other hand, the study has also shown that some organizations, whether state or non-state, are family-friendly. Then fathers seem to be more encouraged to take parental leave, when their companies and/or superiors have positive attitudes towards male care-taking.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, the study also suggested that fathers that work in the state sector have it easier to go on parental leave.²⁰⁶

To sum up, insisting on the family-friendly organizational culture is of utmost importance for the government that has a power to issue requirements or new laws when trying to contribute towards more gender equal care-taking model. The government should aim for policies, for instance such as implemented in Sweden, where every company needs to submit a plan of action targeting how the company facilitates men to take part in care-taking.²⁰⁷

4.2.7 Influence of international organizations

The potential of international organizations to influence a government's policy via international treaty or recommendations has already been discussed. As a result, it is valid to study Canada's participation in international organizations and its commitments resulting from its membership in those organizations. Canada is member of the previously discussed organizations – the UN, the ILO, the OECD on international level. On the regional level, Canada is a member of the OAS. As a result, this subchapter will discuss the impact of these organizations on the policies regarding the parental leave provisions.

In the UN regime, Canada has ratified many treaties, among others the CEDAW Convention in 1981.²⁰⁸ The CEDAW Convention is perhaps the most important international treaty emphasizing gender equality, targeting women and enhancing their position.²⁰⁹ Moreover, it is important in discussion of parental leave as it considers parental leave to be a human right. When it comes to the convention C156 of the ILO, Canada has not been such a committed

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Linda Haas and C. Philip Hwang, "Gender and Organizational Culture," *Gender & Society* 21, no. 1 (2007), doi:10.1177/0891243206295091.

²⁰⁸ "Status of Treaties." United Nations Treaty Collection. Accessed May 07, 2019.

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en.

²⁰⁹

player as Sweden because of its reluctance to ratify the Convention. Canada has not ratified C156, that calls for equality of opportunity and treatment of male and female workers and also prohibition of the discrimination based on family obligations.²¹⁰ Nonetheless, Canada has already introduced the maternity benefit, some years earlier and enlarged it by parental leave in 1990s, thus rendering their reluctance to sign the Convention less of an issue.

Since the parental leave is more than the concern of women and particularly feminists – because it has implications on the participation of women in the labour market - Canada has also been under the scrutiny of the OECD for the review of its parental leave policies. Same as in the case of Sweden, the Canada's parental leave policy has been reviewed in the fourth volume of OECD *Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life*, published in 2005. The organization criticized the absence of a federal childcare system and “*family-unfriendliness*” of the organizations, state or non-state. OECD recommended to subsidize the childcare system, put special emphasis on low-income families.²¹¹ Canada still has a long way to go to perfect their childcare system, nonetheless, there have been some improvements. Moreover, the differences between provinces when it comes to childcare are huge and require harmonization.²¹²

On the regional level, the social rights are less protected within the OAS than they are in the EU. Canada has ratified the OAS Charter, nonetheless the government has not ratified the Protocol of Buenos Aires. On the other hand, it is questionable if this article would have any effect on Canada's parental leave policies, since it does not explicitly mention parental leave, only social security policy in general.

The weakness of the OAS, especially the IACHR can also be seen by the unwillingness of important large states to ratify the treaties. For instance, neither Canada, nor the USA have

²¹⁰ Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (C156), 23 June 1981.

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C156, preamble

²¹¹ OECD. "Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life (Volume 4) | READ Online." OECD ILibrary. 2005. Accessed May 07, 2019. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/babies-and-bosses-reconciling-work-and-family-life-volume-4_9789264009295-en#page13

²¹² Statistics Canada. "Child Care in Canada." Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. November 30, 2015. Accessed June 03, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2014005-eng.htm>.

ratified the American Convention on Human Rights.²¹³ Canada has been reluctant due to the pro-life provisions of this treaty.²¹⁴ Furthermore, the ADRDM, that protects maternity is not legally binding.

To sum up, the impact of the international organizations is much lesser than in the case of Sweden due to various reasons. Firstly, Canada appears as non-complying with the international organizations, for instance, the non-compliance with the OECD's recommendations. Secondly, Canada would like to comply with others such as the American Convention of Human Rights, however due to its controversial pro-life provisions.

