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Gender Mainstreaming

- What is It Represented to Be?

A discourse analysis of how gender mainstreaming is constructed on a municipal level

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Abstract

When talking about gender equality work in public sector in Sweden two words come to mind, ‘gender’ and ‘mainstreaming’. Gender mainstreaming is Sweden’s official strategy to reach the national gender equality goals. Despite its popularity the strategy has received criticism for being too fixated on process and thus mainly focusing on methods, tools and policy instruments instead of addressing the real inequality problems.

In this thesis how gender equality and gender mainstreaming is discursively constructed on a municipal level is studied. The reason behind the focus on discourse is due to an assumption that how problems are discussed and represented will affect what solutions are proposed to solve these problems. By analyzing policy documents and interviews in two municipalities that are considered to be successful in their implementation with gender mainstreaming, it is found that the discourse in these municipalities is considerably different from how the criticism portrays the strategy. I argue this result to be significant since how gender problems are described in the municipalities will likely have an effect on how they are dealt with. Without making any further generalizations I also argue that the result opens up for a debate about what gender mainstreaming can and should be.

Key words: Gender Mainstreaming, Discourse Analysis, What’s the Problem? Approach, Problem Representation, Gender Equality
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Table of contents

1 Introduction **1**

1.1 Thesis Background 1

1.2 Research question and aim 2

2 Method **4**

2.1 Discourse and Policy 4

2.2 The 'What's the problem?' approach 6

2.2.1 The cases 8

2.2.2 Document analysis 9

2.2.3 Interviews 10

2.3 Limitations and issues 12

3 Theoretical framework **15**

3.1 What's wrong with mainstreaming gender? 15

3.2 Comments 20

4 Analysis **22**

4.1 Documents 22

4.1.1 Problem representations of gender equality 22

4.1.2 Discussion 28

4.2 Interviews 31

4.2.1 Representations of gender equality and gender mainstreaming 32

4.2.2 How to attain gender equality through mainstreaming 34

4.2.3 Issues with gender mainstreaming 37

4.3 Discussion 38

5 Conclusion **41**

References **43**

Literature 43

Empirical material 44

Appendix I: Interview questions **45**

Appendix II: Interview quotes **47**

1 Introduction

Sweden is a country considered to be one of the leading countries when it comes to equality between women and men. In the latest measuring made by the UNDP in 2012[1], Sweden ranked second place behind only the Netherlands. Despite this there are still many inequalities between women and men that need to be eliminated. The main strategy used in Sweden to come to terms with these inequalities is gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming can be defined in several ways[2] but in short it means that a gender equality perspective should be integrated on all policy levels and in all decision-making by the actors normally involved in the policymaking and the decision-making. It is argued that since equality between men and women is shaped where ordinary decisions are made, services provided and norms created, a gender equality perspective needs to exist in the daily work.

Even though few question this benevolent logic, the strategy has received criticism for how it is supposed to achieve gender equality. Scholars argue that the strategy is a result of the last decades' move towards neo-liberal governance, overly focused on methods, instruments and tools that do not achieve any real change in terms of reduced inequality. As gender mainstreaming is an accepted strategy that is widely used on several levels of public administration today, I believe it is important to open up for a discussion regarding this criticism. By studying the discourse of how gender mainstreaming is realized on the level of public administration that is closest to the citizens, namely the municipal level, my ambition is to do just this.

1.1 Thesis Background

During my time as an intern at Program for Gender Mainstreaming I came across both praise and criticism to the strategy of gender mainstreaming. As the program was dedicated to spread good examples of how to implement the strategy there

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[1] UNDP website

[2] Definition of the Council of Europe: "Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation,

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improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making."

was, unsurprisingly, a firm belief in the potential of the strategy, that it is transformative if applied correctly. Nevertheless, it was also where I came across the criticism to the strategy. The critics generally claim that the strategy is inherently flawed, as it is nothing more than the progeny of the last decades of neo-liberal ideas and influence that permeate society today. It is argued that there is an over-focus on methods and processes, which turns the strategy into a technocratic tool producing little in terms of increased gender equality. I found this critique perplexing since I had personally seen many examples of what could be considered successful implementation of the strategy. There were of course instances where the implementation of the strategy had not resulted in any observable improvements, but these cases were not in themselves grounds to dismiss the strategy completely I felt. Also, as the criticism was mainly based on experiences from national initiatives, I felt even less certain how well it could be translated to the work on the municipal level. As such, these were the reasons that led me towards how the criticism actually relates to the work done in the municipalities.

Carol Bacchi (1999, p.29) argues that how problems are represented is especially important since "the solution to the problem of problem definition is simply to define problems which can be solved". In other words, there is a hazard that instead of solving the 'real' problem, another solution is offered and accepted that implies another definition or representation of the problem. Thus, my intention is to study how these solutions through gender mainstreaming and problem representations of gender equality are defined and thought of on the municipal level. By doing this I hope to show that how gender equality is thought of in the municipalities studied opens up for an understanding of gender mainstreaming that is different to how the critics portray it, which in turn can lead to a better discussion about what gender mainstreaming ought to be.

1.2 Research question and aim

The aim of this thesis is to find out how gender equality and gender mainstreaming are discursively represented[3] in two municipalities working with the strategy. My ambition is therefore to answer the following overarching question:

[3] The word representation is a discourse analytic term used to describe definitions, understandings and meanings that are found in the discourses analyzed. This will be explained further in the methods chapter.

- *How is gender equality represented on the municipal level and how is this thought to be achieved through implementation of the strategy gender mainstreaming?*

In addition to this I would like to answer the following sub-question:

- *How does the problem representations of gender equality and how gender mainstreaming is to achieve it found in the municipalities relate to those put forward by the critics?*

As made clear by the second question the purpose is also to relate to the criticism that claim gender mainstreaming to have serious flaws in order to see to what extent the representations found in the municipalities are consistent with the criticism.

What I believe is important to make clear at this early stage is what the purpose of this thesis is *not*. My purpose is *not* to compare the municipalities in order to determine which is the better at gender mainstreaming. *Nor* is it to evaluate how well the actual gender equality work done in the municipalities corresponds to how it is described in policies and by those responsible for conducting the work.

As I have presented the background to the thesis and what questions I would like to answer and not answer in it, it is time to move on to how I plan to answer these questions. In the following methods chapter, my discourse analytic approach will be described.

2 Method

As made clear by the research question, my ambition in this thesis is to examine the discourse on the local level in Sweden in order to see what representations and constructions of gender equality and gender mainstreaming exist there. In addition, these representations will be contrasted to the criticism toward the strategy. Since much of this criticism has been produced through a discourse-analytic approach, I have chosen a similar method for this thesis, namely the 'what's the problem? approach'.

In this chapter I will present the approach, its limitations and how I intend to use it in my analysis. I will also describe my material and the reasons for choosing it.

2.1 Discourse and Policy

When discourse analysis is mentioned it is difficult not to think of the French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. Foucault argued that discourses are "groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking" (Rose 2012 p.190). With this thinking he created a sophisticated "positive" theory of power. What he argued in this theory was that power is not necessarily a repressive negative force, but a force that brings "into being regimes of legitimate knowledge or 'truth'" (Wagenaar 2011, p.111; Foucault in Götselius & Olsson 2008, p.181). What is revolutionary with this line of thinking is that power no longer is considered only to be exercised by the state itself, but also in language and discourses that become a tool to govern society and citizens.

Foucault drew inspiration from previous structuralist linguistic thinkers that were active in the beginning of the last century. One such was Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure argued that language consists of words that in themselves are signs. Signs that in themselves are comprised of two sides, the form and the content. He argued that the relation between these two are arbitrary as "[t]he meaning we attach to words is not inherent in them but a result of social conventions whereby we connect certain meanings with certain sounds." (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.10). What he meant by this is that what gives a certain word meaning is constructed and is in no way dictated by the outside world.

Both Wagenaar (2011) and Winther & Jørgensen (2002) use an example with the word 'dog' to illustrate this. When others say 'dog' it is through a social convention that we understand that they are referring to the barking four-legged animal. In the same way we know that it is not a cat and a mouse because these do

not bark, and while they also have four legs, they are much smaller. According to Saussure it is through the relation to other signs that a sign acquire its meaning (Wagenaar 2011, p.108). In this example that would be that a dog is not a cat or a mouse or any other animal for that part either.

To relate to this thesis I would like to illustrate this with the word 'gender equality'. Gender equality is a quite broad concept. I think that one would get as many different definitions and meanings of it as the number of people one would ask. Some people would likely say it is about equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Some would say that it is about equal wages for jobs irrespectively if a man or a woman carries them out. While some would likely define it by that it is what feminists want. Whatever the meaning it is given it is evident that the concept or word 'gender equality' is not naturally linked to some specific object in the world. Its meaning comes from how different individuals understand the concept through its relation to other signs (or concepts) in a specific language system.

It is irrelevant whether I agree or not with the statements above giving 'gender equality' meaning. What is of importance here is that language with its words and thus what it symbolizes, is not in any way objective as a natural consequence of the real world. On the contrary, language is constructed by social conventions where meanings are not fixed and can easily be replaced. For example, how we understand 'gender equality' may be far removed how things are in the world. It may merely be a result of how our family and friends talk about it, or how media depicts it. Nevertheless, our understanding of it is as real to us as anything and will affect how we talk about gender equality and act to achieve it.

As mentioned previously Foucault introduced an original theory of power and knowledge. "Truth is a discursive construction and different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false." (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.13). What is thus considered as truth in a certain discursive formation will determine what can be said and what cannot. For example, in Sweden there is a discussion, both societal and parliamentary, that the parental leave should be divided between the parents with no possibility of transferring days from one parent to another. In the debate the argument from the right wing parties, most commonly the Christian Democrats (KD), is that to divide the parental leave between the parents would be to infringe on the parents' individual rights to decide what is best for themselves and their family. Therefore, to legislate that half of the parental leave goes to the mother and half of it goes to the father, in the case of a hetero-normative family, would in this way be seen as a serious encroachment of the liberal principle of individual freedom as the parents would no longer be able to decide what they think is the best division of the parental leave between themselves.

In the example it is the liberal principle that constitutes the regime of legitimate knowledge in the arguments proposed from the KD. In turn, this decides what is possible to say and propose in terms of policy. Anything that seems to reduce the autonomy of the individual will be seen as unthinkable as far as policy goes. One could always argue that the policy, if implemented, would in fact work in line with the liberal principle to increase the individual freedom of the parents. This is the argument of the left wing parties. That, to divide the

parental leave would lead to a strengthened position for women on the labor market along with better pensions and so forth. This is however based on another regime of knowledge. A regime that recognizes the social structures that exists in society. Structures that influence the choices women and men make.

As these two examples illustrate, it is the regimes of knowledge, or truth as they are also called, that will affect and dictate what is possible to say and thus what to do and propose. Also, as shown above, there are often not only one but several regimes who compete to best describe society or what should be done in order to improve it. More often than not however, there is normally one truth-regime that more than others create the "conditions of possibility" (Wagenaar 2011, p.113) of a certain age.

To give yet an illustration, I would argue that the concept of economic growth is a good example of such a regime in today's society. It is hard to imagine any major policy change that would promise a decreased economic growth. The economy must always grow, regardless if it is sustainable or not. Most if not all political parties represented in the Swedish parliament are in agreement on this. Therefore, this is an argument that can be used to great lengths as legitimate knowledge to why a certain policy is not possible. It can of course be used in the opposite way as a heavy argument as to why a policy is desirable.

I have now given a background to how discourses influence actions and thus also policies. How some discourses enjoy a privileged position where they "[provide] the conditions of possibility for the social" (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.13) By analyzing my material I hope to provide an interpretation of how gender equality and gender mainstreaming is constructed where it is implemented on the local level, an interpretation based on the policy documents of the municipalities and the experiences of the people involved in realizing it there.

In the following section I will describe my approach, the material used for my analysis and the reasons for it. I will also discuss the limitations and obstacles associated with conducting an interpretive policy analysis such as this one and what can be done to overcome these.

