



**ANALYSIS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE WORKPLACE
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

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Introduction

Gender inequality is a very important issue as it is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Surveys show that this issue is not yet solved even in developed countries. For example, 2019 report shows that not even all strongest economic global leaders G20 are on track of achieving goal of reducing gender pay gap; notably Mexico and Saudi Arabia (International Labour Organization, 2019). Situation in the Czech Republic is also very alarming as its pay gap was the fifth highest in the EU in 2019: 18.9 % (Eurostat, 2021). In 2021, Czech women had to work 69 days to equal the men's salary of the year 2020 (Křížová, 2021). Another indicator presenting situation of this issue is Gender Equality Index (GEI); in 2020 Czech Republic had score of 56.2 and was the sixth worst in the EU. The GEI can be also broken down to more specialized index and one of them is in terms of work; where the Czech Republic scored 67 and was the third worst in the EU. Another step backwards is drop of its ranking in the criteria of Power; in 2020, it ranked on the 26th place and in 2010 on the 16th (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021b).

However, Czech Republic is not often a subject of gender studies in international academia but it is important to analyse countries that are not so successful in promoting gender equality. Moreover, situation of progress of gender equality in the Czech Republic was analysed mainly either right after accession to the European Union or until 2010. There is a gap in research in the most recent years. Furthermore, not many researchers include companies in their analyses. The purpose of this case study is to explain the development of gender equality and evaluate impact of international policies on the gender inequalities in the workplace in the Czech Republic.

Research question of this thesis is *To what extent have international bodies influenced gender equality in the workplace in the Czech Republic?* By international bodies are meant international companies, international organisations and European Union.

In order to answer the research question, analysis will contain four chapters in total. Firstly, the historic background will be explored to understand the starting point and roots of this topic in the Czech Republic. First chapter will divide history into sections before and after accession to the European Union because it was significant point of

history for gender equality situation in the Czech Republic. There will be also third subchapter; situation during the COVID-19 pandemic as it has been a time period that revealed many problems regarding gender equality. Second chapter will explain the problematic of gender equality in the workplace and analyse the actual situation in the Czech Republic. In the next chapter we will move to important factor of promoting gender equality; the legislation. This chapter will also contain comparison of the situation in Czech Republic to other member states of the European Union. And last chapter is dedicated to different possibilities for improvement in the future. It also contains inspirational methods, processes and policies from other states.

Literature Review

Eastern and Central Europe states are not very often subjects of studies about gender studies, as for example Fodor and Glass (2018) point out. Eva Fodor is part of Department of Gender Studies at the Central European University and Christy Glass from Utah State University. Their article *Labor Market Context, Economic Development, and Family Policy Arrangements: Explaining the Gender Gap in Employment in Central and Eastern Europe* was published in renowned journal *Social Forces* published by the Oxford University Press. Fodor and Glass (2018) concluded their research by stating that degree of segregation of labour market and size of the public and private sectors are important for women's work opportunities. They also compared the extent of influence of these two factors to shaping men's work opportunities and found out that the impact is larger on women's opportunities. In more details, the phenomenon of gender horizontal segregation of Czech labour market was examined by Hausenblasova (2012), member of the non-profit organisation Gender Studies. Czech researchers who studied case of Czech Republic in terms of within-job inequalities were Alena Křížková from Gender and Sociology Department of Institute of Sociology, Andrew M. Penner and Trond Petersen both from University of California (2009). They used data from Czech firms from years 1998, 2002 and 2004 and they examined the weakness of Czech legislation. Another group of researchers Lenka Formánková from Czech Academy of Sciences, Blanka Plasová from Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg and Jiri Vyhlidal from Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (2011) strongly believe that employers are very important actors in allowing women to have a work/family balance in the Czech Republic. Křížková, Pospíšilová, Marková Volejníčková and Maříková analysed in 2020 for the project by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 22 % K ROVNOSTI the wage differences between men and women and impact of motherhood on women's professional lives. Tomáš Sirovátka and Jana Válková from Masaryk University Brno (2017) focused their research on the development of childcare policies in the Czech Republic and compared it to Norway. Marcela Valkova, member of pan-European political party Volt Belgium and Yannis Karamitsios, a co-founder of pan-European organisation Alliance 4 Europe, (2020) concentrated on the Visegrad Group and the new growing pro-EU feeling in these four Eastern European countries. From the earlier research, Wolchik and Meyer (1985)

analysed the political representativeness of women in Eastern European countries in their book.

Moving on to studies focused on analysing the impact of the European Union, there have been researches led by also other than Czech scholars. For example, Leah Seppanen Anderson (2006) compared the EU accession process of Czech Republic and Poland in terms of adopting gender regulations. Martin Potucek from Charles University Prague (2004) analysed changes in social policies during and after the accession of Czech Republic into the EU. Barbara Havelkova from Oxford University (2006) analysed the effectiveness adopting the EU equality law on gender equality in the Czech Republic. Barbara Havelkova continued conducting research on the topic of gender equality in the Czech Republic and in she published study focusing on the problem of Czech legislation in 2010. Ulrich Sedelmeier from The London School of Economics and Politics (2008) published for Journal of European Public Policy his observation of the post-accession situation in terms of legislation compliance in East Europe. Scholar from York University Heather MacRae (2012) showed the discrepancy between values of gender equality promoted by the European Union and reality in many member states, mentioning also Czech Republic. Researchers Ondrej Císař from Charles University Prague and Katerina Vráblíková from the Ohio State University (2010) targeted another actors in their research about impact of Europeanization: Czech women's group and impact of Europeanization.

Lastly, scholar Anna Elomäki from Tampere University (2015) points out, gender equality is not only about financial equality and therefore gender research on the EU should include quantitative methods more to compare situation of this phenomenon, not only gender pay gaps. Elomäki suggests that multidisciplinary approach is needed to fully understand the issue of gender inequalities.

Methodology

This in-depth study is a qualitative research with sources being interviews and government documents. Additionally, statistical data will be also used in order to show the quantitative part of phenomenon of gender inequalities and to compare situations between countries. In order to get my heterogeneous sample, it was used snowball technique. There were conducted semi-structured interviews with ten women actively working on promoting the gender equality and empowering women at the labor market in the Czech Republic. These interviewers varied in terms of background; some working for non-governmental organisations, some for the Czech public administration and some for companies. Initial plan was to have an equal numbers of participants from each sectors, however due to extensive work load of interviewers at the last minute of data collection process, there were only two women from the public administration.

In order to overcome personal bias and to ensure the validity of research there was used a technique of respondent validation. Furthermore, the interviews were recorded to make sure the responses are reliable. Moreover, the approximately same time was given to each interviewer (one hour) to be consistent with the data collection.

Analysis

Chapter 1: History of gender inequality in the Czech Republic

Before analysing a current situation and possible improvements in the future, it is necessary to explore the historical background of not only legislation on gender equality in the Czech Republic, but also the atmosphere within the public. This chapter is divided into the time periods before and after the accession to the European Union. This milestone is used because European Union has been a strong actor affecting member states including Czech Republic. The third subchapter is dedicated to the difficult times during the COVID-19 pandemic because it has hit women the most and therefore affected situation of gender inequality.

Chapter 1.1. Before accession to the EU

"A woman still has to fight for the right to work, access to higher professions is becoming more difficult for her, and she has less chance of advancing. If she's married, she's twice as worse" said Františka Plamínková, Czech women rights activist born in 1875 (Forbes, 2020).

Even though, the feminist movement dates back to 18th century, the movement for women's rights in Czech environment started in the second half of the 19th century. The catalyst was establishing the American Ladies Club in 1865 by Vojtěch Náprstek and Karolína Světlá. The main demands of the first wave of feminism were about including basic political, civil and human rights of women in the law. The main priorities were the voting right and an equal access to education. In terms of education for girls, Czech feminist author Eliška Krásnohorská founded the first girls' grammar school in the Central Europe in 1890. The Faculty of Arts of Charles University welcomed women as regular students for the first time in 1897. The study programs of medicine and pharmacy were opened for women in 1900. The first woman architect Petříková-Pavlíková graduated in 1920 and designed the House of Czech Women's Club in Prague (Sokačová, 2021). Higher education were becoming more available for women all over the world and it lead to the state when women wanted to challenge the male-nature of the institutions and study programs and Women's studies programme was opened in 1970 in San Diego State University. Its popularity grown and until the end of 1970s there were over 300 Women's Studies Programs and over 30,000 courses

available in the US (Crouch, 2012). In the Czech Republic, gender studies started informally when Gender studies Foundation started to organize their seminars. They offered a course to many state universities but they did not receive the academic status until 1998 when the program Gender Studies was established at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University. However, this program did not last for long and it was cancelled in 2003 and moved until the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University (Univerzita Karlova, 2020).

