

Horizontal principles in the European Social Fund

Explaining successful implementation of EU policies in
Swedish municipalities

Abstract

The Lisbon Strategy formulated that the EU shall be one of the most vital economies in the world. In order to perform that role, it has been argued that the EU must be more coherent. To increase cohesion, the structural funds and cohesion policy were introduced. Included in the structural funds are also the horizontal principles of equality, integration, diversity and sustainable development intended to secure sustainable growth in the EU. Financial resources from the funds are allocated through projects laid down in the member-states. However, when projects have been conducted and implemented research claim that the horizontal principles were disregarded and that the projects rarely managed to successfully implement the principles. The purpose of this thesis is to assess what make projects financed by the EU structural funds successful in terms of implementing EU policies. This will be done by comparing several projects and by investigating what variable or variables were crucial to successful implement EU policies. The relevant EU policies will be the horizontal principles and the projects assessed are financed by one of the structural funds. Finally, this thesis takes on a bottom-up approach with theory and variables have been used in policy implementation research.

Key words: political science, implementation, cohesion policy, structural funds, European Social Fund

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1 Introduction

The structural funds and cohesion policy could be described as the instrument foremost used by the European Union (EU) when tackling differences within the EU (Allen 2010: 230). Overall, the intention is to foster cohesion in terms of employment and growth in the EU (European Commission 2013: 3). The structural funds consist of several financial sources, and most prominent are the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (Allen 2010: 232). Included in the structural funds are also the horizontal principles of equality, integration, diversity and sustainable development intended to secure inclusive and sustainable growth in the EU (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 10).

When allocating financial resources from the funds, this is primarily done through large projects in the member-states. Being an important source of finance tied to developmental work in the EU member states, the funds are an important instrument for the implementation of EU cohesion policy. One of the major issues regarding the EU structural funds, is that the projects, and the activities within them, often suffer from decreasing results and lose their original purpose when the financing comes to an end (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 15). There have been comprehensive problems with the implementation of the structural funds. However, this is not unique for projects being financed by the EU structural funds. Denoted by Brulin and Svensson, this is a problem identified being relevant for all developmental work conducted and financed from large programs and projects (Brulin and Svensson 2013: 15). In the agencies being responsible for the administration of the EU structural funds, there is a large interest in detecting what mechanisms are crucial to bring forward results and sustainable development of projects financed by the EU funds (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 5). Research has already been on what results in successful and sustainable development through projects. Thus, assessing and presenting such mechanism is something that has been covered. However, researchers in this field have identified that the projects financed by the EU funds have faced considerable difficulties when relating the projects and their activities to the policies and targets, which they are intended to follow and fulfill when being financed by the EU funds (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 78). For example, related to the structural funds, it has been specified that the funds are an important instrument when the EU Lisbon Strategy is directed towards the regional and local levels in the member-states (European Commission 2010: 5). However, concerns have been raised about the overall impact and implementation of the policies in the structural funds. As the European Commission suggests, a solution could be improving the structure and administrative capacity at the local and regional level in member-states (2010: 5).

Therefore, this is something that will be taken into account in the assessment of projects financed by the EU structural funds.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess what make projects, financed by the EU structural funds, successful in terms of implementing EU policies. This will be done by a comparison of several projects and by investigating what variable or variables that were crucial in order to result in successful implementation of EU policies. The thesis will study the concept of implementation in the field of policy implementation research, when implementation is defined as the processes when policies are turned into action (Barrett and Fudge 1981: 9). The interest of this thesis is studying the factors influencing these processes regarding implementation of policies into the relevant organizations and their ordinary operating activities.

The thesis will follow an outline that will be suitable for this purpose, to choose particular and similar municipalities and projects owned by them in order to conduct a more in-depth and qualitative study that will assess why the particular projects have been successful in implementing the relevant EU-policies. After choosing particular municipalities and the projects owned by them, it will be possible to do a detailed examination of variables and propose what mechanism that actually explains successful implementation of EU policies in municipalities.

1.1.1 Research question

Out of the reasons stated above, there is a need to assess what make projects successful in implementing particular EU-policies. The research question in this thesis is then formulated into *why are certain projects successful in implementing EU policies in the municipal organization?* Thus, the thesis is not interested in assessing whether the projects overall have been implemented successfully or not, but if the EU-funded project achieved and implemented the EU-policy of relevance as intended when being financed through the EU structural funds.

2 The structural funds of the EU

The structural funds and cohesion policy could be described as the instrument used by the European Union (EU) when tackling differences within the EU (Allen 2010: 230). The European Social Fund, the European Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund are the most prominent ones when describing the structural funds (Allen 2010: 232). Moreover, the European Social Fund and the European Regional Developmental Fund are distributed at national or regional level, and they co-finance projects owned by regional or local actors (Allen 2010: 242).

The previous research on the EU structural funds could be divided into having assessed different areas, suggesting on a relative broad field. Important for this study and as suggested by Allen, the structural funds have been struggling to achieve their overall intention behind them, namely to handle differences within the EU (Allen 2010: 249). Most of the financial resources in the structural funds are targeted to the poorest member-states and regions (Allen 2010: 239). However, thoughts have been raised concerning the impact of the structural funds when it comes to the wealthier member-states and regions (Allen 2010: 249). As previous research states, the allocation of the structural funds might have an impact on how contemporary regions are made up (Mendez et al. 2006: 588). However, the structural funds find it difficult decreasing differences and make the EU more coherent (Allen 2010: 249).

Several authors suggest that the structural funds are clearly linked to the EU Lisbon Strategy (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 78; Allen 2010: 245). The Lisbon Strategy declared that the target was to make the EU one of the most vital economies in the world (European Commission 2010: 2). When the Lisbon Strategy later was assessed it included socio-economical aspects (De Schoutheete 2012: 56-58). The socio-economical aspects in the strategy included the principles of equality between men and women, integration and diversity and sustainable development (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 78). The implementation of these principles will then generate sustainable social and economic growth throughout the EU, and when realizing this, the structural funds were assigned (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 78). In the member-states, national strategies declared in more detail how the Lisbon Strategy should be fulfilled and in Sweden a national strategy for the structural funds were drafted (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 78). The Lisbon Strategy included socio-economical aspects and also in Sweden these aspects were covered in the national strategy (Swedish ESF-Council 2007). A regulation was laid down on the implementation of the structural funds, Council Regulation 1083/2006/EC later overturned by Council Regulation 1303/2013/EC. This regulation included what was laid down in the Lisbon Strategy, and the national strategy was largely based on it (Swedish ESF-Council 2007: 7).

Thoughts have been raised in the literature, suggesting that the structural funds have faced difficulties when fulfilling the EU strategies concerning the principles as they are intended to do (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 18-19). Both reports concerning the European Social Fund and the European Regional Fund mention the same difficulties (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 78-80). This particular problem, namely the implementation of EU policies included in the structural funds and concerning the principles of equality, integration and diversity, will be studied in this thesis.

2.1.1 EU-policies within the funds

Every project financed by the European Social Fund must include the horizontal principles of equality, integration, diversity and sustainable development. In the projects and when implementing projects that receives financing, these principles needs to be assessed, and the applicant must specify how the particular project address the principles (Tillväxtverket 2012: 5). The way in which each project work with the principles varies but it has to be taken into account when conducting the project. However, it is not necessary to include description within the project concerning the work towards all principles (Tillväxtverket 2012: 5). Therefore, the horizontal principles of equality, integration and diversity are the ones chosen to be the relevant EU-policies in this study. This study will answer what make a project successful in terms of implementing EU-policies in the municipal organization. Then, it will be necessary to detect whether the horizontal principles are implemented successful after having conducted the EU-funded project. Something declared previous is that this study is not interested in whether the projects have been implemented successfully or not, but if the horizontal principles have been implemented successfully. Therefore, only relevant EU-policies will be assessed, in this study the horizontal principles of equality, integration and diversity. The horizontal principles are summarized and defined below. The relevant legal source, referred to above, is Council Regulation 1303/2013/EC on the structural funds, that overturns the previously relevant Council Regulation 1083/2006/EC.

Table 1. Horizontal principles when implementing the funds

Horizontal principle	Definition
Equality between men and women	“Equality between men and women” (Council Regulation 1303/2013/EC)
Integration and diversity	“Prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” (Council Regulation 1303/2013/EC)

Legal source: Council Regulation 1303/2013/EC

What is important to know when choosing relevant projects in Sweden is that the European Social Fund is divided in three priority axes. Priority axe one includes projects concerning skills supply, priority axe two includes increased supply of labour and the final priority is about technical assistance (The Swedish ESF Council 2010: 5). In order to choose as similar projects as possible, it is of importance to choose projects within the same priority axe. This is something that will be further discussed in the section about methods and material. Also, this will be described when each project is introduced in the empirical presentation.

3 Theory

Previous studies have shown interest in the implementation of EU policies. Though, there is little attention directed towards the implementation of the horizontal principles included in the EU structural funds. However, in order to provide a more theoretical approach, the relevant field of implementation research will be reviewed below. This part will discuss the background and different approaches in the theoretical discipline applied in the study.

3.1 Theories in the discipline of policy implementation research

The relevant theoretical discipline for this thesis will be that of policy implementation research. This thesis is interested in assessing the implementation of EU-policies through projects financed by the EU structural funds. The definition of implementation used in this thesis is when policies are turned into action in an organization (Barrett and Fudge 1981: 9). This definition of implementation could be seen as particularly related to traditional policy implementation research focused on assessing how governmental policies are turned into action or effect (Nilsen et al 2013: 2).

The theoretical discipline relevant to this thesis is that of policy implementation. Policy implementation could be considered in studies of public administration, management research, organisational theory but mostly political science (Nilsen et al. 2013: 3).

This study, which is concerning the implementation of EU-policies, is laid down in political science. As mentioned by Brulin and Svensson, there is indeed a large amount of research on the sustainability in developmental work through projects and the implementation of politically formulated goals through projects (2011: 42). In addition, Brulin and Svensson notes that one can especially assess work laid down by Hjern (2001), which suggests considerable difficulties when policies in large programmes and projects are about to be implemented (2011: 42) Also, it is something that could be similar in its characteristics as the implementation of EU-policies through projects financed by the EU structural funds.

3.1.1 The emergence of policy implementation research

First, it will be of importance to discuss the emergence of policy implementation research. Concerns have been raised by researchers arguing that insufficient attention is given to the phase of implementation within the policy process (Schofield 2001: 245). As Schofield argues, the policy-formulation or policy-making phase has received more attention than the implementation phase where the policy is implemented and turned into action (Schofield 2001: 245). Precisely this, when policy is turned into action and effect should be called and defined as implementation according to Barrett and Fudge (1981: 9; Nilsen et al 2013: 2). Hjern has similar concerns, when he states that the part of implementation in the policy process is the one less researched (1982: 302). As Hjern puts it, the analysis of the relationship between politics and administration is traditionally the strength of political science, however less attention is given in the directed of this relationship (1982: 302). Mostly scholars coming from USA, the UK and Scandinavia have done studies in the field of policy implementation research and these studies cover different aspects and have national specialities (Schofield 2001:245).

Several reviews are laid down about different studies in the discipline of policy implementation research. The researchers Barrett and Fudge provided a traditional review, presenting three fields in the discipline, namely the field focused on the content of particular policy decisions, the field focused on the policy output and the field focused relationships between individuals in organizations or administrations (1982: 6). Concerning the field interested in the content, studies included pay attention to particular decisions and the making of these decisions (Barrett and Fudge 1982: 6). In the field concerning policy output, studies are interested in why decisions are made and their effectiveness (Barrett and Fudge 1982: 6). Finally, concerning the field interested in relationships between individuals in organizations or administrations, studies are focused on how individuals act and interact with each other (Barrett and Fudge 1982: 6).

