University of Gothenburg

Department of Cultural Sciences

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The Intersectional Intention:

(Re)producing Inequalities When Trying to Attain Gender Equality in Sweden

Ellen Thorell

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Supervisor: Lena Martinsson

Abstract

This thesis investigated the understanding of intersectionality that is being (re)produced in a Swedish governmental investigation report on gender equality (SOU 2015:86). The aim of this study was to critically examine examples found in the SOU-report of the proposed ambition that intersectionality should be implemented into gender equality politics. Analysis was conducted with the help of the What's the problem represented to be? - method developed by Carol Bacchi (2009a). Focus areas were the intersectionality implementation intention and the meaning and effects this would create for those being governed. The findings point to intersectionality being used as a method to favour gender equality, and not as a critical approach to understand the intersection of social categories. Furthermore, the need for a greater understanding of categorical differences has been explored along with the lack of political dimension in the field of gender equality and intersectionality in politics overall. The thesis concludes that by ignoring the complexity of intersectionality in political implementations, this approach could (re)produce inequalities and thus have negative effects for non-normative subjects. Additionally, a de-politicized use of intersectionality is found which makes intersectionality as a concept more static and thus may hinder fruitful political discussion.

Key words: gender equality, intersectionality, Swedish politics, discourse theory, neoliberalism

Introduction

In today's society, we face widespread challenges concerning inequalities between people. Different ways of understanding and overcoming such problems are being discussed and implemented in many areas. In Sweden, efforts regarding inequality issues has especially been made within the political field of gender equality. Recently, the addition of intersectional perspectives within gender equality politics has been suggested and discussed on a governmental level as a way of broadening the government's ability to work with multiple inequalities combined. There, and also in a wider intellectual context, there has often been a lack of critical scrutinizing of this intention of implementing intersectionality. This unchallenged eager of implementation, despite a lack of closer examination, has peaked my interest. This thesis will aim to provide such an examination.

The historical roots of acknowledging the problems of static, uneven and separated social categories for people to relate their societal interactions by is generally thought to trace back to the 1850s'. More specifically to 1851 when Sojourner Truth in a speech posed the rhetorical question: "Ain't I a woman?" (1851/1981). The question was a response to arguments against the women's rights movement, a political movement that black women in southern US wasn't part of. Her speech highlighted the fact that black women at that time and place were unable to fight their unjust position due to their combination of gender and race. Black men didn't want women in the abolition movement, and as coloured they were not welcomed in the women's movement. Truth's speech is commonly known as one of the first traces of understanding the complexity of combined subordinations. Almost 150 years later in her article *Mapping the Margins*[1] (1994), civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the theoretical concept of "intersectionality", which in many ways is the modern-day heir to Truth's ideas. In contrast to promoters of identity politics who failed to understand power as non-static and neglect intra-group differences, Crenshaw used intersectionality to investigate how neglected experiences of women of colour are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism. Another important contribution to an intersectional understanding at that time was developed by Patricia Hill Collins. For instance, in her article *It's all in the Family*[2] (1998), she studied traditional social inequalities in modern American families by examining how social hierarchies such gender, race and class mutually construct

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[1] Full name of the article: "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" (1994)

[2] Full name of the article: "It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race and nation" (1998)

one another. Crenshaw and Collins, amongst other, thereby started the still ongoing project of highlighting the inseparable relationship between social orders in research, policy and law.

Whereas the first intersectional researchers focused on power orders based on race, later ones have incorporated a wider set of power structures in their research. One example is found in Joan Acker (2006) who investigated intersectionality within organisations. In this work, she found a severe lack of critical theoretical engagement with the class concept in intersectional theories. In her view, intersectional work in research and practise tend to focus on either one or more categories, but rarely tries to understand them as "complex, mutually reinforcing or contradicting processes" (ibid, p. 442). Within the field of intersectionality there thus seems to be a hierarchy regarding which categories to use when analysing power interactions, and how these categories constitute each other.

The upsurge of intersectional awareness in Sweden is an example of the yet ongoing process of political discussions that intersectionality entails. The discussion started at large in 2002 with the release of the book *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader*[3] (de los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari, 2002), which in a Swedish context discussed immigrant women and their position of being female minorities in a racist and patriarchal society. This book later became the subject of discussion when Nina Lykke published an article (2003a), cautioning that this book was an example of *diversity feminism*[4] and that this likely would lead to focus on mainly a single power structure. Instead, she asserted that when using intersectionality as a theoretical tool it should not be possible to "forget the gender order"[5] (ibid, p. 48). She thereby revealed her own view on gender as being the most important power structure. de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari (2003) responded by saying that using the term diversity feminism to describe their work neglected the post-colonial contribution by contrasting it to gender equality feminism (ibid). By specifying her claims in another article, Lykke (2003b) declared that they were all united in the belief that intersectionality is needed to overcome power inequalities within the feminist struggle - however it's not unanimous in what way. This discussion shows that a hierarchal society will inevitable affect how research and politics deal with efforts solving combined structural injustice, since some injustices will be viewed as more accurate.

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[3] Full name of the book: *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader. Kön, klass & etnicitet i det postkoloniala Sverige.* Translated to: The (un)equal disguises of power. Gender, class and ethnicity in postcolonial Sweden (2002).
[4] Translated from "Mångfaldsfeminism"
[5] "Gender order" is here translated from the Swedish word "könsmaktssystemet" which isn't entirely the same thing, but aims at describing the structural subordination of women.

I have mentioned these examples of the development of intersectionality in US and Sweden to show the political dimension and inherent complexity of the concept. The story from 1990s US emphasize how inequalities in society neglected black women, and the review from 2000s Sweden show how inequalities in society also effect feministic research and practises where some inequalities seem to be more important than other. When Lykke wrote her first article in 2003(a) she received 2090 hits on Google for the term "Intersektionalitet". Today (March 2017) the same search returns 59 200 hits, which is an increase of 2733%. Along with the increased use overall, intersectionality has also started to be increasingly acknowledged in the field of politics. However, due to the complexity and relative novelty, methods for integrating intersectionality into politics and policy are still in very early stages of development (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). Intersectionality is not a fixed method that can be applied the same way in any context (Lykke, 2005), a matter which greatly complicates the challenge of implementation.

In addition to the increased use of the concept, intersectionality as a political ambition is seldom being questioned. One field of politics where intersectionality has increased its presence is in the gender equality politics of Sweden. The latest governmental investigation on gender equality was published in 2015 (SOU 2015:86) and functions as the framework for the current government's written communication[6] on gender equality (Skr. 2016/17:10). In multiple referrals[7] from governmental agencies and other organisations that can be found in the written communication (Skr. 2016/17:10), nobody contested the proposal of implementing intersectionality in gender equality politics. There where however some concerns of how this was to be executed in governmental agencies and such.

The difficulties of adapting a complex and fluid concept like intersectionality into a system with rather fixed frameworks – the gender equality politics – is an interesting starting point of conducting research. Additionally, incorporating intersectionality into a clear gendered framework - as the gender equality politics - also does something to our understanding of how different power structures can be understood in relation to each other. The ways policies and

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[6] Written communication, or in Swedish a "skrivelse", is a message or information from the government to the Riksdag (the elected parliament in Sweden) on how to look into an issue or how to work with a policy. It doesn't contain any proposals for parliamentary decisions and isn't legally binding. Therefore, it does not have the same political force as a governmental bill (Government offices of Sweden, 2015).

[7] The referral process means that all the government agencies and organizations (or any member of the society) considered relevant to a proposal are invited to submit a written comment on the results of the commission report. The process then continues usually with the government drafting a bill and presenting it to the Riksdag (Bäck and Larsson, 2008).

political ambitions are being described, analysed and implemented becomes the frameworks of our discursive understanding. Policies are both being shaped by the overall societal discourse, but is also in turn themselves reproducing and shaping ongoing discourses about how society is supposed to work. It is therefore important to study such discourse in a specified context to understand how it can (re)produce different subjects. From a perspective of resistance and system criticism, it is also important to investigate the discursive frameworks of intersectionality in this contemporary political context for future resistance to take place. The starting point of this thesis is that simultaneously as gender equality is being regulated by the frames of Swedish politics, the meaning and understanding of what gender equality entails, in turn, regulates the content of Swedish politics. When the meaning of (gender) equality is moving in a certain direction, so will thereby eventually the political system.

Purpose and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to examine examples of the proposed ambition found in the SOU-report (2015:86) that: "intersectionality should be implemented into gender equality politics" and investigate the understanding this ambition gives to intersectionality when put in the context of gender equality politics. The said ambition implies a *need* of change. Hence, there are implied contemporary *problems* that this ambition aims to change.

More specifically, the overarching research question in this thesis is: *What does the SOU-report (2015:86) do with our understanding of intersectionality?* A method by Carol Bacchi (2009a) developed specifically for investigating the intention of implementing a policy or political ambition and the meaning and effects this creates will be used. This way of approaching a political ambition, which consists of asking questions about the ambitions, presuppositions and effects, at the same time functions as a part of a larger project: to understand how governing takes place, and with what implications this has for those who are being governed (ibid, p. ix). In order to achieve this end, six sub- questions are being asked to the material. These questions will be further presented in the table on page 15.

Outline

This thesis is structured in six parts. In the introduction, I have introduced the topic of the thesis together with purpose and research questions. The next part will discuss the methodological issues I have dealt with when approaching the material. After this I will

present the main theoretical outlines required for my analysis along with sub-questions for the policy analysis approach. In the fourth part I will discuss some of the previous research in the field of gender equality politics and implementation of intersectionality. The main part of this thesis will take place thereafter, where I present the material from the SOU (2015:86) and analyse it together with previous research and chosen theoretical approach. This part will be divided by sub-questions, which will lead the way to the conclusion section where the overall research question will be addressed in a concluding reflection along with further discussion.

Methodological approach

My research question stem from discourse analysis which in turn is part of a larger spectra of social constructionist epistemology. Social constructionism is a perspective with the outset that language has an active part in forming our world (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). Thereby, when approaching material with theories of this kind, a reflexive attitude towards the researcher's own position and proceedings are very much needed. In social constructionist research, we can seldom rely on our measures to be repeatable when differentiates us from research with arbitrary conclusions. Instead, when being reflexive with the researcher's chain of thoughts this transparency will hopefully strengthen the quality of the research. Although I have tried to hold on to the principle of not so much talking about methodology but instead reflexively perform it in the text (as Esaiasson et al., 2012) suggests, I must here however present a few initial points of thoughts.

In this section I will present a reflexive discussion of my process. I will discuss how I perceive my role as a researcher involved with this kind of material, and what theoretical tools I have used to overcome different methodological biases. First however I will discuss the choice of material and concepts I intend to use. I chose Bacchi's method since it is very well suited for policy analysis. The material I have chosen is not a policy proposal per se but I interpret the text as a political proposal in a wider meaning, a suggestion for political change with possibility to follow the thoughts behind this suggestion. I could have chosen to use the written communication (Skr. 2016/17:10) as main material and then researched how the current government proposes intersectionality in Swedish politics. Still, I find it more interesting to understand the political dimension of something understood as un-political since what stands unquestioned in political contexts might have effects on our frameworks of political understanding, and thereby in the prolongation also political actions (Freidenvall,

2006). SOU-reports in general, and the aforementioned approved intersectional intention in particular, has an un-political tone which I argue is more interesting to investigate than an outspoken political ambition.