In 1893, the Czech educational and entertaining periodical 'Women Leaves' started to publish, sometimes referred to as feminist magazine (Wolchik and Meyer, 1985). In 1897, there was the first gathering of Czechoslovak women. The media and access to information has always played a crucial role as Interviewer 3 recognized: "We can see that the Western world has always had impact on us in all aspects. We have always wished to have the same as the US, for example. Everybody wanted to be like Americans. And it was the same with the topic of gender equality. Women who had access to information from the West, were inspired to fight for their rights." In 1903 the Czech Women's Club was established in Prague and played a role of the centre of culture and education for women. In 1905 the well-known Committee on Women's Suffrage was founded. Seven years later, Božena Viková- Kunětická was elected a member of the Assembly of the Kingdom of Bohemia, as the first woman in history (Sokačová, 2021). The voting right was given to women in 1920, when it was put in the Constitution. In comparison with other European states, Czechoslovakia was the 17th in giving the voting rights to women but many states which have done it before, allowed only limited voting rights such as the United Kingdom in 1918. Moreover, there were many states who followed this trend very late-for example Greece in 1952 or Switzerland in 1971 (Kubrová Adamusová, 2020). However, we can not forget about the fact that Czechoslovakia was under the communistic government and then socialistic one. Gender topic became a tool for communist propaganda, the regime achieved high level of women employment and generous social security and many childcare facilities (European Parliament, 2015). Many researchers (for example David Stark, 1992) believe that the transformation to capitalism affected women more negatively than men because of several reasons: needs of the capitalistic production or not enough of social movements defending human rights. On the other hand, there are

several studies showing that women were not that losers that many predicted. For example, Researchers van der Lippe and Fodor (1998) claim that during the first five years of transformation women did not suffer economically more than men. Moreover, they point out on the fact that women before 1988 were employed mainly in services and therefore stayed employed even when services became more valuable. Moreover, they opposed the researchers who predicted women to become fulltime housewives in the transformation, which did not happen. On the other hand, van der Lippe and Fodor also recognized the reality that men adapted better in the emerging markets.

As already said, the global women's movement started earlier than in Czech Republic, mainly in the USA but also in Europe: the biggest boom came after the French revolution (Sokačová, 2021). However, the attempts to deal with this problematic globally and cooperate together came in the second half of the 20th century. Moreover, it is fair to point out that the era of establishing international organizations came just after the World War II, for example the United Nations were founded in 1945. Moreover, Articles 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that all human beings are born equal and have equal rights were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. The UN also organized The First World Conference on Women which took place in 1975 in Mexico City, where the Czech presence was clear as one of the four vice-chairs was delegate from Czechoslovakia-Jaroslav Havelka. Czechoslovakia participated also at all the other conferences: Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985. Moreover, Czechoslovakia signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 17 July 1980 and ratified it on 16 February 1982. After dissolution of Czechoslovakia which took place on 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic as a succession state became a member of the UN and adopted all the commitments to human rights protection (United Nations, 2021a). Czech Republic also participated at the 4th UN's World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 where Beijing Declaration was adopted to empower and advance women all around the world (European Parliament, 2020). This conference indicated 12 areas where action was necessary to ensure better gender equality. It also flagged concrete actions for countries to take in order to achieve greater equality between women and men. One of strategic measure was focused on regional, national and international statistical services and relevant government offices in cooperation with research and documentation

organisations because right statistics are necessary for data-based analysis and proper policy making (Český Statistický Úřad, 2021).

Chapter 1.2. After accession to the EU

The aim to be part of the European Union was raised already in 1989 when the former Prime Minister Marián Čalfa sent a letter to the former President of the EC Commission Jacques Delors. But the accession process was stopped during the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. In 1993 the EU decided to start the EU enlargement process (Mzv, 2017). Czech Republic applied to enter the European Union in January 1996 in Rome. Accession negotiations started in 1998 and finally, on the 1st of May 2004 Czech Republic joined the EU (Euroskop, 2021).

Czech Republic had to meet the *acquis* conditions to be able to become an EU member state but as many researchers state even though the gender equality is included in the Copenhagen criteria, it does not mean that they are fully implemented. For example, study of Barbara Havelkova (2006) showed that two years after the accession of Czech Republic to the EU, the rules were not really followed. One of the main problems that she identified was lack of continuous policy evaluation. Moreover, even though Havelkova also agrees that EU is a strong actor in promoting the gender equality, her study conducted in 2010 concluded that the legal notion of gender equality in Czech Republic was impacted by the socialist past. On the other hand, Sedelmeier Ulrich (2008) examined eight post-communist countries and their processes of accession to the EU and found out that the new members outperformed the old ones in the first four years of being EU members. Another researcher Potucek (2004) studied progress of social policies in the Czech Republic and pointed out on the lack change of social policies during the EU accession process. He believed that the main problem is in the disparity between the Copenhagen criteria and Lisbon Strategy which was accepted in 2002 as policy guideline by the EU. He sees the biggest improvement in the institution building. Potucek also compares Czech Republic with other Visegrad countries by stating that Czech Republic's social policies have been resistant to change and its development had a tight bond with the corporatist welfare state. Potucek believes that Czech Republic did not accepted the neo-liberal policy concept by International Monetary Fund and World Bank unlike the other Visegrad countries. Another aspect of gender inequality is gender pay gap. Group of three researchers (Křížková, Penner and

Petersen, 2009) used firm-level data from the years 1998, 2002 and 2004 and examined the effect of introduction of gender law by the accession to the EU on the gender wage gap. They concluded that there was no significant difference in these three periods; in all years female workers earned approximately 10 percent less than their male co-workers. They also mentioned the socialistic past of the country by stating that the lowest wage gaps were in the establishments or groups of employees with strong socialistic ties. They also concluded by speculating the probable reasons limiting the impact of the gender law; motherhood, domestic work and lack of legitimacy of legal system. I will focus on different aspects of gender inequalities in the second Chapter.

Furthermore, accession to the EU affected also social movement and women's groups in the Czech Republic. As Ondřej Císař and Kateřina Vráblíková concluded their study in 2010, Europeanization does not influence only top-down processes, but also non-state actors. The most significant factors were opening the political opportunity for women's group, new opportunities in terms of international cooperation and access to resources.

All of my interviewers agree that the accession to the EU improved the situation of women in Czech Republic mainly in terms of the gender equality law but also in terms of awareness of this problematic. Another benefit they see in opportunities of international cooperation in fighting gender inequality and also about the EU financial support given to non-profit organizations focusing on gender issues. Moreover, the impression I got from the interviews is that an important role have been playing also international organizations and companies. They bring their values to the countries of operation such as Czech Republic. However, I will focus on this topic more in the Chapter 4. Additionally, my interviewers also strongly believe that it is not only about the legal framework but also about the society. As one of my Interviewers said: "I feel that awareness about diversity and its results for businesses raised in 2011 in the Czech Republic. Before that was feminism something like a swear word for the mainstream society. Even nowadays, people trying to improve position of women in Czech Republic face taunts quite often."

Chapter 1.3. Situation during the COVID-19 pandemic

We all know that the whole world has gone through difficult times in 2020 and 2021 because of the health crisis. Economy was hit in all countries of the world and therefore labour markets too. Employment relations have changed for millions of people and many data show that women have been affected significantly more than men. This became clear immediately after the lockdowns came and schools were closed. Women were the ones that stayed home with their children. Even before pandemic, women did 2.5 times more domestic work than men (Barr, 2021). The United Nations estimated that even before pandemic women did about three quarters of the 16 billion hours of unpaid domestic work that was done every day all around the world. According to global study done by Boston Consulting Group, European employed women spent 27 hours weekly more by taking care of children and household in average ; twice as much as before the pandemic (Cápová, 2021). Moreover, this study also revealed that very low percentage of female top managers felt support during the crisis, in France 29%. For the BBC, UN Women Deputy Executive Director Anita Bhatia, revealed the biggest threat that she is afraid of: "everything we worked for, that has taken 25 years, could be lost in a year," (Lungumbu and Butterly, 2020). Moreover, research done by M. Reichelt, K. Makovi and A. Sargsyan (2020) shows that not only women's employment was affected by the health crisis in 2020 but also the gender-role attitudes. This study showed that men tended to be more egalitarian when they became unemployed and their partners stayed employed. Women, on the other hand, took more traditional approach. On the other hand, the advantage of COVID-19 for scholars is that it provides them an opportunity to highlight the gender inequalities and to explain the structural problems and suggest lessons from this health crisis. Scholars Mooi-Reci and Risman (2021) examined the different impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on paid and unpaid work according to gender. They present empirical evidence from the United States, Canada, Israel, United Kingdom, Australia and India. They concluded their research by recognising importance of availability of child-care and in-person education in order to fight gender gap. One more implication drawn by Mooi-Reci and Risman is the need of fighting sexism both in social policy and in cultural logic.