Schofield provides a more contemporary review, but as detected the fields suggested by Barrett and Fudge are largely unchanged. Schofield argues that studies in policy implementation could be divided into four fields (2001: 247). As presented, studies interested in explaining why policies are implemented successfully or unsuccessfully, studies interested in the outcome or output of policies, studies interested in actors and organizations interacting and how they interact and the behaviour of individuals within organizations are largely the same (Schofield 2001: 248). In addition, Schofield suggests a fourth field with researchers interested in providing recommendations on how the design the policies in order to be implemented successfully (Schofield 2001: 248).

When assessing the review as presented by Barrett and Fudge and by Schofield, five different fields were detected. However, it should be argued that both the field interested in explaining why policies are successful or unsuccessful, and the one interested in policy outcome or output, are closely related and could be included in the same field. Therefore, four fields are detected, the one focused on the content of particular policy decisions, the one focused on the policy output,

including why policies are successful or unsuccessful, and the one focused on relationships between individuals in organization or administrations (1982: 6). In addition to these three, also a fourth, providing recommendations on how policies should be designed as identified by Schofield (2001: 248).

First, one can turn to the field interested in the content of particular policies. Studies included are the ones interested in the content of the policies and the decisions that are taken (Barrett and Fudge 1982: 6). For example, Koven has provided us with a review of studies laid down in this field (1994). Secondly, one can turn to the field that focuses on the policy output, including why policies are successful or not. Such studies are in addition to this interested in the efficiency of decisions (Barrett and Fudge 1982: 6). In this approach, it is possible to include work by Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979) but also O'Toole (1986: 181; 2000: 266). Thirdly, concerning the field with interest in relationships between individuals in organizations or in administrations, Hjern and Porter have put forth representative work (1981: 211). Finally, Schofield mentions the field providing recommendations on how policies should be designed (2001: 248). Interestingly, the studies in this field and the theoretical framework by Brulin and Svensson used in this thesis are similar. Moreover it should be argued, as it has been by Schofield, that the field providing recommendations more or less draw conclusions from other fields, and the findings done by other researches, when providing these recommendations (2001: 248). Something similar to what is presented by Brulin and Svensson when they describe how their theoretical framework is constructed and based on their previous findings (2011: 210).

In order to suggest how the different fields are related, one could argue that the policy implementation research has evolved at the same time as more contemporary research is presented. Studies laid down in policy implementation research commonly use a theoretical framework or analytical model consisting of different parts of the several studies as mentioned above. This study will use a theoretical framework constructed by the researches Brulin and Svensson (2011: 210). When using the framework mentioned, this study could be included in several of the fields above. The study is relevant to anyone interested in the policy output such explaining successful or unsuccessful policy implementation and to the one interested in relationships between individuals in organization or administration. To some extent, when answering the research question and when explaining why certain projects are successful in implementing policies, it could be included in the field presenting recommendations.

3.1.2 Bottom-up or top-down

Research laid down in the policy implementation research has however commonly been divided in two broad approaches, the top-down and the bottom-up approach (Sabatier 1986: 21). Indeed broadly and simplified, the top-down approach suggest that the relevant place to begin a study is at the level of decision-making (Sabatier 1986: 22). The bottom-up approach suggests that the relevant place to begin study is at the local level and there detect the findings of importance

(Sabatier 1986: 22). Previous studies focused on the implementation of EU-policies have used different approaches. For example, Stajano uses the bottom-up approach (2009) and Sanchez Salgado the top-down approach (2013).

In relation to research laid down in policy implementation research, research laid down on the concept of Europeanization commonly uses either a top-down or bottom-up approach (Mendez et al. 2006: 582). Europeanization, describing the EU influence on the member-states (Pollack 2010: 37). Interesting is then that also Europeanization could be studied from both the top-down and bottom-up approach. Top-down, when the EU influences the member-states but also studied bottom-up, when studying member-states' pressures towards the EU (Mendez et al. 2006: 599-600).

When returning to studies in policy implementation research, the most prominent debate identified in the discipline is that between the supporters of the bottom-up or the top-down approach. A researcher in the field of policy implementation research usually makes it clear if the study is laid down from the top-down or bottom-up approach (Schofield 2001: 248). The debate was also identified by Barrett and Fudge thus labelling it as either a study that is policy-centred or a study focused on how concrete action relates to the policy that has been laid down (Barrett and Fudge 1981: 13). However, in order to very briefly discuss the main difference between top-down and bottom-up one could start describing the main interest of top-down supporters. Both the difference and peculiarities of the two approaches top-down and bottom-up will be address below. Also, a motivation of what kind of approach is the most relevant and also used in this study, will be addressed in the section below.

Traditionally, implementation was studied applying a top-down approach assessing difficulties when a policy coming from centrally placed governments was about to be implemented (Sabatier 1986: 21-22). Thus, in a top-down research, the study starts at the level of the central government because the top-down supporters argue that implementation starts at the level of the policymakers when policy are formulated and legislated (Schofield 2001:248). It is indeed similar to how Barrett and Fudge referred to it as a policy-centred study (1981: 13). One of the most prominent supporters of the top-down approach is moreover Paul Sabatier (Sabatier 1986: 22).

When returning the different fields of studies in policy implementation research, a top-down approach is then mostly interested in assessing why a particular policy failed to be implemented with the intention from the policy-makers' point of view (Sabatier 1986: 21-22). Relevant variables when applying a top-down approach are those related to the centrally placed government (Nilsen et al. 2013: 2). However, the top-down approach was soon about to get criticized for neglecting the phase at the lower level of the process, for example at the level of administration when the policies should be turned into effect and concrete action (Nilsen et al. 2013: 2). Rather specifically this critique or concern is to be found in the work that was presented by Barrett and Fudge (1981: 13). Those behind this concern, including Barrett and Fudge, instead argued the importance of focusing on individuals or groups responsible for concrete actions relating to the policy (1981: 12-13). Identified as the important focus of the study is to assess the role of

local officials or groups of local officials belonging to network and structures responsible for the concrete action and effects, such as turning policies into activities at the targeted levels relating to the relevant policies (Nilsen et al. 2013: 3). Thus, if the researcher is interested and studies at the level of the implementers, mostly the local-levels, the study is laid down in line with the bottom-up approach. The bottom-up supporters are namely, as argued above, recognizing the importance of local-level administration and bureaucracy. Also, they share interest in interaction of actors, organizations and between individuals in organizations. Moreover, a bottom-up study could also assess the problem as the policy is intended to handle (Schofield 2001:251).

This study it will be laid down in line with the bottom-up approach and thus argue that it will be relevant to assess the lower and local levels. Inspiration is drawn from concerns as raised by Barrett and Fudge and also the definition of implementation as laid down by them are applied in the study (1981: 9-13). Thus, in accordance with characteristics of bottom-up research (Nilsen et al. 2013: 3), it will pay utmost attention to the lower levels at the officials belonging to structures and networks responsible for turning policies into concrete action and activities. In accordance with what is declared above, this study is interested in detecting mechanism when explaining successful implementation of EU policies in municipalities.

3.1.3 Independent variables traditionally derived from implementation theories

The variables derived from implementation theory have been summarized in the work as laid down by O'Toole (1986: 185-188). However, the variables more traditionally assessed in the field of policy implementation and suggested by Schofield are the area of the policy, the particular organisation and the organisational structure related to that of organizational type (2001:252). However, something that will be motivated below is that this study will use a most similar system design and compare similar municipalities and their projects financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and thus attempt to hold other variables constant.

In the contemporary research, the above listed variables have been given a rather limited role and the research has come to now include other variables that will be of importance to this study, namely knowledge and learning, the role of and importance of specific actors and finally the role of bureaucratic influence (Schofield 2001:253). Returning to variables of knowledge and learning, researchers such as Sabatier has paid particular attention to learning (2007: 198; 1986: 38). Sabatier argues that it is possible to learn and change the beliefs of individuals and thus implement new policies (2007: 198). Variables related to the importance and presence of specific actors have also been particular prominent in the works as laid down by Sabatier (1980: 553). Sabatier pays attention to the importance of leadership and that that the leading officials in an organization need to be supportive (1980: 553). Also, the work by Hjern and Porter suggests on the

importance of actors and organizations (1981: 222). Clearly related is the variable emphasizing the role of bureaucratic influence and the role of bureaucracies to be found in the work laid down by Gofen (2014).

After having laid down this review of what is traditionally considered to be important variables in the field of policy implementation research, one should approach the work laid down by Brulin and Svensson that pays attention to mechanisms or variables of importance when explaining successful implementation and sustainability in the field of EU projects and programmes (Svensson and Brulin 2013). The research as laid down by Brulin and Svensson will be of importance in order to further specify the theoretical framework and later variables that this research will use.

3.1.4 Implementation and long-term effects of EU-funded projects

Brulin and Svensson argues that EU-funded projects seldom result and lead to long-term effects (2013:15). Indeed, this argument is in the centre of this thesis, because it is interested in whether EU-funded projects managed to implement activities and the official EU policies in the relevant organizations.

In their book, Brulin and Svensson have in detail assessed the long-term effects of EU programmes and projects. Their contribution will be of great importance when writing the thesis. In their work, they contribute with a theoretical framework when explaining what actually explain and result in that EU funded projects leads to long-term effects (2011: 210; 2013: 31). However, they have chosen to foremost discuss how to assess and identify the unintended long-term effects of EU-funded projects in their book (2013: 15). This leaves room to discuss and conduct a study on whether if the EU-funded actually implement the official EU policies.

In the framework laid down by Brulin and Svensson they have identified three mechanisms crucial when explaining what results in long-term effects from the projects. These mechanisms will be the independent variables of this study. First, they have identified that active ownership of the project is crucial when it comes to the implementation of the activities of the project into the organisations ordinary operating activities (2013:30). Clearly, this variable is similar to the variable of prominent actors and leadership as laid down by Sabatier (1980: 553). Secondly, they have identified that collaboration, between municipalities and other actors, is necessary for the project to be successful and tackle complex problems and implement solutions and activities to trigger growth and innovation but also remove regional disparities (2013:30). Here, Brulin and Svensson refer to work as laid down by Hjern when discussing the variable of collaboration (Hjern 2001: 185). Clearly, this variable is also similar to that of actors and organizations previously suggested by Hjern and Porter (1981: 222). Thirdly, developmental learning is identified to be a final factor crucial for the project when implementing the activities into an organisation (2013:31). The organisation owning or involved in the project must be particularly interested in learning and focusing on learning from the activities within the project. Also here, this variable is related to the

variable of learning presented by Sabatier (2007: 198; 1986: 38). To visualize the theoretical framework developed by Brulin and Svensson they have constructed a figure presented in their book (2011: 210; 2013: 31). A figure inspired by the one laid down by Brulin and Svensson is presented below.

Figure 1. Successful implementation and long-term effects of projects

Successful implementation and long-term effects		
Collaboration	Developmental learning	Active ownership

Source: Figure inspired by Brulin and Svensson 2013: 31

3.1.5 How the mechanisms relates to the horizontal principles

When discussing how the theoretical framework with the three mechanisms collaboration, developmental learning and active ownership results in implementation of the particular policy field of the horizontal principles it will be argued as follows with support in the literature. The framework applied is commonly used when explaining what mechanisms are crucial for long-term effects and implementing policies into the ordinary operating activities of an organization. At first, collaboration is seen as crucial when tackle complex problems as equality, integration and diversity. When implementing such policies it is argued that an organisation, such as a municipality, needs to cooperate with external actors (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 30). Also, these actors should preferably have expertise in the field of the new policies to be implemented in the organization. Developmental learning is then moreover regarded to be crucial mechanism when implementing new policies into an organization. The organizations must be willing and interested in learning from others with expertise in the field and open to new policies than the ones currently being followed. Finally, active ownership is crucial when implementing new policies. In order to implement policies, the ownership should be active and willing to implement policies in the relevant fields. Without owners being active and willing to revise their current documents and guidelines and instead include and follow new policies, sustainable change and implementation will be severely hard to carry through. Therefore, the owners need to be active in the process and supportive to new and revision of contemporary documents.