4.2.8 Chapter conclusion

To conclude, Canada is a welfare state with developed social security policies. Moreover, it is one of the few countries, apart from the Nordic ones that have implemented dual-earner model.²¹⁵ The model has been adopted in order to boost women's participation in labour market. Nonetheless, some decades ago the parental leave for fathers did not exist in Canada.²¹⁶

The care-taking policies have been transformed since 1971 UIA, that included only maternity leave, through the amendment of 1990, when the first 10 weeks to be divided voluntarily between mother and father were added. The provisions on parental leave reached its peak this year (2019) when Canada have adopted additional 5 weeks saved for other parent, in order to motivate fathers.

Nonetheless, the parents still face basic problems in order to live up to the dual-earner family model, as the childcare is still not accessible to everyone. Moreover, no campaigns to propagate fathers' use of parental leave have been introduced, apart from the legal efforts establishing the

²¹³ Department of International Law, OAS. "General Information of the Treaty: B-32." Multilateral Treaties. Accessed June 03, 2019. https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-32_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights_sign.htm.

²¹⁴ "Canadian Adherence to the American Convention on Human Rights." Accessed June 18, 2019. <https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/372/huma/rep/rep04may03part1-e.htm>.

²¹⁵ Ann-Zofie E. Duvander, Tommy Ferrarini, and Sara Thalberg, Swedish Parental Leave and Gender Equality: Achievements and Reform Challenges in a European Perspective (Stockholm: Institutet För Framtidsstudier, 2005), accessed May 3, 2019,

²¹⁶

5 extra non-transferable weeks dedicated to fathers. The campaigns, perhaps, might be just about to come depending on the effect of the use of the extra 5 weeks by fathers and the will to unburden the women even further. Because even if fathers would use the 5 weeks provided to them, their role might still be only complementary and also it has been shown that women bear majority of the burden of not only care-taking but also household.

Furthermore, contrary to Sweden, the international organizations have not been found to have much effect on the parental leave policies of Canada. The suggested policies were not fully realized. Furthermore, the political unwillingness towards the OAS and the IACHR was a surprising finding. Nonetheless, Canada has a potential to be a leader within these structures and be an example towards other countries within its region.

4.3 COMPARISON

This subchapter serves as a final conclusion of the case studies. The aim of this section is to compare and contrast the two different systems and approaches of Sweden and Canada towards parental leave policies. In the same time, it will unfold the answers to the research question posed in regard to what can be learned from the Swedish approach.

When comparing the path towards not only gender equal parental leave provisions but especially the supportive policies on paternity leave, it is easy to spot the differences between the two countries. Even though the pressing need to create gender equal parenting policies is the same and stems from the need to boost female participation in labour market, the development of parental leave provisions came faster in Sweden. Canada was delayed by almost two decades with providing gender neutral parental leave policy. The same goes for creating an incentive in the shape of “daddy months/weeks”. When the special provisions boosting fathers care-taking were reality in Sweden in 1995, Canada on federal level took until 2019 to incorporate such a policy in its parental leave provisions.

Another aspect that has been discussed within the development part concerns kindergartens. The publicly provided childcare has a potential to decrease parents’ burden caused by parenting and allow them to resume their participation in labour market, which in turn reduces the economic hardship families might be facing when on parental leave. While Sweden have

understood the importance of kindergartens half century ago, the Canada is still lacking a federal strategy for childcare. As a result, the kindergartens often lack placements for children or are overly expensive and parents cannot afford them.

Further way to boost participation of fathers in care-taking of their children is to introduce series of campaigns to reshape the public opinion on the roles of mothers and respectively fathers. In Sweden the campaigns came alongside with the creation of daddy months and they seem to be rather effective, especially when they emphasize the gender equality, not just fathers as secondary care-takers. In Canada, there have not been any specific campaigns to boost the paternity. I think this might be explained by the newness of the daddy weeks in Canada, nonetheless if the new paternity-boosting policy is to live its full potential, it would be perhaps good to accompany it with some extra propagation of the benefit of gender equal care-taking.

The campaigns were a way to restructure a masculinity in the Swedish society. The analysis of Swedish campaigns shows various approaches have been implemented, such as matching masculine attributes to childcare, shaming old generations towards the gender equal model. This model eliminates the discourse on the gender differences in care-taking and abolishes the socially constructed prejudices. The masculinity in the context of parental leave has been also reshaped in Canada. The fathers that were on parental leave have shown more appreciation and understanding of the burdens of unpaid work of women and admitted to learning of new skills such as compassion. Nonetheless, it is visible that men in Canada are still in the first phase of Swedish campaigns – matching masculine attributes to childcare, when they try to reaffirm their masculinity via connecting the parental leave with new activities reinforcing their masculinity. As a result, Canada could benefit from changing the discourse on masculinity on societal level, for instance via campaigns in order to reshape the socially constructed gender attributes to the level, where the childcare will not be women's job anymore.