The situation in the Czech Republic was not any different. Pandemic has widened the gender inequalities even more. The Czech statistical office reported that female unemployment increased to 4.4 % unlike for women was less than 3%. One of the reasons is that Czech women have been often employed only on part-time contract that is easy to break. Another reason is that the sectors restricted the most were the ones with female employees (Cápková, 2021). On the other hand, during the pandemic was also most important sectors where women make the majority of employees such as health care: in Czech Republic women make 78% of the total health care employees (European Parliament, 2021). Another group that has been significantly affected are single parents. In Czech Republic, 90 % of single parents have been women. In 2019, two thirds of single parent households were at the risk of poverty and during the pandemic, their situation worsened even more (Kučerová, 2020). Even though, there was some social financial support from government in reaction to pandemic, it was still very low and could not cover the living: the highest option was 17 euros per day (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, 2021). But also women that remained employed and worked from home were not in easier situation because they had to do the informal unpaid job such as taking care of children or elderly. As one of my Interviewer said: "Home office was totally different for me and my husband. My home office was understood by children and my man as not as important and I had to work until the night most of the days to finish the work that I was not able to do during the day." However, pandemic also brought different perception on work and perception of home office as relevant type of work. Home office was proven effective by many companies in Czech Republic, for example Deloitte (Bilinská and Bejšovec, 2021). Additionally, most of my interviewers also see opportunity created during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of flexibility of work. As one of them told me: "most employers did not want to hear anything about home offices and flexible working hours before the pandemic. But the pandemic forced them to implement them and we all proved that home office is a possible option."

Chapter 2: Gender inequality as a problematic

Gender inequality is a very broad term and includes many aspects. I will focus my thesis on the specificity of workplace but I will also include statistics from politics to have an overview of the Czech society and environment where laws and policies are created. Even though representation of women in the Czech government has been increasing over time, it depended a lot on each prime minister. However, the last term of office had the highest percentage of women politicians (25 %). Since 1992, the average representation of women in government has been 12.3 % which is very disappointing. Even looking at the highest proportion 25%; it is still only one quarter of the government (Padesát procent, 2018). In terms of municipal politics, the situation is little bit better for women. Even in periods when was very low representation of women in government, there were more women in municipal offices. This proportion has been increasing and the last period since 2018 equals to 28 % of women (Padesát procent, 2019b). On the other hand, it is interesting to look at data about representation in European Parliament. The proportion of women elected to represent in European Parliament is actually higher than their ratio in candidates. That shows their capabilities and expertise (Padesát procent, 2019a). In terms of presidential election, Czech Republic has never had a women president in its history. Even though there have been candidates in each election candidacy since 2013 when the direct election of president was implemented, none of them received enough votes (Padesát procent, 2020). Unfortunately, future outlooks are not very promising for women representation. There will be elections in autumn 2021 and in the time of me writing this thesis, few political parties presented their candidates. However, even the political party called Pirátská that has been promising improvement of women political representation and equal opportunities, presented only one female candidate. On the other hand, the positive aspect of this affair was quite strong criticism by society and therefore more pressure on the political parties to introduce the gender problematic into their programs (Břešťan, 2021).

Chapter 2.1. Gender pay gap

As was already mentioned, pay gap is one of the main indicators that is used to express the situation qualitatively (Rovná odměna, 2021). As Křížková, Penner and Petersen (2009) agree within-job wage inequality plays significant role in the Czech labour

market. Moreover, researches show that only approximately 50 percent of wage inequality is due to employment in different sectors (Křížková, Pospíšilová, Marková Volejníčková and Maříková, 2020). This is expressed by the so called adjusted gender pay gap. Recent studies done by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs show the same value as As Křížková, Penner and Petersen in 2009: ten percent. They also show the difference between public and private sectors: in public it is 5 percent and 10 percent in private one. In comparison to other EU countries, Czech adjusted gender pay gap is twice as high. Moreover, the highest gender pay gaps is in positions where is less females; for example gender pay gap in management positions is 36 percent. There are women represented only by 18 % because they face the glass-ceiling phenomenon. It is for sure not the problem of low female unemployment, in 2018 Czech Republic had the ninth highest women's employment in the EU (Eurostat, 2020). I also talked with my interviewers about the relatively high employment of women and many interviewers answered that this high employment has started quite early in history too. However, they believe it was not caused really by emancipation but rather economic reasons to be able to survive. The phenomenon of high women's employment is also mentioned in the study by Formánková, Plasová and Vyhlídal (2011) when they observed in in all post-communist states in comparison to other EU member states.

Historically, the gender pay gap in Czech Republic used to be even higher; in 1962 it was 36 percent. And even though it decreased in the 20th century, it stagnates since 2002 (Rovná odměna, 2021). The issue of gender pay gap is not affecting women only, but also their families and as was already mentioned, 90 percent of single parents in Czech Republic are women. Moreover, the gender pay gap differs for different age groups. It is highest in the age of 40-44, when women are most affected by the childcare and also under 24 years when employers expect women to have children in the future. Moreover, the gender pay gap also has a significant impact on the poverty in retirement. Eurostat compares the pension gender gap and in Czech Republic was the fourth lowest in 2019. On the other hand, we also have to look at the amount that pensioners receive and if we look at the risk of getting into poverty, EU average was 17 % for women and 13.1% for men, in total 15.1%. In Czech Republic, the risk was above the EU average: it was 17.1% (Eurostat, 2021). Even though, the gender pay gap improved in the 20th century mostly because of education of women, the largest gender pay gap is among

people with a university degree (26%) and the lowest among people with basic education (15%) Female work is being undervalued, there are so-called feminized fields with more than 80 % of female employees, such as health care and education (Rovná odměna, 2021). Also, majority of my interviewers mentioned continuous horizontal labour market segregation in their answers about the causes of gender inequalities. Jitka Hausenblasova from the Czech non-governmental organization Gender studies researches this phenomenon and in 2012 believed that there was no political debate about this topic in Czech republic in contrast to few other European countries where practices to lose the traditional division of fields were put in place already since 1970s. She also points out that it is important to target these practises not only to women to become part of the male-fields but also to encourage men to join the field of healthcare or education. Moreover, all of my interviewers expressed their opinions of the men-oriented view of success; mostly profit and result-driven. But women have different values and characteristics which should be valued the same rate as the males' ones. This should also be included in education of children: as all the interviewers agreed, girls and young women are taught not to be too ambitious, be modest and they lack self-confidence. That is also linked to the level of the wage they ask for when being recruited. All interviewers experienced men of the same qualities as women ask for much higher wages, sometimes even twice as high. Moreover, women need to be confident enough to try to fight against stereotypes and the labour market segregation. If women are interested for example in technology, they should be encouraged to enter this world where also the wages are higher. And not only women would benefit from this desegregation as I will explain more in the chapter 2.3.

In comparison to other states, the highest gender wage gaps can be found in labour markets with higher employment of women than men, such as already mentioned education or healthcare. Second factor increasing the national gender wage gap is female employment as part-time workers.

Chapter 2.2. Main causes of gender inequalities in the workplace

According to the *IKEA Gender Equality Study*, only 45 % of Czechs believe that the current society is built on the gender equality principles. Moreover, the opinions differ in each gender group; 52% of men share this opinion but only 38 % of women do so (IKEA, 2021). As was already mentioned in the Chapter 1, one of the main reasons

affecting women's work opportunities are domestic work. *IKEA Gender Equality Study* revealed that Czech women, in average, spend one hour daily more on domestic work than men. My interviewers agree with Roman Bojko, IKEA Diversity and Inclusion Manager for Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia; this disparity has been happening because of gender stereotypes; for example ironing has been seen as a women work by 85 % respondents. Moreover, 32 % of respondents are aware of the fact that they are affected by the gender stereotypes. However, Roman Bojko and the whole IKEA team believe that these gender stereotypes are created mostly at home and that can be affected by the right upbringing and education. The *IKEA Gender Equality Study* did not focus on situation at home only but also at workplace. 61 % of female respondents believe that they are not treated equally as their men colleagues at their workplace. The motto of *IKEA Gender Equality Study* is that fairer home is a happier home and that equality has to be created first at home and only after that can transferred into the society and workplace (IKEA, 2021). Moreover, most of my interviewers believe that gender stereotypes are still present in the society. For example, people still tend to look at women who try to have children and also career as a bad mothers. It is interesting because as was already explained, historically high proportion of women have been employed but this stereotypes still persist. Moreover, project 22 % K ROVNOSTI interviewed 178 respondents and found out that majority of them (especially within the range of age 50 +) still has the traditional view of the division of roles of men and women based. During these interviews researchers faced insufficient education of respondents in the topic of equal pay and gender equality and therefore denial of existence of phenomenon of gender inequalities. This was true also for employees in the leadership and managerial positions (Projekt 22 % K ROVNOSTI Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí, 2020).