3.1.6 From horizontal principles to operational indicator of successful implementation

This study has chosen Swedish municipalities and to choose Swedish municipalities could be seen as most likely cases to be successful in implementing the principles. This because, every Swedish municipality needs an equal treatment plan, something detected when the relevant municipalities were assessed (Trelleborgs kommun 2014: 12; 2010: 15; Interview Osby 2014-05-08). However, the equal treatment plan could be questioned because the European Commission has put forward the concept of gender mainstreaming in the EU (Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000: 432). Gender mainstreaming is about integrating gender throughout the Structural Funds and the implementation of them in various structures, such as municipalities (Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000: 441). When assessing the concept of mainstreaming it will be relevant to assess the full process of implementation in municipalities, not solely if there is any equal treatment plan.

Sabatier and Mazmanian suggests on different stages in the implementation process (1980: 553). As Sabatier and Mazmanian argues, stages are for example the decisions of officials at implementing levels, how the targeted groups follow the decisions and finally the impact of the decisions as taken (1980: 553). Indeed, a study could focus on several stages, but also narrow it down and focus on a particular stage. This study will focus on a particular stage, namely when decisions of officials at implementing levels are taken. In this study, it will be to assess when officials in municipalities take decisions and implement EU-policies.

Something declared in the section above, the horizontal principles of equality, integration and diversity are decided to be the relevant EU-policies in this particular study. However, in order to assess if the EU policies have been implemented successfully, an operational indicator of successful implementation must be provided. Successful implementation of the horizontal principles will thus be the dependent variable in this study. The operational indicator of successful implementation of the horizontal principles will be concrete changes and the presence of equality, integration and diversity in the official documents of the municipalities. This could for example be when the projects have resulted in the concrete revision of the existing or when the principles of equality, integration and diversity are included in new documents of the municipality.

4 Methods and material

This section will describe and discuss the methods and materials that were used. First, the research design chosen will be motivated. Then, the methodology and materials that were used will be described and discussed.

4.1 Research design

Something that will be described below is that the study is interested in some particular municipalities and their projects. This, in order to assess the relevant mechanisms derived from the theoretical framework used in this thesis. Also, it will be of interest to assess indeed similar projects but with different outcomes when this study is not specifically interested in the overall success of the project but rather if it succeeded in implementing the relevant EU policies. Something meaning that it must be possible to detect and identify both projects successful and unsuccessful when implementing EU policies. Therefore, it is relevant but also difficult to find projects similar except in some aspects. The below projects are chosen with the motivation that they are indeed similar to each other and the European Social Fund (ESF) funds all the projects chosen.

When choosing some particular municipalities it will be possible to be more specific and conduct a study that will be able to assess relevant theoretical variables and control for other variables. Such variables could for example be differences between the municipalities in terms of differences in organizational structure and socio-economical aspects. When this particular research design is chosen, projects with different outcomes have been detected and later compared in order to detect differences that explain the variation in outcome. However, it must be seen as both relevant but also difficult to find projects similar except in some aspects. Therefore, the thesis has chosen both municipalities and projects that are indeed similar to each other in order to control other variables that according to the theoretical framework are suggested to have an impact.

4.1.1 The design of controlled comparison

The chosen design for the thesis is the design of controlled comparison laid down in the work by George and Bennett (2005: 151). In line with their arguments, is to design the study with two or more instances that are close to each other and similar in every aspect (2005: 151). Although this controlled comparison is difficult to achieve this study will employ what other scholars have suggested

when facing this problematic. When choosing this design one can foremost turn to King, Keohane and Verba and the concept of most similar system design as presented by them (1994: 205). Presented in the work by Esaiasson they argue that one can focus on what is observable when having independent and dependent variables (2010: 115). In this study, it must be argued that it will be difficult to in full meet the requirements for controlled comparison. However, one must be careful to admit this difficulty and assess what have been laid down and done by others in order to handle this problem.

4.1.2 The most similar system design

To continue, the thesis is designed in line with studies having applied the most similar system design (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 114). In short, the most similar system design could be laid down either knowing the independent or dependent variables in two or more instances or cases (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 115). To briefly discuss how this could be done one could choose instances or cases, in the thesis EU-funded projects successfully and unsuccessfully having implemented EU-policies. Thus, in this scenario, the dependent variables in our instances are known, because it is detected whether the EU-funded projects have either been successfully or unsuccessful in implementing the relevant EU-policy. Something suggested by Esaiasson is that this design, when knowing the dependent, is the one commonly applied and probably also the most suitable in this thesis because it is often not possible to in the initial stages of the thesis already know the independent variables and how it differs between the instances that have been chosen (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 115). However, for the projects compared in the study one must be careful to both look for variation in the dependent variables, successful and unsuccessful implementation of the relevant policies and homogeneity, namely that the project needs to be similar to each other (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 102). Something also discussed below, is that this study is made up of two separate most similar system designs with one pair of projects having the relevant policy as their main policy and the other pair having the relevant policy underlying. Thus, potential other variables will be delimited when comparing the projects.

The most similar system design described above has been used two times on two separate pairs of projects. First, the comparison is made between two projects that have the horizontal principles as main policy. This in order to avoid the findings is to be found in the periphery of the project and difficult to assess. The projects that have the horizontal principles as main policy in the project are specifically conducted in order to promote equality and prevent discrimination (Swedish ESF-Council 2012: 15). Secondly, the comparison is made between two projects that have the horizontal principles underlying. When assessing these projects, it will be possible to detect if projects not primarily intended to implement the relevant policies managed to do so. Moreover, in order to motivate why the thesis uses two most similar system design, one with the relevant policies as main and one with them as underlying it will also be possible to apply the test

of most-likely or least-likely. Presented by George and Bennett, cases could be either most-likely or least-likely (George and Bennett 2005: 121). If the theory applied proves to be successful in the least-likely cases, it is strongly supported, however, if the theory is unsuccessful in the most-likely cases it is strongly questioned (George and Bennett 2005: 121). Thus, in this study, the projects intended to implement the policies will constitute the most-likely cases and the projects with the principles underlying will be the least-likely cases.

4.1.3 Selection of cases: projects financed from the ESF

For the reasons stated above, municipalities and projects have selected on a strategically basis in this study (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 113). Both are chosen carefully in order to control for other variables than the variables suggested by the theoretical framework.

Particular municipalities located in southern Sweden and Scania are chosen. Thus, the projects belong to the same region, namely Southern Sweden (Swedish ESF-Council 2012: 10). The projects in the first most similar system design that have the horizontal principles underlying, are both located in the northern areas of Scania. In relation to what is suggested above, the projects are chosen strategically and this because we must know the dependent variables. The projects chosen in the first most similar system design that have the horizontal principles as their underlying policy are a project laid down in the municipality of Osby and secondly a project laid down in the municipality of Perstorp. When choosing this particular pair of projects, we know that the project in Perstorp has been successful (Haverdal Consulting 2013: 31). The project in Osby is both chosen because the similarities between the municipalities and between the projects.

Moreover, the projects in the second most similar system design that have the horizontal principles mainly and to implement, are both located in the coastal areas of western Scania. The projects are chosen strategically and this because we must know the dependent variables. Then, the projects in the second most similar system design that have the horizontal principles as their main policy, are a project laid down in the municipality of Landskrona and a project laid down in the municipality of Trelleborg. When choosing this particular pair of projects, we know that the project in Landskrona has been described as successful (Oxford Research 2011: 34). On a similar manner as done with the other pair of projects, the project in Trelleborg is both chosen because the similarities between the municipalities and between the projects.

After have chosen municipalities, it is also of importance to choose projects that are similar and owned by these particular municipalities. In order to choose projects that are similar, only projects within the ESF priority axe one skills supply are chosen. Of all the three priority axes, the first one is of particular interest because it is targeted towards workers at workplaces in organizations. Something that is viewed to be indeed relevant projects when consider the formulated research question. Also, projects financed through the ESF are laid

down in two phases, namely the mobilization phase or the implementation phase (The Swedish ESF Council 2010:54). Here, the projects that are assessed have been finalized but laid down in the mobilization or preliminary phase and then the implementation phase. In order to provide a structured presentation, the projects are going to be described in the two different phases and what the specific phase has included. Something declared by the Swedish ESF Council is that the mobilization phase includes an assessment and mapping of what is the general need in the organization and what is the need among employees in the organization (The Swedish ESF Council: 2014). Also, an assessment of how the organization needs to develop in order to improve their skills has to be laid down followed by that the developmental needs among the employees in the organization have to be specified (The Swedish ESF Council: 2014). The mobilization phase should then also suggest a suitable methods and activities in order to engage the employees in the organization that enables skills development in the areas of need (The Swedish ESF Council: 2014). Moving on further and to the implementation phase, the methods and activities suggested in the mobilization phase should basically be laid down in the organization and towards the employees been targeted (The Swedish ESF Council: 2014).

4.2 How the theory will be applied and tested

This thesis will use theories commonly used in the field of implementation research. Theoretical material in the field of implementation research has commonly been divided in two approaches, the top-down and the bottom-up approach. Simplified, the top-down approach suggests that the relevant place to begin a study is at the level of decision-making (Sabatier 1986: 21). On the contrary, the bottom-up approach suggests that the relevant place to begin study is at the local level and there detect the findings of importance (Sabatier 1986: 22). This study will support the bottom-up approach and pay attention to the lower levels and to officials belonging to the structures and networks responsible for turning policies into concrete action and activities.

4.2.1 The theoretical framework and the most similar system design

This thesis will be an explanatory study and attempt to explain why certain projects are successful in terms of implementing EU policies. In order to explain why certain projects are successful, it will compare to test the theoretical framework as chosen in study. The theoretical framework as chosen, is the one laid down by Brulin and Svensson (2011: 210; 2013: 31). They have identified three mechanisms crucial when explaining the long-term effects of projects. First, active ownership (2013:30), secondly, collaboration, for example between municipalities and other actors (2013:30) and thirdly, developmental oriented learning (2013:31). In addition, it might also be that the mechanisms are important

to each other (2013:31). Thus, one can also formulate several causal mechanisms that our theoretical framework is suggesting. When it comes to the causal mechanisms, one could formulate it as follows, “if A, then B” (Esaiasson et al. 2010: 90). The theoretical framework used in this study then suggests that each mechanism is of importance, namely “if developmental learning, collaboration and active ownership, then successful implementation”.

The use of the theoretical framework in a most similar systems design is illustrated below in figure 2. Each mechanism identified to be crucial in our theoretical framework is regarded to be an independent variable and the dependent is successful implementation. The two projects below are invented.

Figure 2. Illustration of the use of the theoretical framework in a most similar system design

	Project 1	Project 2
Collaboration?	Yes	Yes
Developmental learning?	Yes	Yes
Active ownership?	Yes	No
Successful implementation?	Yes	No

As seen above, the two projects are similar in every aspect except the variation in the independent variable “Active Ownership”. Thus, in the above figure, “Active Ownership” is detected as the most crucial variable. However, this is an invented variation. Though, it may be a likely one and this because, with support in the literature, it seems that active ownership of the EU-funded project indeed affects whether it will be successfully implemented or not (Sävenstrand and Florén 2011: 56).