2.2 The 'What's the problem?' approach

To analyze the material I will, as explained above, use an interpretive method that draws upon the theories on discourse by Foucault. The method, or rather the approach, is called 'What's the problem represented to be?' The approach has been devised by the Australian professor Carol Lee Bacchi and looks to competing constructions of social problems or issues. How these competing constructions define not only what the problem is, but also what should be done to solve the problems. In Bacchi's (1999, p.2) words the approach "frames policy not as a response to existing conditions and problems, but more as a discourse in which both problems and solutions are created". What this means is that policies

implicitly or explicitly define what is to be remedied by the policy. In other words, as policy proposals offer a solution to an observed problem, a representation of the problem necessitating the solution has to be in place. It is these representations of the problem or issue that become the main focus of the approach. The purpose of the approach Bacchi (1999, p.4) says "is to create a space to consider competing constructions of issues addressed in the policy process, and the ways in which these constructions leave other issues untouched."

To give an example I would like to return to the debate in Sweden about individualized parental leave as discussed earlier. The proposal from the leftwing parties has been that it is necessary to divide the parental leave equally between the two parents. This, they argue, is because women should be given equal opportunities as men. Women are being discriminated on the labor market as a consequence of them using more of the collective parental leave and as such do not have the same opportunities as men. It is argued that the discrimination comes from employers seeing women in childbearing age as a greater liability and risk, and may therefore chose to employ men instead to reduce the risk of having to replace a woman who will have to leave work to give birth and then stay home with the child. The problem representation in this instance is the labor market discrimination women have to face as a result of them taking a larger share of the parental leave, with the solution being to individualize the parental leave so each parent has an equal share that is not possible to transfer to the other parent.

There are of course several other problem representations used in this debate. For example, another argument in favor of the proposed policy is that the child has a right to both parents. As it currently stands, men only claim about 25 percent (SCB 1) of the total days of the collective parental leave, which naturally leads to fathers spending less time home with their children. Arguments against the policy are as mentioned earlier concerned about the loss of autonomy for the parents if the policy would be implemented, that the leftwing parties want to decide for the families what the families themselves know best to decide.

This recycled example shows how different representations of the problem have effects on the solutions proposed to come to terms with the problem. As Bacchi (1999, p.21) states: "every postulated 'solution' has built into it a particular representation of what the problem is, and it is these representations, and their implications we need to discuss". In the discourse of what gender equality and gender inequality is, this is exactly what I intend to do; to discuss the representations about what can and should be done about gender inequality in a local context, in contrast to those put forward by the critics of gender mainstreaming.

According to Winther & Jørgensen (2002, p.21) it is not the main purpose of a discourse analysis to assess which of the statements that are right or wrong. Bacchi (1999, p.10) on the other hand argues that it is not enough just to identify interpretations but "it is absolutely necessary to *evaluate* them." In this analysis I will identify representations of gender issues and the solutions to these. However I am not satisfied with just identifying and presenting these different representations. In agreement with Bacchi, I believe there is a need for a sort of evaluation. Even though the room for comparison is limited in this thesis, the way

I will evaluate the representations I find is to see how they compare to the criticism directed towards gender mainstreaming. This criticism will be presented in detail in the next chapter.

2.2.1 The cases

The criticism I am referring to in this thesis is directed against the transformative potential of the strategy gender mainstreaming. Therefore I have chosen two cases that are considered successful in their implementation of the strategy. That is, two cases that are considered to have transformed at least parts of their organization to become more gender equal in their service provision. My reason for this choice is that it would not be very interesting or as fruitful to select cases that are considered less successful or failures. This would probably not produce any new representations of what gender equality is and how it can be sustainably achieved, which would render the thesis rather meaningless, as it would not produce any new knowledge. Successful cases on the other hand are more likely to give new representations of what gender inequality is and how it is best remedied. However, the question arises, what are the conditions then for being considered successful?

For a case to be considered successful in its work with gender mainstreaming I have relied on the experiences made in the national program aimed at implementation of the strategy on the local level in Sweden, namely Program for Gender Mainstreaming[4]. A former policy officer in the program whose task was to monitor and document the work done in the participating municipalities describe what made some of the municipalities stand out and be considered as successful during the program: "These were considered to have worked seriously by establishing a solid sustainable organizational structure to support the work with the strategy. They could also display several examples of how public welfare services provided in the municipalities had been improved in terms of more fair resource allocation, equal treatment and increased general knowledge about how municipalities affect gender equality and inequality." (Interview 3). The reason why I use this definition of successful gender mainstreaming is because it is a definition produced by the largest gender equality initiative in Sweden to date, funded by the Swedish government, and as such it is likely to be as close to the general or the official definition as possible. Using cases that are considered to be generally successful makes for more interesting findings I would argue.

Two cases that fitted this description have been chosen for this thesis, namely the municipalities of Malmö[5] and Eskilstuna. These two are Swedish

[4] The program was run between 2008 and 2013 by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), funded by the Swedish Government

[5] Malmö municipality is officially called Malmö city, but to not cause any confusion Malmö will be referred to as a municipality throughout this thesis.

municipalities that both participated in Program for Gender Mainstreaming. However, both municipalities have a long tradition of working with issues related to gender equality and equality in general, which can explain why they are considered to have achieved more than municipalities who have initiated their work more recently. Both municipalities are large by Swedish standards, with Malmö at 313 000 inhabitants and Eskilstuna at 100 000 inhabitants. Here it is important to point out that despite the fact that I have chosen two municipalities, my ambition is not to compare these two. My use of an interpretive method makes any such comparison not only more difficult to validly conduct, but also unnecessary. My ambition is not to generalize further upon any findings but to study how problem representations found relate to those presented by the critics. Therefore the reason behind using two cases should be seen as a way to diversify and enrich the material used for analysis and not an attempt for comparison.

The choice to select municipalities and not government agencies or other instances that have also worked to integrate a gender perspective in their organization, was in part due to the recently finished Program for Gender Mainstreaming. Through the program a lot of work has been done on the municipal level in Sweden over the last six years, making municipalities suitable objects for analysis. Another reason was due to the nature of the municipal sector. Municipalities are situated on the level of public organizations that meet the inhabitants most through education, elderly care, social service and so on. Therefore it is considered especially important that these services are provided equally to women and men, boys and girls. In part as a question of fairness since they are funded with public means but also to not reinforce or reproduce any stereotypical norms about masculinity and femininity.

The material I have gathered from the cases consists of policy documents and interviews. The reason to analyze both documents and interviews is to understand what gender equality and inequality, and also what is done to remedy it, are represented to be, both in the more formal policy documents and from the accounts of those closely involved with realizing what is written in these policy documents. By combining these two sources I will be able to see if there are other representations on the municipal level than what the critics argue exist. I believe that to only study documents would not be sufficient to achieve this. As Wagenaar (2011, p.251) asserts: “for those who want to learn something new about their topic of choice, there is no alternative but to go out and expose yourself to the world.” How this material have been produced and selected will be explained under the following two sections.

2.2.2 Document analysis

To understand how the municipalities officially represent what gender inequality problems there are and therefore what solutions are proposed, I will analyze policy documents in the form of development plans, action plans, checklists and strategy documents for gender mainstreaming in the respective municipalities. Some documents will be those guiding the work in specific departments while

others will be the common guidelines for the whole municipality. The documents will be accessed from the municipalities either through the interviewees or through the respective websites. Since these are policy documents in a public organization they are accessible to the public.

The documents and the interviews will be analyzed with the 'what's the problem? approach' described above. This means that when reading the documents and transcripts of the interviews a critical perspective will be applied to scrutinize what problem representations are being used to validate the solutions implemented and suggested, critical in the sense of what these solutions consist of and how they relate to other problem representations and solutions.

An objection to using official policy documents such as these in this kind of interpretive study is that policy documents may be formulated vaguely. That their proposed measures can be interpreted in such ways that no real changes or improvements need to take place, that they are not a representative or suitable source of data. This is a serious point of criticism would my intent have been to study and evaluate implementation and effects, but as my aim is to find representations of a socially constructed concept, vague formulations representing gender equality are still significant. Whether or not these vague problem representations lead to any substantive changes is of course not unimportant, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to assess their transformative potential. Also, if the documents analyzed contain vague directions and actions, the answers in the interviews can help to make sense of these representations.

An advantage, however, using documents compared to using interviews is that there will be no influence by the researcher in the production of the material (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.120). With documents the influence of the researcher occurs when it is time to analyze the material, because it is impossible for the researcher to objectively relate to the material with the prior knowledge, beliefs and values he or she possess. These prior conceptions have to be clearly stated in an interpretive study such as this before any interpretations can be made in the analysis. This is similarly important for the interviews and I will return to this under the section 2.3 'Limitations'.

2.2.3 Interviews

Two interviews have been conducted, one in each municipality. One interview was conducted in person and the other over telephone. The choice to only conduct two interviews was due to the fact that the interviews are not the sole source of information as I am also analyzing policy documents, thus the interviews are considered to be a complimentary source of material. Even though there is no ambition to compare the cases, how the two types of material relate to each other will be considered. Another reason for conducting only two interviews was that additional ones may not necessary lead to better results in an interpretive study. In the words of Winther & Jørgensen (2002, p.120): "Sometimes more interviews can create work without enriching the analysis", thus "what is important is that

researchers justify their choice on the basis of the research question and methodology."

The interviewees were the central process leaders for the work with gender mainstreaming in the two municipalities respectively. Both municipalities have a similar organizational structure for its gender mainstreaming work, with a central process leader who coordinates the work centrally and functions as a link between the politicians on one hand and the departments working to implement the strategy on the other. Therefore, the central process leaders have good insight into all the work that is currently being done and has been done in the various departments. They know how the politicians in the city council reason and they have room to influence through the continuous contact they have with the elected officials. At the same time they have the overarching responsibility to superintend and support the gender mainstreaming work for all departments in the whole municipality, which in turn gives them information about what the work consists of, how well the work is proceeding and what obstacles to it exist. They are also highly involved in the policy formulation at a central level in the municipalities and responsible for that these policies are complied with. In my eyes this makes them very suitable sources of information regarding how gender equality is thought of and how the municipal activities ought to be designed to work towards it.

As the purpose of the interviews has not been to collect answers with the intention to compare the interviews, they were conducted in an unstructured or focused way. The unstructured interview has an open-end character where the standardization used in the structured interview is sacrificed in favor of giving the interviewee the opportunity to answer the questions from his or her frame of reference (May 2011, p.136). The interviewee is therefore allowed to elaborate beyond the question to give the researcher a chance to get a grasp of how the interviewee understands and gives meaning to a certain concept or event. As such, the unstructured interview gives the researcher the opportunity to analyze the discursive resources of the interviewee that become more evident as the interviewee can influence the direction of the interview (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.121).

In both interviews the same set of questions were asked, but these were constructed to allow for elaboration beyond the questions. The questions can be found in Appendix I. The questions were rather comprehensive but always related to how the interviewee described, thought of or understood some part of the work within the own municipality. This can be seen in the answers of each respective interview, that the answers are very different between the interviews in terms of how the interviewees understood the question. This did however not matter as the point was to give the interviewees as much room as possible to explain how they give meaning to gender equality and how it is best achieved in the municipal sector. During the interviews, the interviewees were never interrupted and allowed continue until they felt they had said everything they wanted to say. The only time I as the interviewer interjected, was when I felt something needed to be clarified or elaborated further on.

The way interpretive research is conducted, the role of the researcher has to be taken into consideration. In a socially constructed world it is impossible for a researcher to not affect the answers given in an interview. I will expand on this in the next section but I feel the need to shortly address the issue here. During the interviews extra care was taken not to influence the interviewees to affect their answers any more than what must be considered unavoidable. For example when explaining the aim of the thesis to the interviewees, the representations of the critics were not directly revealed to avoid creating a defensive reaction in form of reluctance to talk about some aspects of the work done in the municipalities. Instead a more general description of the criticism was given. Also, when asking follow-up questions for clarification or further elaboration during the interview, care was taken when phrasing the question to avoid 'leading' the interviewee to give an answer he or she believed I wanted to hear.