Second barrier that women face very often is childcare and maternity leave. The length of maternity leave differs across the EU countries; the lowest is in Portugal (10 weeks) and the longest in Belgium (58 weeks). In Czech Republic, there are 28 weeks of maternity leave possible. Moreover, the length is not the only difference, but also the level of payment varies: from 70 % (case of the Czech Republic) up to 100 % (European Parliament, 2019). And in terms of gender, some countries offer paternity leave for fathers after the child is born. Czech Republic offers 1 week of paternity leave

which is paid by 70 % (European Parliament, 2019). All my interviews commented on this statistics by saying that it is logical that mother stays at home because fathers mostly earn more; as I showed on the gender pay gap. Maternity leave disables women in their career growth and when they come back to work they are often valued less than before the maternity leave. Moreover, as two of my interviews pointed out, the options of preschool facilities in Czech Republic are very limited; not only in terms of availability but also financially. European Parliament states that in Czech republic is one of the lowest rate of use of childcare services for children under 2 years old (only 2 % of parents use them), mainly due to the lack of such affordable facilities (European Parliament, 2015). Moreover, childcare obviously does not stop after returning to work. According to the *IKEA Gender Equality Study*, 37 % of Czech women do not feel enough support from their employers in terms of flexibility to be able to take care of their children (IKEA, 2021). However, it is not only fault of employers, but also family policies implemented by the Czech government. For example, researchers Sirovátka and Válková (2017) concluded their study by contrasting situation of child care policies in Norway and in Czech Republic. They believe that in Czech Republic, attitudes of policies promoting gender equality at work and child care led to refamilization policies. Moreover, Formánková, Plasová and Vyhliďal (2011) also understand that Czech family policies insist households to take care of their members and don't offer any alternatives of child care.

Furthermore, women themselves can not be omitted; as was already mentioned, girls in the Czech Republic are often raised differently than boys. This can have negative impacts on their self-confidence in their adulthood. Project 22 % K ROVNOSTI also identified role of individuals as crucial in determining the gender inequalities in the workplace. It points out on the importance of support from the side of partners and families. Moreover, there are ways that organisations can help their female employees; for example mentoring and also informational and motivational meetings focused on gender equality. Another possible useful training should be focused on negotiation techniques in order to teach women how to negotiate properly about their salaries (Projekt 22 % K ROVNOSTI Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí, 2020).

As already mentioned, the organizational features play a big role in creating a friendly environment where women feel welcomed, valued and supported. Ellemers (2014) studied the gender differences in career development and identified mechanisms such as implicit bias, the glass cliff effects, Queen Bee effects and work-family approaches. She stressed out the importance for companies of knowing these mechanisms, their implications and remedies.

Chapter 2.3. Benefits of gender equality

The importance of diversity has been understood even by leading management consulting company McKinsey & Company. The McKinsey series about diversity and inclusion started in 2015 and has already three reports; the latest in 2020 (Dixon-Fyle, Dolan, Hunt and Prince, 2020). Even though this series does not focus on gender diversity only, gender diversity is a big part. The first report carries title *Why diversity matters* bring the clear fact that the most diverse companies are the most successful ones. It also explains that diversity does not cause more profit directly but the correlation means that the companies that promote diversity are more likely to be more open to innovation and therefore more profitable (Hunt, Layton and Prince, 2015). The second McKinsey report *Delivering through diversity* acknowledges the rising awareness of companies about importance of diversity and inclusion. It focuses more on guiding these companies through the process of inclusion to achieve the best results (Hunt, Yee, Prince and Dixon-Fyle, 2018). The latest report *Diversity wins* incorporated so-called “social listening” by online employees’ reviews and revealed that even though companies are diverse, they should improve inclusion (Dixon-Fyle, Dolan, Hunt and Prince, 2020)

Looking again at the case of IKEA, its CEO and CSO Mounia EL Hilali believes that diversity in the team is crucial for good business results (Řezaninová, 2021b). Moreover, all my interviewers see a big potential in gender diversity for the companies, people and even the whole society. They all have experience with better business results when diversity and inclusion practises are implemented into the organizational culture. However, some of them also agree with the latest McKinsey report that promoting diversity is not the final step to take by the CEOs but they also have to achieve inclusion. As one of my interviewers said: "CEOs must not only promote gender

diversity by saying but also by doing and taking actions even at the top level. If the mean diversity seriously, they have to start at the top." As one of my interviewers working in IT sector explained, when one member of minority joins the team, it catalyses a bigger action and encourages everyone to join. The same happens with women, there always have to be a pioneer at the start. And then it must be followed by medialization and promotion of these successes. This is why also rankings of the most successful women are useful, for example Forbes List of Most Powerful Women. There are these lists in majority of countries, in Czech Republic too. As one of the ranked women this year, Renata Mrazova, said, these lists are great motivation for ambitious women to not give up. However, she also criticizes them because firstly, not all of the women in the list are inspirational, and secondly, the list is created based only on the financial budget these women have access to (Drtinova, 2021).

I have already mentioned that there is very low proportion of women in the leadership positions in Czech Republic. If we have a look at numbers: in 2019 there were 16.2% women of members of boards in largest quoted companies, in comparison to the EU average of 26.6%. The share of women as members of boards of central bank was zero percent, the EU average was 22.1% (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021b). There is another advantage of women in leadership positions; they are great leaders in time of crisis. As one of my interviewers explained, to me, from her experience, it is often woman who gets in charge of big companies when a problem or crisis raises. She shared her personal opinion; she thinks it is not to harm men in case of catastrophe or bankruptcy. However, as was already explained, women have different characteristics and behaviours than men and they are generally more used to changes because of their biological life cycle. Therefore women very often succeed in solving the problems and helping the companies to stand up again. This phenomenon of likelihood of women rising to leadership positions being higher in times of crisis is called glass cliff effect (Bruckmüller and Branscombe, 2010). However, the conclusion of this research was interesting because resulted in conclusion that male leadership stereotypes are more important in creating the glass cliff effect than female's.

Moreover, one of my interviewers shared her HR experience about loyalty of employees. She believes that women are more loyal and more engaged employees than

men and therefore employers should focus and invest in women employees. This idea is supported by many researchers, for example Narayan (2018) also adds that average attrition level of women is lower than for men. This is not a matter of the latest years only, also researcher Kendra Hogue examined the same phenomenon in 1997. All these facts suggest to invest more in the relationships with female employees and to create a friendly and diverse working environment. Furthermore, looking at the opposite side of the relationship; women customers also tend to be more loyal than men ones (Melnyk, van Osselaer and Bijmolt, 2009). As one of my interviewers pointed out, women have a strong purchasing power; on average 89 % of women worldwide reported controlling shopping, in contrast to only 42 % of men (Catalyst, 2020). On the other hand, worldwide there still remains the spending power gender gap. In Europe this gap is projected to increase by 62 % in the next 10 years (Tong, 2019). But as surveys show, women often decide about the household spending of big amounts and therefore advertising and product designs should target them more than men. For example, according to Yankelovich Monitor & Greenfield Online, 91 % of house purchases, 92% of vacation purchases and 65 % of new cars are done by women (Girl Power Marketing, 2020). In conclusion, companies only benefit from gender diversity even in the leadership positions.

In terms of benefits of gender equality for society, the benefits for companies are one part, the female employees another one. However, there is also a direct link between gender equality and life satisfaction (Audette, Lam, O'Connor and Radcliff, 2018). Furthermore, Audette, Lam, O'Connor and Radcliff (2018) found out that from gender equality, the whole society benefits, not only women. Moreover, as was already mentioned, gender equality is part of the Sustainable Development Agenda and is a necessity for peaceful and prosperous world (United Nations, 2021b). On the second page of the World Bank's book *Getting to equal : Promoting Gender Equality through Human Development* is a diagram explaining the relationship between markets, formal and informal institutions, households and gender equality as a machine and policies are illustrated as an oil that is needed for these interactions to go smoothly. In other words, policies and legislation are needed to start the debate and fuel its continuation.

Chapter 3: Legislation

As Snyder (1993) stated: “law matters: it has effects on political, economic and social life outside the law – that is, apart from simply the elaboration of legal doctrine”. This is true also in terms of gender equality. The already mentioned Audette et al. (2018) believe that gender equality policies have a positive impact on quality of life of citizens. Moreover, gender equality is a human right, very well elaborated in international law (Fredman, S. and Goldblatt, B., 2015). Furthermore, gender equality is an indisputable part of human development and vice versa, human development is a cornerstone of gender equality (World Bank, 2011).