My process and position

To conduct research as Jackson and Mazzei (2012) suggest in their work *Thinking with theory in qualitative research*[8] has been an aim for me during this process. In their book, they discuss problems with coding within post-structural research methods and are emphasizing the idea of thinking about coding as an ongoing process. Inspired by this process - called "plugging in" - I have tried to work with theory and material intertwined. Plugging in means that the researcher should be aware of the fact that the contact between theory, material and researcher will be an ongoing, non-static process during the whole research procedure. The knowledge and position of the researcher will change during the process, and so will therefore the results. Being open to the non-static preconditions of research have helped me dare changing my material, theory and research questions several times, in order to find the most interesting angle for this thesis. Plugging in also has helped me not to think too strictly about the division of theory/material, researcher/material or object/subject as two separate, binary issues. By aiming to understand these things as intertwined I am more likely to get past a static and simplistic treatment of my material. The outcome has resulted in me being better able to understand how theory and material mutually form each other in the process of interpretation due to language having an active part in describing the material.

I have also come to think about research as a process of "walking over a theoretical threshold". The metaphor is to be understood as a threshold the researcher passes again and again, every time with new insights from reading, collecting material, listening and writing (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 266). This insight has made me aware that the research process is cumulative, and that the methodological choices I make during the research process change, since *I* change with new understandings. This means that with every choice I make during the process, such as what quotes I choose, I connect with a certain theoretical turn, and this makes me see things differently, influence my research self, and thereby shape the methodological choices and theoretical orientation I make in the future. Bacchi (2009a) writes that when choosing a policy, it's important to already have established the context since the choice of

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[8] Full name: Thinking with theory in qualitative research: viewing data across multiple perspectives.

material, in this case the specific governmental report, will already be a part of the analysis. The same goes for the theoretical positioning where I early in the process connected recent developments in the political field of gender equality to a de-politicized context through authors such as Wendy Brown and Chantal Mouffe. By establishing this theoretical context early in the process, I already started the analysis.

Throughout the process, I have aimed to be as transparent in my analysis as possible and made an effort to adopt a constant reflexive position. I found it interesting to go back to the discussion between de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari (2003) and Lykke (2003a; 2003b). They claimed that it is from her position of being a white, heterosexual and middle-class female Lykke came to her conclusions she did and thus reproduces the claims which she criticised, i.e. that her position was the cause. When Lykke (2003b) responded, she highlighted the features they were describing and explained that she did not intend to speak from a universal position. The features she described were those with relevance in the text and those she was being criticised for not acknowledging. Thereby, one could say that Lykke (2003b) took reflexive responsibility from her position.

Taking reflexive responsibility is about being transparent about the consequences of the researcher's methodological choices, but it is also about understanding how power relations influence our production of knowledge, as in the case of Lykke. Donna Haraway (1988) problematized the view of researchers as being able to study an object in an impartial way. The critique was against the illusion that research can speak entirely for itself, as if the researcher could place herself outside the act of producing knowledge. Research is instead to be viewed as something created in symbiosis between the researcher, material and theory - as also Jackson and Mazzei acknowledges. Research isn't something that "is" and waits to be collected, it instead develops in the act of combining material/theory/subject. Refusing to get stuck in a contrary approach where research and knowledge is solely a matter of subjectivity and opinions Haraway (1988, p. 590) suggests that:

"The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular"

Being able to make an adequate statement about something outside myself, I must therefore make clear from what vision this statement is. I don't believe however that revealing my position in a list-like way will make the reader more assured that I have done fair claims throughout the thesis. Neither do I believe that I can reveal my own preconceptions, since the

issue that comes to my mind can only be explained within the frameworks of my own understanding, and thus it contradicts the purpose. What I can reveal however, like Lykke (2003b) did, is the relevance of my position towards my approach for this thesis. During the fall of 2016 I did an internship at the Swedish Secretary for Gender Research, and their project on Gender Mainstreaming in Governmental Agencies. From this, I got the opportunity to get an inside view of the possibilities and difficulties in doing gender equality work. Coming directly from gender research academia it was rather difficult for me to understand how political guidelines proposed we should solve gender equality problems by merely addressing the power structures of gender. The research and political discussion of doing and understanding intersections of power structures in gender equality politics was very limited. I thus started this research process of reading up on intersectionality in practice. Although this research does not appear directly in this thesis, it has influenced my approach since I started off in a critical approach about the gap between research and practice. This was a first situation of "plugging in", where my position and previous research came together and engaged me in an analysis.

After this broader discussion, I especially want to highlight two methodological issues. The first issue is the problem of how to be transparent with the selection of examples from the material in the study. A researcher's own attitudes and hypotheses might unintentionally erase contradictions in the material. Post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha is of interest regarding this problem since he in his work *The commitment to theory* (1994/2004) illustrated lack of contradictions in material regarding people in "the rest" since this knowledge production is based on static post-colonial preconceptions and categories. This is also explicitly stressed by Bacchi (2009a) who writes that it's important to keep in mind that society and people overall are complex. By (subconsciously) polishing any material to find unchallenged results we will fail to give a full image of our field of research. In contrast, I do not strive towards attempting to identify biases since I don't want to frame my material. However, by asking from what perspectives the contradictions I can perceive are logic, I think I can be respectful and problematizing at the same time. This issue will be further discussed on page 16.

The other issue I want to highlight is interpretations, due to the fact that I have to translate quotes from the report. Like Haraway (1988) who problematize the "accessing" of information from the research subject, Benjamin (2012) also finds "accessing" information through translation very problematic since words and meanings are dependent on context.

Pure language is thus an illusion since language is always contextual and words get different meanings in relations to each other since they evoke different associations. Therefore, I chose to conduct the analysis in Swedish before I translated it to English and put the original quotes in footnotes. The Swedish language also lack ways of describing subordination and inequality processes and a lot of words are borrowed from English, such as intersectionality and mainstreaming. This might make it unlikely for Swedes to have the same connotations as someone with English as first language. By displaying both languages, and explain certain words, I think I've done my best to be transparent.

Discourse analysis: theoretical perspective and method

To be able to analyse the linguistic frameworks for intersectional gender equality politics in the SOU-report I will use discourse theory. The What's the problem represented to be? – method stems from Foucauldian discourse analysis and will help me ask relevant questions to the material. Together with a brief summary of McCall's (2005) intersectional approach, these three inputs will help me answer my research question: What does the SOU-report (2015:86) do with our understanding of intersectionality?

Before I go any further I think it's essential to reflect upon the concepts power, structure and discourse which I will frequently use in my theoretical discussion and analysis. Power is a central concept when it comes to this thesis since it is a key to explain oppression, empowerment and (re)distribution. In this thesis, I am interested in the situations of power-over-relations, in contrast to the act of an individual to exercise power (Weber, 1978). Power will be used as a theoretical concept to explain "relational ways in which individuals and the social worlds they inhabit are themselves constituted by power relations" (Allen, 2016, p. 3). In other words, power-over concerns how networks of power affect societal orders and the interplay of individuals. This leads up to the second concept: structure. Structure is in this thesis used as a concept explaining power arranged in such a way that fully forms individuals (for example de Beauvoir's theory on female oppression or the Marxist theory about capitalism). However, in theorist Michel Foucault's influential analysis of discourses (1969/2002) he criticised this static exercise of power, stating that power is not something one has and can execute, but something that is being performed. This Foucauldian perspective on power as performative can according to discourse theory be viewed and (re)acted in language. Discourse theory agrees with the structuralist view that we interpret and shape the world in a

network of connotations. However, it does not agree that these structures are static. Instead, discourse theory believes in the constant (re)shaping of power relations, although within the frameworks of the current discourse. I am repeatedly in this thesis using the prefix "re" to emphasize the point that what the SOU-report is producing isn't done in a vacuum but is highly dependent on the overall societal discourse. The material can thus both be an effect of the current discourse, and responsible for (re)producing the discourse.

I will now briefly account for my theoretical outset and how I intend to connect this to my material. I will go more deeply into theoretical analyses later in the analytical part of the thesis. The analysis of the material will take part in three stages, inspired by three themes from Foucauldian discourse analysis. The three themes are: the history that shapes the discourse, the institutions that "filter" the discourse, and the discourse being (re)produced by institutions – in other words the past, the present and the future.

The past, or the history that shaped the contemporary discourse, will be discussed together with Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/2002) and *The Order of Discourse* (1971/1993). Accord to Stuart Hall (1997), Foucault's understanding of discourse means that all practices have a discursive aspect, since all social practices contain meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do. Bacchi (2009b) also describes Foucault's way of understanding discourse as not merely a combined production of meaning, but rather well-bounded areas of knowledge that influence what can be thought and, hence, what can be said. The term discourse is thus broader than only text analysis, and rather refers to historical systems of understanding, knowledge and practices that is being (re)produced through language. In *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/2002) Foucault writes that to understand history we must study the discursive contexts of that time. At the same time, the history has shaped the discursive frameworks of today – thus, all has a history and a contemporary context. Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990/1999) will also be discussed further with the material in order to describe how history is being used as a tool to consolidate gender as two binary categories.

The present, or the institutions that "filter" the discourse, will be discussed with the help of a lecture from 1976 by Foucault (1997/2008). The material for this thesis can be seen as a product of the prevailing discourse, filtered through the investigation. According to Bacchi (2009b), Foucault was interested in the role of institutions in defending and reproducing

certain means of understanding. This might mean that institutions are not to be seen as executing power as forced measures, but rather as institutions playing an important role in the reproduction of discourses since they have a wide distribution and normative force.

The future, or the discursive (re)production, is the effect of the understanding the investigation has of intersectionality. Discourses define and produce the objects of our knowledge, and hence what can meaningfully be talked and reasoned about and what is normal. All discourses create certain practice. However, the discourse that has been filtered through the institution comes out on the other side a bit modified, depending on who formed the outcome and what knowledge and position this person had. The intention is thus to understand this (re)production of the discourse that comes out of the SOU-report, and what meaning, specifically about intersectionality, is being (re)created. The language used in policy documents can thus reveal presuppositions of the authors, but the language can at the same time (re)produce the ways in which we can understand societal problems and how we can solve them (Bacchi, 2009a). To further this discussion, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1991) and *History of Sexuality* (1976/2002) will be used regarding internalisation and establishment of identities of the individual. Butler's *Undoing Gender* (2004) and other work will be used to further discuss how subjects can be recognized in the prevailing, (re)produced discourse.

What's the problem represented to be?

The path towards problematizing a political proposal can go through discussing what it is that is constructed as a problem. By questioning what is constructed as a problem in a specific context, this can later develop discussions about discursive political understandings that are being (re)produced in policy documents. I have therefore chosen to work with Carol Bacchi's (2009a) method What's the problem represented to be? (henceforth the WPR- method) since it stems from Foucault's epistemological assumptions on discourse analysis that all discourses create certain practice, and it seeks to question the constructed problem in policy documents. According to the WPR- method, every policy proposal that plans on solving a political problem builds on a problem representation, which in turn is based on underlying presuppositions and assumptions. The goal of the WPR-method on policy analysis is to problematize the *problematizations* in selected government policies, through examining the ideas and effects of the problem representations these problematizations contain (Bacchi, 2009a). Many governmental policies do not formally declare that there is a problem that the

policy will address. However, there are always implied problems and the aim of this thesis is to search for those "between the lines" in the chosen policy. Investigating what is proposed as a policy will reveal how the issue is being thought about. The opposite view would be to think about problems in society as being "out there". This is similar to Haraway and her critique towards the view on "collecting" knowledge. Instead, the WPR-method interpret implied problems that policies hope to solve as a social constructed problem. Since how things are understood as a problem are central for the governing process, it's important to make the implicit problems explicit. This is the aim of discourse analysis in general and the WPR-method in particular. Bacchi (2009a, p. xi) claims that "…we need to direct our attention away from assumed problems to the shape and character of problematizations." Bacchi thus mean that we are governed through problematizations rather than through policies. By posing questions from Bacchi's method to my material, my aim is to deconstruct suggestions for policies in the SOU-report (2015:86) stating that we need a greater intersectional perspective in Swedish gender equality politics and policy. Following is a list of Bacchi's questions and how I have interpreted and formed them into my own research questions. After this follows a general discussion. My overall research question *What does the SOU-report (2015:86) do with our understanding of intersectionality?* will thus be answered with help from the following six sub-questions:

	Bacchi's (2009a) questions:	**My interpreted research questions:**
Q1	When the government proposes to do something, what is it hoping to change? What does it produce as a problem?	What does the higher focus on intersectionality in gender equality politics hope to change? What does the SOU-report produce as a problem?
Q2	What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?	What presuppositions or assumptions underlie the SOU-report's representation of this problem?
Q3	How has this representation of the problem come about?	How has this representation of the problem come about?
Q4	What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?	What is left unproblematic or unspoken in this problem representation?
Q5	What effects are produced by this problem representation?	What discursive, subjective and lived effects are produced by this problem representation?
Q6	How/where has this representation of the problem been produced, disseminated and defended?	How would it be possible to make resistance towards this produced understanding about intersectionality?