When it comes to the current parental leave provisions, it is visible that Swedish policy is more generous than the Canadian one. Not only in length, but also in the financial compensation. Financial compensation is of utmost importance as taking the parental leave will influence the family's budget and perhaps the decision on who is staying home based on how much money will the family loose. Apart from that, Swedish parental leave policy provides three daddy

months, which is almost three times as much as in Canada. The implementation of daddy months in Sweden has shown the increase of fathers taking parental leave. Thus, it is a good incentive to boost the dual earner family model and the increase of non-transferable parental leave in Canada could have positive effects on gender equal parenting.

Furthermore, both countries belong to the top twenty equal countries in the world. Nonetheless, Canada ranks thirteen positions behind Sweden. Both countries seem to have problems with the majority of unpaid work being performed by women. However, Swedish women are better off and according to the OECD statistics, they perform only about 2/3 of what Canadian women do.²¹⁷ Obviously, overall gender equality is not mirrored only by the parental leave policies but boosting these policies could have an important impact on improving the economic equality of men and women. The logic behind this is that while women are staying at home taking care of their children, men are able to dedicate the time, that would be otherwise spent at home to work and advance with their careers.

Apart from parental leave policies as such, the organizational culture, mirroring the heteronormative presumptions, is often to be blamed for fathers' reluctance to use the paternity leave. The research has shown that the organizational cultures of both countries seems to be obstacle in taking full use of daddy months or generally in going on paternity leave. Sweden appears to have very good policy to boost family-friendliness in work place. Organizations are required to submit the action plan on how they will motivate the father's participation in care-taking. This could have a positive effect if implemented in Canada. Not only does creating the action plan force an organization to reflect on its policies, but by being forced to create a plan, it is much easier to take an action and tackle the issue.

The analysis has furthermore shown that the parental leave has been on the agenda of important international organizations. Sweden has often been more progressive than the mentioned international organizations in the question of gender equal parenting. Nonetheless, when recommendations related to parental leave have been issued, the Sweden has adopted them. On

²¹⁷ OECD. "Employment: Time Spent in Paid and Unpaid Work, by Sex." Accessed May 07, 2019. <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54757>.

the contrary, Canada did not cooperate quite as well as Sweden did. It could be very beneficial for Canada for instance to obey the OECD recommendation to improve their public childcare system. As it has been discussed, the kindergartens have potential to unburden women of the obligation to stay home with their children and ease their reintegration to the labour market.

To sum up, Canada seems to be two decades behind Sweden in the modernization of its parental leave policies. The effort should be put on engaging fathers even more via supportive paternity leave legislation, for instance by adding more daddy weeks. Another thing that could help Canada to boost their dual-earner family model is the implementation of a pan-Canadian policy of public childcare, with a need to subsidize strongly this area. The public childcare has been implemented as one of the first steps towards the achievement of dual-earner family model and the aim to increase women's participation in labour market in Sweden. That is why it is a crucial precondition of unburdening mothers and fulfilling the dual-earner family model by Canada. Moreover, the creation of various campaigns would be beneficial to stir up a public debate on the roles of fathers. The campaigns are a tool that has a potential to restructure masculinity and break down the socially constructed gender ideals. Furthermore, the legal efforts could be enhanced by adding more non-transferable time provided for fathers as well as improvement of the parental benefit (that seems to be too low in Canada) and to regulate the behaviour of organizations, to insure family friendly policies are in place.

5 DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter theoretical conceptualizations that have been discussed in the second chapter are going to be applied on the case studies of Sweden and Canada. The aim of discussing the theoretical conceptualizations is to see how men can be motivated to go on parental leave as it has a potential to unburden the women and disrupt the heteronormative presumptions. After studying the perceptions of society in those countries alongside with the legal norms concerning the parental leave, it is possible to test the theories on concrete examples and see how the policies can close the gap in unequal parenting. The discussion will involve the theories of feminism, gender, masculinity, attitudes of organizations and the importance of law.

5.1 Gender and Heteronormativity

Gender, unlike sex, encompasses the social attributes of what we consider masculine or feminine. The heteronormative, traditional perception is that women are the primary care-takers and thus parenthood is rendered female, while men are considered to be money-bringers. Thus, in order to end gender disparity in care-taking, the gender presumption must be changed so the parenthood becomes the responsibility of both men and women as discussed in theoretical part.