Chapter 3.1. Existing law and public policies

As many researchers focusing on gender inequality as a problematic agree, legislation is an indisputable part of achieving success. In this thesis, topic is divided into two subchapters to demonstrate the impact being part of international arena on adapting gender equality policies by the Czech Republic.

Chapter 3.1.1. State level

First subchapter is dedicated to the legislation and policies adapted on the state level. There have been adopted several legislative acts and articles focusing on gender equality in the Czech Republic. Starting with the Czech constitution, concept of equality is defined in Article 3 of the Czech Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. In 2009, followed the Anti-Discrimination Act which was adopted very late due to political hesitation but has been the cornerstone of gender legislation which follows the EU law definitions. In terms of legislation about equality in the labour market, there has been the Labour Code and Employment Code. In case of civil procedure, the burden of proof has been shifted onto the employer, not the victim, which is the right procedure (European Parliament, 2015). However, all these law pieces have not been focused especially on gender equality but rather on equality as such. Since 1993, Czech government has adopted annual action plan for gender equality (Human Rights and Minority Protection Department, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2016). However, these were never really followed. The real progress happened in 2014 when Czech government adopted Strategy for equality of women and men in the Czech Republic for 2014-2020. This strategy contained strategy concepts, strategic areas and implementation methods. (Department of Human Rights and Minorities, 2014).

However, majority of these measures were soft and did not bring much better results (Homfray, 2021). As my interviewer remarks, this Strategy was very much inspired by the European Union one. And even though the European Union plays significant role in promoting gender policies in member states, each member state needs to modify and adapt these policies for the needs of each country, society and law system. The European Committee of Social Rights also observed that the laws are implemented, but to achieve some progress it is needed to accompany them with policies and concrete measures (Gangemi and Costantino, 2021). As also few of my interviewers pointed out, one of the main problems of gender policies in the Czech Republic is that most of them have been only on voluntary basis. However, the next Government Strategy for equality of women and men in Czech Republic for 2021-2030 is more promising because it focuses on wide range of problems in the society and it also offers many actual practical solutions. There are more than 400 concrete measures approached across eight main societal areas in the strategy: work and care, decision making, safety, health, knowledge, society, external relations and institution (MPO, 2021).

The in-depth analysis for the FEMM Committee of European Parliament in 2015 acknowledge the satisfactory implementation of EU gender policy implementation. However, it points out on still very high gender pay gap and other inequalities in the labour market. The social protection for small children is also mentioned there with comment of not helping the situation of women as they are the ones taking maternity leave in most cases (European Parliament, 2015). Many scholars (Formánková, Plasová and Vyhlidal, 2011; Sirovátka and Válková, 2017) agree with the findings of European Parliament about motherhood and family policies which I also mention in chapter 2.2. The employment of women with children under 6 years old was 35.8 % in 2013, in comparison to the EU average of 59.7% (Visegrad Group, 2016). In 2014, there has been adopted Act on providing childcare in children groups so the situation should improve in the future (European Parliament, 2015). However, as my interviewers all agree, the state does not support women to return to work. For example, in terms of taxes, in many cases, it is economically more convenient for household when husband applies for spouse tax deduction than wife returning to the labour market and earning money. Another aspect is part-time work which is not used very often in Czech Republic despite Czech legislation allowing flexible working hours. Only 8.8 % of

Czech women work part-time, compared to the EU average of 31.6%. It is mainly because of employers who do not like to shorten the working hours. However, part-time contracts are not the best solution because they offer no career development, less opportunities, fewer employee benefits (Andělová, 2014). Moreover, as the legislation for part-time workers exists now, it does not provide any labour security for them. This was clear during the COVID 19 pandemic, when the first workers who lost their jobs were part-time workers (OECD, 2020). Moreover, in terms of gender pay gap, there is an average earning information system but it is not fully effective as it works on voluntary basis. Similar systems are used in other countries such as Germany or Norway but it is mandatory there to provide all information to be able to see the inequalities in the remuneration (Křížková, Pospíšilová, Marková Volejníčková and Maříková, 2020).

There is often a gap between articulating, interpretation and implementation of law and it is also the case of Czech Republic (Fredman, S. and Goldblatt, B., 2015). Moreover, there is also a gap between diversity and inclusion. Even though awareness about diversity has been raising, concept of inclusion has been still neither very well understood nor implemented (Egerová and Jiřincová, 2014). Moreover, one of the weaknesses of Labour Code that research Kristina Koldinská (2020) observed is the absence of mentioning wage transparency.

Chapter 3.1.2. International level

As was already mentioned, joining the European Union played a significant role in terms of promoting gender equality in Czech Republic. And even though not all the texts produced by the EU are not binding to the member states, they contribute to change in principles and atmosphere about this problematic. Furthermore, the EU enlargement strategy stands on the *acquis* which also include criteria about gender equality. The European community is an international promoter of diversity of all kinds, mainly since 1975. One of the main binding documents is Amsterdam Treaty; equal treatment and opportunities are mentioned mainly in articles 2,3,13,137 and 141. During the accession process, the Czech Constitution was evaluated as sufficient in terms of gender equality. However, European Parliament also mentioned the gender wage gap; women earning three quarters of men salaries and provided main cause for

this inequality being women working in non-professional jobs. Moreover, European Parliament recognized the fact that under the previous regime, the women employment was forced. But pointed out on the rising opportunities for women and also mentioned that one third of new entrepreneurs were women in that time (European Parliament, 1998). The European Union has been applying policy strategy called Gender Mainstreaming to achieve gender equality across all fields. The evaluation of EU itself in 2019 was that this strategy worked well in the EU institutions but not so much in member states (Shreeves, 2019). Moreover, EU Economic Growth Policy includes an objective of increasing women participation in labour markets. Furthermore, the so-called Barcelona targets cover also the aim to increase childcare coverage. Moreover, EU also focuses on improving the work-life balance, both men and women (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). However, many scholars believe that gender policies of the European Union have been based mainly on the market idea and conceptualized economy and gender equality together. Elomäki (2015) mentions the macroeconomic benefits of gender equality that the EU and its policies promote. This approach of EU trying to achieve gender equality by promoting economic advantages faces criticism from feminists. And this policies also tend to be incorporated by the member states such as the Czech Republic; the most medialized measurement is gender pay gap and most of the policies are focused on the economic situation of women (Rovna odmena, 2021). Furthermore, as was already mentioned, debate about gender equality can not be only a topic to talk about but it needs action. And if we look at the EU institutions, the decision-making bodies remain mainly in roles of men (MacRae, 2012). Therefore it does not lead by example and as one of my interviewers pointed out, it is often used by decision-makers in Czech Republic; in political or workplace matters. Additionally, it always depends on the domestic actors how the EU policies are implemented in each member state. On the other hand, as for example Anderson (2006) argues, European Union has tools to convince these domestic actors to comply with the ideology of the policies. As Shreeves concluded in 2019 from the evaluation of effectiveness of EU gender policies, European Parliament is aware of weakness of this topic in the agenda and will try to strengthen the awareness of member states about importance of gender policies. In terms of Czech republic as part of the European Union, will held the EU Council presidency in second half of 2022 and include gender

equality as one of priorities (Úřad vlády České republiky: Sekce pro evropské záležitosti, 2021).

Another important international player is the United Nations, which measures gender inequality by its own index GII. In 2019, Czech Republic ranked as 36th out of 189 countries and was defined as country with very high human development (UNDP, 2020). But that was not because of gender equality in the workplace but mostly because of high rate of women with high education, low maternal mortality ratio. In Czech Republic, there are more women with university degree than men. But that it is also the group affected the most by the gender pay gap (Rovna odměna, 2021). Moreover, on behalf of the UN, Fredman, S. and Goldblatt, B. (2015) identified that that the right to equality has been defined in open-textured terms in legislation worldwide. UN held in March and July 2021, The Generation Equality Forum in Mexico City and Paris. Paris Forum concluded with the 5-year action plan to be achieved until 2026. This action-plan is very bold and brave, mainly due to the negative unequal effects of the pandemic. This Forum brought together not only governments, but also civil societies and investors. All actors believe in faster progress in gender equality than ever before (France Diplomacy, 2021).

Moreover, Czech Republic is a member of OECD since 1995. Even though OECD was primarily founded to serve as advisor and stimulator of world trade and economy, it has widened its expertise to policy advice, education and other societal issues. Current OECD aims to shape the world to be developed not only economically but also in terms of equality and well-being. Therefore also promote gender equality in the international arena. In 2016, the OECD Secretary General, Angel Gurría acknowledged a remarkable progress in Czech Republic the first twenty years of cooperating with OECD. However, he also remarked the need of improving gender equality in Czech Republic. He mentioned advices to government to expand childcare facilities and reduce disincentives to return to work (Gurría, 2016). The already mentioned 2019 report done by the International Labour Organization and OECD explains the goal for 2025 of G20; reducing the gender gap in labour participation by 25 %. Moreover, it points out on the issue of gender pay gap and return of women on the labour market after maternity leave (International Labour Organization, 2019).