4.2.2 Theoretical definitions into operational indicators

The theoretical framework as constructed by Brulin and Svensson and as used in the research will be operationalized in accordance with what have previously been laid down by them.

First, the theoretical definition of collaboration will be operationalized to be when the project cooperates with other actors and organizations from different sectors and form relationships or partnerships (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 30). For example, this could be towards the evaluators, the Swedish ESF Council or any organization with expertise in the area of relevance. This is also the operational indicator of collaboration suggested by the Swedish ESF Council (2011: 7).

The theoretical definition of developmental learning will be operationalized to be when the project is open towards circulation and influence between other actors and organisations at local, regional and national level (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 206). Also here, this operational indicator is assessed together with the indicators of learning suggested by the Swedish ESF Council, namely formal learning and learning through education, informal learning on a day-to day basis and non-formal learning through practice (Svenska ESF-rådet 2011: 2). Concerning this particular variable, the projects relations and use of the evaluators will be of particular importance to assess. As suggested in the literature, evaluations could either be planned or developmental supportive (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 42-43; Svensson and Brulin 2013: 87). Concerning the planned and more traditional form of evaluation, it is mainly interested in the quantitative results and to measure the numbers within the project (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 42-43). Rather contrary, the developmental supportive is interested in the process and the learning within the project (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 42-43). Thus, the variable will also be operationalized and consider if the project uses an on-going evaluation that is development supportive. It will also be assessed if the project does take part in an on-going evaluation (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 31).

The theoretical definition of active ownership will be operationalized as when the lead of the municipality provides steering and resources to successfully implement the project (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 30).

From the theoretical definitions and operational indicators a number of central questions are formulated. The operational indicators and the interview guide that has been formulated are inspired from the work laid down by Brulin and Svensson (2011: 206) and from the Swedish ESF Council (2011: 2-7).

Figure 3. Operationalization of the theoretical framework

Theoretical definition	Operational indicators	Central questions
Collaboration	Actors and organisations from different sectors cooperate and form relationships or partnerships within the project	What actors and organisations cooperate in

	<p>(Svensson and Brulin 2013: 30).</p> <p>Actors will be defined as external evaluators and officials working at the national agencies (Schofield 255; Brulin and Svensson 2011: 208).</p>	<p>the project?</p> <p>What external actors and organisations cooperate with the project?</p> <p>Were these actors and organisations used?</p>
Developmental learning	<p>The project is open to circulation and influence between them and other local, regional and national actors and organisations (Brulin and Svensson 2011: 206).</p> <p>The project uses on-going evaluation that is development supportive (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 87).</p> <p>Different concepts of learning are also assessed. Formal learning defined as learning through education, informal learning on a day-to day basis and non-formal learning through practice (The Swedish ESF Council 2011: 2-7).</p>	<p>Are other actors and organisations in the area of the project consulted?</p> <p>Are ideas and results circulated towards other actors and organisations?</p> <p>How was the evaluator engaged?</p> <p>What activities within the project did the evaluation assess?</p> <p>Was anything changed in the project when it was carried out?</p> <p>How was the evaluation of the project used?</p> <p>How will you use the results if the project?</p>
Active ownership	<p>The lead of the municipality is actively involved and provides steering and resources (Brulin</p>	<p>Who initiated the project?</p>

	<p>and Svensson 2011: 30).</p> <p>The lead of the municipality will be defined as the municipal chief executive and the elected representatives in the municipality.</p>	<p>How were the lead actors in the municipality involved?</p> <p>How was the project motivated by the lead?</p>
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Sources: Brulin and Svensson 2011: 206; Svensson and Brulin 2013: 31; The Swedish ESF Council 2011: 2-7

4.3 Methodology

This thesis will use multiple methodological techniques. First, it has been interested in documentary research of the official documents and reports from the projects, for example application forms, reports and evaluations. Moreover, centrally placed officials have been identified and interviewed about their information, knowledge and insights in the relevant municipalities and their particular projects.

4.3.1 Methodological technique 1: Documentary research

To begin, it will be necessary to conduct the method called documentary research presented by Tim May (2011: 191-192). This, in order to assess if any official EU policies are referred upon when applying for the projects and when assessing if the projects have been laid down in line with and achieved the EU policies and targets. The material that will be used in this study will application forms, official reports, document of results and evaluation reports about the projects. Moreover, it is suggested by Tim May that it is useful to complement any conducted interview with findings detected in official documents (2011: 191). Thus, it might both be necessary to conduct documentary research and consult official documents concerning the EU-funded project before any interviews in order to get information about the projects. Also, it will be necessary to consult the official documents in order to complement any information coming from the interviews. As suggested by Thies it may be possible to develop and describe the process after conducting the interviews and when using the method of documentary research (2002: 352). Then, it will be possible to discuss and identify any lacking or absence of crucial mechanisms explaining successful implementation of the projects.

4.3.2 Methodological technique 2: Interviews

When turning to the interviews, they have been of informant-character, rather than respondent-character. This because the thesis is foremost interested in using relevant and centrally placed officials from the municipalities and the projects in order to get insight about what actually took place. When conducted interviews of informant-character with the chosen officials, they have the function seen in providing the study with information (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 257). Also, as suggested by Esaiasson it has not been of importance to ask exactly the same questions to every informant. Rather, every informant has provided information with possibility to be new and specific, something that enabled the researcher to alter and develop the questions being asked. For the method of documentary research, the analysis of the conducted interviews of informant character will be done when understanding what actually happened and what is the contemporary situation (Esaiasson et. al. 2010: 303). The purpose of the interviews has been to outline what took place and if the mechanisms in the theoretical framework are present in the projects. Thus, the interviews have provided such information and used together with the official documents gathered when assessing the projects.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured (May 2011: 134) and the interview guide was constructed before entering the interviews with relevant questions derived from the theoretical framework. When using semi-structured interviews, it was both possible to seek deeper understanding and further information when asking follow-up questions (May 2011: 134). The interview guide together with more detailed information about the conducted interviews is placed in the final chapter of the thesis.

4.3.3 Methodological considerations

It is a challenge to carry out the most similar system design because it is difficult to control for other variables. Therefore, it is most appropriate to study similar municipalities with similar EU-funded projects. It will moreover be a useful design in order to avoid and control for other variables. To study similar projects as owned by similar municipalities is an attempt to enable control for other independent variables, for example socio-economic differences and differences in organizational structure. This could be example of variables that differs between municipalities.

Moreover, a study with relative few projects could be motivated for several reasons. Foremost, the study is interested in testing a theory demanding a rather detailed research and analysis. Also, it could be argued that the EU-financed projects are relatively few in each of the municipalities because it is rather demanding to own and conduct large projects.

Concerning the theoretical framework, the definitions of “developmental learning”, “collaboration” and “active ownership” are translated into operational indicators possible to detect. When then discussing validity, namely the accordance between the theoretical framework and the operational indicators

literature has been consulted (Esaiasson et al. 2010: 63-66; Bergström & Boréus 2005: 34; Rose 2012: 91). The operationalization has been done, carefully consulting the inventors of the framework and previously laid down literature on implementation that was described in the literature review. Also, previously done research laid down by the Swedish ESF-council, the managing authority of the European Social Fund has been consulted in order to give the study acceptable validity. When then turning to the operationalization of the dependent variable, successfully implementation, the operationalization has been done after consulting previously laid down research in implementation and the horizontal principles in order to give the study validity.

Concerning the methods that have been chosen it is rather hard to elaborate on alternatives. Because the thesis is interested in doing a qualitative study, assessing relative few municipalities and projects in-depth, any quantitative method such as statistics must be inappropriate. To conduct interviews together with documentary research seems to be most relevant and suitable methods. When documents have been used in the study, only official document provided by the municipalities are used. Thus, one can be certain about the authenticity of the documents (Esaiasson et al. 2010: 317).

Concerning each of the projects as assessed in this study, two separate interviews will be conducted including both visiting interviews and telephone interviews. One with the individual most closely engaged with the project providing key-information about the process and other questions demanding deeper insight in the project. Further, another interview will be conducted when seeking information about the results of the project and the current situation within the municipality concerning the relevant areas. As the second interviewee needs to be an unbiased individual without any personal prestige related to praise the success of the project the specific questions might be unfruitful also to ask the second interviewee. When drawing conclusions about the projects from two separate interviewees strategically chosen, the results will be argued to be unbiased and independent (Esaiasson et al. 2010: 318-319). Because the study uses multiple methods and also consider the information in the official documents, one should argue that the empirical material presented in this study is authentic, unbiased and independent.

4.3.4 Limitations

The formulated research question is interested in answering *why certain projects are successful in implementing EU policies in the municipal organization?* Then, this thesis will not assess whether the projects overall have been successful or not. Moreover, it will not assess if the projects have been implemented successfully or not, but only if the EU-funded projects implemented the relevant EU-policies when being financed by EU funds.

This thesis will only assess the horizontal principles of equality, integration and diversity. The principle of sustainable development has been removed in order to compare projects having the principles as main or underlying

policy. Moreover, the principle of sustainable development could be seen as an independent area from that of equality, integration and diversity.

The thesis will not discuss any research laid down in the field of equality, integration and diversity. Of reasons motivated below, the policies of relevance in the study are related to equality, integration and diversity. This thesis will only assess how each particular municipality and project has managed to implement the EU policies in the municipal organization.

As described above, Sabatier and Mazmanian suggests on different stages in the implementation process (1980: 553). Different stages are for example the decisions of officials at implementing levels, how the targeted groups follow the decisions and the impact of the decisions as taken (1980: 553). This study will however only focus on one stage, namely to assess when officials in municipalities take decisions and implement EU-policies in the official documents and guidelines of their organization. When it then comes to the implementation in municipal organization, this study will not assess if the target groups followed the decisions or assess the impact of the decisions in the overall target groups. To assess if any changes are to be found in the ordinary operating activities of the organization and in the behaviour of the individuals in the organization are outside of this study. Instead, this study will argue in line with the logic of appropriateness as presented by March and Simon on that individuals will follow and act according to the formal and informal rules of their organization (1993: 305).

5 Empirical presentation

In order to repeat the research question formulated in this study it is interested in assessing *why certain projects are successful in implementing EU policies in the municipal organization?* Thus, the thesis is not interested in whether the projects have been implemented successfully or not, but successful in terms of the implementing the EU-policy as intended when being financed by EU funds. The empirical material is presented with a short introduction to the project and then the different phases are presented followed by a discussion assessing if the relevant variables are to be found. Each project will be studied using the official application, the evaluation reports and the interviews with key informants that have been conducted. Then finally, success in implementation of the EU-policies could be discussed.

5.1 Project 1: Visionärt Ledarskap

The first project that will be assessed in this study is the ESF-funded project entitled "Visionärt Ledarskap" or "Visionary Leadership" owned by and conducted in the municipality of Osby in northeastern Scania. The project was included in the first of the three priority axes, skills supply. Moreover, the project was laid down in the phase of implementation and finalized in late 2013 (Osby kommun 2011a: 1).

The project "Visionary Leadership" was about implementing a new attitude within the municipality. In particular, the project was targeted towards executives at different levels within the municipalities. It was laid down in order to increase the presence of collaboration and decrease executives working independently within their specific administration. As declared in the application form, the executives did not have a common attitude towards the values, policies and rules present in the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 2). When applying for a project financed by the ESF, the intention was to introduce a more developed leadership, with a common understanding of the values, policies and rules in the municipality.

Concerning the horizontal principles, the principles of equality, integration and diversity are approached in the project. In the application form, the overall target was specified to increase the awareness and knowledge of equality, integration and diversity and the idea was to implement equality and equal treatment within the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 5). Within the project, the level of awareness and knowledge concerning these principles will be assessed and then later worked with during the project (Osby kommun 2011a: 5-6).