Nevertheless, as mentioned, it is extremely hard if not impossible to stay completely objective as an interviewer. When asking questions, listening to answers and affirming the interviewee, reactions in form of facial expressions, body language and tone of voice can and will affect the interviewee whether or not he or she is aware of it. This is of course something I have been conscious of when conducting the interviews, but is still difficult to completely control.

2.3 Limitations and issues

Interpretive research such as discourse analysis is by no means uncontested as a means to produce scientific knowledge. Critics, most commonly followers of the positivistic research tradition, argue that interpretive research is scientifically and politically unusable. Since it cannot make any truth claims it does not provide anything to the scientific mass of knowledge it is argued, thus scientifically unusable, and as it cannot decide what is good and bad it is considered politically unusable (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.175). Obviously I do not agree with this criticism due to my choice of approach in this thesis, but there are still some issues related to using an interpretive method to study and produce knowledge about policy that I feel the need to address here.

One such issue is that of how the researcher can relate to the fact that it is impossible to contact an interpretation-free reality due to the ontological position of interpretive methods (Bacchi 1999, p.49). How we perceive and interpret reality depends on our prior understanding of the world, and thus the questions we ask and the conclusions we come to will also be affected by it. It is therefore impossible to argue that one as a researcher is a neutral spectator who can sit back and observe the world as it really is, as those engaged in quantitative research believe they can do (Wagenaar 2011, p.9). The question thus arises: what can the interpretive researcher contribute to science and society?

Even though discourse analysis does not adhere to the same criteria of validity and reliability as positivistic research does, it does not dismiss all criteria. One such criterion in interpretive research is that the researcher should reflect on his or

her role and position as a researcher throughout the research process (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, 117). One way of doing this is to reflect on the assumptions and preconceptions one hold before any interpretations are made. By justifying all interpretations made in the analysis in a transparent way the reader will be able to test the claims made as far as possible. To achieve this it is important that I motivate all the interpretations made in the analysis to avoid any taken-for-granted assumptions I hold to slip into the interpretations without reflection and motivation. By being as open and transparent throughout the thesis as possible I "[enable] the reader to conduct an *immanent critique* of the research" (ibid, p.174), which means that he or she can evaluate the inner consistency of the thesis.

There are of course several other criteria for validity in interpretive research. One such is that the research should be plausible and relevant to other researchers in the same field. Another is that the research should be fruitful which means that it should produce new knowledge. Despite the multitude of criteria there are no definite rules as to which criteria one has to stick to, it all depends on what status one ascribes to scientific knowledge. Winther & Jørgensen (2002, p.173) does however list what they think are generally important criteria to fulfill. First the analysis should be solid, which means it should be based on different sources of language, for example not only one type of policy document. The second is that the analysis should be comprehensive. This means that the material used should be analyzed in all the ways possible so as to consider all possible interpretations. The third criterion is the one mentioned above, that the analysis should be as transparent as possible, that all interpretations are motivated and thoroughly explained. These three criteria are suitable to proceed from and I believe they can very well be met in this thesis.

To return to the question posed earlier about the contribution of an interpretive analysis such as this one I use an expression of Winther & Jørgensen (p.206); what I do when I generate new representations contesting those put forward by the critics, is to produce scientific knowledge as "a truth that can be discussed". What I bring to the table is by no means any objective truth of how gender inequality can be remedied by implementing gender mainstreaming. Conversely, my contribution to science and society by using an interpretive method is "to democratic debate by making visible areas which have hitherto been outside discussion because the state of things has been considered to be natural." (ibid, p.210). By adding to the academic discussion what gender mainstreaming can be and achieve, I hope to open up for a wider understanding of the strategy so it can be used to reduce gender inequality and thus improve society even more effectively in the future. Thus, as mentioned, it is not an objective understanding. It can be challenged and deemed unsatisfactory, but even so, it has then contributed to the debate about what gender mainstreaming is and can achieve which I argue, has to be a good thing if we want to promote a democratic society where issues can be discussed openly.

As Winther & Jørgensen (2002, p.22) state that discourse analysts should "consider and make clear their position in relation to the particular discourses under investigation". This begs the question: what is my position in relation to the

discourses I am analyzing? Having worked in Program for Gender Mainstreaming and other projects concerned with the strategy on municipal level, one could say that I have been and still am closely tied to those working actively with implementing the strategy. During my time in the program I learned a lot about how and how well the strategy is considered to be implemented in the municipalities participating in the program. Obviously as in most organizations given the task to implement a strategy, there was a belief in the work, that the strategy had transformative potential. Nevertheless, there was also a good awareness of obstacles, pitfalls and other difficulties that characterized the work out in the municipalities. There was also an awareness of the criticism that is directed towards the work with the strategy. Also as mentioned, it was during my time at the program I first came across this criticism.

One could argue that I am biased towards a positive view of the strategy because of my background working with implementation of the strategy. Unsurprisingly in the program, focus was directed towards what was considered success, while less emphasis was put on the less successful municipalities. However at the same time I learned a lot about why some municipalities had likely not reached their goals or set low goals to begin with. Therefore, as I have seen many cases what I consider successful implementation of the strategy and many cases that have had less success, I definitely have an understanding of how these two outcomes can be represented. I do believe the strategy can produce tangible results, but also be less effective as I have seen examples of both during my time in the program. I do find the criticism justified in some instances, for example when comparing it to some of the least accomplished municipalities participating in the program, but also appealing when looking at municipalities who have achieved a lot in their work. Consequently, my experience from working comprehensively with the implementation of the strategy will of course affect the interpretations I make in the analysis. Although, this experience is not one-sided, which I believe will aid me to not make any interpretations based on taken-for-granted assumptions attained from my work with the strategy.

In this chapter I have presented my method and the reasons for choosing it. I have described the material and how it will be used. I have also discussed the limitations of using an interpretive approach such as the one I use. In the next chapter previous research criticizing gender mainstreaming is presented. It is this criticism that will be referred to in the analysis.

3 Theoretical framework

As made clear in the previous chapter, my aim is to study discourses on a local level constructing gender equality and how it is attained by implementing the strategy gender mainstreaming. The reason behind this is that there is previous research that directs criticism against the gender mainstreaming strategy. The criticism is mainly based on representations of the strategy on a national level, but the researchers behind the criticism paints a picture that the strategy is flawed and its potential to remedy gender inequalities observed on the local level is therefore also reduced. In short the criticism views gender mainstreaming as a result of the last decades of a new public management philosophy, that it is an administrateive routine focused mainly on methods and techniques, that it is procedural rather than substantive, and thus not capable of producing any real change.

In this chapter I will present the arguments of authors who are not convinced that gender mainstreaming is an effective strategy to establish gender equality in public services. This will be done in order to lead a discussion in the analysis with the representations I will derive from the interviews and the policy documents.

3.1 What's wrong with mainstreaming gender?

As the heading suggests I will here describe the criticism presented by a few scholars active in the field of gender policy analysis. Thus trying to answer what they argue is wrong and problematic with gender mainstreaming in its efforts to try to create a more gender equal society.

Political scientist Malin Rönnblom discusses what meaning gender equality is given in various circumstances and what consequences this has for the measures proposed and not proposed to achieve it. By studying how women and gender equality are constructed in regional policies, her argument is that it can be difficult to distinguish what the problem is that gender mainstreaming is supposed to solve, that it does not clearly state what gender inequality is. In some cases gender equality is represented as a women's issue, that women are "in need of support, as lacking what it takes to be part of creating sustainable growth in a region" (Rönnblom 2005, p.168). That gender and women become more or less synonymous, that the objective with gender equality policies is merely to improve the position of women. This is not necessarily problematic if one considers that women are disadvantaged in several aspects in society today. However, as Rönnblom argues, these efforts were limited as far as to mainly focus on economic growth. Gender equality is achieved if women can attain a stronger position as entrepreneurs and business owners, and that ecological and social

dimensions will be improved as a result of this (ibid, p.169). In the cases studied it is therefore argued that the problem with gender equality is that women do not have the economic opportunities that men do and that this will be resolved by directing efforts toward making women to be better entrepreneurs. However, no explanation to the current situation is given, that is, why women and men have these different opportunities. This makes Rönnblom (2005, p.172) conclude that "the articulations of gender and gender equality in regional policies create great difficulties for politicizing gender as a power dimension in society." The consequence of this de-politization is that gender equality work becomes more of an administrative routine, having no practical implications in the end (ibid).

According to Katharina Tholin (2011), it is the last decades' turn towards a more managerial society that is the reason for this administrative evolution of the gender equality policies. Through a genealogical analysis of the parliamentary debate over gender equality policies in Sweden between the 70s and 00s, Tholin argues that one can see a distinct change in the language in terms of what the problems related to gender equality are and therefore what can be done to achieve it. During the 70s an understanding began to develop that it was no longer thought that the differences observed between men and women in society were a result of biological traits but as a result of social relations and structures, and thus possible to rectify. The ideas about how to change these structures were of course different depending on party affiliation. It was however in the 80s that a new language emerged that would hold a hegemonic position over the coming decades. This language accused the large public sector of being inefficient and that the solution for this was to adapt more to the ways of organizing and managing the private sector. This adaption was not only to be achieved by privatizations, but also through methods for steering normally found in the private sector such as evaluations, mappings and effect goals. Consequently, the political solutions offered for the gender equality work became strongly influenced by this (Tholin 2011, p.116). In other words, the so-called New Public Management (NPM) ideas of the 80s and 90s have not left the political field of gender equality policies unaffected, according to Tholin.

A result of this ideological shift was the choice to use the strategy of gender mainstreaming in Sweden. In part since it was an internationally recognized strategy, but also since the focal point of the strategy was not the reasons for gender inequality in society, but the forms of how to organize the work in terms of methods, techniques and process (ibid, p.123). It is this over-emphasis on procedure rather than substance in the gender equality work Rönnblom (2011) is critical against. In line with what Tholin's explanation, Rönnblom argues that it is the neo-liberal steering mentality of the last decades that has become self evident in the contemporary public sector (2011, p.38). By studying several national gender equality initiatives she discusses what this neo-liberal steering mentality means for the Swedish gender equality work.

Her argument is that a large part of how the problem is represented is that there is a lack of knowledge and education about gender equality issues. The solution to this is often suggested to be through conducting studies, analyzes, mappings and developing methods and instruments. The issue with this is she

argues, that the production of knowledge becomes the end of the gender equality work instead of a means towards it (Rönnblom 2011, p.43). That when measures to work with observed inequalities are suggested through the various initiatives, there is little connection to what causes the inequality. Instead the methods presented only assert that gender mainstreaming aims at creating equal conditions in life for women and men, which is to be achieved by various investigations and checklists (ibid, p.47).

In other words gender equality is transformed into an administrative routine that makes the methodological tools into what is supposed to be conducted and evaluated. Therefore the problem to be solved is the lack of these tools and methods or to correct already existing inadequate tools. When gender mainstreaming is turned into a technocratic tool in policy-making it depoliticizes the issue gender equality (Squires 2005, p.374). In the words of Rönnblom (2011, p.49): "When the technique comes in, the power analysis goes out." [author's translation], which can be understood as gender mainstreaming to reduce the important power dimension in gender equality work. The closer one gets to the implementation of the policies, the more administration and the less politics one gets (ibid, p.50). This de-politicization is to be understood as a result of a steering mentality that depoliticizes the politics, namely the neo-liberal, Rönnblom concludes (ibid, p.51).

Another point of criticism towards gender equality policies related to a neo-liberal governing mentality is that of devolved accountability. As Bacchi & Eveline (2003, p.39) states: "neoliberalism is not anti-state but that it encourages a particular kind of state, a state that governs from a distance" and as such it "is about reregulation rather than de-regulation, with no subsequent decrease in state mechanisms of control." (ibid, p.44). This entails that neo-liberal governmental bodies puts in place processes of accountability over the performance of public officials. As such it is the responsibility of each public official within an organization to ensure that he or she does not discriminate or add to gender inequality in providing municipal services to the inhabitants. Gender equality issues should be treated seriously in every part of the organization it is argued. As Bacchi & Eveline (2003, p.43) admit, this is not such a bad thought since it is the "compelling logic" of gender mainstreaming; as everyone in an organization is in one way or another likely part in creating inequality, it is therefore also everybody's responsibility to prevent this from continuing. The risk with this reasoning however is that the responsibility becomes nobody's.