Chapter 3.2. Comparison to other EU states

The already mentioned Gender Mainstreaming has been endorsed by the European Union to accelerate progress in gender equality in its member states. On the peak of statistics about gender equality, are often Nordic countries like Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Sweden being the most inspirational one. Moreover, France is also a successful country in terms of achieving great gender equality. In terms of gender equality at the workplace, Sweden and Denmark rank as first two again, followed by Netherlands. On the other end of the ranking are countries of Visegrad Group, Romania and Greece. In the index detail of work, Italy ranks as the worst in the EU; Czech Republic as the fourth worst (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021a). Starting with the successful countries, Nordic countries cooperate together to achieve gender equality. Each three-year long programme focus on different themes, the 2015-2018 on public sphere, welfare and innovation (Nordic Council of Ministers 2015, 2015). The achievements of Nordic region are acknowledged also by international bodies, such as OECD which also draws connections between these achievements and economic benefits for the society. Furthermore, OECD recognizes the gender equality being priority of the Nordic social policy model (OECD, 2018). I will mention other steps and programs that helped the Nordic region to achieve the gender equality in the Chapter 4.1. Furthermore, according to the World Bank's report called Women, Business and the Law, there are six countries that scored 100 % in terms of gender equality in Europe: Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, Latvia, France and Belgium (Picheta and Mirchandani, 2019). On the opposite, Italy was warned by the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) to start to comply with the right to equal opportunities and right to equal pay. ECSR observed that Italy lacks appropriate measures to promote gender equality in the labour market and also measures to balance personal and professional life such as financial support for childcare. Moreover, recently gender issues have been often addressed by Italian courts, where the biggest problem is that burden of proof lays on the victim. On the other hand, measures taken by the Italian government during the COVID-19 pandemic show that government is aware of gender inequalities and wants to fight it (Gangemi and Costantino, 2021).

Moving on to comparison to other states of Visegrad Group; Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. All these countries are often seen by the Western Europe as more traditional and conservative societies, also in the topic of accepting gender equality (Forest, 2020). In most recent years, Poland and Hungary have proven their negative approach to civil societies, independent justice and rule of law (Valkova and Karamitsios, 2020). Even though all the countries implemented the principle of equal pay, studies and statistics show that the discrepancies between women and men are significant in the V4 countries. It varies from 8.5% in Poland to 18.4% Slovakia (Eurostat, 2021b). In comparison using gender wage gap, Czech Republic is the most unequal of these four countries with wage gap 18.9 %. Moreover, the situation with higher gender pay gap for women with high level of education is similar across all the V4 countries (Visegrad Group, 2016). In terms of gender legislation, Anderson (2006) compares the implementation of gender policies in Czech Republic and in Poland during the EU accession process and clearly states that Czech Republic was faster and more effective in adoption of these policies. In Hungary, researcher Beata Nacsá (2015) points out on the curiosity that equal pay for equal work was clearly guaranteed in previous constitutions, but the New Fundamental Law does not include it. Moreover, the gender theory was used to justify the closing of the Central European University in Budapest which raised huge demonstrations. Additionally, in Poland, the Polish church has been fighting against the gender theory too. However, Polish church faces several scandals and slowly loses its influence on citizens. Even though, the current political representatives in V4 countries might not be in favour of promoting gender equality and other human rights, there is visible pressure from the civil societies which shows that the society as a whole is ready for such progress (Forest, 2020). Moreover, Czech Republic is analysed as the most pro-European and pro-reform state out of V4 countries, also in terms of gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021a).

Chapter 3.3. Political analysis

As was already mentioned, women in Czech Republic are underrepresented in politics. The current political system disadvantages women, for example by placing them on party candidate lists where they are not expected to be elected. Mainly the high-politics is in role of men in Czech Republic (European Parliament, 2015). In the current Czech

government, there are four female ministers: Alena Schillerová as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Marie Benešová as Minister of Justice, Jana Maláčová as Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and Klára Dostálová as Minister of Regional Development (Government of the Czech Republic, 2021). Even though there are female ministers, they are criticized by the public because they follow the wishes and opinions of either President Miloš Zeman or Prime Minister Andrej Babiš. Moreover, these four ministers do not support each other very much and do not encourage another women to join the political representation; this is known as the queen bee phenomenon. In the opposition political parties, there are two distinctive women: leader of the party TOP 09, Markéta Pekarová Adamová, and Vice-President of Pirátská strana, Olga Richterová. Pirátská strana has always promoted equality and diversity in its main programme, however after presenting the candidates for the next elections, this party was criticized a lot because it was dominated by men; only 25 % were women. Olga Richterová is the main promoter of the gender equality in this party and she was criticized the most. She said that achieving gender equality is a long process and that the politics now are organized mainly for men and therefore women do not want to sacrifice their family life. On the other side, there are also parties that have higher percentages of women in their membership base and also members of parliament. Great example to follow is Green Party Zelení which has won Award Political Party Open To Women many times in a row (Smiggels Kavková, 2015). Their Co-Chair Magdalena Davis also participate in conferences promoting gender equality. For example, on conference Equal Pay in 2021, she said: "all women at high positions have the duty to encourage women to achieve the same. They have to break down barriers that keep women from career development"(Řezaninová, 2021a). However, the situation can be summarized by the case of KDU-ČSL which has women as 51 % of members but only one female member of the parliament out of ten in total (Břešťan, R., 2021). Furthermore, there are women platforms within some political parties, for example parties KDU-ČSL or ČSSD have those. But as Veronika Šprincová, director of the non-governmental organisation Forum 50 %, explains:"sooner or later, Czech political parties have come to the conclusion they need some such formal or informal platform. However, with a few exceptions, these groups focus primarily on meetings or education of their members and do not interfere with the program or political priorities of their parties" (Homfray, 2019).

Moreover, as the pre-election surveys show, the most promising parties are not the ones with the most women, therefore we can expect that situation in political parties and government is expected to stay mostly in hands of males even after the fall 2021 elections. However, the situation does not have to continue like this at least on the presidential post. When we look at Slovakia, the last presidential elections won Zuzana Čaputová and following reactions of majority of Czechs were positive (Hofmanová, 2019). At this moment, there are two possible female candidates for president in the Czech Republic: Klára Long Slámová and Danuše Nerudová (Seznam Zprávy, 2021).

Another part of the machinery are governmental bodies. When the Anti-Discrimination Act entered into force, Czech Ombudsman was made the equality body. This Office of Public Defender of Rights works very well in according to the European Parliament. It publishes many reports and public opinions surveys. However, the court procedures are still very lengthy and it discourages victims to enforce their rights and therefore the case law is still quite sparse in the Czech Republic. In terms of gender equality policy, there are many dedicated governmental bodies and councils; The Governmental Council for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women cooperate closely with Department for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women (European Parliament, 2015). Moreover, there has been running a programme focused mainly on equal pay originally called 22 % k rovnosti, now called Rovná odměna, under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. As the name suggests, it started when the gender pay gap in the Czech Republic was 22 %. It provides many practical tools, workshops and also counselling for employers. This program also proves the importance of European Union because it runs thanks to the European Union funds (Rovná odměna, 2021).

However, it is not only about political representatives and governmental bodies. Crucial role also play non-governmental organisations and civil societies. Also World Bank (2011) recognises the important role that civil societies and non-profit organisations play in promoting the gender equality principles. In the Czech Republic, the most active ones are Business & Professional Women CR (BPWCR), Gender Studies and Forum 50%. BPWCR is part of international network of Business & Professional Women International. It organizes conference Equal Pay every year to raise awareness and discussion about equal gender pay. It also works on various projects, for example

Women in the Media or Anchors for the future. They are also partners of big media such as Nova televise to increase its impact. Moreover, it works on the membership base and it brings female experts to support each other because, as the BPWCR president Lenka Šťastná says; "when women work together, they can achieve incredible things"(BPWCR, 2021). The non-governmental organisation Gender studies provides mainly educational, informative and consultation services in the area of relationships between women and men and equal position in the society. On the website, there is a feminist and gender library and the organisations performs gender audits in companies, organisations and institutions (Gender Studies, 2018). The third organisation, Forum 50 % primarily focuses on promoting gender equality in politics and in decision-making posts. However, it also cooperates with other national or international organisations and provides analyses and reports (Forum 50 %, 2020). Another important actor in the machinery of non-profit organisations is an umbrella organisation The Czech Women's Lobby (CWL) who brings together 36 organisations defending women's rights in the Czech Republic. This organisation focuses mainly on creating pressure on the Czech government to sign international conventions defending rights of women such as Istanbul Convention. Furthermore, CWL has a strength in cooperation with national and also international bodies such as European Women's Lobby or UN Women (Czech Women's Lobby, 2021). As I showed, all of the important non-governmental organisations believe in the strength of international cooperation.