The goal with **Q1** is to identify implied representations of the problem[9] the SOU-report wants to change with the policy proposal, or in this case a political ambition to implement a greater intersectional perspective into gender equality policy. By implementing a greater intersectional perspective, what are they hoping to change?

Now	→ Proposed policy →	Outcome
(Implied) representation of a problem	Implementation of intersectionality	Less of a problem

The chart above visually explains **Q1.** We are interested in identifying the column to the left: the implied representation of the problem. The middle column is the proposal and the right column is the implied outcome. To answer **Q1,** I will look into the contexts where questions about intersectionality are taken up, and analyze how it is being discussed. I will also discuss places in the text where the authors use "categories" in the same sense as they have used "intersectionality" earlier.

To answer **Q2** I will discuss how this representation of the problem **(Q1)** have come about. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem? By discussing what is taken for granted and not being questioned, I will attempt to identify the assumptions and presuppositions that remain within this representation of the problem. Policies will always come out biased by an unjust society with unquestioned assumptions, and remain so if we do not question them. The goal of **Q2** is to identify and analyse the conceptual logics that underpin specific representations of the problem. This refers to the meanings that must be in place for a problem representation to make sense. Not by asking *why* this representation of a problem has come about, but by asking how it is possible for it to happen. As an extension of **Q2,** what is left unproblematic in this problem representation **(Q4)** will also be discussed in this section.

I will then discuss the broader context of Swedish gender equality politics in **Q3;** how has this representation of the problem come about? The purpose is to highlight the historical and contemporary discursive conditions that allow this problem representation to take shape. The two last of Bacchi's (2009a) questions are the ones that are most politically interesting in an

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[9] By writing "representation of" a problem, instead of just a problem, is a way of reminding the reader and myself that the problem is not "out there" but is constructed by the investigation in the policy process.

overall discussion – with them I will analyze the possible effects on the society and individuals **(Q5)** and how we might be able to think differently in contrast to this portrayed problem representation and assumptions **(Q6).**

Construction of categories in intersectional theory

My analysis will discuss how the SOU-report relates to, and (re)produce, social categories when discussing inequalities in general, and intersectionality in particular. It is not my intention to completely map out the complexity of intersectionality as a concept. However, to be able to discuss how the SOU-report use the concept I have chosen to focus on how political theorist Leslie McCall (2005) differentiate between different intersectional attempts, and how the different constructions of categories are then being made visible. Categories are being (re)created depending on the different intersectional understandings which has a lot of similarities with discourse theory.

As has been discussed in the introduction, intersectionality can be seen as a holistic concept where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The analytic concept highlights the interweaving of social inequalities, including class, race, gender, disabilities and sexuality, which combined can produce more complex patterns of discrimination than single-dimensional conceptualizations allow for. Intersectionality seeks to understand how power relations operates in society to produce inequality and discrimination depending on combination of place, time and space. In the article "The complexity of intersectionality", McCall (2005) discusses different methodological issues that has emerged with the rising popularity of intersectional analysis. The main purpose of the article is to make the reader gain understanding about the importance of interrelated methodological issues. However, I will use her categories as a way of discussing the attempts from the SOU-report.

McCall detects three common approaches to intersectional analysis - the inter-categorical and anti-categorical approach form two endpoints of a spectrum, placing the intra-categorical approach in between. The intra-categorical approach has a sharp focus on inclusion for disadvantaged groups to give voice to their experiences and perspectives. McCall (2005, p. 1780) defines this intra-categorical approach as "typically either a single social category at a neglected point of intersection of multiple master categories or a particular social setting or ideological construction, or both". Like McCall, professor in sociology Nira Yuval-Davis

(2006) is sceptical of this approach's lack of analytical depth. Yuval-Davis claims that contextual differences and composition of identities, make it impossible to add different categories on top of each other. There can be some similarities between different kinds of positions within certain context, such as race and class, that can cause similar material prerequisites. But still, overarching questions concerning recognition and redistribution are too complex to be used in an additive way.

The anti-categorical approach on the other hand, is based on a deconstruction of analytical categories. According to this approach, there are no effects of gender alone since gender always must be understood as linked to other power orders. Understandings of statuses is thus contextually bound. The last category is what McCall herself is proclaiming - the inter-categorical approach. It means for the researcher to critically work with existing analytical categories to identify patterns of relations between them. Rather than seeing gender and race as additively affecting a person's experience, the approach considers how both, for example, gender is raced and race is gendered. It thus has the critical perspective of the anti-categorical approach, but temporary uses categories alike the intra-categorical approach.

Previous research on gender equality

In regard to positioning this thesis within the field of research on gender equality politics and intersectionality, I will make a brief summary of what I think are the main four areas of relevance in previous research. This consists of, except for a few examples, research from a Swedish context, and my primary intention is to show how this research can – and have been – done. Recently, a considerable literature has developed around the theme of implementation strategies concerning gender equality and gender mainstreaming. For instance, Kerstin Alnebratt and Malin Rönnblom (2016), Eva Amundsdotter et al. (2015), Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014) and Kristina Lindholm (2011) have been investigating equality implementations in general through field studies and policy analysis. Some of these research projects mention the concept intersectionality, however with some, in my opinion, reluctance. Even though this thesis does not engage specifically with issues regarding implementation strategies, it does critically connect to issues regarding gender equality politics.

Another field of research that has influenced my research is the historical impact of today's understanding of inequalities. In this field, Katharina Tollin (2011) and Paulina de los Reyes

(in association with a range of co-authors) have been influential. Tollin engage with the constructed understanding of the past in favour of implementing today's liberal politics. de los Reyes work on the other hand account for contemporary issues on racism and its roots within the Swedish society. This understanding of history I connect to Foucault's notion of understanding the discourses in the past in order to understand present discourse. I will engage in this question very much in the analysis.

The third topic in previous research within this field that relates to this thesis is neoliberalism and its effects on gender equality issues. I here draw on work by for example Siv Fahlgren and Wendy Brown. I am interested in how they describe the development of equality politics, but also of subjective and material effects by the expansion of neoliberal values and political strategies.

The last area is research on problems and possibilities with implementing intersectionality into gender equality politics. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in this issue. However, policy analysis grounded in an intersectionality framework remains largely undertheorized. Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) have been influential in describing ways to overcome problems when integrating intersectionality into policy processes. Some policy research has been done on an EU-level by Kantola and Kevät (2009), and Lombardo and Verloo (2009), who both find that policies are favouring anti-discrimination and additive analyses at the expense of a more critical structure perspective. Three themes concerning problems that might appear when trying to implement intersectionality I've identified to be; "one size fits all", the consensus problem, and the hierarchical problem. The "one size fits all" problem occurs when addressing multiple forms of discrimination with the incorrect assumption of equivalence between different inequalities and the processes that constitutes them (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). The consensus problem concerns when intersectionality is viewed as a static, administrative task that can be applied without ideological political discussion (Lykke, 2005) in a constructed, unquestioned and "perfect" way. Last, since the society is unequal overall, an arbitrary analysis (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2007) containing multiple categories of social position is likely to be hierarchical, and thus favour an analysis based primarily on gender.

This previous research has served as a starting point for this thesis and has enabled me to me ask the most relevant questions to my material. Much uncertainty still exists about the

relationship between gender equality politics and intersectionality. This paper critically examines the view on gender equality politics as static, and tries to broaden the understanding about discursive (re)productions in writings of policy documents.

Understanding intersectionality in a (re)produced discourse

SOU-reports in general and the SOU 2015:86 in particular

The material this thesis engages with is a governmental investigation, also called a SOU[10]-report. Governmental investigations are usually initiated when the government seeks to acquire information of a subject before writing and posing a bill. On comprehensive issues, the government usually appoints a special commission of inquiry (Bäck & Larsson, 2008). Investigations attempting to give a full picture of gender equality politics in Sweden has been conducted about every ten year since the 1970s. Although the gender equality specific ones are rather rare, other investigations connected to gender equality comes out almost every year depending on governmental directives, and has typically been related to issues of working life, gender equality in school and so on.

The government controls the commission by giving them directives and a budget. The commission is thus not completely autonomous but can be seen as an extension of the governmental office. When the commission of inquiry has submitted its proposal, there is a process where government agencies, organizations or any individual member of society are invited to submit a comment on the results of the report, i.e. referrals. The process then usually continues with the government drafting a bill and presenting it to the Riksdag[11] (Bäck & Larsson, 2008). However, in the case of this specific SOU-report, changes proposed in the report where not substantial enough to be voted on in the Riksdag, and so the sitting government had the power to do the proposed changes on their own. Hence, the SOU-report resulted, together with referrals, in a written communication (Skr. 2016/17:10) from the government. The investigation let, amongst some, eight researchers be responsible for outlining the Swedish gender equality progress in the last ten years. They took their starting point in the gender equality policy objectives, and discussed how they could be developed in the future.

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[10] SOU is shortening of Statens Offentliga Utredningar, in English meaning public governmental investigations.
[11] The Riksdag is the decision-making assembly in Sweden.

Briefly summarized, the content in the SOU-report (2015:86) consists of the authors covering four main areas. First, they analysed and assessed gender equality progress over the last ten years. Second, they analysed how effectively gender equality policy has been implemented. Thirdly, they reviewed gender equality politics. And finally, the commission considered changes to how gender equality policy could be organized and implemented in the future. The statistics cover the period of 2007-2014. Their conclusion was that the gender equality objectives have not been met. The investigation could not measure any consequences in society from the efforts made by the municipalities and governmental agencies. This is even though knowledge about these issues have increased, methods have improved and about 40 agencies has developed gender equality plans directed towards the citizens. To obtain the objectives, what is most needed in the future is a central governance of these issues, more support to governmental agencies, municipalities and county councils, and a clearer focus on results. This might be obtained through better monitoring, analysis and collaboration in order for efforts that have been made to help other efforts do better gender equality work. Proposals for a new direction of intersectionality within gender equality is being mentioned 32 times in the investigation (SOU 2015:86) compared to only once in the last investigation (SOU 2005:66). Intersectionality have thereby increased its presence in gender equality politics.

The most significant part of the report is "Development towards gender equality during 2005-2014"[12] where they report on what effects the different gender equality goals have had during this period, and what can be learned from this. After this section, the commission makes suggestions about what should further be done regarding gender equality politics. This section writes about conclusions and proposals. When answering Q1 and Q3-Q6 I am primarily interested in the later section - number 4 in the SOU-report (2015:86) called "Considerations and proposals"[13] (page 417- 514) since this is where the SOU-report authors give their suggestions for future politics of gender equality, with the background of their overview on Swedish gender equality politics from 2005-2014. Regarding Q2 I will mostly use the section called "Outset"[14], in the "Introduction" (page 45- 65) since this is where the authors outline most of their assumptions and presuppositions.