To give an example, if it is stated in the policy of the municipality that the realization of the gender equality work is everybody's responsibility, it is crucial how each employee in the municipality understands this. If the employee understands gender equality as to not discriminate anyone based on his or her gender, or for instance to work towards recruiting more men or women to create a more gender equal workplace, then it is likely that they already feel content with their effort. That he or she cannot do anything more and that they have done everything in their responsibility and can thus check off gender equality off the list. Chances are that most of their colleagues will do the same. However, as evident in this example, where the employee draws the line for his or her

responsibility depends on their understanding of gender equality and inequality, and what they thus believe can be done about it. Someone who has studied gender studies at a university for example may have an easier time to see the structures and what can be done to change them than someone who has never been confronted with these issues and thus never had the time to reflect over them.

The main criticism against gender mainstreaming that I have presented here is related to the understanding that it is a strategy heavily influenced by the neo-liberal management philosophy that is arguably prevalent in society today. As described, this has led researchers to believe that the strategy has no real potential to transform organizations providing in-equal services to provide equal services; instead of trying to unveil the power structures that maintain the unequal distribution of influence and resources, it focuses on the administrative forms of the equality work; instead of analyzing if a service is provided differently to women and men, boys and girls, a checklist is designed or a system that will collect gender-disaggregated statistics is put in place. It is argued that these administrative routines become the ends and not the means to achieve gender equality, which in effect turns the meaning of gender equality into the execution of these methods, techniques and instruments. In contrast to how widespread and commonly used the strategy is, this criticism deserves to be seriously considered I believe.

Petra Meier and Karen Celis (2011) provide another perspective on the strategy of gender mainstreaming that also draws on the criticism presented earlier. They argue that gender-mainstreaming work can be categorized into three different categories: procedural, substantial or combined. For policies to qualify as procedural they have to "focus on the policy form, its tools, rules, procedures, and/or policy processes, and do not frame these as instruments in fighting gender inequality or establishing gender equality." (Celis & Meier 2011, p.476). This description is similar to the ones presented earlier by Rönnblom and Bacchi & Eveline. The second category, the substantive, defines policies as ones that focus on the substantive aim of the policy, "offering an analysis of the inequality problem, and/or [define] the policy's ambition to establish gender equality." (ibid). An exclusively substantive policy does however not specify what tools are to be used to establish gender equality. The third and final category, combined policies, is defined as policies that "aim at implementing procedures in order to reach a substantive aim." (ibid). As hinted at in the name of the category, these policies are not solely focused on just process or substance but combine the two. It is maintained that work focused only on either one of these may not necessarily be a failure. It is nonetheless believed that for gender mainstreaming policies to become effective "they need to be more than 'procedural.'" (ibid). I find this way of representing the problem with gender mainstreaming to be quite helpful as it provides room to think of the strategy in a less black or white manner. Methods should not be seen as intrinsically bad if used towards a substantive aim of reducing any observed gender inequality.

As mentioned earlier it was argued that a problem representation that identified the lack of knowledge as the sole problem to be solved could be seen as an indication of equality work that is not aimed at substantive aims. The argument

is that knowledge is not considered to automatically produce gender equality. There is a need to translate the knowledge into action to change the behavior, conduct and structures causing the inequality. However, as Celis & Meier (2011, p.473) points out, to integrate a gender equality perspective throughout an organization "requires a certain amount of expertise". Most municipal employees have a limited understanding about that what they do in their daily work can potentially contribute to gender inequality. Before this understanding and knowledge is in place there is little reason to deploy any procedures and instruments since these cannot be successfully applied it is argued. In this way, a lack of knowledge can indeed be seen as a problem that needs to be solved. Without the appropriate knowledge it will be difficult to formulate policies, which in turn makes it even more difficult for the officials responsible to implement the policies, in part due to the lack of substance in the policy but also as a result of their own limited knowledge. Therefore, where a lack of knowledge has been identified as a problem to be solved, this does not have to be a negative thing if it leads to improved policy formulations and policy implementation.

The vague definition of gender mainstreaming and its goals is also deemed a problem with the strategy (Callerstig 2014, p.34; Squires 2005, p.368). The lack of a clear definition to what is supposed to be achieved or how it is to be done "could hamper its use as a strategy for achieving real gender equality." (Celis & Meier 2011, p.472). The result being that it is up to those responsible to implement the strategy to define what is to be mainstreamed in the context they are active in. This could be advantageous as it is up to the local policy actors to translate and define what the gender equality problem to be solved is and how this is to be done. Nevertheless, it is not certain that policy actors will be able to define it. This can be due to a gap in knowledge or lack of political will. In either case, if the policy is formulated vaguely on the local context as well, this will affect the chances for the officials responsible for implementing the policy to succeed. In a similar way it is argued that if objectives and directives are vaguely formulated it is not very helpful for those given the task to implement gender mainstreaming in the daily work of the department. In these cases the gender mainstreamers have to 'invent' solutions to the problems presented, which in the words of Callerstig (2014, p.130) means that they have to "interpret and transform the policy into practice based on their understandings of what gender equality is and how it might be accomplished." The invented solutions are thus dependent on the understandings of gender equality of those responsible for implementing it. As this shows, one can yet again relate to the importance of knowledge in gender mainstreaming work, both to formulate substantive policies and to implement vague ones. However, I do not interpret that knowledge concerning gender issues is deemed unnecessary among those implementing a gender mainstreaming policy that is substantively formulated. On the contrary, I believe knowledge concerning gender issues is vital for those implementing a substantive policy as well. Still, it can be seen as more important that an understanding based on scientific knowledge of gender issues exists among implementers if a policy is vaguely formulated.

3.2 Comments

I believe it is important that something is said about how I relate to the criticism presented, especially since I am using an interpretive method. As made clear above, the arguably most significant criticism against gender mainstreaming is the one that reduces the strategy to being merely an administrative routine with an over-focus on methods and techniques. To understand the criticism in the way I believe the authors intend it to be understood, it is important how one interprets the over-focus on methods.

When engaging in any activity, be it development work, daily work or household chores for that matter, there is always an approach or method to the work. To take a household chore such as cleaning for example, the way I go about cleaning my apartment normally means vacuuming the floors and wiping off most dust-collecting surfaces. The method is therefore vacuuming and wiping, which is used for the purpose of having a clean apartment. The method should be seen as a means (cleaning) to and end (a clean apartment). Therefore as this example shows, what I believe the authors mean when saying there is an over-focus on methods, is not that all methods are bad and should therefore never be used, but that methods should be used to achieve something. To accuse all methods of being bad would be ridiculous as it would literally be impossible to accomplish anything, as there is always a method or an approach to doing something, whatever it is. It does not even have to be the same method every time, but there is always a method or an approach to an action. My interpretation of what the authors mean when they say there is an over-focus on methods is that methods are not necessarily a bad thing if used towards an end. In the case of gender mainstreaming however they argue that the methods become the end instead of a means toward 'real' gender equality.

To return to the cleaning example this would mean that the vacuuming and the wiping was the end with the cleaning and not the clean apartment. An objection to this is that it does not matter if the act of cleaning in itself is the end as long as it produces a clean apartment. This is however, what the critics question will happen when using the methods of gender mainstreaming. By applying the methods, techniques and instruments little will be achieved in terms of more equal opportunities and resource allocation between men and women they argue. To yet again use the cleaning metaphor, to gender mainstream would be like vacuuming the apartment with the vacuum cleaner unplugged to the electrical outlet.

Also, to return to the criticism concerning the problem representation of gender equality as a lack of knowledge, I do not interpret this as a critique against all educational and knowledge-increasing efforts. What I believe the critics see as problematic is yet again that the lack of knowledge becomes the problem to be solved. In similarity with what has been said above, the concern is that knowledge-increasing efforts become what the gender equality work consists of. As mentioned, increased knowledge does however not necessarily lead to a conduct that improves gender equality it is argued. Nevertheless, as mentioned,

knowledge concerning gender issues is considered necessary both to formulate substantive policies and to implement these policies.

In this chapter I have described some of the main criticism directed against the strategy gender mainstreaming. I have also presented research that despite the findings of fellow scholars has identified ways to make the strategy effective. Furthermore, as I am conducting an interpretive study I have clarified on how I interpret some of the criticism presented. In the next chapter, the analysis, the research presented in this chapter will be used as a point of reference in the interpretations made about how gender equality and gender mainstreaming is represented in the two municipalities.

4 Analysis

In this chapter I will turn to the material collected from the two municipalities in an effort to understand how gender equality and inequality is thought of and represented, and thus what is believed ought to be done to achieve the former and to remove the latter. The results found in the analysis will then be compared or put in contrast to the criticism toward gender mainstreaming presented in the previous chapter. The material consists of policy documents such as overarching equality policies, action plans and strategies. In addition to this, two interviews have been conducted as complimentary material for the analysis.

4.1 Documents

Before I begin the analysis a few words about the selection process of material is necessary. Considering that most departments in the two municipalities have their own strategies or action plans for their work with gender mainstreaming, it would be a too time-consuming to analyze each and every document that exist. Also, as I have no ambition to compare the cases with each other, there is no requirement to find corresponding documents from each municipality. Representations found in the documents of the department for city planning in one municipality does not guarantee that representations will be found in the same department in the other municipality. Therefore the documents are chosen from the single criteria that they relate to or describe the work with gender mainstreaming in the municipality as a whole or the work in a specific department. In some cases these will be similarities between the two municipalities and in some they will be differences. What is important is that they describe what their work consists of and what the issues and problems that they are aiming to resolve are.

The policy documents analyzed are all in Swedish. Therefore all quotes used from these in the analysis will be translated to English. The quotes are translated as literal as possible but in some instances the phrasing may require the order of the words to be changed to make the meaning of the quote understandable.

4.1.1 Problem representations of gender equality

As mentioned, the underlying idea of the 'what's the problem? approach' is that how problems are represented will dictate what solutions are proposed (Tholin 2011, p.23). I will therefore begin by looking at how the municipalities describe what gender equality and inequality is in their policy documents.

In the main steering document to guide the gender equality work for the municipality of Eskilstuna, 'På spaning efter jämställdheten' translated to 'On the lookout for gender equality' (Eskilstuna 2011a), several descriptions are given of how different areas of the municipal organization are related to issues concerning gender equality and inequality. In the area of education and pre-school for example the following explanation is given: "Gender equality in schools means to give girls and boys equal opportunities and conditions to develop their whole personality" (Eskilstuna 2011a, p.23). The problem in society it is argued is that norms exist that dictate what girls and boys can and should do based on their biological sex. These norms are inhibiting and restrict girls and boys from doing certain things, in making choices and in turn to become what they very well can be regardless of their biological sex. As this process to create gender roles starts early, "the schools have a responsibility to counteract traditional and hampering gender norms" and "the pedagogical personnel have a key role when it comes to ensure that all work with the children is characterized by a gender perspective." (ibid, p.34). A similar attitude can be found in the development plan for gender mainstreaming (Malmö 2011a) of Malmö municipality. There it is stated that "the school system is a part of society and the pedagogical activities therefore matters in the preservation of gender identities and gender relations." (Malmö 2011a, p.17).

As can be seen, there is a similar understanding in the two municipalities of what gender inequality is in the school and pre-school sector; inequalities in the shape of structures and norms affect the opportunities of girls and boys by limiting them to what girls and boys 'should do'. The responsibility therefore lies at the schools and pre-schools to not reproduce and reinforce these structures and norms. Here, there is also a similar view of how this responsibility is supposed to be taken. By applying gender pedagogy especially in pre-schools but also in primary schools, the municipalities aim to challenge these norms and avoid being a part of the process that reproduces them (Eskilstuna 2011a, p.24). As such, there is a shared view in these two municipalities that the gender inequality issue in pre-schools and primary schools is that stereotypical norms about the gender roles are created and reproduced there that will influence how girls and boys act and think of themselves, which ultimately affects the choices girls and boys make that will shape their future lives. It is however not believed that an awareness of this is enough, but that pre-schools and primary schools have to analyze the ways they teach and treat the children and change these ways if it is found that they are contributing to the preservation of stereotypical norms.