Furthermore, academic sector also plays an important role in achieving gender equality in the society. As was already said, there are more women with high degree education in Czech Republic than men. But that does not necessarily mean that there are more women in academic sector, science or education. As Keményová (2018) argues, the numbers of women in research have been increasing over time, but it still increases too slowly. For example, in 2018, there were only two female university rectors; one of them the already mentioned Danuše Nerudová, the candidate for president for next elections. Moreover, in 2015 25 % of associate professors and 15 % of professors at Czech universities were women. Furthermore, the situation in research has stagnated for decades. This does not affect negatively only women themselves, but also the research. Additionally, the proportion of women at the head of research and development institutions was in 2015 only 10.3 %. On the other hand, the effort to support women in

academia has been growing too. There are many awards dedicated only to women researchers (Keményová, 2018). Another scholars who dedicated their research to position of women in the field of research and science are Blanka Poczatková and Pavlína Křibíková (2017) who compared the gender inequalities in Czech Republic, the USA and Russia. Moreover, they explored the use of quotas in the fields of science. They also concluded their research by stating that there is still no public debate on the topic of positive regulations for improving gender equality in this field in the Czech Republic. In the sector of foreign policy, think-tank Association for International Affairs (AMO) have created a database of female experts with the aim to show that there are female experts even though they might not be that well known and to widen the community of experts on foreign policy (Databáze expertek, 2021).

And finally, I will analyse the gender equality in the media. Women make only 20 % of the decision-making position. According to the report of Forum 50 %, women make decisions only not too serious topics and in less serious media. It is very important how women are presented in the media and how it influences the majority of society as receivers. Moreover, the majority of guests in television debates is made of male experts. This is true also in the public televisions which should try to offer equal space to the different opinions (Forum 50 %, 2020). This issue is fight against by the AMO's initiative and its database; to show the female experts to the public and to provide them with opportunity to be heard and seen.

Chapter 4: Opportunities for future

Until now, I analysed historical and present times. However, it is also crucial to think about future where gender equality will play even more important role. Moreover, as I observed, society has been opening to new changes and has started to understand that gender equality is nothing horrifying but on the contrary. And it is not true for women only, but for men too. Since 2017, there has been an initiative called Genderman aiming to find out what men can and must do to stop the patriarchal stereotypes. Moreover, the non-governmental organisation behind this initiative, Otevřená společnost, organizes every year a competition acknowledging men who contributed to the equality between men and women in Czech society. The last competition won František Kopřiva, member of the Parliament for the Czech Pirate party (Pirátská strana). As the second ranked journalist Filip Titlbach who has been drawing attention to the issue of sexism in his social media post or articles in the media. And the third place won psychologist and therapist Jan Vojtko (Otevřená Společnost, 2021). This shows that all kinds of professions can contribute to the gender equality. Moreover, there have been written many guidebooks and toolkits by international organisations which have been also an inspiration for many leaders in the Czech Republic, as my interviews state. One of them has been the toolkit created by the World Economic Forum which focused not only gender equality but on the diversity and inclusion as a whole in companies (World Economic Forum, 2020). Moreover, the report of International Labour Organization and OECD gave recommendations for further actions for the G20 countries to improve gender equality. To give examples that are relevant the most for case of the Czech Republic, issues were detected in the women's burden of care work, stereotypes of housework and care work, gender segregation in the labour market and not enough evidence of gender pay gap in labour market (International Labour Organization, 2019). Another organisation providing toolkits is European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) who recommends applying SWOT analysis for gender budgeting. It starts with gathering data, followed by identifying existing gender inequalities and ends with consulting conclusions with target groups (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021c). Moreover, EIGE also brings guidebook for gender equality training of public administration employees to improve implementation of gender equality strategies and practises (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). In the following chapter, I will

present and analyse possible improvements to the Czech legislation and bring inspiration from other countries and companies.

Chapter 4.1. Legislation used in other countries

As was already indicated, the Nordic region is the leader in regards to the gender equality. Sweden describes itself as so-called feminist government committed to build society where everyone can fulfil their potential. As a separate policy area, gender equality became in 70s in Sweden and gender discrimination became illegal in 1980. Government keep gender equality in mind when making any decision. In 2015, the first Swedish Ambassador for Gender Equality was appointed. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming has been implemented throughout all government agencies. Swedish government notes three most important welfare reforms that helped achieving gender equality as it stands today. First happened in 1974, when the public childcare was developed. In the same year, Sweden was the first country introducing gender-neutral parental leave benefit (currently, each parent is eligible for 240 paid days). And lastly, the employment rate of women is fundamental part of gender equality policy. In 1979 the Swedish Gender Equality Act was introduced. Additionally, employers are required to conduct annual pay surveys to eliminate the gender pay gap. Moreover, Swedish government knows how important is to involve men in promoting healthier gender norms. The success of this effort can be seen in the increasing number of men's use of parental benefit days (Government offices of Sweden: Ministry of Employment, 2020).

The second Nordic leader is Denmark where the gender equality law came into force thanks to the European Union's Gender mainstreaming, mostly after the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999. Year later Danish government adopted Gender Equality Act and in 2001 Gender Mainstreaming Steering Committee was established. Denmark also work with four-year action plans and cooperate actively with Department of Gender Equality of the European Commission. Moreover, I found one of the reasons for gender equality worded interestingly: 'better utilisation of talents and resources'. I completely agree with this wording and I believe that it catches attention of also employers. Another successful reform was appointing Danish Institute for Human Rights as an independent gender equality body which works on the principle of United Nations. Moreover, to raise awareness about principles and practises of gender mainstreaming, specialised

website was created in 2013 with training tips and also easily accessible statistics on gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019).

Third successful country in terms of gender equality is France which has made the biggest progress during the last decade when for example, introduced paid parental leave. Furthermore, France was the first country in the world adopting compulsory 50 % quotas for gender parity provision and today applies quotas in business sector, public bodies, public administration and even in some civil society organizations (Lépinard, 2015). French president Emanuel Macron has been strongly committed to achieve gender equality. In 2019, French government established new objectives focused mainly on reducing gender pay gap. Examples of these obligations are compulsory publication of gender pay indicators and penalties for not meeting the gender equality (Le Roux and Eun Kaela Kim, 2019).

Moreover, in Portugal they also have only parental leave; 120 days paid at 100 % and 150 days at 80 % (European Parliament, 2019).

Chapter 4.2. Possible legislation proposals in Czech Republic

As was already explained, there have been efforts and initiatives in terms of new proposals of gender legislation in Czech Republic. There have been a debate between all the actors that I wrote about in the third chapter. The main idea is neutral remuneration: giving the same money for the same amount of work, no matter of gender. The criteria for evaluation of level of wage considered by the project 22 % k ROVNOSTI of the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, are work complexity, responsibility effort, working conditions, work performance and work results. Moving on to the proposals of legislative adjustments, one of proposed solutions to reduce pay inequalities is pay transparency, which is a principle already implemented in many countries that I commented in the previous chapter 4.1. As mentioned previously, pay transparency is not compulsory in Czech Republic and therefore not legally enforceable. However, it is part of gender equality legislations of the European Union and therefore Czech Republic will also have to implement it. However, as majority of my interviewers agreed, the public opinion about pay transparency nowadays is rather negative. However, my interviewers believe that it is mainly due lack of information, misinterpretation of the concept and suspicion. As says Lenka Simerska, the manager of

project 22 % K ROVNOSTI: "since the publication of the proposal, I have seen rather concerns and negative reactions, mostly because of ignorance of the issue. Much of the requirements of the directive can already be addressed by employers or trade unions; responsibilities will only take more concrete form, be better targeted and controlled" (Equal Pay Day, 2021). According to my interviewers, in many cases of gender pay gap, the employers is not even aware of this inequality. Therefore, introducing pay transparency would decrease the tendency of employers to create these gaps. Furthermore, it would fight against the previously mentioned education of women to be humble and therefore are less equipped for negotiation about salary. Moreover, pay transparency would also lead to determination of values of the work in the company across positions for comparability. However, measuring of gender pay gap is not as easy as it could sound; the main wage gaps are not included in the basic salary, rather within bonuses. Moreover, the already invented tools and systems from abroad are mainly suitable for big companies. But, the already mentioned project 22 % K ROVNOSTI, invented a tool for measuring the gender pay gap within also small or medium-size companies, called LOGIB, and organise presentation and special training for companies. The proposed pay transparency would include many steps to be followed by the companies. First would be including the wage already within the job offer and during the interview, the employer could not ask the potential employee about his/her previous salaries. Secondly, each individual would have the right to ask about the salaries of his/her colleagues. Thirdly, there would be mandatory reporting about the situation of wage gaps within each company. Fourth rule would be that 5% would be the maximum possible gender pay gap. And lastly, there would be compensation for victims of unequal pay. However, as was already written, there is also criticism from side of the companies because they often do not want any intervention from the government, as my interviewers say. Moreover, public is also sceptical because of the fear of return to more hierarchical system of positions. Second proposal linked to reducing gender wage gap is using gender as a criterion in public procurement (Projekt 22 % K ROVNOSTI Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí, 2021).