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[12] Translated from: Utvecklingen mot jämställdhet under 2005–2014.
[13] Translated from: Överväganden och förslag.
[14] Translated from: Utgångspunkter

Q1: Representation of the problem

The purpose when answering the first question in the WPR-method is to find out from the material what a higher focus on intersectionality in gender equality politics hopes to change. When the report proposes more intersectionality, what does the investigation think will be the positive outcome different from today's gender equality politics? After having answered this question, it's possible to discuss what the investigation produces as a problem. In other words, what does the SOU-report construct as the problem of today's politic that this proposal can help to reduce?

At several places in the SOU-report (2015:86) the investigation makes claim about the importance of an increased focus on intersectionality within gender equality politics in Sweden. I will draw some examples that can help discuss what a higher focus on intersectionality in gender equality politics hopes to change. In the end of chapter 12, "Conclusions and Evaluation", the investigation make some interesting statements about intersectionality. The chapter has summarized an overview of the development in Swedish gender equality politics the last ten years and in the end of this chapter they give their conclusions about the development and implementation of gender equality politics. In the conclusion, they write:

> "In our view, the most urgent challenges are how an intersectional perspective will continue to develop in the implementation of future gender equality politics"[15] (p. 437)

And later in the investigation they state:

> "The investigation proposes that an intersectional perspective should be reinforced in the implementation and monitoring of gender equality politics"[16] (p. 512)

These quotas are examples of statements that speak for a need of a gender equality politics with a greater intersectional perspective. Similar quotes can be found in several places in the text. This can be said to be what the investigation wants to do, in other words their proposal.

In other parts of the text, they do not always use the term intersectionality specifically, but the content is however similar as when they describe intersectionality. Such as:

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[15] Translated from: Till de mest angelägna utmaningarna hör enligt vår bedömning hur ett intersektionellt perspektiv ska fortsätta utvecklas i genomförandet av den framtida jämställdhetspolitiken.
[16] Translated from: Utredningen föreslår att ett intersektionellt perspektiv ska förstärkas i genomförandet och uppföljningen av jämställdhetspolitiken.

"Gender is seldom the only factor underlying inequality between women and men"[17] (p. 448).

Other factors apart from gender that according to the SOU-report can explain gender equality factors between women and men are socio-economic factors, residential background, functionality, sexuality, age and/or transgender identity or expression (p. 448). What is implied is that intersectionality, or other factors like in the latter quota, will be something put *into* gender equality. Intersectionality is thus a complement to gender equality, and thereby the investigation performs a hierarchy between different power orders since gender is always present and other factors are added. The investigation continues to say that the conclusion so far points to the importance of "systematic and structured including more power aspects into gender equality work"[18] (p. 437). This quote is an example of how they think intersectionality can be conducted. I will continue to discuss this matter in the section Q2, but what is important in Q1 is that the proposal claim that intersectionality should be implemented *into* gender equality work. Not only will gender have a more important role when many categories of subordination come together, it will also be on the terms of current gender equality politics.

Another example of this can be found in the chapter about suggestions for future politics, in the section about suggestions for starting point in future gender equality politics the SOU-report states that "…an intersectional perspective will be ensured in the conduct and follow-up"[19] (p. 447), and in the next sentence that "gender mainstreaming is proposed to continue to be the main strategy. Targeted efforts should complement and reinforce the strategy"[20] (p. 447). This is also an example on how intersectionality will be a complement to gender equality politics and thus will be implemented within these frameworks. One could argue that finding of gender being the most prominent analytical factor in current gender equality politics isn't something spectacular, adding other power dimensions into gender equality work has been an ambition in political fields before outside a Swedish context. The purpose with the WPR-method is however to understand arguments in the material about what exactly the investigation think will be better with a greater intersectional perspective.

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[17] Translated from: Kön är sällan den enda förklaringsfaktorn bakom bristande jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män.
[18] Translated from: Systematiskt och strukturerat inkludera fler maktaspekter i jämställdhetsarbetet.
[19] Translated from: …ett intersektionellt perspektiv ska säkras i genomförande och uppföljning av jämställdhetspolitiken.
[20] Translated from: Jämställdhetsintegrering ska vara den huvudsakliga strategin för genomförandet av jämställdhetspolitiken. Riktade insatser ska komplettera och förstärka strategin.

An intersectional perspective, the SOU-report concludes, in the sense of systematic and structured inclusion of more dimensions of power, is "an important prerequisite to reach the gender equality objectives"[21] (p. 437). This is an example of what this new approach would like to change. Intersectionality could be a way of better obtaining the Swedish gender equality objectives. It seems as the authors of the report think that the political field should implement intersectionality as a method to find new ways of reaching equality between women and men. What they are hoping to change is thus to meet the gender equality policy objectives. Additional to this quote is the ongoing occurring starting point, as shown above, that gender equality politics is the base of the proposal. Intersectionality is thus not given ground for tackling structural inequalities such as racism and heteronormativity, since this is absent in the text. The future positive outcome with greater intersectionality is that it as a method or a tool, can help tackle gender inequalities.

What then is the representation of the problem that the proposal of greater intersectionality in gender equality politics can help reduce? The answer to this lies in how the SOU-report discusses why the gender equality objectives has not been reached, and how intersectionality should help obtain the objectives. In the summary in the beginning of the SOU-report, a greater intersectional perspective is needed because:

> "…the equality policies should take note of *the gaps and differences between different groups of women and men* [my italics]. This is both in regard of differences related to socioeconomic factors and power relations such as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, and ethnicity"[22] (p. 35).

In the end of the SOU-report, similar quotes can be found:

> "… gender equality politics can include important perspectives and pay attention to the conditions of *different groups of women and men* [my italics]. In our view, a clear intersectional *perspective* [my italics] sought to be applied in the gender equality politics regarding implementation and follow-up"[23] (p. 448).

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[21] Translated from: En viktig förutsättning för att nå de jämställdhetspolitiska målen.
[22] Translated from: …behöver jämställdhetspolitiken ta fasta på de klyftor och skillnader som finns mellan olika grupper av kvinnor och män. Det handlar både om skillnader som avser socioekonomiska faktorer och andra maktrelationer som t.ex. rör funktionshinder, sexuell läggning, könsidentitet och könsuttryck, ålder och etnisk tillhörighet.
[23] Translated from: På så sätt kan jämställdhetspolitiken inkludera viktiga perspektiv och uppmärksamma villkoren för olika grupper av kvinnor och män. Enligt vår uppfattning bör ett tydligt intersektionellt perspektiv eftersträvas i hur jämställdhetspolitiken genomförs och följs upp.

In this part of the text they discuss the need of an intersectional understanding in implementation and evaluation since there are differences within the gender divided outset. It is also clear that the word *perspective* reveals a hierarchy between gender which is always present and "other perspectives" that can come in and out from our analysis by arbitrary, or at least unexpressed, choice. They thus recognise the gaps within the group women, and men. Later in the report they also acknowledge how gender interact with other positions:

> "With an increased focus on how *gender interacts with, among others,*
> *ethnicity, class and age,* [my italics] we believe that the knowledge of the
> complex mechanisms that contribute in different ways to create uneven terms
> in both work life, social life and family life, deepen and nuanced"[24] (p. 437)

The differences within the groups women and men, and the interaction with other factors, thus complicate gender equality efforts since they miss target. In the chapter about calculated costs they write about what can happen if they were to apply an intersectional perspective in implementation and follow-up (p. 513):

> "… the commission's suggestions will lead to positive economic
> consequences, even if these are not possible to estimate in absolute terms. A
> clearer and developed gender equality perspective in public administration
> means better opportunities to distribute the publicly financed funds *more*
> *accurately and fairly*"[25] [my italics] (p. 512)

This quote is an example on how they discuss intersectionality as can be used to overcome biases that may arise in tax-funded efforts for gender equality. If intersectionality would be implemented, the accuracy might increase and so would the efficiency of tax-funds. The current problem is that they can't reach the gender equality objectives, and target the efforts since gender equality is a too insensitive measuring instrument. They write:

> "With an intersectional perspective gender equality policies can more
> consistently than in the past, notice the processes that create difference and
> maintain inequality, *to then be able to focus on relevant measures"[26]* [my
> italics] (p. 437)

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[24] Translated from: Genom ett ökat fokus på hur kön samvarierar med bland annat etnisk tillhörighet, klass och ålder anser vi att kunskapen om de komplexa mekanismer som på olika sätt bidrar till att skapa ojämlika villkor i både arbetsliv, samhällsliv och privatliv, kan fördjupas och nyanseras.

[25] Translated from: Utredningens förslag kommer att leda till positiva samhällsekonomiska konsekvenser, även om dessa inte är möjliga att skatta i absoluta tal. Ett tydligare och utvecklat jämställdhetsperspektiv i de offentliga verksamheterna innebär bättre möjligheter att fördela de offentligt finansierade medlen mer träffsäkert och rättvist.

[26] Translated from: Med ett intersektionellt perspektiv kan jämställdhetspolitiken ges bättre förutsättningar att på ett mer konsekvent sätt än tidigare uppmärksamma de processer som skapar skillnad och upprätthåller ojämställdhet och ojämlikhet, för att sedan kunna inriktas på relevanta åtgärder.

It seems as if the SOU-report thinks that if the gender equality politics in Sweden would acknowledge more differences found within the two binary gender categories, and understand the interaction of other factor, the political efforts would be more legit. The SOU-report is thus asking themselves if the Swedish gender politics really do political efforts towards the supposed target group.

Comparing this analysis to validity as a methodological concept, it's possible to find similarities in between them. High validity means that you have accurate concepts together with high reliability, in other words it means that you measure what you intend to measure (Esaiasson et al., 2012). The concepts the SOU-report must deal with – the two categories men and women – seems to have low validity since they are simplified and thus do not target the efforts needed to achieve the gender equality objectives. Hence, it seems like the investigation is using intersectionality as an instrument to increase the validity in gender equality efforts. Intersectionality therefore indicates in this context to be used as a method in favour of gender inequalities, and not a critical concept to help understand interconnection of social categories and problematize separation of power structures.

To conclude Q1, I have inserted the findings in three stages as shown:

Now	→ Proposed policy →	Outcome
The representation of the problem is that the two categories of men & women are too heterogeneous in themselves	Implementing intersectionality as a method to understand this heterogeneity	Targeted efforts to attain greater gender equality

The hopeful outcome in the policy proposal is that implementation of intersectionality in gender equality politics hopes to increase the gender equality objectives[27] with targeted, effective efforts. The representation of the problem today is that the categories men and women are too heterogeneous in themselves, and the gender equality political field need to recognise this heterogeneity by using intersectionality as a method.

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[27] Men and women should have the same opportunity in life (SOU 2015:86).

Q2 and Q4: Assumptions, presuppositions and silences

The aim of Q2 is to understand what assumptions and presuppositions the SOU-report authors have had while making the representation of the problem found in Q1. My task has thus been to identify the assumptions and presuppositions that lodge within the representation of the problem. Q2 shall not be answered by asking *why* the investigation thinks that intersectionality should help attain gender equality, but *how* it is possible for them to make such claim. The guidelines Bacchi (2009a) gives is to above all reflect upon key concepts, theories and categories. I have chosen to also insert Q4 in this section and writing about what is being left unproblematised or unspoken in their statements. I will demonstrate assumptions and silences to discuss what is taken for granted, and thus what is their discursive frameworks of understanding and (re)production. This section will be conducted with a combination of material and previous research, and some theoretical perspective.