Thus, the solution to the problem represented is a pedagogical approach that is based in gender theories of how the genders are constructed through social interaction. Therefore it is undeniably a method employed in the gender equality work. Nonetheless, it is a method aimed at reflecting and changing a conduct; a conduct that, it is argued, will otherwise create unequal opportunities for girls and boys, women and men. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the main criticism against gender mainstreaming is that it risks over-focusing on procedure instead of substance, that the methods to remedy gender inequality takes the center stage instead of changing what is causing the inequality. In this case however, the

method employed is not about administrative routines in the form of construction of checklists and collection of gender-disaggregated statistics. The method is about changing the power structures that are created when teachers and other personnel treat and act differently towards girls and boys as a result of their own understanding of what girls and boys can and should do. Of course, the ways to see how the personnel themselves treat girls and boys differently might, for example, require statistics to be collected on how much time the teachers spend on girls and boys respectively. Though, these statistics will be used and analyzed in order to see if there is any valid reason why the teachers spend more or less time on the girls or the boys, which in turn may warrant a changed way of teaching. In this sense, to collect statistics should be understood as a means to an end instead of an end in itself.

The area of city planning is another area of municipal activities that is connected to the making of gender equality in society as shown by this quote: "There should exist a gender awareness in the city planning. The experiences, priorities, needs and everyday life of women and men, girls and boys need to be made visible and taken into account." (Malmö 2011a, p.19). It is argued that one such area where awareness is required is regarding security and safety. Women experience that they feel unsafe in public spaces more often than men, which leads to women avoiding certain places especially when it is dark outside more often than men do. This is done either by women staying inside more or by taking long detours around areas perceived as less safe such as parks or desolate areas with no people around. This insecurity experienced by women not only restricts them to freely move about in the public space, but it also consumes time and energy spent on strategies to feel less insecure. Therefore it is argued that heightened awareness about women's fear of staying in different parts of the public space at certain times of the day, is a condition for gender equal city planning (Eskilstuna 2011a, p.28).

In this case the problem is represented as the heightened sense of insecurity that women feel when staying in the public space. The solution given is that awareness has to exist when planning the city and the public space so that women will feel safe when they walk home alone at night for instance. An example of this awareness is the city lighting plan created to keep bike paths and bus stops lit for example. This is important for everyone but especially important for women who feel less secure outdoors (ibid). In this case the solution given also requires a different way of acting in form of conducting the physical planning with consideration to the different conditions of life women have. However, there is the question of who is responsible to carry out the work. To relate to the criticism of devolved accountability (Bacchi & Eveline 2003, p.46) presented earlier. It is argued that if the responsibility is shifted out to the employees this can cause the work to become nobody's responsibility. At the department for city planning in Malmö municipality it is stated that the responsibility for the gender equality work is divided between the managers on one hand and the employees on the other. The "managers are responsible for a gender equality and diversity perspective to be integrated on each unit" and "the employees are responsible to participate in the gender equality and diversity work." (Malmö 4, p.1). As such, this representation

of how the division of responsibility contrasts the representation of neo-liberal division of responsibility. Nevertheless, it is not specified how the managers are supposed to integrate the gender perspective, or how the employees are supposed to participate. If knowledge of how to go about this is not attained, the division of responsibility may mean little in the end.

Gender equality and gender inequality is arguably created in social interaction between individuals. As the municipal activities in Sweden contain many areas where there is much social interaction, it is considered important that the municipality in the interaction with citizens treat everyone equally to not reproduce any stereotypical norms about the sexes. Some of these areas are education, elderly care and social services. In the policy document "tänk jämt" (Malmö 2011b) which means "think equally", the social services explain why it is important to have an awareness of gender in the daily work of the organization. When the social workers are out meeting families where there may have been reports of physical abuse or other issues, it is important that they do not treat or respond to the individuals they meet based on any stereotypes or prejudice they hold based on the sex of the person. This is illustrated in several reflective questions posed for the social workers out meeting citizens: "What questions do we ask to a young man who says he cannot live at home because he has had a fight with his parents, would we ask the same question if he had been a young woman?" and "Would I have done/spoken of/assessed similarly if this person had been of the opposite sex?" (Malmö 2011b, p.8).

The argument here is that it is important for the personnel working in the social service to not assume anything or act toward the individual or the family based on prior beliefs and stereotypes, since doing so can affect what conclusions are drawn and furthermore what actions are taken. It is therefore claimed that the personnel continuously have to reflect on how they relate to the gender in the individuals they meet and help. It is however also mentioned that the social workers should not ignore the fact that the clients they meet may come from different cultures where problems are not thought of in the same way as they are in Sweden. There is a need for humility toward this but at the same time it does not mean that discrimination is allowed for cultural reasons (Malmö 2011b, p.6).

In this case the problem represented is that the social workers should not treat anyone differently based on their gender, or any other characteristic for that matter. This because it is a question of fairness, it is the obligation of the municipality to treat everyone equally due to Swedish law. But also, because it is through "our language we create and consolidate both hetero normative norms and gender norms and [we should] therefore use a gender neutral language." [author's added brackets] (ibid). In this case the solution proposed is also a changed way of acting, or at least a changed way of looking at ones actions. The method to do this is however not specified any further than that it is a self-reflective process where the employee herself or himself should take the initiative to self-examination. "One can say that when one incorporates a gender equality perspective into the work it is in a large part about reflecting over oneself and one's actions." (ibid). To yet again relate to the criticism of devolved

accountability (Bacchi & Eveline 2003), this representation of how the self-reflection is supposed to be conducted may be subject to this criticism.

As the quote shows, to implement a gender perspective or in other words to gender mainstream, a large part of the work is to be carried out by the individual employee in the form of reflection over his or her actions. The point made by the critics is that to move responsibility away from central management to the individual employee may cause the work to become nobody's responsibility. If it is the sole responsibility of the social worker to reflect on his or her conduct and actions toward the citizen they meet, the success of the gender mainstreaming work is dependent on if the employee actually does this. In other words what validates or disqualifies the criticism is whether or not the individual employee can take this responsibility.

In the result report to Program for Gender Mainstreaming (Malmö 2010), which Malmö and the social service in Rosengård was a part of, an account of how this responsibility is supposed to be taken is provided. The following example shows how the social workers were given an opportunity to get insight to how women and men, girls and boys face different difficulties in life, and how this is related to the daily work of the social workers.

> "IoF has worked with vignettes. The vignettes consist of a short description of a situation that can be faced as a social worker, one that through questions ought to be reflected over together with the colleagues. Seven vignettes were handed out: one that concerned a homeless parent where the sex was not stated, two of the vignettes concerned adolescents. When it came to the adolescent vignette, it had been made in four different versions, two girls and two boys, two with Swedish-sounding names and two with names that could be derived from a different ethnical origin. Two additional ones addressed the view on sexuality when it comes to girls and boys. The purpose was to initiate reflection and discussion and it could be noted that strong discussions arose in the groups." (Malmö 2010, p.7)

This example shows that knowledge about what it means to treat someone equally or unequally is a key to be able to take the responsibility to reflect over ones actions as a social worker. This knowledge is thus interpreted to be a requirement for the social workers to treat the clients equally and behave in a way that does not aid further to gender inequality in society. Though, as mentioned previously, it is argued that by identifying the lack of knowledge of gender issues, as the problem in an organization, there is a risk that educational efforts to remove the lack of knowledge becomes the end and not the means to the work (Rönnblom 2011, p.43). In this case there is an identified lack of knowledge, however, I do not believe that it signifies an exclusive focus on educational efforts. There are descriptions of how this knowledge has actually led to a change in how gender issues are thought of and related to in the work at the social services. For example, "in discussions between supervisors and social secretaries surrounding investigation and decisions concerning intervention for the individual, the gender perspective is included. It has become natural to problematize around gender." (Malmö 2010, p.9). Another example is that the "project work has led to that the

vulnerability to honor-related violence for boys and men has been given more attention. Through this it has also been identified that there is a need for sheltered housing and efforts for boys and men who have been subjected." (ibid, p.10). As these quotes illustrate, the knowledge about gender issues have been translated to a change in conduct among the people employed at the social services. I would argue that this represents a way of thinking of the knowledge as a way to change a possibly unequal way of working. That the knowledge about gender issues concerning the individuals the social workers meet, can indeed be understood as a means toward a way of acting that does not involve treating women and men, girls and boys differently based on their sex. The solution should therefore be seen as the knowledge combined with the action.

Nevertheless, one could of course claim that this way of acting has not lead to any substantive changes towards a more gender equal society as the quotes above mostly describe an increased awareness as the changed behavior or way of acting. Even though there is a representation in the policy document that defines part of the problem to be a lack of knowledge, as made clear in the preceding discussion I would argue that there are also representations in the policy document that do not corroborate this criticism, but in fact challenges it. This would for example be the solution that views knowledge as a means to an end in terms of an altered way of working more gender equally. Also, on the note of devolved accountability, I would argue that there are representations that support that the responsibility can be carried by the social workers, but not that it necessarily will be taken. It is described that by attending courses and discussion seminars the social workers are given an opportunity to obtain the knowledge required to reflect on their own actions in their daily job (ibid). Even so, it is not guaranteed that they will do so even if they have the knowledge required. The knowledge is likely necessary but does not compel the individual employee to act upon it. Regardless if this is a result of a neo-liberal steering mentality, it is important for the employee to have knowledge about gender issues to be able to take responsibility in his or her daily work. As mentioned previously, it is argued that a neo-liberal liberal model of governance introduces a type of self-surveillance in which the performance of the public officials is supposed to be ensured by the officials themselves (Bacchi & Eveline 2003, p.46f).

In the plan for gender equality and diversity (Malmö 2013a) at the educational department in Malmö municipality, the description of how the work is to be conducted is represented in a fashion that in some ways is similar to the critique towards the strategy. This manifests itself in the ways the problem to be solved is represented. For example, it is stated that the department has an obligation to work towards equitable working conditions, that the department has a zero tolerance against sexual harassment, and that the department should prevent and counter unjustified differences in pay (Malmö 2013a, p.6-7). Most would agree these statements are uncontroversial in terms of their aim. However, the fact that there is no description to what the concrete problem is and how it is to be avoided make these statements rather insipid. It is without question an obligation to work against all kinds of discrimination, be it ethnical or sexual, but if both the approach to work against the discrimination and what the discrimination consists

of is not known, it will be difficult to succeed in this work. It should be noted that some references are given to how the work is to be conducted. In the work against unjustified differences in salaries it is argued "that to prove and ensure that gender inequality does not exist, a concrete methodology is required to be applied on these and other areas as the function of managers." (ibid, p.7). Also, " in support to ensure equitable terms of employment and to have a dialogue concerning this, a methodological tool for such dialogue has been developed during the autumn of 2012." (ibid). As these two quotes show, methods are described as solutions but it is not explained what they are to solve. For example it is not answered if the methods will aid the managers to rectify existing unjustified differences in pay or if the methods will aid the managers not to give men and women different salaries in upcoming salary negotiations. One could argue that the latter does not necessitate a certain kind of methodology to be achieved, only common sense. Nevertheless, as the problem to be resolved is not specified further than this, there is a risk that the problem to be solved is the lack of methods. Thus, it can be thought that by producing these methods the problem will also be solved. Apart of removing the lack of methods, this promises little in terms of increased gender equality it is argued (Rönnblom 2005 & 2011).