Further, every employee and executive at different levels will be included in this work. In the project, every activity are planned to be accessible to persons with disabilities and the intention was to also assess how equal treatment towards persons with disabilities could be implemented in the ordinary activities of the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 6).

5.1.1 Visionärt ledarskap: mobilization phase

In the mobilization phase, the project assessed the overall problem in the municipality and the need of the employees to develop their skills. After the mapping was done, a more detailed plan for activities in the implementation phase could be defined (Osby kommun 2011a: 7). In specific, the mapping was done targeted towards all the executives at different levels in the municipalities and their own suggestions on different needs for skills supply in leadership. This mapping did include both executives and elected representatives in the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 4). Moreover, a survey was distributed towards all the relevant targets groups in the municipality assessing their understanding of leadership, work environment and equal treatment. The findings detected in the survey suggested on what areas the activities in the project should focus on (Osby kommun 2011a: 9). Finally, a specific mapping was done concerning knowledge in the areas of equality and diversity in the target group. The project did also establish specific contacts with other municipalities working in the relevant areas and an assessment was done concerning interested organizations and actors in the private sector (Osby kommun 2011a: 9).

5.1.2 Visionärt ledarskap: implementation phase

In the implementation phase the overall target with the project was to develop the skills of the executives in areas of equality, integration and diversity. Within the municipality, no one of the employees should after the project feel discriminated based of their sex, age, religion, sexual orientation or identity (Osby kommun 2011a: 8). Moreover, the target was to increase the skills of the executives in their leadership and enable the executives to develop their leadership when working in the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 8). Also, an overall target was to make the executives more familiar to other executives in the municipality and thus establish a common platform resulting in that the same values, policies and rules are used throughout the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 8).

When turning to the activities laid down in the implementation phase, one can first turn to the recurring activities in the project. Once a month reporting was done to the steering group of the project, made up of executives from different administrations of the municipality and the municipal chief executive. Moreover, information was distributed to executives in the municipality, to the reference group of the project and information was also spread in the municipality using newsletters (Osby kommun 2011a: 12-13). Finally, the project leader also had the

responsibility to report to the administrative agency Statistics Sweden about the participants engaged in the project (Interview Osby 2014-05-08).

The project did also use an external evaluator during the project (2011a: 10). The evaluator was specifically assigned to conduct a process evaluation. More specific tasks for the evaluator were to engage with the project-lead and support to them, participate in meetings and other activities of the project and also report regularly on how the project functioned (Osby kommun 2011a: 10-11).

When turning to the activities being more time specific, the project included a course for the target-groups of the project, namely executives, steering-group and the project lead, in areas of accessibility, diversity and equal treatment (Osby kommun 2011a: 12). External actors with specific expertise provided a course in the areas (Osby kommun 2011a: 12). Also in the early phases, a course towards the executives and specific administrations in LEAN, a specific mode of operations, took place (Osby kommun 2011a: 8). In the following time of the project, more specific workshops, seminars and courses were organized in the above-mentioned areas (Osby kommun 2011a: 9). Finally, one of the activities in the project was to establish a policy concerning leadership in the municipality and this policy was established and distributed to all executives (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). However, the project leader argues that the policy could not be regarded to be new, because it was the existing one, not being used by the executives in municipality (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08).

5.1.3 Variable 1: Collaboration

At first, concerning collaboration, it is formulated in the application form that collaboration will take place at different levels within the project. For example, between the municipality and different labour unions and between the municipality and other non-governmental organizations that represents users towards the municipality. When assessing collaboration in the municipality, the project leader argues that the level of collaboration between executives in the project has increased (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). Also, the executives now regard the municipality more uniform, something that changed with the project. Also, collaboration took place when the executives from different levels and administrations participated in the courses about leadership within the project. The different courses about leadership, equal treatment and working environment were open towards the private sector. The intention is to increase the collaboration with the private sector (Osby kommun 2011a: 17). However, collaboration with the private sector was something that decreased throughout the project (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08).

5.1.4 Variable 2: Developmental learning

One of the main intentions with the project was to introduce a visionary leadership open to development and learning. As formulated in the application

form, a desire was to introduce a leadership that is open to learning from every level and towards every employee in the organization. The employees within the municipality should have the possibility to bring forwards new ideas on how improve the operating activities (Osby kommun 2011a: 15). In the interview with the project leader, it is presented that they suggested on a particular content of the educative activities, however, the executives themselves wanted to in particular bring forward more issues tied to personal attributes, including equality, integration and diversity (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). Thus, the executives themselves decided on the content of the activities.

Concerning the evaluation of the project, one could start by assessing the evaluation laid down by the external evaluator. The evaluation used was on-going evaluation, however including attributes of a planned evaluation interested in the more quantitative results of the project, when for example assessing the fulfilment of quantitative targets within the project (Demokratikonsult 2013: 9-10). Moreover, something detected in the interviews with the project leader, the relations between the municipality and the evaluators were rather defective (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). Indeed, the knowledge of evaluator was not used in the project, when the project lead for example provided the evaluator with suggestions on what to assess (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08).

5.1.5 Variable 3: Active ownership

The variable of active ownership is not specifically discussed in the application form. Rather, the researcher must identify whether the owners of the project, the lead of the municipality, are active within the project. Some insights can be drawn from how active ownership is described and how the owners are planned to be active within the project.

The overall intention with the project was to introduce a developed and visionary leadership within the municipality. The executives of different administrations in the municipality were the target group in the project. The idea of conducting the project funded by the ESF was approved by the relevant executives in the municipality. Also, the different areas included in the courses of the project are the ones asked for by the executives. The ideas behind the project was approved and supported by elected representatives together with organizations working close to the municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 4). Finally, is to assess that the steering group of the project will be made up of executives from different administrations of the municipality as well as the municipal chief executive. Also non-governmental organizations and the private sector were included in the steering group municipality (Osby kommun 2011a: 19). When assessing developmental learning, the municipal executives themselves decided on the content of the activities in the project (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). Moreover, when discussing if the lead municipality was actively involved and provided the deployment of the resources and steering of the project, this is something confirmed by the project leader. It is detected that the lead of the municipality was committed and provided support enough to make close to every

executive in the municipality participate in the activities of the project (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08).

5.1.6 Assessment if the EU-policies have been implemented

In order to assess if the horizontal principles have been implemented, one must return to the operational indicator used in this study, in specific, concrete changes and the presence of equality, integration and diversity in official documents of the municipalities.

In the project and when assessing the variables above, it could be seen that indicators of the variables collaboration, developmental learning and active ownership are present when conducting the project.

The level of collaboration between executives in the project has increased, something argued by both the project leader and the human resource director in the municipality when they suggest that the level of collaboration between executives in the project has increased (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08; Interview Osby, 2014-05-12). Moreover, the project included learning activities. However, the difficulties in relation to the external evaluator suggests on obstacles to successful developmental learning. When consider active ownership, it is also argued in one of the interviews, the municipal chief executive was particular active when providing support and steering in the project (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). However, the lead of the municipality did not engage active in the concrete activities of the project. Rather, the lead supported the educative activities and motivated others to take part in them. Concerning the variable of developmental learning, the project leader suggest on difficulties when using the external evaluator (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08).

Returning to the assessment if the horizontal principles have been implemented, one could detect that the project has not resulted in any concrete changes and the increased presence of equality, integration and diversity in the official documents of the municipality. In the findings a new policy with values in leadership is detected (Osby kommun 2011b: 1). However, the project leader argues that the content was not changed because of the project (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). The detected policy in leadership seen as established in the project was instead the revival of the existing one (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). Therefore, the policy could not been influenced by any of the principles included in the project. Anyhow, it must be presented that the project seems to have resulted in the increased knowledge of equality, integration and diversity in the municipality. Something argued by both the project leader and the human resource director are that the executives now consider the principles in their work when for example recruiting new co-workers (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). The project may also result in inspiration when the municipality now have started to work with the new equal treatment plan. However, it is uncertain if the activities in the project will result in any concrete changes in this plan (Interview Osby, 2014-05-08). Because this work is still in the initial phase, it is hard to suggest if the principles will be included or not.

5.2 Project 2: Kulturutveckling, kompetensutveckling och kompetensstyrning i Perstorps Kommun

The second project that will be assessed in this study is the ESF-funded project entitled “Kulturutveckling, kompetensutveckling och kompetensstyrning i Perstorps Kommun” owned by and conducted in the municipality of Perstorp in northeastern Scania. This project is also included in the first of the three priority axes, skills supply. Moreover, the project was laid down in the phase of mobilization and the phase of implementation and finalized 2014-01-31 (Perstorps kommun 2011:1). The project was about initiating a more efficient and collaborative municipal organization. Moreover, the project was intended to develop a common understanding between the municipal employees of the culture and values in the municipality (Perstorps kommun 2011: 2). Before applying and entering the project, a survey was distributed to all municipal employees. The findings of the survey suggested on the overall need to map out the competences of the municipal employees but also establish a common approach towards other employees and citizens in the municipality (Perstorps kommun 2011: 3).

5.2.1 Kulturutveckling, kompetensutveckling och kompetensstyrning i Perstorps Kommun: mobilization phase

When entering the mobilization phase, the first concrete action was to start map out the competences of the municipal employees and in order to present relevant activities of the project (Perstorps kommun 2011: 3). During this work, equality and accessibility constituted one of the areas in the mapping. Also, after having assessed the competences in this area, an equality and accessibility program was introduced providing guidelines how to work with these areas during the project (Perstorps kommun 2011: 5). After finalized the mapping, the specific activities of the project were decided and an external evaluator was assigned to the project (Perstorps kommun 2011: 10). The evaluator was especially assigned to ensure that the overall targets of the projects were fulfilled, but also to ensure that the gender mainstreaming was laid down (Perstorps kommun 2011: 8). Moreover, the evaluator was assigned to participate active during the process of the project (Perstorps kommun 2011: 8). The mobilization phase ended with the establishment of the organization behind the project and that the project lead took part in educative activities concerning equality and accessibility (Perstorps kommun 2011: 10).

5.2.2 Kulturutveckling, kompetensutveckling och kompetensstyrning i Perstorps Kommun: implementation phase

The overall target with the project was to ensure increased competence of the municipal employees, executives and elected representatives. But also to introduce common basic values and vision for the municipality, that together will result in a more efficient and cooperative organization (Perstorps kommun 2011: 6). When turning to the activities in the implementation phase, one can start with the recurring activities. First, was to start the process with the new and common values and vision for the municipality. The common values and vision was laid down and an external actor was assigned to the process (Perstorps kommun 2011: 11). Moreover, the project engaged actively with the private sector in the municipality and this when the project lead on a regularly basis informed the private actors on the proceedings of the project (Perstorps kommun 2011: 11).

When turning to the activities being more time specific in the project, the project focused on ten particular areas, namely professionalism, service, attraction, cooperation, collaboration, effectiveness, diversity, equal treatment, communication and treatment (Perstorps kommun 2011: 11). Concerning these ten areas, particular educative activities engaged the municipal employees (Perstorps kommun 2011: 3).

5.2.3 Variable 1: Collaboration

In the application form, collaboration is foremost assessed concerning internal collaboration. In particular, an outspoken need was to develop a more cooperative organization, between the municipal employees, executives and elected representatives (Perstorps kommun 2011: 6). Also, private actors in the municipality were targeted, however without any active participation in the activities of the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). The process leader indicates that the project managed to create a fruitful relationship between the municipal employees, executives and elected representatives in the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). For example, the lead of the project established an active relationship with the elected representatives in the municipality during the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12).