Canada and Sweden are countries with high gender equality index.²¹⁸ Among other characteristics, they both adopted dual-earner family model. Nonetheless, the uptake of parental leave is still not equal. As discussed by Wall and Arnold, in Canadian society, more women than men are portrayed as parents in the media²¹⁹. As a result, these perceptions influence also the organizational culture, that as a result does not support men to go on parental leave. A solution for gender unequal standing in parenting, could be for instance issuing of campaigns, such as in Sweden. The campaigns in Sweden eventually managed to reconstruct the image of masculinity, where being a man meant to be a good father too. Moreover, the campaigns managed to reconstruct the heteronormative presumptions regarding parenting and established

²¹⁸ "Human Development Reports." Accessed June 13, 2019. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI>.

²¹⁹ Glenda Wall and Stephanie Arnold, "How Involved Is Involved Fathering?" *Gender and Society* 21, no. 4 (August 2007). Accessed June 2, 2019, doi:10.1177/0891243207304973.

a gender-neutral discourse of the parenting. The same strategy could be used in Canada as well, in order to reshape the social constructs concerning parenthood.

5.2 Feminism

Feminism addresses inequalities of men and women in all the aspects of life. This work has presented two types of feminisms – liberal and radical in the section on theoretical conceptualization. Liberal feminism puts emphasis on the legal equality of men and women, while the radical feminism discusses the power dynamics between men and women and works with the notion of hegemonic masculinity. I nonetheless, see them as complementary as the law and change in the society go hand in hand. For instance, the creation of daddy months, alongside with campaigns raised significantly the participation of fathers in care-taking.

5.2.1 Liberal Feminism and the Importance of Law

The importance of law is without doubt connected to the discussion of liberal feminism. The importance of law is undisputable for the healthy functioning of society. In the same way, legal parenting is crucial for welfare of family and has a potential to enhance women's participation in labour market and men's participation in care-taking. The legislative powers can improve the imbalanced division of parental leave via adding daddy months/week as it was done in Sweden and Canada. Moreover, the state can regulate the behaviour of organizations and force them to be more family-friendly, via requiring the creation of action plans such as was discussed within Swedish case study.

It can be said that the goals of liberal feminists have been long achieved by establishing gender neutral parental leave provisions as that means equal legal provisions for men and women. Nonetheless, the statistics has shown us that men, even after having a chance to stay at home with their children, do not use this right.²²⁰ Thus, it could be said that the liberal feminism failed in establishing the bigger goal - gender equality - in both Sweden and in Canada. However, the case studies have shown that the liberal feminism does not fail overall, as it sets the way towards achieving gender equality by establishing the gender-neutral parental provisions. Nonetheless,

gender-neutral parental leave provisions seem to be insufficient in both case studies and thus, it is important that the legislative powers go beyond gender-neutral provisions.

5.2.2 Radical Feminism and Masculinity

After the gender-neutral parental leave provisions have been established, the radical feminism comes to the spotlight, removing further obstacles to achieve gender equality. As it has been mentioned previously in the theoretical part, radical feminism studies the power relations of men and women, while the patriarchal society, power is given to the perfect males – hegemonies in masculinity. Since motherhood is considered to be a feminine practice, men who participate in care taking are being looked down on and ostracized as could have been seen in the family unfriendly practices towards fathers in both countries. Thus, the analysis suggests that it is important to study the masculinity, break the heteronormative assumptions and change the narrative in the societies in order to establish more gender equal care-taking.

Since fathers as care-takers are not considered heteronormative, they might be considered less of a man if they go on a parental leave. That seems to interfere with their hegemonic status and endangers their position in the patriarchal society. As a result, men do not have a possibility to go on a parental leave or do not use their right to participate in care-taking.²²¹

In order to fight the notions of hegemonic masculinity, Sweden and Canada had to change the narrative of care-taking and the perceptions of traditionalists. Firstly, both countries introduced gender neutral parental leave. Secondly, after some time, both countries introduced non-transferable parental leave for fathers only. Lastly, Sweden has introduced a series of campaigns to completely transform the notions of hegemonic masculinity. It took decades, but Sweden got from the model of mothers as a primary care-giver and managed to convince fathers that it is their obligation – same as mothers' - to stay home and take care of their children.

On the other hand, the analysis of the case studies has shown that the uptake of parental leave by fathers is still not perfect in neither of the countries. The question arises, what could be the

²²¹ Andrea Doucet and Robyn Lee, "Fathering, Feminism(s), Gender, and Sexualities: Connections, Tensions, and New Pathways," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6, no. 4 (2014): , doi:10.1111/jftr.12051. p.363

next steps to enhance the participation of fathers in care-taking. The further action is needed to break the heteronormative assumptions and normalize parenting to completely equal uptake between mothers and fathers.