It is not evident if this absence of substance is due to a lack of knowledge concerning gender issues in the secondary school sector or due to a rapidly produced policy document ordered by upper management. In any case, it is a policy document that is supposed to guide the work with gender equality at the department and as such it dictates what will be done in the name of gender mainstreaming. As the gender issues concerning education and secondary education are rather well known, it is puzzling that they were completely absent as problem representations in the policy document (Malmö 2013a). The on average lower grades of boys than girls is one issue that most Swedish schools have in common, secondary schools in Malmö unlikely to be an exception to this. Another issue is the gender stereotypical choices that girls and boys do in deciding what the orientation of their secondary school education will be (SOU 2010:99, p40f). If these or other problems had been related to in the policy document, it would have been easier to challenge the representations of the process-focus that is dominant now.

4.1.2 Discussion

In the analysis of the policy documents I have found several representations of what gender equality issues are in relation to the different responsibilities the municipal departments have. The solutions accompanying the problem representations have in some cases been comparable with the ones constituting the criticism that questions the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming. Most solutions described, however, have been those that combine a clear definition of what the problem is represented to be, with the methods to achieve this. To use the typology of Celis & Meier (2011), I would argue that many of the

policies would be placed in the combined category. In this section I will discuss and elaborate on these findings.

To begin with the example concerning pre-schools and primary schools, I argued that the problem was represented in relation to the norms and social structures that restrict opportunities for boys and girls to become whatever they want. As such the schools have a responsibility to counteract all gender stereotypical norms it is argued. This responsibility is taken in the form of employing gender pedagogical teaching in the schools and pre-schools to minimize that the teachers reinforce and recreate norms about how girls and boys ought to behave. In effect this means that there is a power perspective included here, namely the norms and structures that hold power over the behavior and choices of girls and boys. This stands in contrast to the criticism which claims that when emphasis lies on methods the analysis of power structures walks out the door (Rönnblom 2011, p.49). Also, the work does not see the gender pedagogy as the goal. Conversely, it is viewed as the means to an end that is to challenge and break the norms that inhibit girls and boys in their choices. This does also stand in contrast to the criticism that blames gender mainstreaming to be overly focused on methods and processes to the point where the methods become the end instead of the means (ibid, p.48 see also Squires 2011, p.374). Nonetheless, as shown in the example of the policy document for the secondary school in Malmö municipality, the solutions and the problem representations were of a character that reflected the criticism. The methods employed did not specify what they were aiming to solve and there was an absence of defined gender issues related to the secondary school. Due to the different solutions and problem representations in these two cases both related to the school, the question arises: how should this be interpreted?

My understanding is that this is due to the different policy levels. In the first example concerning pre-schools the problem definitions and representations and solutions were collected from the overarching steering documents. In the case of the secondary school the representations and solutions came from the policy document describing the strategy for the department, the difference thus being the proximity of the policy to where the gender equality work is actually being done. As there are concrete descriptions of how the gender pedagogical work is being done in the two municipalities (Eskilstuna 2011b & Malmö web 1) I do not necessarily believe that this makes the solutions and representations of the primary school and pre-school any less representative. What I do believe is that this represents the importance of knowledge and the difficulty to disseminate it in a large organization such as a municipality. If knowledge about gender issues and inequalities exist on a central level or at any level in the municipal organization, it does not mean that the knowledge is automatically transferred to other parts of the organization. If the knowledge at the level that formulates the policies and at the level that executes them is low, "this opens the door for policies with limited ambitions that do not aim at gender equality as defined." (Celis & Meier 2011, p.473).

As discussed in chapter three, for gender mainstreaming to be successfully implemented certain knowledge about gender issues has to be in place. I believe that the above example signifies a lack of deeper knowledge of gender issues in

the secondary school. To this I would like to add that I am not saying that there is no deeper knowledge at the department for secondary education. There might very well be many highly knowledgeable among the staff that are highly competent to work with gender equality issues. What I am saying is that this is not shown in the policy document as it lacks the substantive problem representations one would like to see. If this actually implies that the gender equality work at the department is ineffective or unsuccessful is not relevant and even if it was, it does not challenge the view of the municipality as a more successful case in this study since there is no requirement that the municipalities should have gender mainstreamed their entire organization.

As shown in the analysis, several of the cases examined relate to the importance of knowledge in the work with gender mainstreaming. Apart from what was discussed prior to this, In the case of the department of city planning it was shown that knowledge was required for the employees to be able to take the responsibility to implement the strategy. Also, at the social services knowledge about how the social workers should act to not treat anyone unfairly based on his or her gender was identified as a key in the work. It might seem rather commonsensical that to successfully conduct any type of work you have to know what it is you want to achieve and at least have an idea of how to achieve it. Despite this, as shown in the representations of some of the cases studied, this might not always be the case.

In the overarching steering documents the importance of knowledge about gender issues is highlighted. "To be able to see, understand and analyze injustices in regards to gender patterns, knowledge about how power and gender shapes the conditions for girls, boys, women and men is required." and "Women and men employed in the municipality shall have knowledge about power and gender and how this can be translated into practical action in the daily work." (Eskilstuna 2011a, p.34). Translated to a departmental level knowledge is also emphasized: "Gender equality is to be a part of the introduction for new employees" (Eskilstuna 2014). Also, "the management and employees of the city of Malmö require fundamental knowledge about gender theory and important gender equality issues within their own area. There is also a need for education and knowledge concerning how for example gender disaggregated statistics and gender equality analyses are applied in the daily work." (Malmö 2011a, p.11). This view is also demonstrated on departmental level: " As these citations show, the understanding in these policy documents is that it is essential for both management and workers to have knowledge about gender issues, both in terms of what they are and how they come to be, but also how they should be resolved through changing the daily work of the municipality. Part of the solution in successful gender mainstreaming work is thus to possess this knowledge it is argued.

As shown in the analysis, representations of this view of knowledge were found in some cases, but not in all cases. The way in which a gender perspective was implemented in the daily work in the pre-school was through a gender pedagogical approach. In the case of city planning it was by planning the city through a safety perspective so women would feel more safe in the public space,

for example through better outdoor lighting. In the social services the problem with discrimination and unfair treatment was to be solved by reflecting on how the social workers acted based on the gender of the people they met. It was only in the case of secondary education that there was no clear description of how the work was supposed to be done to achieve gender equality. The fact that what the gender problem was represented to be was very vaguely formulated, could have aided to this. The problem with such a vague definition of the problem is that it risks having the people who are to implement the strategy invent the method based on their interpretation and understanding of the gender issue (Callerstig 2014, p.129f). For example, if the task is given to the HR-office to implement a gender perspective in the activities of the department, and the HR-office lacks understanding of gender issues related to the secondary school and how these can be overcome, there is a large chance that the work will consist of issues that the HR-office can identify and that are associated with their work. These are likely to be issues related to the responsibilities of the HR-office such as employment, workplace environment and salaries. In this way, known gender issues related to the secondary school such as the lower grades of boys than girls and the gender stereotypical choices boys and girls do in picking their program for their secondary school, risk being left unaddressed.

In this first part of the analysis I have shown that there are representations that corroborate some of the criticism towards gender mainstreaming but that there also are representations that contest it. I have also found representations that highlight the importance of knowledge and understanding of gender issues, which in previous research is pointed out as a key in successful gender mainstreaming work. In the next part of the analysis, the analysis of the interviews, I will focus on how the representations found in the policy documents are reflected and related to.

4.2 Interviews

In this second part of the analysis I turn to the interview material collected from the two municipalities. One interview was conducted with the central process leader in each municipality. The purpose of this was to gain insight to how these individuals viewed the work with gender mainstreaming, what they saw as gender issues and how these related to the municipal activities. In the analysis I will present quotes from the interviews. As the interviews were conducted in Swedish these quotes have been translated to English. The original quotes in Swedish can be found in appendix II. Under each heading I will first present the quotes and briefly comment on them, thereafter I will lead a discussion of how the quotes relate to the prior analyze and the criticism against gender mainstreaming.

4.2.1 Representations of gender equality and gender mainstreaming

In the document analysis several examples of how municipal activities has identified different gender problems and dealt with these were presented. To relate to this I believe it is important to examine how the interviewees view gender equality, how gender issues are related to the municipal activities and how these should be solved.

"I think gender mainstreaming is an ideological question about the equal rights of humans. Because in the end the people down here should have equal rights but to make these visible one has to work with aggregated levels to make the gender inequality visible." (Appendix II, quote 1, interviewee 2)

Here gender equality is seen rather conventionally as a human right. What is significant is that it is related to the municipal activities as the municipal sector is considered one such aggregated level. The following quote further shows why gender equality is seen as important and how it is thought to be related to the daily work in the municipal sector:

"Why I should get people to understand that it is important, so they can see that it [their daily municipal work] affects for example, their son or their daughter, their wife or their partner or their grandmother, that they see that what they do can contribute so that their loved ones are better off. That they really feel this way." (Appendix II, quote 2, interviewee 1) [author's addition]

Municipal activities are directly related to the doing of gender equality and inequality in society. Therefore, it is argued, those who work in the municipality should be aware of that what they do in their daily work can aid to a more gender equal society that benefits everybody, including themselves. The following quotes illustrate how it is thought the municipal activities can cause gender inequality and what can be done to reverse this. The second quote below is a description given by an interviewee of a case of how the municipality changed their way of acting towards the inhabitants to become more equal.

"There is a large part of municipal activities that concern meeting with individuals and it is there that the gender equality really is. (Appendix II, quote 3, interviewee 2)

"This case concerned those living out on the countryside with the responsibility for their own sewage system. In this case Anna the process leader there, accompanied the colleagues and studied how we do when we hand over information and so on. We can change the way we act, but we cannot always change the way someone else acts. The principle in this case was that she joined and asked a lot of questions in order to make sure that we quality-assured the way we met and responded to the client, for example we stopped discussing the matter if the woman, which it often was, went out to make some coffee. That we made sure that we always brought two materials with us, so both parts could have information." (Appendix II, quote 4, interviewee 2)

As shown in quote three, it is in the social interaction between municipality and the individual that gender equality is created. Quote four demonstrates how this is done in an example of the municipal activity of informing about private sewage systems. Here it is argued that it is the municipality's obligation to do what it can to not reinforce or perpetuate gender stereotypical norms about women and men. And in what might seem like an insignificant area to work with gender equality, the municipality can still make sure that it acts toward its inhabitants in a way to not reproduce and cement these norms by addressing women and men equally when for instance, discussing the matter of private sewage systems and handing out information about these.

Taken together, these quotes show that gender equality is understood to be an issue of equal rights, an issue that is impacted by how a municipality and its employees conduct their work in terms of allocating resources and behaving towards its inhabitants. To yet again turn to the solutions and problem representations of the 'what's the problem? approach', the problem representation drawn from these quotes is that the municipalities are a part of the structures that adds to and maintain gender inequality in society. The solution thus being to ensure that there is nothing in the daily work of the municipalities that adds to gender inequality, but instead increase gender equality in society. By recognizing that if primarily addressing the man in the sewage system example, then the municipality is not treating women and men equally, but instead differently based on an assumption that it is typically the man that handles technical tasks such as sewage. It might very well be the case that the couple visited has made a division of the household chores that reflects the traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, the representatives of the municipality have no reason to assume anything before they know and should as such act in an equal way when working towards the couple.

This way of describing gender equality and gender mainstreaming does not demonstrate the strategy as having an over-focus on process that leave out the power dimension (Rönnblom 2011, p.47-50). As explained there is an understanding that in what way the municipality acts does in turn influence the lives of women and men living in the municipality, which clearly is to acknowledge that there are forces that shape our actions towards others based on their gender. The method used in the example above was to reflect on how the actions in the daily work could be adding to inequality by bringing in an external observer. More on methods further on, but this shows that the method can hardly be interpreted as the problem to be solved. On this point then, the understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming is quite removed from the criticism. Under the next heading I will look further into what the interviewees claim is needed for successful gender mainstreaming.

4.2.2 How to attain gender equality through mainstreaming

The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to integrate a gender perspective throughout all activities and areas of a public organization, since it is thought that gender equality and inequality is created where decisions are taken and resources are distributed. In this section I will present how the interviewees describe and argue that gender equality is supposed to be attained by implementing gender mainstreaming.