Another factor of decreasing the wage gap would be adjustment of wage of women during their maternity leave. These women are neglected in adjusting inflation and valorisation. Therefore when these women return to work, they earn unequal pay. These

adjustments would encourage women to return to the workplace. Because as my interviewers agree, the start of career are often the same regardless of gender. The biggest pay inequalities occur during the career. Another problem occurring in the current legislation is that the person having parental benefits, can earn money by another job to only a small limit to be still suitable for the security benefits. Moreover, another aspect that would help women to return to the job is keeping in touch with their colleagues and bosses. Moreover, employers should include these women into training courses even during their maternity leave (Projekt 22 % K ROVNOSTI Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí, 2021).

Another topic that is often brought up in the debate about improving gender equality are quotas. However, as my interviewers confirmed, also this practise has been criticised by the public. Critics say that it would help women which would not succeed otherwise and on the other hand, discredit successes of capable women who would succeed even without quotas.

As one of my interviewers says;" women often do not want to be promoted to high positions if they feel they do not fulfil the criteria by 100 %. You often don't know if the woman is competent or modest if you don't give her a chance. Quotas are not crutches for incapable women who can't take care of themselves. It is an opportunity to restore balance in the society". Moreover, there is a Czech law professor at the Harvard University specialising on topic of gender and discrimination, Barbara Havelkova, who says: "the law is not neutral, it is gender burdened. Quotas would make employers think and actively look for candidates who are overlooked for various reasons. The moment that quotas would be introduced, it would show how incredibly good women are. There would be also low-quality ones, of course. Just like there are men of low-quality"(Houdek and Kleníková, 2021). In terms of political parties, even the Director of the Department of Equality for Women and Men at the Government Office, Radan Šafařík, admitted, that the situation of underrepresentation of women is so critical, that it is legitimate to interfere in the freedom of political parties and include quotas there (Mošpanová, 2021).

Chapter 4.3. Practices for implementation of gender equality in the workplace

Benefits of gender diversity are indisputable and many companies have already understood this. However, it has been mainly international companies with headquarters abroad. Many international companies have even dedicated Inclusion & Diversity CEOs to make sure that their companies are diverse and welcoming to everyone. However, in many cases, these headquarters force their branches to implement gender equality programs and policy in the exactly same way as they were designed. But that might not be ideal for each and every branch (Bosničová, 2010). Furthermore, another problem in the Czech Republic are small or medium-size enterprises (SMEs) which often either do not understand the value of gender diversity or do not have enough budget to focus on this issue. Despite the fact numbers have been decreasing over time and the COVID-19 pandemic also reduced them, small and medium-size companies employ around half of total employees in the Czech Republic (Holý, 2021). SMEs often do not even have a HR department that is mainly responsible for this matter, and also often do not have a lot of written rules or code of conduct. In regards of gender equality, clearly defined and transparent rules ensure consistent and equal treatment of all. Conversely, without them, there is a risk of conscious or unconscious disadvantaging of individual employees. On the other hand, according to the non-governmental organisation Gender Studies, there are interesting gender equality programs and practices also in many SMEs. The main difference between SMEs and big companies is competence to be heard and seen; SMEs often do not advertise their successes as much as the big enterprises (Bosničová, 2010).

"Equal pay is the hardest step to take for companies, but it's foundational", says Véronique Goy Veenhuys, founder of EQUAL-SALARY, the certification of equal compensation for women and men (Řezaninová, 2021c). EQUAL-SALARY is a non-profit organisation founded in Switzerland that certifies companies with wage difference lower than 5 %. Moreover, after getting the certification, there are two monitoring reviews and the certification is valid only for three years. Among the certified companies from all around the world, we can find Philip Morris ČR as a single company located in the Czech Republic (EQUAL-SALARY, 2021). The Czech branch of Philip Morris was among the first branches of this brand worldwide (Philip Morris

ČR, 2018). Another initiative that companies can signed up to is the European Diversity Chart. It requires companies to follow four principles to improve gender equality in the workplace. The main promoter of this Chart in the Czech Republic is Byznys pro společnost, Czech platform for responsible business. Moreover, it shows good practises of its members. One of the examples is Vodafone, which have been applying internal and also external strategies since 2014. They try to fight the stereotype that technology is for men only and show to the public that they welcome women too. One of the interesting aspects of Vodafone's gender equality strategy is option for parents to return to the workplace after half a year of maternity leave working 4 days in week for the wage of 5 days. Vodafone team also organises Week of diversity- week of women every year. Next company with both internal and external practise is Accenture. They apply similar practises as Vodafone. Accenture also conducts surveys to explore the actual needs and wishes of parents. Vodafone have also organized days Bring Your Child to Work since 2017 (Byznys pro společnost, 2021).

Another international company with good gender equality practises has been IKEA; 54 % of employees are women and on the managerial positions, the balance is 50 /50. IKEA also asked in the Gender Equality Study its own employees and brought positive results: 96 % are satisfied with the gender equality situation at their workplace (IKEA, 2021).

The first and most important step is raising awareness about the topic of gender equality in the workplace; inside and also outside of the companies. Few examples of good practises within companies are mentoring, training and HR consulting. Training should be focused on the right to equal pay and also negotiation techniques for women (Projekt 22 % K ROVNOSTI Ministerstva práce a sociálních věcí, 2021). Furthermore, creating inclusive and welcoming working environment is key to attract and keep women as employees.

Another possible practises reducing gender bias are applicable in writing job descriptions. First practical tip would be using gender neutral titles and language (for example pronouns). Secondly, avoiding superlatives and reducing requirements would invite more women because they are often insecure and don't apply to a job that they don't fulfil the criteria by 100 %. And lastly, showing the friendliness of the workplace

and company values would also welcome more women (Glassdoor, 2021). Moreover, as Sharon Florentine (2016) points out, the gender-neutral job posting has many advantages for the companies; such as faster hiring and attracting more applicants.

Conclusion

This master thesis focuses on analysis of gender inequalities in the Czech Republic. It follows the Elomäki (2015) point that gender equality is not only about financial equality and incorporated many tools and aspects of this problematic. The research question raised was *To what extent have international bodies influenced gender equality in the workplace in the Czech Republic?* This thesis analysed the influence over time and over various sectors. The conclusion in terms of international companies is that the influence can be both positive and negative. It is true that international companies with headquarters outside the Czech Republic are more likely to include gender equality programs and policies within their national branches. On the other hand, the pressure from headquarter might be contra productive if there is no freedom in adapting the policies and programs to the environment of each branch.

Another significant international actor in promoting gender equality has been the European Union. European Union applies strategy called Gender Mainstreaming and it creates pressure on its member states to adopt gender policies. First impact of European Union on Czech legislation was during the accession process when Czech government needed to adopt specific legislative changes. According to majority of experts and my interviewers, Czech government would probably not have done it on its own; or at least not so soon. However, the main problem in Czech Republic is that these policies are not implemented to a large extent. Therefore, it is similar conclusion as for international companies. The policies designed by the European Union needs to be adapted to specific needs of every country. This was finally understood also by the Czech government during creation of the new Government Strategy for Equality of women in men in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the majority of tools that European Union offers are designed for large companies, but half of Czech employees work in small or medium-size enterprises. However, this was understood by the special project functioning under the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 22 % K ROVNOSTI, which offers consultation and training for employers and employees of small or medium-size companies. Moreover, it also developed specialised tool LOGIB for measuring the gender pay gap within enterprises.

Another impact of European Union is on the civil societies, non-governmental organisations focusing on empowering women. Financial and expert support plays crucial role for functioning of the main non-governmental organisations. Moreover, European Union provides opportunity for international cooperation and learning from successes and mistakes of other countries.

In conclusion, Czech Republic is a specific case for analysis of gender inequalities because it used to be a pioneer in giving voting right to women but current situation is similar or even worse than in countries that joined this path later. Therefore, this thesis suggests to continue research on this country and its development in the future.

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