5.2.4 Variable 2: Developmental learning

Concerning developmental learning, it is argued by the process leader in the project that the level of learning was particular high in the municipality and between the municipal employees (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). Not every employee was reached in the activities of the project but close to all of the employees have been reached with the results of the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12).

Concerning the evaluation of the project, one could start by assessing the evaluation laid down by the external evaluator. The evaluation was conducted during the project and the evaluator was especially assigned to ensure the

fulfilment of overall targets, but also that the gender mainstreaming was laid down (Perstorps kommun 2011: 8). Moreover, the process leader argues that the external evaluator was successful and useful during the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). Also, when studying the evaluation report in detail, particular focus was towards the process and qualitative result of the project (Haverdal Consulting 2014: 6).

5.2.5 Variable 3: Active ownership

Concerning active ownership, it is declared in the application form that the steering-group of the project is going to be made up of the project-leader, the municipal chief executive, and the human resource director in the municipality (Perstorps kommun 2011: 15). In the interview with the project leader, it is suggested that the municipal chief executive was clearly one of the persons behind and in support of the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-04-05). Though, alternations in that position took place during the project. However, it is suggested in one of the interviews the current municipal chief executive has been engaged in the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-14). For example, the municipal chief executive was particular involved in the work with the new and common vision of the municipality (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). Moreover, the municipal employees, executives and elected representatives all were involved in the project. In particular, elected representatives and the municipal chief executive took particular lead in the work with the common vision and values of the municipality (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). The work with the common vision and values of the municipality has not been finalized and decided upon. However, the interviewees describe a process strongly inspired by the activities in the project and that they have influenced the new vision and values of the municipality (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12; Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-14).

5.2.6 Assessment if the EU-policies have been implemented

In order to assess if the EU-policies have been implemented one must return to the operational indicator of successful implementation as used in this study, in specific, concrete changes and the presence of equality, integration and diversity in the official documents of the municipality.

In the project and when assessing the variables above, it could be detected that the variables of collaboration, developmental learning and active ownership were present when conducting the project. Concerning collaboration, it is foremost detected concerning internal collaboration within the municipality. The project leader argues that collaboration in the municipality was established and developed during the project between employees, executives and elected representatives in the municipality (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). Concerning developmental learning, a successful and fruitful usage of the external evaluator during the project is detected (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). When discussing

active ownership, it is declared in one of the interviews that both the municipal chief executive and the elected representatives paid interest in the project. Especially, when the municipal chief executive took particular lead and was involved in the work with the common vision and values of the municipality (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-12). In one of the interviews, it is described that the project has managed to bring together the municipal lead in a process strongly inspired by the project (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-14).

When assessing if the horizontal principles have been implemented, one could assess the indicator used, namely when concrete changes are made and the principles of equality, integration and diversity are present in official documents of the municipality. The findings suggest that the project has resulted in a process of revising the common vision and values of the municipality. The new common vision and values are still to be decided by the municipality. However, the findings in the interviews suggest that the new documents are inspired by the project including the horizontal principles (Interview Perstorp, 2014-05-14).

5.3 Comparison: projects with the horizontal principles as underlying policy

This section will discuss if any differences are detected concerning the variables in the project compared in this to study. The relevant variables will be assessed followed by a summary comparing the projects.

5.3.1 Variable 1: Collaboration in the projects

After have studied the projects in detail it is clear that the some specific indicators of collaboration are to be detected in each of the projects. The projects find it rather hard to collaborate externally, with other organizations and actors. Both projects intended to collaborate with external actors but this is something that decreases during the project. Moreover, the projects intended to increase collaboration internally. The findings suggest that both projects have managed this. However, when consider external collaboration, this is foremost detected when the projects have assigned external experts to perform the educative activities. Also something similar between the projects is that they have assigned an external evaluator to conduct evaluation during the process of the project. When then assessing the evaluation and the usage of the evaluator, this is something included in the variable of developmental learning that will follow below.

5.3.2 Variable 2: Developmental learning in the projects

When assessing the variable of developmental learning, the findings suggest on several similarities between the projects. Foremost, the projects consider the needs and the will of the employees. Also, the projects include similar educative activities. The educative activities could in the projects be seen as formal and structured rather similar. However, concerning the use of the external evaluator, the projects should be seen as rather different. As detected in the interviews, the project laid down in Perstorp developed a rather fruitful relationship with the external evaluator. Rather contrary the project laid down in Osby find it hard to use their evaluator. Indeed, this is something important that differs between the projects that will be discussed further below.

5.3.3 Variable 3: Active ownership in the projects

Concerning active ownership, findings in both of the projects suggest on a municipal lead involved and engaged in each of the projects. However, some differences are detected. When assessing the variable in the project laid down in Osby, the findings foremost suggest that the lead has been engaged and provided support enough to make every executive engaged in the educative activities. Indeed, the findings also suggest that the project proved to be fruitful, when executives now have developed and altered the way they recruit. However, when assessing the findings concerning the project as laid down in Perstorp, it is suggested that the municipal lead, elected representatives and municipal chief executive, have been particular engaged in the work with the new common vision and values of the municipality. Findings concerning the project laid down in Perstorp suggest that the project thus has managed to engage the municipal lead to revise official documents and guidelines of the municipality.

5.3.4 Summary

After have discussed each of the relevant variables independently, one must now discuss the findings together. Similar indicators of collaboration are identified in each of the projects. However, concerning developmental learning, the projects differ in some aspects. It could therefore be possible that the evaluator had an important function when proving guidance on how to engage and motivate the lead of the municipality to be more active in the project laid down in Perstorp. When then assessing active ownership, findings are presented suggesting that the lead in Osby foremost provided support and engaged executives at different levels to participate in the educative activities in the project. Rather differently, something detected in the project in Perstorp, the lead of the municipality participates actively in project, when working with the common vision and values of the municipality.

Finally, it is hard to argue if the principles are implemented successfully in any of the municipalities. Indeed, the findings are in the periphery. In Osby, a new leadership policy was established. However, the project leader argues that it is in

fact the revival of the existing one. Clearly, this questions successful implementation of the principles in that leadership policy. In Perstorp, both the project leader and the process leader argue that the project has started up a process of revising the common vision and values of the municipality. Moreover, they suggest that this revision is inspired by the activities in the project. Therefore, this study will argue that the project in Perstorp seems to have managed to successful implement the principles. However, it must be clearly stated that the confirmation of successful implementation of the policies in Perstorp are made with a reservation, because the common vision and values still needs to be decided. Similarly, the project in Osby seems to not have implemented the policies successfully. However, the process in Osby is still in the initial phases. The findings detected in the projects are summarized and presented in the table below.

Figure 4. Comparison between two projects having the horizontal principles as underlying policy

	Visionärt ledarskap	Kulturutveckling, kompetensutveckling och kompetensstyrning
Collaboration?	Yes	Yes
Developmental learning?	Yes	Yes
Active ownership?	No	Yes
Successful implementation?	(No)	(Yes)

5.4 Project 3: (o)Likabehandling

The third project that will be assessed in this study is the ESF-funded project entitled "(o)Likabehandling" or "(Un)equal treatment" owned by and conducted in the municipality of Trelleborg in southern Scania. The project was included in the first of the three priority axes, skills supply. Moreover, the project was laid down in the preliminary phase and in the phase of implementation and finalized 2011-08-31 (Trelleborg kommun 2009:1).

The project "(o)Likabehandling" was about initiating a dialogue and a new attitude within the municipality concerning equal treatment. All employees in the municipality were targeted in the project and the foremost activity was to organize learning seminars concerning equal treatment (Trelleborg kommun 2009:10). The project enabled a general skills supply towards the employees in the municipality concerning the horizontal principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and diversity (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 4).

5.4.1 (o)Likabehandling: preliminary phase

Before entering the project, a preliminary phase including mapping was done by the municipality of Trelleborg in order to assess how the organization worked with respect to principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. After the mapping was laid down the conclusion was reached that the general knowledge about those principles was good and at a satisfactory level. However, a conclusion was also drawn concerning that little was done in the ordinary activities suggesting on the respect and implementation of these principles. The problem identified was not a lack in general understanding and knowledge, rather, it was about implementing the principles in the municipal organizations (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 2). In order to assess how the employees approached the principles in the municipal organization, it is argued in the application form that they see a challenge when approaching individuals and not to discriminate on the bases of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 3).

5.4.2 (o)Likabehandling: implementation phase

In the implementation phase it was time to organize different activities targeted towards the problems described above. The overall need in the municipality was to make the employees more confident and sure when providing a service without any discrimination. After the project, no citizens in contact with the municipality should feel that they have been discriminated and mistreated by a municipal employee.

The project started with a presentation on a meeting with all the different municipal administrations (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 5). Then, the project

continued with some of the recurring activities in the project. For example, meeting with the steering-group of the project made up of different heads of administrations (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 5). An external evaluator was assigned during the project. The evaluator assigned had in particular the function to ensure that the overall targets of the project were fulfilled, that the employees should be confident when providing a service without discrimination, the introduction of equal treatment representatives, increased knowledge in areas of diversity and equality and the production and distribution of educative material (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 5-6).

For the activities being more time specific, one can first turn to that the project arranged seminars during a day targeted towards all the employees in the municipality (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 5). Different external organizations and actors with knowledge in the relevant areas provided the seminars (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 8). After one introductory seminar, more specific seminars followed (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 6). After the seminars, equal treatment representatives were introduced at all workplaces in the municipality. The same representatives produced specific material concerning the areas of equal treatment and non-discrimination (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 6).

5.4.3 Variable 1: Collaboration

In the application form, collaboration is considered to be crucial in order to successfully execute the activities of the project. However, collaboration has not been present this far within the municipality. Therefore, it is argued to be important to collaborate in order to successfully execute the activities of the project (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 3). Also, within the project, every specific administration was going to be involved in the activities of the project and develop their skills in field of the horizontal principles. However, something detected in one of the interviews, the project only concerned employees within the municipality (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-08).

5.4.4 Variable 2: Developmental learning

As declared in the first page of the application form, the project was not considered by the applicants to fulfil the criteria of learnable environment. However, when assessing the application form, the indicators of developmental learning could be identified. For example, seminars made up the main activities of the project and they attempted to engage every employee in the municipality (Trelleborg kommun 2009: 9).

Concerning the evaluation of the project, an external evaluator was used during the project. The evaluator assessed the process, however, considerable parts of the evaluation were devoted to quantitative measures, such as number of persons engaged and consider the result of the project on these quantitative measures (Tranquist 2011: 30). However, it is described in one of the interviews,

the relation with the external evaluator proved to be fruitful and the analysis on the project as laid down by the evaluator were used to alter parts of the project (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-14).

After the interviews were conducted, the findings suggest that the employees in the municipality regarded themselves educated in the particular areas. When consider the variable of developmental learning, this should be seen as an obstacle. For example, the employees felt that they already before the project acted with respect to principles of equality, integration and diversity within the municipality and towards citizens (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-08). The project was applied for in order to make clear that the principles of equality, integration and diversity were a priority in the municipality (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-14).

5.4.5 Variable 3: Active ownership

Concerning active ownership, it is declared in the application form that the steering-group of the project was made up of heads of every specific administration (Trelleborgs kommun 2009: 9). This is something suggesting on active ownership as well as fruitful collaboration within the municipality. In one of the interviews, it is presented that the head of the municipality devoted resources, as in extra personnel, to ensure the functioning of the project (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-14). However, the interviews conducted also suggests on that the project leader self, together with other employees, engaged most actively with the project (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-08). When also assessing the role of the lead in the municipality, they were not actively involved in any specific activity (Trelleborgs kommun 2009: 5-7).

5.4.6 Assessment if the EU-policies have been implemented

In order to assess if the EU-policies have been implemented one should also here return to the operational indicator of the implementation of the horizontal principles that is used in this study, in specific, concrete changes and the presence of equality, integration and diversity in official documents of the municipalities.