As discussed in the earlier document analysis, it was argued that to successfully integrate a gender perspective into the daily work of municipal employees gender knowledge is necessary. In the interviews a similar view can be distinguished. The first quote illustrates what risks happening if a gender perspective does not exist among those working in the city-planning department.

"It is when the other everyday tasks are pushing on… if it is not integrated one will start planning a park in Rosengård without thinking that there are both women and men, girls and boys living here. Instead a park is designed the way parks always have been designed. A few bushes here and a few bushes there, and there is a landscape architect doing what they've always been doing." (Appendix II, quote 5, interviewee 1)

If there is a lack of knowledge about the lower degree of safety that women feel in the public space, the park will not be planned with regards to this. This is considered unequal city planning as it will likely cause women to avoid such a park, at least after dark, to a larger extent than men which is considered unfair. The following quote shows how one of the interviewees rather strongly emphasize the need for this knowledge:

"You have to get it into peoples' heads that when they start planning this park they should think: 'but who's going to use the park?' The purpose of the park is not to look good on some aerial photo in some damn tourist guide but it's the citizens of Malmö who are to use the park. These people are women and men, girls and boys and they should feel at home there." (Appendix II, quote 6, interviewee 1)

Due to the view of the importance of knowledge in implementing gender mainstreaming, it is told that much effort has been put into educational initiatives and efforts such as programs for the various municipal departments. The following quote tells the story of how a group working with assisted living that participated in one such educational program, made an interesting discovery when they were asked to return 'home' to see how the situation was at their workplace.

"They mapped the time they spent at women and men respectively during a month. To their great surprise it showed that during one month there was a difference of 3 minutes per care recipient, since men received on average 3 minutes more. It might not sound like much but in total it adds up during a month. Then they thought that it might just be this month. So they looked one year back and it was the same. Then one has to start looking to

what the reason is to why it takes so much more time." (Appendix II, quote 7, interviewee 2)

The example illustrates the importance of training and education to create the preconditions for municipal employees to reflect over their daily work. At the time of the interview it was not yet known what the difference was due to, but it was under investigation. The next quote also highlights the importance of knowledge, but it also shows another factor the interviewees pointed out as crucial for gender equality work to be successful.

"Those who write the proposals and make the plans must have knowledge about gender equality, and the politicians must demand it [gender equality]. Then the management can say 'okay, this seems really important, let's make sure we work with it'." (Appendix II, quote 8, interviewee 1) [author's addition]

The above quote shows that not only knowledge is necessary, but also that the politicians demand gender equality efforts from the departments so that the management at the department in turn can realize that gender equality is important, and as a result initiate gender equality work at the department. The following two quotes further underline the need for an organizational structure where management is also active in the work and posses knowledge about the issues.

"So when it comes to systematizing the work and get it in to the ordinary organization, and this is because I have been a project person and worked in projects for 100 years before and know that it doesn't matter. It is the everyday work that changes even if a project can work as a vitamin injection and fantastic things can be done through projects, one must get it into systematic everyday work if it is to become sustainable." (Appendix II, quote 9, interviewee 2)

"No matter how good projects are, they risk never surviving and to not leave any significant imprint in the daily work if it is not within steering and management and owned by the administrative management." (Appendix II, quote 10, interviewee 2)

As seen both quotes refer to how gender equality work run in a project form risks having little impact on the actual doings of gender equality in the municipal organization. It is argued that there is a need to establish a solid organizational structure where the management takes responsibility for the gender equality work and demand that the staff works with these issues. If run as a project there is a chance that a project leader is hired for the duration of the project, carries out the project and then leaves when the project ends. If this is the case most of the competence and know-how will disappear as soon as the project leader leaves, causing the municipality to be back basically where it was before the project.

To summarize the above quotes, it is argued that the key to make gender mainstreaming effective is to integrate it into the ordinary work and structures of the municipal organization. This entails increasing the level of knowledge on all

levels. The politicians have to know what gender issues exist in the municipality to decide that the various departments should work to resolve these. As a result of this the management will realize that gender equality is important to work with, but they also need to grasp how it is related to the work of the department, since it is their responsibility to demand action from the employees. At last it is also essential that the employees working towards the citizens of the municipality have an understanding of how their daily work can add to gender inequality in society, and that they are given time and encouragement from the departmental management if it is found that that there are elements in the daily work that indeed adds to this inequality. As such, knowledge is considered to be important on all levels, and all levels have a responsibility in the work with gender mainstreaming.

To relate back to the document analysis it was discussed whether knowledge was represented to be the problem to be solved or if it was seen as a requirement for actual change to take place. In most cases the latter explanation was found. From the answers of the interviewees knowledge is also described as a means to change municipal services to be delivered in a way that adds to the aggregated gender inequality in society. The example about assisted living for the elderly shows an understanding of the interviewee that it was the effort to increase the knowledge level of the employees that led to the subsequent discovery of the different time in care men and women received. Knowledge is thus seen as a way to change or at least reflect over the daily work of the employees. It should be noted that the difference in time spent on women and men was not yet assigned to any unjustified actions. Nevertheless, the example shows a representation of how gender knowledge is supposed to be utilized which is similar to what Celis & Meier (2011, p.476) categorize as the 'combined' way of implementing gender mainstreaming. In their words: "In this type, the procedural aim serves the substantive one." (ibid). In this case the knowledge – the procedural aim - about how the daily work can add to inequality is seen as a means to alter the daily work to achieve gender equality – the substantive aim.

Another point that was debated in the document analysis was if the policies showed signs devolved accountability in the way they organized the work. To reiterate, it is argued that gender mainstreaming as a neo-liberal governance strategy may cause the responsibility to carry out the mainstreaming to be delegated to the employees as it is everyone's responsibility to see that it is implemented. In turn this may cause the gender equality work to end up in nothing as everybody's responsibility turns into nobody's (Bacchi & Eveline 2003, p.45-46). The interviewees indeed claim that it is the responsibility of the employees themselves to ensure that they do not conduct their daily work in a way that creates more gender inequality. Nevertheless, it is also argued that it is the responsibility of the managers and the politicians to demand work to be done by allocating time and resources to the employees who are supposed to do most of the work. A similar view on the division of responsibility was missing, or at least not as explicitly stated, in some of the cases studied in the document analysis. I argue that this recognition of the need for divided responsibilities also stands in sharp contrast to this part of the criticism towards gender mainstreaming. I do however not argue that this proves that the responsibility is taken on all levels in

all departments. The view of the interviewees should be seen as a representation of how gender mainstreaming work is thought to best be organized in order to be successful, and nothing else. In the next section, what the interviewees have experienced as less positive in the work with gender mainstreaming is discussed.

4.2.3 Issues with gender mainstreaming

As the interviewees both are the central process leaders for the work with gender mainstreaming in their respective municipality, it is maybe not surprising that they believe that the strategy has the potential to ensure that municipal welfare services are provided equally to women and men, boys and girls. Nevertheless, the following answer was given regarding how gender mainstreaming is discussed on a national level:

"I think there is too much of a buzzword that gender equality is economically effective. That it becomes the main goal instead of seeing that it is about so much more. Of course, one of the aims is to use resources effectively. I think so too. It's the taxpayers' money for crying out loud! But in general I think there is too much talk that you are always winning." (Appendix II, quote 11, interviewee 2)

Also:

"I think there is too little talk about the value of the democratic process on the national level sometimes. But it might be easier to measure. And there I can have objections that one measures ad absurdum. There is nothing in this kind of complex organization that can be fixed with one single indicator. So here we have naturally also had a fight with our economists, not with our politicians other than to make them ensure that everything is divided [gender disaggregated statistics] and that everything is measurable in that sense. But in general there is too little democracy and values and too much economy when generally discussing on a higher level." (Appendix II, quote 12, interviewee 2)

As described in these quotes there is a feeling that on the national level there is too much talk about the economic profitability of gender mainstreaming and too little about the democratic values, and that what is measurable is what to focus on. This is more in line with what has been directed as criticism against the strategy. That emphasis lies on targets, effects and indicators that can be measured. Tholin refers to this as a "discursive expansion" (2011, p.144); when gender equality becomes concerned more with economic profitability than democratic rights. This can be a strategy to frame the issue in a way to make it more appealing, but it can also be a result of a discursive formation where the legitimate knowledge is that of the neo-liberal ideas (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.13). Whether or not this is the case, as noted before, gender equality is an open, sometimes vague concept that travels between many policy areas. It can therefore be up to the policy actors themselves to define what gender equality and gender mainstreaming means (Callerstig 2014, p.130). Now, as seen before, it seems not to be the case in the

two municipalities studied that there is any confusion over what gender equality entails, at least not on a central level. Thus, it can be seen as a resource to have a person, who has awareness of this economistic emphasis, on a central position with influence over the policy formulation and implementation of the municipality's gender mainstreaming policies. This, in order to ensure that cost efficiency does not become the main goal and democratic values are lost. It should be mentioned that it is not unthinkable that gender equality leads to a more efficient resource use and is thus more economically profitable. My interpretation however, is that the reason to conduct gender equality work should not only be because there is economic profit to make, but rather because it is a question of fairness and human rights. In the next section I will discuss the combined findings of the interviews and the documents.

4.3 Discussion

In contrast to the document analysis, most representations found in the interviews were rather different from the criticism, different in the sense that they identify substantive gender issues that are directly related to the daily work of the municipalities, and different in the sense that how this is to be remedied is not by shifting the responsibility to the employees without any specification of how it is to be accomplished. They are also different from the criticism since methods are seen as means to ends instead of ends in themselves. For example, knowledge in gender theory and knowledge about how gender theory relates to the daily work of the municipal department is seen as a way to correct any activities that adds to the gender inequality in society. The reason why the interviews differ from the criticism to a higher degree than the documents will be discussed in this section.

The simple answer to why the policy documents did not reflect as substantive representations of gender equality and gender issues is of course that the interviewees are more knowledgeable about gender equality and gender mainstreaming. After all, their job is to oversee and support the work to implement the strategy in the municipality which does naturally require knowledge about feminist research, gender theories and how these relate to municipal areas of welfare service. Because of this it is not very difficult to see why the problem representations are more substantive in the answers of the interviewees than in those found in the policy documents. Nevertheless, I would argue that this difference yet again signifies the need for knowledge about gender theory and how it relates to the various municipal activities.

In the interviews an understanding of how vital knowledge is for the municipal employee was demonstrated. If the employee is to be able to reflect over his or her work and make any necessary changes in how it is carried out, knowledge needs to be in place of what is the problem and how this is to be solved. This knowledge is argued to be both in the form of gender theories and in the form of how these theories relate to the daily work. Therefore, I argue that the interviews and most of the cases analyzed in the document analysis are fairly

similar in how they view knowledge as a means to work toward gender equal welfare services; a lack of knowledge can be seen as a problem that needs to be solved, but not as *the only* problem to be solved. Rather, it needs to be solved in order to deal with the real inequality problem. This view is opposite to the view of how knowledge is used in gender mainstreaming according to the critics.

What stood out more significantly in the interviews than in the documents was how it was argued that the gender equality work should be organized. Gender equality work run as projects on the side of the daily work risk having very little impact in the organization. Projects can provide ideas and energy it was argued, but the work needs to be integrated into the ordinary activities. For this to be achieved, the management has to be 'active owners' and take responsibility to lead the work with the strategy. The solution presented is thus the division of responsibility between management and employees, but also politicians. The politicians do not only have the responsibility to formulate the policies and follow up to see that these are really implemented it is argued. They also have the responsibility in the political committees to keep an open eye for proposals that have not made a gender impact assessment for example.

The solution in this instance is claimed to be to organize the work in the way that other municipal work is organized, with clear responsibilities between employees, management and politicians. As discussed, the problem to be solved is represented as that the equality work will be severely impeded if these responsibilities are not made clear and taken on their respective levels. Why this facet of the equality work is stressed more in the interviews likely has to do with the position of the interviewees as central process leaders. After all, their responsibility is to see to how the implementation of the strategy is best attained which likely forces them to see the bigger picture. Nevertheless, the understanding of a division of responsibilities in the mainstreaming work as something crucial also stands, if somewhat less prevalent in the policy documents, in sharp contrast against the view that gender mainstreaming as a neo-liberal product shifts responsibility from the management out to the employees.