To begin questioning key concepts I will start with the chapter "Basic concepts within gender equality politics" (p. 50-58) that can be found in the section "Outset". The concepts are: sex/ gender, feminism(s), intersectionality, gender equality, masculinity and gender mainstreaming. These are according to the SOU-report the most accurate concepts when it comes to understanding gender equality politics in Sweden at this time.

Concerning the first concept, sex/gender, the report uses professor in history Yvonne Hirdman's theory of "Genussystemet", which is a way of explaining male privilege as a theoretical outset. The report refers to the proposition from 1994 (prop 1993/94:147) which was important in the development of gender equality politics due to it acknowledging structural gender inequalities through Hirdman's theory. In the same section of the SOU-report, the binary relationship of women and men is being questioned but without any research reference. It's clear that they struggle with incorporating concepts like "biological, social and mental gender" and the base for discrimination "Transgender identity or expression"[28] with the binary outset that the sex/gender-section has. In the following section, the investigation describes how it relates to the chosen concepts. According to the report, the binary categories of men and women are both "necessary and problematic" (p. 59). The categories are necessary to map out and in order to analyse structural differences between women and men. However, the report adds, it's important to understand the differences within

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[28] They use the three Swedish words: "könsöverskridande identitet", "cispersoner" and "transpersoner", where the first is a bases for discrimination and the last to are two opposites in the sexual identity spectra.

these groups. Hirdman's theory is assumed to be the main outset for gender equality, and even if the report has a fairly critical discussion about hetero – and cis- normativity, its assumptions make it difficult to combine this with a non-binary understanding. The authors are struggling with a structural understanding of gender oppression at the same time as they try to incorporate a critical perspective towards the structure. What is clear throughout the text is that they leave this discussion and press on with only the static structuralist view.

In the section about feminism(s), they state an overall definition of the term as "a conscious perception about structural indifference between men and women and an ambition to change this"[29] (p. 52). Further, the investigation recognizes different strands within feminism, such as liberal feminism and post-structural feminism. They highlight two examples of post-structural feminism - queer-feminism and post-colonial feminism. Queer feminism is defined as a strand that "…questions static gender categories"[30] (p. 53) and challenges the heterosexual matrix. Post-colonial feminists are described as criticizing the hegemonic white, west and privileged woman in feminist research. Overall, the different post-structural feministic views challenge the generalization about "women as a group". They write that the

> "…differences within the group "women" are too substantial so that other
> power relations have to be considered to improve the conditions regarding
> terms, power and possibilities for women"[31] (p. 53).

This definition criticizes any static analysis of power with the sole outset in gender. Post-colonial and queer authors (such as Bhabha, Mohanty and Butler) criticize the very construction and use of social categories since it stems from, and performs, a hierarchal and oppressive power system. The SOU-report write that although they are aware of the different feministic and theoretical strands, they join the "core feminism" (p. 58), that according to them consists of agreement on a willingness of female subordination and systematically different terms for women and men to end. It is obvious that the displayed post-colonial and queer critique is not present in the authors' further analysis. The chosen key concepts thus seem to be a way of positioning themselves, but a critical perspective towards their position throughout the text is lacking. By positioning themselves as "core feminists", they also (re)produce an image of a hegemonic, structural feminism to be the right or only one. When

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[29] Translated from: En medvetenhet om systematiska skillnader i villkor för kvinnor och män som grupper i samhället, dels en strävan efter handling.
[30] Translated from: Ifrågasätter att det överhuvudtaget finns några fasta könskategorier.
[31] Translated from: Skillnaderna inom grupper kvinnor anses vara så pass omfattande att andra maktordningar måste tas i beaktande för att kvinnors villkor, makt och möjligheter ska kunna förbättras.

they write about a core feminism despite the fact that they have tried to show different kinds of feminism they also perform power in a sense that is making the normative "core" feminism - which neglects structural injustices apart from gender in the feministic analysis – de-politicized compared to the politicized "other" feminism(s). The de-politicized dimension is also visible in the key concept part about gender equality, which also gets portrayed as a rather un-problematical instrumental. Alnebratt and Rönnblom (2016) write that the problems that arise when feminism is becoming adapted to bureaucracy is that simultaneously as feminism can impact more in society, the feminism will be conducted in an instrumental, hegemonic way. It thus gets difficult to object to this feministic strand, and the feministic transformation tends to get more affected by the frameworks of the existing society. This bureaucratic dimension of feminism has increased during the years, and might continue to increase even more (Alnebratt & Rönnblom, 2016).

The lack of conflicts are also visible when the report describes the key concept intersectionality. The authors lump the references of the chapter together as a single general footnote, and refer to amongst others McCall (2005), Lykke (2005) and de los Reyes and Mulinari (2003; 2005). As described in the introduction of this thesis, intersectionality as a concept is filled with contradictions and problems that are being formed and developed in constant discussion. The concepts of intersectionality, gender equality and feminism are all being de-politicized in this bureaucratic context. The de-politicizing of intersectionality also indicates that the report thinks of a "perfect way" of implementing intersectionality into gender equality politics or other contexts – a largely impotent one where it's more a question of if than how. In the post-political era we live in, political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2005) argues that the society is more and more becoming a place where decisions are being implemented in a mechanical way - politics. In contrast stands the political arena where discussions can be raised – the political. According to Mouffe there can be a lot of politics without any political aspects, and this SOU would be an example of this. This contemporary political situation leaves little space for contradictions and hinders a lot of the political potential in gender equality politics (Rönnblom, 2009).

Another assumption the SOU-report makes repeatedly is that there is place for a valid hierarchy of power orders in politics, where gender always is the main explanatory factor. Social categories as gender, race and class are being discussed in the text, often in a context of describing the categories of men and women as not homogenous:

"Gender is thus *not the only* [my italics] category that decides a person's
identity, terms and situation"[32] (p. 54).

Gender is not the only category but it is always present in their analysis, together with other power dimensions of choice. Gender is also being portrayed as the main denomination in quotes such as "Always gender, never solely gender"[33] (p. 441). Both of these assumptions make clear that gender is the most accurate, and main, category. As stated recently, the report does not specify how to overcome the differences in between social categories when using them together. In Hankivsky's (2005) view gender equality and mainstreaming is inherently limited because it prioritizes gender as the axis of discrimination. To find a notion "able to consistently and systematically reflect a deeper understanding of intersectionalities—the combination of various oppressions that together produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone" is according to Hankivsky a concern that has not yet been solved (2005, p. 978). As said however, the SOU-report assumes that intersectionality can be done in a hierarchy of power orders where gender is the most important power dimension.

Using social categories as interchangeable might be an effect of the authors' presuppositions to ignore structural differences. This is known as the "one size fits all" approach which incorrectly assumes an equivalence between different inequalities and the processes that constitutes them (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). Icelandic researcher in equality policies Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir (2007, p. 3) writes that the interchangeable approach conceals the different historical backgrounds of the different structures and thus will treat all structures the same, probably due to the hegemonic view of oppression that favours gender. The outcome is thus that those working with intersectional theories tend to present an uncritical list of social categories, as if they were all equally situated and interchangeable, without adequately addressing their structural differences and historical and contextual specificity of each category listed. Þorvaldsdóttir (2007) states that the analysis tends to be rather un-historical when an intersectional perspective with too many factors are being implemented within gender equality politics. The historical understanding is however very important in order to adapt directed political efforts (ibid), since it is not desirable to implement same the political efforts on subordinations with different histories. Having less societal power compared to the

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[32] Translated from: Kön är således inte den enda kategorin som bestämmer människors identitet, villkor och situation.
[33] Translated from: Alltid kön, aldrig bara kön.

majority society will be a different experience for example if you have a non-normative sexuality than if you have a non-normative religion, and thus the political efforts to overcome those subordinations should differ.

The SOU-report also seem to think that more categories in an analysis is almost always better. Most of the time the report uses the different bases of discrimination, plus class, as these categories of subordination. For example, the report has a section called "Not only gender equality but also *other perspectives*"[34] [my italics] (p. 329). Referrals from the governmental agency for discrimination (DO), maintain that gender equality should include all bases for discrimination (ibid). The governmental agency for cultural analysis states that "gender equality politics can be connected to the different bases for discrimination" (ibid). There is no place in the report where this approach is being problematized from a historical perspective or where differences between the bases are being acknowledged. It seems as if the SOU-report and the referrals thinks that if gender can be used in gender mainstreaming politics, so can "other perspectives".

Foucault (1971/1993) writes in *The Order of Discourse* that our historical background affects our way of thinking and how we relate to the world. Therefore, it might be empty phrases to claim that all discrimination grounds should be able to fit within the frameworks of gender mainstreaming. Foucault also criticize the traditional assumption that history is always developing linear towards something better and truer. It's problematic to assume that we automatically will learn from the past and become a better version. This undermines the importance of both hard work and political efforts, and also the political dimension of not agreeing on the outcome of historical development. Foucault thus problematized the perception that truth or knowledge can be understood as "out there", as something we have not yet found by the means of today's methodological shortcomings. Instead he argues that truths and knowledge are controlled by the frameworks of our understanding. With the background of Foucault, it is problematic to not understand the contemporary discursive hindrances found in the construction of categories. Post-colonial author Homi K. Bhabha (1994/2004) and Chandra Mohanty (2005) are both criticising the contemporary historical narrative since it stems from a western perspective. Bhabha (1994/2004) is criticising the lack of complexity about the non-west, unlike the multi-complex west and Mohanty (2003) writes

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[34] Translated from: Inte bara jämställdhet utan även andra perspektiv

that it's highly problematic to view the western narrative as universal since it doesn't acknowledge the complex history of colonialism and how it affects the present-day non-west narrative. In other words, the colonial history of erasing complexity of non-western history will exist as long as we don't make a real effort to overcome them. In this SOU-report negligence is being made when power orders are uncritically put together. It is however rather common to deal with smaller changes (Lindholm, 2011) as a way of improving injustices in organisation, instead of revolutionary systematic changes to overcome historical rooted power orders. But by not acknowledging other historical structures, it is rather problematic to claim that they can use intersectionality in this way. By not assuming an approach that might acknowledge other power structures than gender, the SOU-report is able to make claims about intersectionality in a way that is (re)producing the image of gender inequalities as the main subordination. This in turn is only making an additive approach of intersectionality usable.

Going back to the report's selection of concepts, this too reflects a hierarchy of perspectives with gender on top, along with an un-problematized and un-historical understanding of other power structures, (re)producing a complexity only present when discussing gender. Again, the concepts the authors use are sex/gender, feminism(s), intersectionality, gender equality, masculinity and gender mainstreaming. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are two political strategies, whereas intersectionality is part of the theoretical perspective of feminism, alike sex/gender. Masculinity, on the other hand, is a social practise that maintain the legitimacy of patriarchy (Connell, 1996). Hence, concerning power orders based on the binary categories of gender they present both a theoretical framework, political- and social practise. Regarding perspectives of power orders apart from gender, these concepts get acknowledged but lack theoretical tools. One might for instance ask why masculinity is given a section of its own when it could have been connected to a wider concept like gendered norms.