Before turning to the assessment of the horizontal principles have been implemented one should discuss the findings concerning the variables of importance in this study. When assessing the variables above, one could suggest that the variable of collaboration is detected in the project. However, it is foremost detected within the municipality between and employees (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-08) and to some extent also towards external actors with expertise in the areas. Concerning developmental learning, this is however something that could be more questioned. One of the interviewees suggests that the municipal employees already felt that they have knowledge and respects the principles of equality, integration and diversity (Interview Trelleborg 2014-05-08). However, the project managed to involve the municipal employees in different educative

activities in the relevant areas. Concerning active ownership it could mostly be detected when the heads of each specific administration of the municipality were involved in the steering group of the project (Trelleborgs kommun 2009: 9). Therefore, both variables of developmental learning and active ownership could be questioned. However, an indicator of developmental learning is detected because an external evaluator was assigned to the project. The variable of active ownership is therefore less present, because the findings only suggest that the lead of the municipality supported the project, not having a prominent or active function.

When then turning to if the horizontal principles have been implemented, one should return to the indicator as used in this study, namely when concrete changes are made and the principles of equality, integration and diversity are present in official documents of the municipalities. It is suggested that the equal treatment representatives produced specific material, however, this material is no longer used to any considerable extent (Interview Trelleborg 2014-05-08). Moreover, an equal opportunities plan of the municipality is established. It is however suggested that the project did not influence with any specific changes in this plan (Interview Trelleborg, 2014-05-14). Rather, the plan recommends on using the equal treatment material produced in the project (Trelleborgs kommun 2014: 3).

5.5 Project 4: Jämlika Landskrona 2013

The fourth project that will be assessed in this section is the ESF-funded project entitled "Jämlika Landskrona 2013" or "Equal Landskrona 2013" owned by and conducted in the municipality of Landskrona in southern Scania. This project was also included in the first of the three priority axes, skills supply. Moreover, the project was laid down in the mobilization phase and the implementation phase and finalized 2013-01-31 (Landskrona kommun 1).

5.5.1 Jämlika Landskrona: mobilization phase

In the project, the mobilization phase was about doing an assessment and map-out the general need in the organization and the need among the employees in the organization (Svenska ESF-rådet 1). Also, it was about suggesting a suitable and efficient method and activities in order to engage and develop skills among the employees (Svenska ESF-rådet 1).

The project was laid down in order to gender mainstream the municipality in certain key areas. In order to perform gender mainstreaming some key areas had to be identified and prioritized. Here, the organization behind the project

identified and prioritized four overbridging areas, namely the municipal steering processes, human resource processes, organizational cultural as well as politically formulated goals (Landskrona kommun 2010:1). About the overbridging areas, the municipal steering processes included the municipal budget, operational planning and follow-up (Landskrona kommun 2010:4). Especially the steering process regarding the municipal budget was one of the processes specifically prioritized by the municipal executive committee (Landskrona kommun 2010:4). Moreover, the human resource processes included policy and guidelines, mapping of salaries and guidelines for recruiting (Landskrona kommun 2010:1). The organizational culture was to develop the existing culture into one that has been gender mainstreamed and finally, the politically formulated goals were about the vision formulated and prioritized by elected representatives in Landskrona (Landskrona kommun 2010:1-3).

Working groups were assembled for each of the four overbridging areas in the municipality with responsibility for the process to conduct gender mainstream. Municipal employees belonging to each of the working groups were chosen by the project-lead, recommended or participated because of their own interest (Landskrona 2010:2). These working groups were then educated in the relevant areas and about the concept of gender mainstreaming. Concerning the activities, an external expert performed the educative activities (Landskrona kommun 2010:2). Employees in working-groups, key-persons as well as heads of different administrations of the municipality participated in the activities (Landskrona kommun 2010:2).

5.5.2 Jämlika Landskrona: implementation phase

When turning to the implementation phase, it was time for the project to actually perform the methods and activities suggested in the mobilization phase, and also, the methods and activities were directed towards the parts of the organization and towards the employees been targeted in previous phase (The Swedish ESF Council: 2014).

The recurring activities that took place early in the project was to report to the Swedish ESF Council, report to the steering-group of the project made up of heads of administrations, report to the administrative agency Statistics Sweden about the number of participants engaged in the project, report to the strategic HR-group, the central collaborative group and also report to the municipal executive committee (Landskrona kommun 2010: 29). The lead behind the project had the responsibility to participate and represent the project at different conferences in order to exchange experiences, spread results of the projects and develop networks (Landskrona kommun 2010: 29).

Relating to the recurring activities specified above is to now consider how the project used the evaluation. Something declared in the report to the Swedish ESF Council was the project intended to use on-going evaluation during the project and assign an external evaluator to provide this (Landskrona kommun 2010: 22). The evaluator was assigned as specified in the report and conducted an

evaluation during the project (Landskrona kommun 2013: 10). The foremost important purpose was to be a continuous support to the lead of the project (Landskrona kommun 2010: 22). As moreover declared, the evaluator had a more specific assignment made up of different tasks. Those tasks were to assess if the activities and methods used in the project was laid down in accordance with the declaration done in the application, how well the project is organized and how well the different components of the organisation has managed to cooperate, how well the project has approached the issues of gender mainstreaming and accessibility as well as provide and assessment if the conditions are present in order for the organization to develop and improve even when the project have finalized (Landskrona kommun 2010: 22).

For the other activities and methods being more time-specific one can at first turn to those as used in the more early phases of the project. First was the activity about educating all employees within the municipality in norms and values. External actors performed this activity with specific knowledge in the areas being thought (Landskrona kommun 2010: 29-30). When the project then continued, the activities were specified towards certain target groups. Activities then took place targeted towards these groups. More specific, all municipal economists were educated in gender issues, the municipal executive committee were educated in equality, all working groups were educated in equality specified to their area, all heads of administration were educated in the areas of the project during two days followed by three occasions when the findings done in the working groups related to their area was presented and assessed (Landskrona kommun 2010: 30). Finally, a large conference was launched at the final phase of the project with all heads of administrations, the municipal executive committee and the heads of boards in the municipal assembly present, about the findings of the project and about discussing how the work as done should be taken further (Landskrona kommun 2010: 30-31). In all the activities, except the one targeted towards heads of administration and the end-conference, an external actor with specific knowledge in the areas being thought performed the activities (Landskrona kommun 2010: 30). However, concerning the activities targeted towards the heads of administration, the content was received from an external actor with specific knowledge in the specific areas (Landskrona kommun 2010: 30).

5.5.3 Variable 1: Collaboration

Concerning collaboration, one must according to the operational indicators both assess the collaboration that takes place internally and externally in the project. To then begin with an assessment of which actors and organisations collaborating internally it is rather clear from the review of the project, that the different heads and their respective administrations within the municipality were involved in the project. In total, all the nine different administrations in the municipality participated in the project (Landskrona kommun 2013: 7). Also, the heads of those administrations constituted the steering group of the project thus deeply involved

in the project (Landskrona kommun 2013: 7). As with the purpose of the project, the municipal organization was covered by the project.

Furthermore, the external evaluators functioned very supportive to the lead of the project (Landskrona kommun 2013: 6). Also, concerning all the activities, except the activities targeted towards heads of administration and the end-conference, they were laid down together with an external actor with specific knowledge in the areas being thought (Landskrona kommun 2010: 30). For example, private actors were used in order to educate working-groups and the heads of administrations (Landskrona kommun 2010: 6-7). Moreover, the private actors were used to provide the content in the educational activities provided by the project lead themselves (Landskrona kommun 2010: 6). Moreover, it is presented in the report to the Swedish ESF-council, the trade unions constituted important organizations to cooperate with in order to gender mainstream the recruitment process of the municipality (Landskrona kommun 2010: 14).

5.5.4 Variable 2: Developmental learning

Concerning developmental learning, the activities in the project educated different target groups within the municipality in the concept of gender mainstream. The target groups were employees, executives, elected representatives and other relevant persons tied to the municipality (Landskrona kommun 2010: 13). More specific, all municipal economists were educated in gender issues, the municipal executive committee educated in equality and all working groups educated in equality specified to their area (Landskrona kommun 2010: 30).

When assessing the evaluation that was done, an external evaluator conducted an on-going evaluation of the project (Landskrona kommun 2013: 10). The evaluator was actively engaged and provided a support during the project. Moreover, this is something that is confirmed by the project leader, arguing that the evaluator was a useful support when conducting the project (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). For example, the evaluator encouraged the project leader to consider the long-term results of the project and functioned as a support when approaching the lead of the municipality when more active steering and focus were needed (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). When returning to the central questions as asked, the project leader also declared in the interview that concrete changes were done in the project after the evaluator was consulted (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). Also concerning the evaluator, the findings above suggests that the evaluation was mostly developmental supportive. Clearly, when assessing the answers of the interviewee, but also when reviewing the evaluation, it suggests on the importance learning effects and the long-term effects of the project, indicating on a developmental supportive evaluation (Oxford Research 2013: 26-33). Furthermore, the evaluation concerning the project is still used in the municipality in order to learn from the project (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07).

Finally, one indicator of developmental learning could be detected when conducting the interviews. The results of the project have actively been spread

towards other municipalities and national agencies (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). This something suggests that the project has and continues to be open to circulation and influence towards other actors and organizations.

5.5.5 Variable 3: Active ownership

Concerning active ownership, the conducted interviews suggest that the project leader wanted the municipal lead to be more actively engaged in the project (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). However, when assessing the involvement of the municipal lead, several working groups were assembled in the project for each of the four overbridging areas and they were responsible for the process to conduct the gender mainstream (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). These working groups were highly involved and active in the project. In the working groups, the municipal employees and executives of relevance and working active with the processes made up the members. For example, the municipal economists were responsible for the steering process as the budget and the municipal human resource department was responsible for the recruitment process (Interview Landskrona, 2014-05-07). This, making relevant actors actively involved when ensuring deployment of the resources, steering and focus needful to implement the relevant policies in the municipal official documents.

5.5.6 Assessment if the EU-policies have been implemented

In order to assess if the EU-policies have been implemented one can return to the operational indicator of the implementation of the horizontal principles used in this study, in specific, concrete changes and the presence of equality, integration and diversity in the official documents of the municipalities.

In the project and concerning the specified variables above, it could be seen that all the variables of collaboration, developmental learning and active ownership are detected when assessing the project.

Concerning collaboration, this could for example be detected when assessing the educative activities of the project performed by external actors and the fruitful relations with the external evaluator. Overall, the findings indicate on an overall openness to collaboration in the project.

When assessing developmental learning, the fruitful relations with the evaluator suggest on the presence of developmental learning in the project. The findings make it clear that the evaluator was present in the project. Also, because the project lead put forward concrete changes and that the evaluation still is in use suggest on the variable of developmental learning.

Consider active ownership, findings were detected in the interviews suggesting on the difficulties when engaging the lead of the municipality. However, the established working-groups proved to function well and were active when for example the revision of the steering process and of the recruitment process were realised.

Finally, when consider the findings about the project it must be argued that the horizontal principles have been implemented successfully. The project managed to engage the relevant actors in the municipality, namely the economists and the human resources department, in charge and with the ability to revise and put forward new documents.

5.6 Comparison: projects with the horizontal principles as main policy

One must now discuss if any difference are to be detected concerning the variables in the relevant projects. The relevant variables will be assessed followed by a summary comparing the projects.