5.3 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to how family-friendly are the organizations. As a result, some fathers may feel encouraged or discouraged to go on parental leave. Nonetheless, it could be said that organizational culture mirrors the society. If it is unusual for fathers to go on parental leave instead of pursuing their careers, they will most probably meet the resistance of the organization where they work. Thus, following the feminist reasoning, firstly it is essential to provide the gender-neutral provisions for parental leave so it becomes possible for fathers to go on parental leave and secondly, it is important to address the structural causes of this inequality rooted in the heteronormative perceptions.

As discussed within the chapter about the impact of the international organizations in the case study, Canada was criticized for the family-unfriendly organizational culture by the OECD, and the research has shown that there has been indeed lot of issues father encountered when going on parental leave.²²² It is possible to fight the organizational culture by creating special requirements for companies to address this issue just like in Sweden.

5.4 Chapter Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

To conclude this chapter, it is evident that in order to establish gender balanced uptake of parental leave, many different aspects have to be addressed. It is not enough to establish non-discriminatory laws. Moreover, according to my analysis, establishing the special daddy weeks/months is important and has been proved to be successful to certain extent, nonetheless that effort still seems insufficient by itself. Besides creating new laws, the attention should be put on addressing the social constructs of gender attributes. Sweden has shown the success of reconstructing the image of masculinity via campaigns, thus Canada and other countries would

²²² OECD. "Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life (Volume 4) | READ Online." OECD ILibrary. 2005. Accessed May 07, 2019. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/babies-and-bosses-reconciling-work-and-family-life-volume-4_9789264009295-en#page13

most probably benefit from the similar approach. Moreover, it is important to remove the obstacles coming from the institutions, for instance via creating further rules and norms.

The general recommendations for the boosting of fathers' participation in care-taking stem from this work. Firstly, the countries should address the gender inequalities in all the spheres of the life as it is a precondition not only for the equal uptake of parental leave, but also for other issues resulting from gender imbalances in the society such as gender-based violence that I have researched in my previous work and referred to in the introduction. Education of the general public and especially youth should play a key role in combating any issues resulting from the gender unequal society. Secondly, countries should join and commit more on the international level to exchange good practices, and most importantly comply with the recommendations.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this work was to point out the gender unequal uptake of parental leave. The lack of participation of fathers in care-taking was analysed from various perspectives. This work studied what discourages fathers to go on a parental leave, how can their environment influence their decisions and what roles play the state and international community in addressing this issue. The analysis was conducted on the case studies of Sweden and Canada. Apart from that, the case studies -especially Swedish one - have revealed the lessons learned from establishing dual earner family model.

In order to answer why men do not use their right to go on parental leave, concepts of gender and heteronormativity were discussed alongside with the liberal and radical branches of feminism. The results show that socially constructed gender attributes play a role in discouragement of fathers to use their right to take care of their small children at home. Sweden and Canada are countries with relatively low gender inequality and perhaps that is why these countries have such progressive policies. The progressiveness of these countries can be seen in the fact that they both introduced daddy weeks/months that are reserved for fathers. On the other hand, Canada still seems to lag behind Sweden. That can be perhaps mirrored by the fact that Sweden ranks higher in the overall gender equality evaluations. Moreover, the analysis has shown that in Canada, fathers are portrayed less often than mothers as a parent. That can be a good example of how the social constructs are created and/or maintained. On the other hand, Sweden has sent different message to its parents, when issuing the campaigns of the equal care-taking model.

Furthermore, within the studying of how the environment influences the fathers in their decision making related to their engagement in care-taking, the organizational structure has been discussed. It refers to the general mood that the organization projects in terms of how family friendly it is. As a result, fathers might feel encouraged or discouraged to go on a parental leave. It was also found to influence how long will fathers stay on parental leave. The impact of the organizational culture has been confirmed for instance in Canada, where fathers tend to take the leave when it best suits the company and feel general disapproval from their superiors when going on parental leave. Besides that, the Byrger's and Duvander's hypothesis, that it makes a

difference if fathers work in the public sector, was confirmed. The research has shown that it is easier for fathers that work in state sector to go on parental leave.