The authors describe masculinity as connected to norms, which in turn acknowledge power and structures that forms our ways of being. Why not more structures get the same acknowledgement as patriarchal norms is left unspoken. Norms about masculinity is later in the report connected to violence (p. 438) and it is noted that analysis and active management of change is important to understand and prevent this violence (p. 438). There is a need of a greater understanding about how "…representation and norms about masculinity and

manliness affects society"[35] (p. 437) in contrast to intersectionality in the section before. It seems as if the report assumes that not all power categories that affects people's livelihood need the same amount of theoretical and conceptual understanding. Therefore, there is a great lack of complexity when they discuss power orders and categories that doesn't stem from gender. As an example, they use "etc"[36] (p. 55) when writing about different categories of social identities and positions as a list. Butler (1990/1999) uses the concept "the embarrassed etc." at the end of the list as a way of making visible the occasionally occurring checklists of identities. The political ambition to sometimes simplify and merge different equality policies might obscure the fact that different forms of inequalities, discrimination and equality policies might have very different problem constructions. This lack of complexity leads to a failure in addressing the structural level and tends to (re)produce the political competition between inequalities (Verloo, 2006). In other words, power orders apart from gender have to fight for analytical space. Other concepts that are present in the text but was not given a section of their own is for instance diversity, discrimination and norms which is not connected to gender. By using words such as diversity but not giving them the same status as the words that are getting a definition, this act (re)produces a hierarchy between different concepts and power orders. Additionally, it also makes it difficult for bureaucrats to interpret these concepts. When there is a great uncertainty about equality issues, bureaucrats themselves become in charge of the interpretation and implementations (Alnebratt & Rönnblom, 2016). This leaves a lot of power to individual bureaucrats, instead of having the matter controlled by the state.

The hierarchy between different power orders is also visible in how the report fail to understand that more categories than gender need theoretical tools. One example of this is how the authors deal with statistics where they have a positive attitude towards statistics disaggregated by sex, along with an almost non-existent reflection or request of statistics based on other categories than gender. In the section on how the gender equality work from governmental agencies should be ensured, one chapter is called "Ensure the requirement to present official statistics broken down by gender and give some authorities a mandate to also include other statistics broken down by gender"[37] (p. 478). More governmental agencies must, as explained in this chapter, provide statistics based on gender to better evaluate their own and the overall impact on gender equality in Sweden. However, when they discuss the importance

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[35] Translated from: ..hur föreställningar och normer om maskulinitet och manlighet
[36] Translated from: m.m.
[37] Translated from: Säkerställ kravet på att redovisa officiell statistik fördelat på kön och ge berörda myndigheter i uppdrag att även redovisa annan statistik fördelat på kön

of improving the situation for people from outside of Sweden they state that it's problematic to evaluate since there is no statistics regarding this aspect on gender equality (p. 48). In 1994, the government decided to issue an additional instruction to the central statistics office in Sweden, stating that all official statistics in Sweden shall be disaggregated by sex unless there are special reasons for not doing so (Callerstig, 2014). According to researcher Tobias Hübinette (2017), this way of understanding statistics has become natural for swedes, but unlike many other countries we don't have statistics based on self-identified race or such. If we were to have statistics on geographical place, age and education on an individual basis, we would be better able to measure efforts to reduce more inequalities in the future (ibid).

The SOU- report uses a combination of different social categories to target vulnerable groups of people. Since they are also stating that intersectionality entails adding different categories on top of each other, the conclusion would be that they interpret intersectionality as a way of targeting extra vulnerable groups. As have been shown in Q1, intersectionality can be a way of overcoming the simplistic division between two groups, e.g. men and women, in order to increase precision in political efforts for gender equality. At several places in the text, examples are given of vulnerable groups where two or more categories of subordination are being used for explanation. These groups are always, with one exception (p. 430), based on gender and are used to describe vulnerability. For example, when it comes to gender equality on the labour market, women born outside of Europe are targeted as the group of people that struggle most with establishment (p. 424). The same is being discussed regarding societal decision making processes (p. 421), where the goal of a higher female political representation is being connected to people immigrated from outside of Europe. Also, in the new objective about health, gender differences are connected to level of education, transgender expression or identity, sexual orientation, place of birth, functionality and violence vulnerability (p. 435). Regarding prostitution, non-Swedish[38] women are described in several places as a target group (p. 432). At one place (p. 430) the heteronormative family is being acknowledged in comparison to the gender equality objective of unpaid labor, without gender being outspoken. Still, nowhere in the SOU-report can I find any attempts to discuss category interaction with a holistic intersectional approach or critique towards the construction of categories. And nowhere does the report seek to understand how power relations operates in society and (re)produces privilege. Even if I find some critique towards the categories they use when

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[38] Translated from "Utländska" (p. 432)

describing inequalities, such as the critique towards binary gender categories, they do not take responsibility for their perplexity but instead ignores it further in the text. I would think that when using the term "life-cycle perspective" at several places in the material, this is an attempt to discuss how power relations are non-static and can change over time. But this is as far as the depth of the analysis goes and categories stands to be analyzed with an additive approach to cover target groups.

With the background of these findings, it seems as if the SOU-report makes an assumption of intersectionality like it is unproblematic to additively analyze positions, and where the gendered position gets more status and analytically tools. Closest to this intersectional approach according to McCall (2005) would be the intra-categorical one since it's a perspective of narrowing down groups that need extra political efforts. However, it's a very simplified way of analysing since it doesn't describe the very *intersection* of multiple categories, only combining one social category at an unspecified point of intersection with other categories.

The need for an intersectional perspective in the report is not being justified to improve social change besides structural disadvantages based on gender. Neither does the report use the hegemonic majority as a target group and thereby discuss privilege. The inter-categorical-approach would by contrast reinforce categories, but in a non-static context of physical place and social space. Yuval-Davis (2006) warn about any un-reflected, static attempts of essentialism, since forms of oppression in additive ways inevitably merge together. If they were instead to understand intersectionality as *inter-categorical* (McCall, 2005), they might be more attentive to how, for example, gender is always raced and race is always gendered and thus inseparable. Now, when describing target groups, race is only involved when they talk about the "other" like the non-white woman, and not a normative, advantaged target group. The last perspective of intersectionality that McCall (2005) is using is the *anti-categorical* way, which is criticising the individualistic, narrow and additive approach that is apparent in the SOU-report, since it's about how correlations, categories and so on are interchangeable. To narrow down a group would assume structures to be static. It's important here to highlight Yuval-Davis' (2006) discussion of recognition and the (re)production of categories. She writes, "Therefore, a case where recognition – of social power axes, not of social identities – is of crucial political importance". We must focus on recognition of power instead of recognition of categories. With this perspective, the bases of discrimination aren't

enough protection if the historical power dimension isn't being recognized. Also, as Butler (2015, p. 77) asks; how do we explain the actions and status of the people disaggregated from the plural? What political, or theoretical, language do we have to describe exclusion and resistance of the ones outside the existing political arrangement? Categories such as those described in the discrimination act are constantly expanding. Instead of focusing on more and more categories, we should look beyond the categorical approach and focus on powers that creates domination and subordination.

With the intra-categorical perspective, the experiences and perspectives of the ones disaggregated from the plural is important. In the report, the authors could have discussed representation, but it's seems like they haven't taken into account a variety of experiences from the perspectives they are presenting. Even though they do not claim that it is their intention to have an intersectional understanding of the SOU-report (p. 59), it might have been a good opportunity to at least involve people in the investigation process that could present a position of recognition and experience from some of the target groups they try to narrow down. This is however, left unproblematic.

It is clear that the SOU-report only propose intersectionality in certain contexts in the text, but in the most important parts like the gender equality objectives, intersectionality is absent. The objectives for gender equality politics are structured in the categories of men and women. The authors thereby fail to address any other power structures. They are also explicitly reproducing binary gender (in every goal) and heteronormativity (in objective number 4[39], men's violence against women). They also fail to address the power dimension in the objectives which is a prerequisite for further intersectional analysis (Alnebratt & Rönnblom, 2016). As a consequence of this, they aren't explicit about which people are in the subordinated position or if all should have the same opportunities. As Yuval-Davis (2006) asks: if we talk about everybody, why do we need to focus on men and women? The objectives could mean that all could have equally bad opportunities.

As I concluded in Q1, intersectionality is in the SOU-report being used because the differences within the groups women and men are too great. To make take such a position, one must assume that intersectionality can be used as a methodological tool to overcome the

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[39] In the SOU they address it as objective number 4, but since then more objectives have been added. Hence, the objective about violence is number 6.

gender equality objectives. Summarising Q2, the task has been to identify the assumptions and presuppositions found within the problem representations. What is found in the material is a structuralist view of power relations, in contrast to the intersectional perspective which is post-structural and system critical. The outset of any analysis comes from a de-politicized version of gender equality and intersectionality, and gender is always the main category when analysing combinations of different social categories. The overall finding is that the report assumes that different social categories can be used in an un-problematic, interchangeably way. The report portrays only gender as being a developed theoretical area with a variety of concepts and methodological tools. This is due to a lack of complexity that is also found in the negligence of historical perspectives on subordinations other than gender. Their way of understanding intersectionality leans towards an intra-categorical way in McCall's (2005) terminology, with a focus on an additive outset of analysis where categories are unreflectively being added into the analysis.

Q3: Discursive origins

The purpose with Q3 is to highlight the conditions that allow the portrayed representation of the problem and underlying assumptions to take shape. In *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/2002) Foucault wrote that to understand history we must study the discursive contexts of that specific period. At the same time, the history shaped the discursive frameworks of today – thus, all has a history and a contemporary context. Bacchi (2009b) uses this Foucauldian notion when analysing how meanings of gender equality touch upon fundamental beliefs about human political relationships. The historical context of Swedish gender equality politics has shaped how concepts such as equality and intersectionality has and still can be understood. When the SOU-report uses intersectionality as unproblematic, un-historical, de-political and including more and more perspectives, this is not being done in a vacuum of thoughts. It can be traced back to different political understandings and practices. This entails both explanations going back to the historical focus on gender subordination, and more recent development as the spread of neoliberalism. Section Q3 will mainly be conducted with previous research that completes what results have been found in Q1 and Q2.

The making of normative gender equality politics

First, it's central to connect the hierarchy of subordinations to the discourse of gender equality politics in Sweden and the high status of gender when understanding structural inequalities.

To better understand the discursive frameworks of this hierarchy, it's necessary to give a short historical background about the Swedish gender equality politics during late 20th century. However, by making a selection of history, I am at the same time reproducing a tale about equality development. Katharina Tollin (2011) has in her research showed how the Swedish gender equality politics has been exploited by a politic characterized by decreases in the public sector and a movement towards an increasingly neoliberal society from 1971- 2006. Tollin (2011) shows in her research how a selected understanding of the past can be used as a political tool of today. For instance, when differences between today's politics and political issues from 1970s are being discussed, biased ideas on history is being entrenched. Political discussions of today, such as legislations of non-normative families, have had a history of disagreement in the past. Disagreements from the 70s however tend to be written out of history to motivate on-going heteronormative policies in the present. By shaping the past, and leave out contradictions, history can be used as a tool to influence our understanding of the current (ibid). I have tried to overcome this dilemma by nuancing the image of the legislative process in Sweden with different perspectives and hopefully challenge the hegemonic tale.

In the late 60s, a strong political force with focus on women's emancipation and empowerment increased in both the private and public sphere, to put pressure on Swedish politics (Callerstig, 2014). Protests against the male norm in society and structural injustice influenced the installation of the first governmental unit working with gender issues in 1972. Later, in the early 1980s a division for gender equality was created with the purpose to arrange societal efforts to encourage equal opportunities for men and women (Lindholm, 2011). Hence, in 1980, a gender equality act with active measures in the working life made it illegal for employers to discriminate women in the search for employment (Callerstig, 2014). This gender equality act was the outcome of strong political conflicts, something that seems to have been written out of history (Tollin, 2011). These discussions did not only concern whether or not gender equality should matter, but whether gender equality should be part of legal, individual rights, or part of a broader agenda for social justice. The political victory of Swedish Liberal Party[40] and the strategy of a gender equality act was a defeat of the socialist alternative with more focus on labour rights and union negotiations. This gender equality act, Tollin (2011) writes, was part of a greater ambition to separate gender and the Social Democrats[41] push for social equalization and greater union influence.