To say a few words about the criticism against the strategy regarding the talk about economic profitability that was discussed under the previous heading, there is little room for comparison with the policy documents. What can be said is that no such representations were found in the policy documents, which might indicate that it indeed is a way of framing the utility of gender equality that belongs on the national level and not the municipal level, at least not in these two municipalities. However, as I have not studied all policy documents I cannot be sure of this either. It should also be said that in similarity with knowledge and methods, cost effectiveness is not considered to be intrinsically bad. To use tax money in the most effective way would by most be regarded a desirable thing. What is considered bad is if profitability becomes the sole purpose of the gender equality work. If this happens, the democratic values and human rights risk being left out it is claimed. The ability to be critical towards the broad concept that is gender mainstreaming when closely working with its implementation, is positive I believe. According to Bacchi & Eveline (2003, p.47) it is important to have 'watchdogs' that make sure that equality does not drown in the competition with

all other values. Though, they continue, “mainstreaming often means the removal of these ‘watchdogs’” (ibid). In this case, the watchdog is still on its post which also goes against this view of gender mainstreaming.

In this chapter I have shown that in the document analysis, some ways to represent the gender issues and how these were supposed to be remedied resembled those of the critics. Nevertheless, there were also several ways of describing gender equality and how to achieve it that did not correspond to the criticism. A similar picture was painted in the interviews. In the next chapter, the conclusion, I will see if these findings help me answer my research questions.

5 Conclusion

The emphasis in this thesis, as well known by now, has been on the discursive representations of the gender equality issues related to the municipal activities and what is thought should be done to resolve these issues. The reason to use a discursive approach is that it is assumed that how problems are represented will have an effect on the solutions proposed to solve these problems. How solutions are defined and problems represented are thus important to discuss. What I do when I identify these new representations that potentially contest those put forward by the critics is to produce scientific knowledge as "a truth that can be discussed" (Winther & Jørgensen 2002, p.206). Therefore, by adding to the academic discussion what gender mainstreaming can be and achieve, I hope to open up for a wider understanding of the strategy so it can be used to reduce gender inequality and thus improve society even more effectively in the future. Though, in order to have something to contribute to the discussion, two research questions have been posed. The first one asked how gender equality is represented in the municipalities and how it is argued to be achieved through the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The second one concerned the criticism against the strategy and asked how this criticism relates to the findings of the first question. I argue that I have found answers to these questions in my analysis and I will here present these.

In my analysis I have found that the gender issues represented are substantive in the way that they relate to how the daily work in the municipalities is argued to add to or produce gender inequality. For example, in the area of city planning it was argued that the greater sense of insecurity women feel when in the public space should be considered when developing the city. In the area of pre-schools and primary schools the traditional gender norms about girls and boys were seen as the problem, and that these needed to be counteracted and challenged for girls and boys to have equal opportunities in life. Also, in the social services the problem was represented as how the social workers treat women and men differently in their daily work when meeting people who are in difficult situations. As these examples show, gender equality is represented as the right to equal opportunities, treatement and resources for women and men, girls and boys.

Among the solutions proposed to remedy these inequality problems knowledge was seen as one such. Not as a goal in itself, but as a prerequisite for employees, manager and politicians to be able to identify gender issues in their daily work, but also as an awareness of other known gender problems related to the area of municipal activity each level are responsible for. In addition to knowledge it was also found that for the gender mainstreaming work to have an impact on the municipal organization it has to be systematized as other types of municipal activities are. Through a clear division of responsibility between

politicians, management and employees the work becomes much more effective and the results much more sustainable it is argued.

To relate these findings to the criticism towards gender mainstreaming, *I have shown that they predominantly demonstrate representations of gender equality that are contrary to what the critics claim is typical in cases where gender mainstreaming is implemented.* For instance, the representations found do not define gender equality as merely a lack of knowledge or a lack of methods. Neither do they fail to define gender issues related to the respective municipal areas. Also, they do not suggest that the responsibility for the work only should be placed on the employees. Would they have done all of this, they would have validated the criticism. As shown, with a few exceptions, they do the opposite instead I would argue. This is significant since how a problem is talked about and defined also affect the solutions that will be suggested to solve these problems. Consequently, due to the nature of these representations, this suggests a different outlook for the gender equality work in these municipalities than what is suggested by the criticism. Of course this conclusion cannot be generalized beyond these two cases but it can still open up and contribute to a discussion concerning what gender mainstreaming can and ought to be on a municipal level.

At last I would like to return to the analogy of gender mainstreaming as cleaning an apartment described in chapter two (Ch.2, p.20). In this example to gender mainstream was, according to the criticism, the same thing as vacuuming the apartment without the cord plugged into the electrical socket. The method is conducted but little is achieved it is argued. In the two municipalities studied in this thesis the view of gender mainstreaming is better described as vacuuming with the intention to have a clean apartment. In these municipalities the cord is plugged into the electrical socket, the vacuum cleaner is on and the goal is gender equality.

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Interview 1 = Central process leader of City of Malmö. Interview. 9th of May 2014

Interview 2 = Central process leader of Eskilstuna municipality. Telephone interview. 12th May of 2014

Interview 3 = Former policy officer at Program for Gender Mainstreaming. Short interview. 13th of June 2014.

Appendix I: Interview questions

Interview questions

The interviews were conducted in Swedish and the questions are therefore translated into English here.

1) Could you describe why your municipality has chosen to work with gender mainstreaming as the main strategy for your gender equality work.
    (1) Were any other strategies considered?
    (2) If so, why?

2) What have your work consisted of until today?
    (1) What are the problems you have identified and worked to resolve?
    (2) What solutions have you found to remedy the inequality?

3) What are your concrete goals with the gender mainstreaming work?
    (1) Effect goals in terms of effects for the inhabitants?
    (2) Process goals in terms of operational improvements?
    (3) Do you possess any of these?
    (4) Do you believe it would have been possible to conduct the work with gender mainstreaming without measurable goals?

4) Have you used any specific methods in your work to integrate a gender equality perspective and resolve the problems you have identified?
    (1) Can you give any examples of these?
    (2) Have any of these worked better or worse for you to reach your goals?

5) Do you believe the demands to reach measurable effects and results are to high, which in turn affects the work with gender mainstreaming?

6) What capability and education do those who work with gender mainstreaming in the municipal departments have?
    (1) If it's missing, what have you done to raise the capabilities and knowledge?
    (2) And if so, which capabilities is it that needs to be raised?

7) What are your main tasks and responsibilities in the municipality's work with gender mainstreaming?
    (1) What are the largest challenges and obstacles you face in your work?
    (2) What are you most satisfied with regarding the work with gender mainstreaming in your municipality?

8) With relation to the work that has been done in your municipality, how do you view the strategy gender mainstreaming? What advantages and disadvantages do you see with it? Do you know of any of the critique directed at the strategy? What do you think of it?

Appendix II: Interview quotes

In this appendix all the quotes used in the analysis will be presented in their original language, which is Swedish. A quote taken from the interview with the interviewee from Malmö municipality will be referred to as 'Interviewee 1' and a quote from Eskilstuna municipality will be referred to as 'interviewee 2'.

Quote 1, Interviewee 2:
Jag tycker att jämställdhetsintegrering handlar om en i grunden ideologisk fråga om människors lika rättigheter. För det handlar till slut om att individerna här nere ska ha samma rättigheter men för att kunna göra dem synliga måste man jobba med aggregerade nivåer för att synliggöra ojämställdheten.

Quote 2, Interviewee 1:
Varför ska jag få folk att känna att det är viktigt, att det kan se att det har en påverkan på t.ex. min son eller dotter, min fru eller min sambo eller min mormor, att de ser att det de gör kan bidra till att deras nära och kära får det bättre. Att de verkligen känner det.

Quote 3, Interviewee 2:
Det är mycket av kommunal verksamhet som handlar om mötet med människor och där sitter verkligen jämställdheten.

Quote 4, Interviewee 2:
I det här fallet var det då de som bor på landet och har ansvar för enskilda avlopp båda två. Där var Anna som processledaren där hette, följde med sina kollegor och tittade på hur gör vi liksom lämnar över information och annat. Vi kan ju påverka vårt agerande, vi kan ju inte alltid påverka deras agerande. Principen var i alla fall att hon följde med och ställde massa frågor och såg till att vi kvalitetssäkrade vårt bemötande t.ex. att vi slutade prata om ärendet om kvinnan, vilket det ofta var, gick ut och satte på kaffet. Att vi såg till att vi hade två material med oss, att båda parter kunde få material.

Quote 5, Interviewee 1:
Så det är när vardagen tränger på… är det inte integrerat börjar man planera en park i Rosengård utan att tänka på att här bor både kvinnor och män, flickor och pojkar. Utan man gör en park som man alltid har gjort en park. Man har lite buskar här och lite buskar där och så har man en landskapsarkitekt som gör som de alltid har gjort.

Quote 6, Interviewee 1:
Man måste få in det i folks huvud att när de börjar planera den här parken ska de tänka "men vem ska använda parken?". Parken ska inte vara snygg på ett flygfoto eller i nån jävla turistbroschyr utan det är människor som bor i Malmö som ska använda parken. De här människorna är kvinnor och män, flickor och pojkar och de ska känna sig hemma där.

Quote 7, Interviewee 2:
De kartlade tiden de la hos kvinnor respektive män under en månad. Det visade sig till deras stora förvåning skilde det 3 minuter per vårdtagare, för män fick i snitt 3 minuter mer. Det låter inte så mycket men totalt blir det ganska mycket på en månad. Då tänkte de: det kan ju bara vara den här månaden. Så tittade de på en månad året innan och det var likadant. Och då måste man börja titta på vad är det vi gör, som gör att det tar så mycket längre tid.

Quote 8, Interviewee 1:
De som skriver ärendena och gör planeringarna måste kunna jämställdhet och politikerna måste efterfråga det. Då kan någonstans ledningarna säga "okej men fan det här är ju jätteviktigt, nu får vi se till att jobba med det".

Quote 9, Interviewee 2:
Så det är väl det här med systematiken med arbetet och hänga in i den ordinarie organisationen och det beror helt enkelt på att jag varit en projektmänniska och jobbat i projekt i 100 år tidigare och vet att det spelar ingen roll. Det är vardagen som förändrar även om projekt kan vara en vitaminkick och man kan göra fantastiska saker genom projekt, måste man få in det i ett systematiskt vardagsarbete om det ska bli hållbart.

Quote 10, Interviewee 2:
Hur bra projekten än är riskerar de att aldrig överleva och inte sätta särskilt stora avtryck i vardagsarbetet om de inte är inne i styrning och ledning och ägs av förvaltningsledningen.

Quote 11, Interviewee 2:
Jag tycker det blir för mycket floskeltoppen att jämställdhet är ekonomiskt effektivt. Att det i sig blir ett huvudmål istället för att se att det handlar om så mycket mera. Det är klart att det är ett utav målen att använda resurser effektivt. Det tycker jag också. Det är för sjutton våra gemensamma skattemedel! Men generellt kan jag tycka att det blir för mycket av det här att man vinner alltid.

Quote 12, Interviewee 2:
Jag tycker man pratar för lite av värdet av demokratiprocessen nationellt kan jag tycka ibland. Men det är kanske enklare att mäta. Och där kan jag ha synpunkter på att man mäter in absurdum. Det finns ingenting i en sån här komplex verksamhet som man kan fixa med ett enda mätetal. Så där har vi också haft en fight naturligtvis med våra ekonomer, inte med våra politiker annat än ibland att

få dem att se till att det verkligen är uppdelat och allt går och mäta på det viset. Men vi har ju könsuppdelade indikatorer och har haft det i många herrans år. Men generellt blir det för lite demokrati och värdeförändring och för mycket ekonomi när man pratar generellt på ett högre plan.