5.6.1 Variable 1: Collaboration in the projects

When assessing the variable of developmental learning, the findings presented above suggest on several similarities between the projects. Foremost, the projects find it hard to collaborate externally. Both of the projects are laid down only concerning the municipal organisation. Also something similar is that the projects have assigned external experts to perform the educative activities. However, when assessing the educative activities, the projects have used rather innovative educative methods when educating about the principles of equality, integration and diversity. Also something similar between the projects is that they have assigned an external evaluator to conduct evaluation throughout the process of the project. As detect above, interviewees from both of the projects are witnessing about the fruitful usage of external evaluators during the project.

5.6.2 Variable 2: Developmental learning in the projects

Concerning developmental learning, findings suggest that the project in Trelleborg faced difficulties concerning the will of the employees to engage in the project. More specific, the municipal employees considered themselves already competent in the relevant areas. The project was laid down in order to clearly signal the municipal engagement concerning the principles of equality, integration and diversity. In the project in Landskrona, the project leader argues about the fruitful usage of the external. Moreover, the findings suggest that the project in Landskrona successfully engaged several of the relevant actors in the municipality with targeted activities. When assessing the process of revising the municipal documents, the activities targeted specific employees proved to be successful.

5.6.3 Variable 3: Active ownership in the projects

When discussing the presence of active ownership in the municipalities, it could also be detected that the municipal lead in Trelleborg clearly devoted the resources needful to carry on the project. However, when comparing with the project in Landskrona, the municipal lead together with municipal employees in Landskrona in the relevant areas engaged more actively in the process of the project. More specific, specific employees and the lead of the municipality engaged actively in particular working groups responsible for concrete activities, for example concerning revision of the municipal steering process and recruitment process.

5.6.4 Summary

The findings discussed above suggests on similarities between the projects concerning the variable collaboration. This is identified when it comes to the educative activities as laid down by external actors with expertise in the relevant areas. Concerning the variable of developmental learning, findings in the projects suggest that the project lead developed fruitful relations with their external evaluators. However, findings concerning the project in Landskrona suggest that the external evaluator inspired the project lead to put forward concrete changes in the project. Indeed, something that differs between the projects. However, concerning the finding in the variable of developmental learning was about the reluctance of municipal employees in Trelleborg. The interviewees suggest that the municipal employees did not agree in the need of the skill development activities in the project. Indeed, something that questions the presence of developmental learning within the municipal organization. Concerning the variable of active ownership, findings in both projects witness about the engagement of the municipal lead. However, when assessing the project in Landskrona, specific activities were targeted towards such actors in the municipal lead with possibility to alter existing and put forward new official documents of the municipality. To engage and make these employees together with the owners more active proved to be successful for the project in Landskrona. Especially, when consider that the project managed to put forward concrete revision in the official documents of the municipality. In contrast, the project in Trelleborg did not engage the municipal lead actively. A clear difference is therefore detected seen in how the different projects engaged relevant leading executives and elected representatives in respective municipality. The findings detected are summarized and presented in the table below.

Figure 5. Comparison between two projects having the horizontal principles as main policy

	(O)likabehandling	Jämlika Landskrona
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Collaboration?	Yes	Yes
Developmental learning?	Yes	Yes
Active ownership?	No	Yes
Successful implementation?	No	Yes

6 Discussion and analysis

The findings in this study will now be discussed together with an assessment if any differences are to be detected when comparing the projects having the relevant policies underlying with the second pair of projects having the relevant policies as main policies. Then, a discussion will follow based on the findings answering what variable proved to be most crucial when explaining successful implementation.

6.1 Comparison between the two pairs of projects

Something detected in this study is that projects share similarities in the variables of collaboration, developmental learning and active ownership. Therefore, it could not be argued that one pair of projects are different to the other pair of projects concerning any specific variable. However, it is detected that several advantages are to be found when having the horizontal principles as main policies. The advantages as suggested are foremost detected when assessing variables of collaboration and developmental learning. Concerning the advantage in collaboration, it could be detected when the educative activities are laid down by experts in the area, all concerning the same area and thus clearly concerning the relevant principles. When it comes to the advantage in developmental learning it is slightly related but mostly concerning the evaluation. When mainly having the horizontal principles as policies and area of the project, the evaluator assigned to the project will pay more attention to the implementation of the principles. When having the principles underlying, it is likely that the evaluator will consider other aspects of the project. Therefore, the findings suggest on advantages when having the principles close to the purpose of the project.

The findings suggest that it is possible to successfully implement the relevant principles even when not having them as main policy in the project. Each of the pair compared has internal differences concerning the variable of active ownership. However, when active ownership is to be detected the project tends to be successful in terms of implementing the principles. The findings therefore suggest that even in a project having the principles underlying, such project might be successful in terms of implementation if the variable active ownership is present. Therefore, it must be argued that it is important but not necessary to have the relevant policies as main policies. Moreover, the theory used in this study is strongly supported. This because the study has compared two different pairs of project in two separate most similar system designs, one argued to be most-likely and the other least-likely. In each pair, the theory is supported.

6.2 Identification of the most crucial variable

Indicators of the variable collaboration are to be found in all the projects as compared. Rather similar, indicators of the variable developmental learning are also to be found in the projects. However, in some of the projects, the findings suggests on less presence of developmental learning than in other projects. When all the projects are compared, it is possible to argue that active ownership is the most crucial variable in a project when it comes to be successful in terms of implementing the horizontal principles. In other words, when variation in active ownership is detected between two similar projects, variation in successful implementation will also be detected. Thus, one can also formulate a causal mechanism, namely, if active ownership, then successful implementation.

With respect to the theoretical framework in this study (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 31), variables of collaboration and developmental learning must also be present in the projects. Foremost, the variable of active ownership tends to be important when it comes to active ownership in the projects. When consider the findings in this study, it is therefore possible to argue that developmental learning, such as the use of an external evaluator and the educative activities within the project, are of crucial importance when it comes to engaging the lead of the municipality and inspire them to include the horizontal principles in the revision or formulation of municipal documents. For example, the external evaluator could suggest that the project needs to engage the municipal lead more actively. Therefore, the variable of developmental learning tends to important to that of active ownership. Moreover, one could also detect the importance of educating the lead of the municipality. In order for the lead to be active and include the principles in the official documents, the project must include activities educating the municipal lead. For example, a project can collaborate and use external experts in order to manage this. Thus, the variable of collaboration is also relevant because the project needs to collaborate with external actors and organizations. Without ignoring the importance of all variables, the findings foremost suggest that active ownership is the most crucial variable.

6.2.1 Active ownership as the most crucial variable

Concerning active ownership, the findings in this study supports the used theoretical framework. However, one must argue that it could be developed concerning the variable of active ownership. More specific, active ownership has been studied when using the operational indicator specifying that the leaders in the municipality are actively involved when providing resources and steering in the project (Svensson and Brulin 2013: 31). However, it might not be sufficient when the lead in a municipality solely ensures resources and steering in the projects. Findings in this study suggest that relevant actors in the municipality with the possibility to revise and influence official documents needs to actively participate in the activities of the project. For example, leading actors could be the

municipal chief executive, elected representatives or officials in charge of drafting official documents or guidelines. Besides providing resources and steering, the function described above is the more relevant indicator of active ownership.

7 Conclusion

It has been presented that the overall intention with the structural funds and cohesion policy is to foster cohesion in terms of employment and growth in the EU. Included in the structural funds are the horizontal principles of equality, integration, diversity and sustainable development intended to secure inclusive but also sustainable growth in the EU. The horizontal principles are in this study the relevant EU-policies. When it comes to the financial resources of the structural funds, they are allocated when financing projects throughout the EU. The projects receiving funding are intended to implement the policies as included in the funds and thus foster cohesion in terms of employment and growth in the EU.

The research question in this thesis was formulated into assessing *why certain projects are successful in implementing EU policies in the municipal organization?* In order to answer this question, this study has compared several projects and investigated what variable or variables were crucial in order to result in successful implementation of EU policies. The theoretical framework in this study was supported. In order to specifically address and answer the research question formulated, this study has explained that projects needs to include the mechanisms of collaboration, developmental learning and active ownership. However, active ownership proved to be the most crucial variable. This because, when active ownership was detected and the lead of the municipality was active in the project, the EU-policies were also successfully implemented. In contrast, when active ownership could not be detected in the projects assessed, the implementation of the relevant EU-policies turned out to be unsuccessful. Therefore, this study will suggest that the lead of the municipality needs to be actively involved in the concrete activities of the project. With support in the findings of this study, the lead of the municipality should be given a particular assignment, for example to draft new or revise official documents or guidelines of the municipality. Then, a project will be successful in terms of implementing the EU policies in the municipal organization. Something also suggested above, is that the lead of the municipality should be involved in the educative activities and collaborate with external actors. The findings in this study suggest that it is important that indicators of each mechanism are present in a project. Then, the relevant project will be successful in terms of implementing the relevant EU-policies in the municipal organization.

However, not every project will be successful in terms of implementing the policies. Therefore, one must argue that the findings in this study are important when it comes to assessing if the projects manages to fulfil the overall intention when being financed by the funds, namely to foster cohesion in terms of employment and growth in the EU. If the intention is to foster cohesion, the program guide when applying for projects financed by the structural funds must

more explicitly state that the lead of the municipality needs be targeted with the activities in the project. Also, projects should include revision of existing or drafting of new official documents in the municipality considering the relevant EU-policies. For example, the concept of mainstream described earlier in this study could be efficient when implementing the principles. The projects assessed in this study that used the concept proved to be successful. Therefore, one must argue that the concept of mainstream will probably improve the effectiveness of the structural funds in terms of implementing the horizontal principles.

When consider the municipalities in this study, the findings suggest that some of the projects financed from the structural funds have not included efficient activities or methods in terms of implementing the horizontal principles. Then, the effectiveness of the structural funds must be questioned. When a project solely provides activities of interest to the municipality, this could be funded by other financial sources.

7.1 Future research

This study has used a theoretical framework and variables presented by Brulin and Svensson (2011: 210; 2013: 31). Indeed, this particular framework could be used when assessing other policies or organizations. For example, it could be interesting to use the variables on a larger organization hosting several similar projects. When discussing independent variables traditionally derived from implementation theory it was also detected that the variables used in this study to a considerable extent are similar to the variables as suggested by Sabatier (1986) and Sabatier and Weible (2007). Sabatier and Weible presents another framework called the Advocacy Coalition Framework (2007: 189). To suggest on future research, it will be interesting to apply the framework presented by Sabatier and Weible to a process of implementing EU-policies. More specific, they argue that the framework recognizes different levels of government, several actors and organizations, conflicts in methods and different goals (Sabatier and Weible 2007: 189). Indeed, the variables could be seen relevant when studying implementation of EU-policies in municipalities. The framework developed by Brulin and Svensson has advantages, for example the accordance in relation to variables and vocabulary used by the managing authorities. However, the Advocacy Coalition Framework could be used in order to apply a different theoretical framework.

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9 Interview guide

Background information

- Please describe your role in the project?

Active ownership

- Tell me about the reason behind the project, why did you apply for it?
- How was the project motivated?
- How have the leading actors in the municipality been involved?
- How have the owners of the project engaged in providing resources and steering of the project?

Developmental learning

- Have you consulted what other actors and organizations in the area of the project have laid down?
- Describe how the results been circulated towards other actors and organizations?
- Describe the assignment given to the evaluator?
- Did you change anything specific in the project when it was carried out?
- How did you use the results of the evaluation? Did you change anything after the evaluation was assessed?
- How will you use the results if the project? Could you mention some specific changes in you organization?

Collaboration

- Did you cooperate with other actors and organizations from other sectors?
- If so, how did you use the actors and organizations?
- Are any relationships, partnerships present today?

Horizontal principles

- Have the work with equality, integration and diversity changed or been revised after the project was carried out? If so, could you mention some specific example?