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[40] Translated from: Folkpartiet Liberalerna
[41] Translated from Socialdemokraterna

Through an investigation on power (SOU 1990:44) the government found out that women's power and influence in society must be prioritised on the agenda of gender equality policies. This lead way to the new act on gender equality (SFS 1991:433) that aimed towards active measures to promote equalities at the workplace. This policy made the UN call Sweden the world champion in gender equality in 1995 (Tollin, 2011). The difference between this act (SFS 1991:433) and the previous was that it didn't only punish those who actively discriminated women, but also those who didn't work proactively to favour equality. In 2009, this gender equality act was interchanged by a new act, the discrimination act (SFS 2008:567), entailing and replacing all eight acts of discrimination. At the same time, a unified governmental agency, DO[42], replaced the previous division between discrimination based on ethnicity, functionality and sexual orientation (SOU 2015:86). Tollin (2011) problematize the focus on the legislative approach which is the main tactic of today's gender equality politics. Tollin describes the investigating policy debates from 1971-2006, which in the name of this feministic politic, centre- right wing could perform more political actions in favour of equal distribution between women and men, but not in society overall. The focus on, for instance, efforts to increase the percentage of women managers stood in contrast, and defeated, the problematizations of class differences between women. Thus, the assumptions about a hierarchal order amongst categorisations found in Q2 where gender is in the top I argue could thus be traced back to the legislative process in the 80s where the main strategy to conquer inequalities came from an anti-discrimination point of view where structural differences got concealed. A greater focus on structural change might have been in favour of a more holistic perspective where a material perspective was more present. If the Social Democrats alternative would have won, we might have had a broader ambition on equality politics compared to the one-dimension approach of today. The broader approach might also have been more suitable to combine with an intersectional perspective. This unified discrimination act together with a history of recognising and improving gender equality especially, (re)produces a hierarchy amongst power orders. Foucault's (1997/2008) notion on institutions as reproducing a hegemonic discourse is very accurate to this situation since how equality is being legally conducted has great impact on how we think about equality overall.

At the same time as the historical gendered discourse is powerful, there is a lack of historical understanding amongst other power orders than gender as has been showed in Q2. de los

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[42] Shortening of Diskrimineringsombudsmannen

Reyes and Kamali (2005, p. 9) writes about the concealed historical dimension of contemporary injustice based on race in Sweden. Since we have a shared history of hierarchy and racial conceptions with Europe, this is something that has been central in the creation and consolidation of European supremacy and dominance over "the other". The presence of discrimination and every-day racism however questions the image of Sweden as a role-model in Europe. Professor Birte Siim (2013) states that feminist scholars are criticising Nordic gender equality politics for neglecting diversities among women. It is important to understand that gender equality efforts towards women in general can often harm those outside the norm. Instead of viewing immigrants as a threat to the Swedish equality (as political parties in Nordic states tend to do more and more) we must, according to Siim (2013) acknowledge that the Swedish equality is being threatened by our undisclosed racist history. Whether women from non-western countries have low labour- market participation compared to women in the ethnic majorities, and thus are being seen as a threat to the welfare state, or an asset due to lower paid, the governance needs to deal with structural racism underlying these assumptions. One example is drawn from Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2007) who emphasize the importance of having a broader perspective on exclusion and inclusion when discussing the term "people". Definitions are otherwise based on normative assumptions about Swedish citizens. They write that "categories such as immigrant, ethnic group and ethnic minority have too often been employed as descriptive and self-evident categories" (ibid, p. 179) and thus not acknowledging the racist history, or understanding the consequences, when dividing people in arbitrary categories. The Swedish discourse which entail categorisations and assumptions about race and nationality has, according to de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) a history of racism which will continue to reproduce if we do not acknowledge its existence. To ask contextually what excluded people are actually excluded from, and not continue a common-sense based approach might be a way of highlighting the discourse. de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) also describe how the concept hierarchal feminism highlights how Swedish feminism is continuously being formed around a white, middle class. They trace this back to the beginning of the women's movement which were forced to adapt to patriarchal institutions and the capitalistic system. By ignoring the dimension of class and race, the normative feminist struggle could conquer new grounds. For example, buying household services is today sometimes being used as an argument in favour of gender equality for Swedish families. This assumption, or argument, can however only be understood if race and class differences are being ignored, since these chores are being done by other less privileged lower-class women. By viewing gender as the most important category to describe privilege and

subordination, is current the normal way of doing equality work in Sweden. This is thus the frameworks of our understanding about what is normal (gender) equality.

Tollin (2011) writes that constant (re)telling about the historical conditions for men and women in Sweden shows how a fictive proposed past creates an image that legitimise a certain version of the present. It's common, she claims, that unequal conditions for men and women are being traced back to the industrial time, where men went to work and women stayed at home. This later shifted when women started to get paid work. When this story is being told it also fixate the industrial time as the starting point of unequal relations. Other explanatory factors cannot be understood if they can't fit into this explanation. This story becomes the "normal", the consensus-explanation. There are of course other ways of understanding inequalities, but in the explanation from the SOU-report, there is no room for other than the normative and gender binary story. Gender differences, as Butler (1990/1999) writes in *Gender Trouble*, are legitimised by repeatedly being linked back to the illusion of history, with a stable version of two different sexes, sexualities and desires. Gender differences are being made legitimate when linking them to an illusion of stable core that caused the differences. History is thus becoming a tool to consolidate gender binary. This retroactive writing of history is portraying the now as natural. And by (re)telling this story (unconsciously and not) the idea of gender differences as natural and basically un-political is being maintained. Concluding the history of Swedish gender equality politics with Fahlgren and Sawyer (2005), they state that equality has been proclaimed for a specific group of women, while the inequality in other groups have been (re)produced. Institutions like this SOU-report is (re)telling the story about gender being the most prominent factor to (in)equality. If we don't recognize structural injustices that lodge in our historical background, gender will continue to (un)intentionally reign since it's the norm of political efforts o today.

The structural understanding of a post-structural conception
As written about earlier, the focus on inequalities from a structural understanding in gender equality politics in Sweden could be traced back to the impact of Hirdman's theory "Genussystemet" in 1994 (prop. 1993/94:147). The theory explains how the patriarchal structure affects female subordination through separation and domination. This structural understanding of power is rather static, in comparison to the later post-structural influence of Foucault (1975/1991). Noted here must of course be that the Foucauldian post-structuralism went hand in hand with the upraise of, for example post-colonial, queer, age and crip theory

that too have deconstructed the static and hegemonic view of female oppression. With the development of notion on power as performative and not inherent, this reconstructed women as a static, oppressed group. Women as a group could with this post-structural interpretation be seen as both oppressed and oppressors at the same time. The struggle for women's rights (re)created meaning about who can be involved in the group women and the feministic struggle, and who is responsible for the oppression. With an intersectional analysis female emancipation had to be explained by more than patriarchy. Capitalism, post-colonialism, transphobia are too ways of explaining subordination and privilege. This multi-complexity gave more responsibility to the normative women's struggle, where questions concerning white, middleclass women were a significant part. It also shed critical light of concern onto the view on all male benefiting from male privilege the same way (Mattsson, 2010). Hirdman's theory is in the SOU-report still being recognized as the main way of explaining oppression and privilege in Sweden. This static outset is difficult to combine with the fluidity and system criticism of intersectionality. And thus this historical trace could explain why the report treat categories as separable and additive, instead of deconstructed.

The making of de-politicized gender equality

Another discursive understanding with historical origin that affects the construction of the representation of the problem is the de-politicising of intersectionality that has been shown in Q2. One way of understanding the de-politicising in the Swedish context is through the spreading of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is here being understood as when the rationality of the market spreads from economic domains into the society overall and thereby governs the subject in a normative way according to market logic (Fahlgren, Mulinari & Sjöstedt Landén, 2016). Fahlgren, Mulinari and Sjöstedt Landén (2016) writes that Sweden is the country in the world that has undergone the most dramatic neoliberal changes the past few years. These changes in public sector over recent decades has meant that different ideas that has come from private companies' methods for managing organizations have been translated into the public sector (Lindholm, 2011). The state must then construct itself and their policies to fit the terms of the market. As an example, Siim (2013) discusses the tendency that Swedish integration policies tend to be based on individual rights instead of state obligations. The market logic and neoliberalism might also increase this individual aspect and disconnect the state from the structural understanding of oppression.

In the era of neoliberalism gender equality efforts are more and more being implemented with a consensus-strategy. It's then easier to sell in due to the less revolutionary aspect for management and employees. Since intersectionality is in the SOU-report being used without its inherited conflicts, it's easier to use it as a concept comparable to the bases of discrimination. This de-politized development through neoliberalism could thus facilitate the increased use of intersectionality within gender equality politics. A conflict strategy on the other hand would mean more realistic conditions but with greater ideological roots (Lindholm, 2011). This instrumental and un-political way of understanding gender equality is also written about in Alnebratt and Rönnblom (2016). Their reflection is that in the context of instrumental approaches, gender equality will fail to be realized since it doesn't have a political goal. It's not lack of knowledge or measure tool that is needed, instead its political ambitions depending on different political ideologies. Mouffe (2005) argues that currently, the discussions about what kind of society we want to live in, and how we believe that this will be accomplished, is centred on a discursive uniformity which cannot be questioned without one being labelled as an extremist.

Q4 has shown the historical dimension of gender equality politics which have affected the assumption in the SOU-report, and hence the representation of the problem. What has been found is that the gendered discourse has strong historical roots of gender equality efforts from the 70s at the expense of a concealed racist and gender binary history. The structural understanding that makes it difficult to combine gender equality with intersectionality is being traced back to the proposition of 1994 which still is present in the gender equality politics of today. Q4 has also shown the spread of a neoliberalism as a way of explaining the un-political use of intersectionality in politics.

Q5: Discursive, subjective and lived effects

The aim of Q5 is to discuss what effects are being (re)produced with this representation of the problem and the assumptions that underlie this construction of a problem. Q5 is to a great extent being conducted with discourse theory along with the findings from previous sections. Bacchi's (2009a) WPR-method differs between three types of effects that the representations of a problem in a specific policy (re)creates. These are the discursive effects, the subjectification effect and the lived effects. The discursive effects follow from the limits imposed on what can be thought and said, depending on the normalised discourse. The subjectification effect refers to the way in which individuals can be understood as subjects.

Lived effects are in turn the material impact of life and death, which follow the first two effects. Before discussing all these effects in order, I will first discuss the symbolic power of this SOU-report. Because of the discursive outset of this thesis, it also relates to Foucault's (1997/2008) notion on institutions as a concentration of power in the sense that it can (re)produce discourses to a great amount of people. The authors to the report are aware of the fact that policies might not only have a legislative force but also a normative effect:

> "The government has an important normative role when it comes to equalizing the differences between wages for women and men"[43] (SOU 2015:86, p. 34)

Authors such as professor Sara Ahmed (2007) have explored the symbolic power of gender equality documents. Ahmed claim there to be a risk that equality ambitions stay in equality documents, and not be implemented into the organisation. Proposals might thus take focus from the practise of equality work and instead concentrate on the function of making investigations or policy documents. It is also a risk, Ahmed writes, that a high trust in documents might draw attention from the individual responsibility within an organization and that might in turn hinder a positive long- term development. In that case, governments can authorize investigations and then refuse responsibility for the outcome at the same time. The case Ahmed is describing in this article is a situation where documents against racism becomes an alibi for the ongoing racism in the organisation. Comparing this situation to the SOU-report could be that by not fully committing to an intersectional understanding the government can continue to (re)produce anti-intersectional actions. Yet, by proposing an intersectional ambition, the field of gender equality politics can dodge critique about lack of intersectionality. It thus becomes more difficult for people to criticize the report's attempt for equality.