This work has also discussed the importance of law in tackling the gender unequal uptake of parental leave. The good governance with issuing of right policies has shown to be essential in tackling the inequality issue. It has shown that with legal efforts, for instance, increasing the number of daddy months have had positive effect on the uptake of parental leave by fathers. Moreover, the monthly allowance was found to play a role in men's decision-making process. Apart from that the creation of new laws and penalties could have the positive effect on changing the organizational culture. For instance, Sweden is a good example as they took measures in the form of the requiring the action plans from all the organization, to see what their plan is to boost the family-friendliness of their company. However, this measure is in place, the uptake of parental leave by fathers is still not perfect in Sweden. As a result, there seems to be a need for further improvements in the system and the question is what government could do next to enhance the participation of fathers even further.

Apart from the importance of creation of new laws, the state should be responsible for the dissemination of the knowledge to fulfil its goal to bridge the gap of mothers and fathers on parental leave. Even though the creation of laws has an impact, the impact can be enhanced if the equality in care-taking is being promoted by other means. As it has been demonstrated, the campaigns were an effective way to boost fathering further. Not only have these campaigns aimed to increase the participation of fathers on parental leave, but most importantly they have restructured the image of masculinity, the socially constructed attributes that were associated with men and their role. In return, after breaking down the heteronormative presumption, fathers in Sweden do not feel anymore that the care-taking is a women's job only, rather the new masculine model includes the responsibility to be a good father. This has been done in Sweden and for sure it would be beneficial to start campaigning for the new masculinity in Canada, especially now its potential is high with the brand-new addition of daddy weeks to the parental leave provisions.

Moreover, the importance of the first year of parenting has been stated to have a crucial effect on the gender roles. This statement made by Doucet has been confirmed by the analysing the

behaviour of fathers in Canada. Fathers that stayed on parental leave have admitted undergoing a personal change and have shown more appreciation for women's work and they also stay involved in the care-taking of their child later on in life, which has also been confirmed in the case of Sweden.

Apart from that, this worked analysed the impact of regional and international institutions on the improvement of gender equal parental leave uptake. The scrutiny was put on the UN, the ILO, the IECD on the international level and the CoE, the EU, the OAS on the regional level. The analysis has shown mixed results:

Firstly, it is important to mention that the institutions (apart from the EU, that issues legally binding directives and regulations) can only have an impact as long as states are willing to become part of conventions or execute the recommendations, which lowers the level of strength of international organizations. That is why Canada can decide to ignore recommendations or even decide not to participate in the Conventions, such as C156 or American Convention on Human Rights. On the other hand, country can be complying exemplary and become a good example, such as Sweden that complied with all the studied international and regional obligations. Moreover, I would dare to say that their early efforts to create dual earning family model and gender balanced uptake of parental leave has inspired the rest of the region.

Secondly, the analysis has shown that the European regional system is much more developed than Inter-American, at least in the questions of social policy and gender related issues, that this work has been studying. For instance, the EU has been discussing a lot how to encourage fathers' participation in care-taking, and the benefits of "daddy month" via directives (that are legally binding) and how to combat overall gender equality via strategies and pacts. On the other hand, the Inter-American system, does not have powers to issue legally binding resolutions or directives. Moreover, it lacks the provisions on paternity leave. Thus, it does not discuss how to boost the participation of fathers, it merely mentions the development of a social security policy and the protection of maternity. As a result, the EU has much bigger impact on its Member states than the OAS.

To sum up, the issue of the unequal uptake of parental leave has been targeted for some decades now, for instance in Canada and Sweden among other countries. Nonetheless, the analysis has shown that fathers are still reluctant to use their right and go on parental leave. The theoretical conceptualizations alongside with a study of the practice of parenthood in Sweden and Canada, pointed to how complicated the issue of equal uptake of parental leave is. In order to bridge the gap in care-taking, the problem has to be addressed on all the levels, individual to motivate fathers perhaps financially and on societal level to tear down all the constraints stemming from socially constructed gender attributes. Moreover, the work of government is essential to tackle all the barriers by creating new rules and legislation. The role of regional and international organizations can help to bridge the gap in care-taking too, via cooperation and exchange of good practices as it could hold a promise of possible improvement of gender relations in larger global society.

This thesis aimed to address the unequal uptake of parental leave among mothers and fathers in Sweden and Canada. The issue has presented itself as multidimensional and complicated. As a result, it is hard to make any indisputable conclusions. Nonetheless, the work has addressed issues that have been identified as some of the causal problems of unequal care-taking. Thus, I am convinced that many countries worldwide could benefit from the discussion presented in this work and start improving the imbalanced uptake of parental leave.

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