To understand intersectionality in the (re)produced discourse

The first effects that I want to highlight is the discursive effects of the representation of the problem. The question is what can be thought and said within the discourse, (re)created by the institution's representation of the problem. As has been found the representation of the problem is that gender equality fails to acknowledge the differences within the two gendered groups. The proposed solution to this problem is that intersectionality should be used as a tool to attain the gender equality objectives. The discursive effects stems from the SOU-report's

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[43] Translated from: Staten har en viktig normerande roll i att verka för att utjämna skillnader i inkomst mellan män och kvinnor

understanding of intersectionality that has been shown in Q2/Q4, and influence what can (continue to) be said and done. Since all practices have a discursive aspect, all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do. I have divided the discursive effects in three parts. The first effect is that it's (re)producing gender as the most important factor to explain inequalities, and the second effect that intersectionality undergoes a discursive transformation into a tool which entails a fixation of both the concept and social categories. I will then discuss how these two effects could then lead to other problematic discursive effects.

The first discursive effect – (re)production of gender as the most important factor to explain inequalities - has been shown at several places in the text so far. This way in which the SOU-report use intersectionality as a concept could spread because of their institutional power. Institutions like this SOU- report are playing an important role in the reproduction of discourses since it produces centralized power effects associated with institutionalised discourses. The reproduction by institutions, Foucault (1997/2008) claims, thus hold a great responsibility towards the procreation of discursive effects. When always measuring gender in intersectional gender equality work, this will probably reinforce the importance of gender above other inequalities. By making statements like "statistics only disaggregated by sex" the reproduced hierarchy is being maintained between different axes of power and thereby a transformation towards intersectional implementation in public administration could be hindered.

The second effect - transformation of the concept into a tool - does too create a discursive effect since being made into a tool might increase the immobility of the concept. I have shown at several places how the view on equality might stem from the structural understanding from the proposition from 1994 (or earlier). When the SOU-report tries to fit intersectionality as a concept of post-structuralism within the more static frameworks of gender equality politic, I argue that the effect could be that the fluidity of intersectionality becomes more static. The increased neoliberalism could intense this development and thus de-politicize intersectionality even more. When an intersectional perception must adapt to the system of gender equality politics, this could result in that the only possible way of using intersectionality will be in an additive way. Thus, the dimension of *intersection* will be concealed. Intersectionality could with this development lose its power and becomes less revolutionary.

There are multiple discursive problems that could follow when intersectionality is being used static and additive. First of all, accurate to the situation of this SOU-report is that governmental agencies could choose which categories they want to use. It would then be up for bureaucrats to pick their categories of interest, and deal with them in isolation, without paying attention to how they intersect with other social division (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2007). By assign an intersectional interpretation for bureaucrats makes the power very centered around people who might not have much knowledge about problems regarding complexity and fluidity of categories. As has been shown in Q2, there seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge differences between historical backgrounds of oppression. These assumed similarities between categories could increase by using an additive perspective on inequalities (Verloo, 2006) since this perspective treats every category the same. An additive approach like this could also lead to "oppression Olympics" where marginalized groups compete with one another for scarce resources and institutional access instead of co-operating with one another to work for systemic reforms of the unjust society (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). Brown (2005) also warns about the risk in a neoliberal time to dissolve the political We, in favour of the individual perspective, which makes it more difficult to oppose inequality together. These thoughts are all grounded in the concern of political competition between social categories (Verloo, 2006) and will probably increase when more social categories are assumed to be implemented together without a critical approach. The problem is thus that these discursive frameworks the SOU-report is reproducing makes it almost impossible to claim that intersectionality is more than adding categories on top of each other in an analysis.

There are also discursive problems that could arise from the increased neoliberalism in politics. Gender equality does not in itself acknowledge other structural injustices, it's therefore accurate to consider the differences between social change and anti-discrimination. Anti-discrimination, or equal treatment does not necessarily attack the structures (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2010). It's foremost[44] a way of securing that every individual, within the groups that are acknowledged in the bases of discrimination, are being recognised in comparison to any another individual. Eduards (2016) writes that the anti-discrimination approach is a classic liberal approach, where equality is being replaced by the rights-perspective where structural injustices are not being recognised. In a neoliberal era it's important, Eduards (2016) continues, to hold on to a politic of redistribution when discussing

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[44] It's in the discrimination act that the plans for pro-active measures at workplaces and school are controlled. However, this is only in regard to gender and functionality.

inequalities, since a focus on merely recognition as in the anti-discrimination approach might easier be influenced by nationalistic and conservative political forces. When bases for discrimination is the outset for intersectionality, the neoliberal development might turn intersectionality into an approach used to deal with problems on an individual, anti-discrimination level, instead of analysing structural injustices in favour of social change. Social change (positive actions) and anti-discrimination laws (equal treatment) are also difficult to combine in practice (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2010). Social change in this sense aims towards the positive actions that could have been the way to tackle inequalities if not the anti-discrimination strand had won ground in the 80s, as have been described in Q3. What is happening on an EU-level is that an emphasis on anti-discrimination turns equality work away from a structural understanding into a focus on equal opportunities that in turn places the emphasis on the individual (Lombardo & Verloo, 2009). The discursive problematic effect on current gender equality politics is that the static and interchangeable intersectional understanding makes is more difficult to claim the focus on structure, instead on individuals.

To be(come) a subject in the (re)produced discourse

Being able to discuss subjectification effects of the representation of the problem, Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1976/2002) and *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1991) will be the starting point since these texts enables an understanding of how the discourse affect us on a subjective level. In other words, how the discourse affects how the subject can be thought and said about. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1991) Foucault discusses the process where the discourse is being internalised on an individual level. The discourse has a disciplinarian power in such a way that it forms how the individual can be understood as a subject in society. Disciplinarian power is not solely executed by punishment, it is equal done by rewards. Foucault (1975/1991) even claims that the "positive" power, with rewards, is more efficient than the opposite. For example, when an individual is not being understood within the frameworks of the discourse, or doing the opposite to what is acceptable, there will arise some kind of punishment towards the subject. On the other hand, when a behaviour of an individual coincides with the discursive norm, the individual will feel contentment. Most importantly hereinafter is how this contentment works on a subjective level. As Foucault writes in *History of Sexuality* (1976/2002), the power of rewards does not only shape the way we can think and talk, but also by establishing our identities. The discourse thereby creates subject's possibilities to be understood, recognised and seen as a "normal" part of society. The fact that language is not only meaningful but also constitutes an active practice with material effects is also something

Butler discusses in *Excitable Speech* (1997). Butler acknowledges language as a trigger to action which gets lived and material effects on the subject. Thereby she too joins the post-structural notion on the subject's appearance in the language. Butler has built on Foucault's notion on discourse to understand the subject as not existing before or beyond the discourse, the way we can understand ourselves and our surrounding is solely within the frameworks of the discourse. That means that we cannot be or become subject beyond or before the discourse. I will hereby discuss different forms of subjectification effects that I think will happen when the discourse about intersectionality as showed in Q1 and Q2, will interact with politics and people. The subjectification effects that will be presented are essentialization of given categories, what is being considered as normal/other, and what it means to be(come) a subject in a neoliberal society.

In the SOU-report categories are constantly used in an additive way. As have been showed earlier in this text, Yuval-Davis (2006) criticize any attempt of intersectional understanding that doesn't problematize the oppressive effect on essentialistic categories such as "blackness", "womanhood" or "working classness". Such descriptions often reflect a hegemonic discourse that make experiences of the more marginal members of any social category invisible. At the same time, this essentialistic way of categorizing people construct a homogenized "right way" for how to be a member of that particular category. With an essentialistic perception on intersectionality it's therefore a great risk that power orders will grow within different social categories. When the category Woman is described in the SOU-report, this always refers to a hegemonic white, middleclass, heterosexual woman, unless the opposite is explained. When the report tries to merge different categories together, the assumption is always that the category Woman is according to the norm. This (re)produced act of essentialise the group "women" is highly problematic since it conceals the differences of experiences of what it is to "be a woman" and thus makes it harder for women outside the norm.

As discussed in Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990/1999), the discourse about the normal way of living and being affects the individual's ability to become a subject. Fahlgren and Sawyer (2005) give an example on how this gets effects on liveable lives in the context of social work in Sweden. It has historically been, and still is, important to visualize people who are not functioning in order to give them social services. At the same time as these people are being targeted, the *normal* is being (re)produced. The act of targeting vulnerable groups of people thus strengthens and normalize the dichotomy between we and them, the functioning and non-

functioning people. In other words, by helping those in need of social care the discourse which entails dichotomies of normal and non-normal is being (re)produced, creates what is the "normal" subject (Fahlgren and Sawyer, 2005). What is common to all these discourses of normalization is that they tend to homogenize social categories and treat all who belong to a social category as sharing attributes specific to it (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The attributes of those in a social category are often used for the construction of inclusionary/exclusionary boundaries that differentiate between we and them, determining what is normal and what non-normal, who is entitled to certain resources and who is not. In this way, institutions hold certain responsibility for the ongoing power imbalance in society and the individual's ability to be(come) a "normal" subject. The report thus (re)produce an inclusion effect by making the static group "women" normal. The normal is those women who are left undefined, and thus are being understood as subjects.

At the same time as the SOU-report is (re)creating the discourse about the normal, they are also in contrast (re)producing "the other". Any threat to the discourse implies challenging and questioning this, which means that those individuals who are not well-suited may be considered threatening to the current discourse (Foucault, 1976/2002). The normalization process is thus establishing identities that in turn will affect some subjects feeling of not being normal in society. The SOU-report uses intersectionality as an analytical tool to target vulnerable, deviated groups. The report has thereby (re)produced normative categorizations at the same time. When the SOU-report wants to integrate an intersectional approach of gender equality on those is extra need of social services, they are at the same time segregating these people from the "normal" equality politic. This could be a consequence of the intra-categorical approach since it doesn't acknowledge the problematic assumptions that lodge within the categorization process. de los Reyes and Kamali (2005) discuss how categorization, "othering- processes" and discrimination of groups may be an unintended consequence of the institutionalized normal, neutral and "objective" actions of the majority society. Categorizations may then be seen as both a product and creator of norms and what is normal. Subjectification effect caused by the dichotomy between the normal and the other is being (re)produced in the SOU-report. To understand this process of subjectification in the context of white and non-white bodies, Sara Ahmed (2010) discuss this as a phenomenological issue. The whiteness is invisible and unnoticed, like the absentee centre around which "others" only appear as deviants. If being human is to be white, then by not being white you are to be the negative: it's to *not be*. Thus, in order to be comfortable as a subject in a world of white

supremacy, you have to *be* white. The SOU-report has been shown to (re)produce the hegemonic feminism by using gender as the most important factor to combine with "other" factors. Fahlgren and Sawyer (2005) writes that a high focus on gender inequalities in a nationalistic time can produce certain criteria on what equality entails, connected to nationalistic ambition. Gender equality might then become a way of (re)producing inequalities as a cultural problem for "the other" groups, instead of a social cultural problem in the majority society. To target groups in special need of gender equality, as the SOU-report claims, could thus increase the "other" also in terms of oppressors. However, this interpretation can only be thought about if ignoring the post-colonial dimension of gender equality politics. At large, the hegemonic gender equality politics of Sweden are becoming equal in the creation of "other" traditional cultures and immigrants who are not (de los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari, 2002).

As have been reviewed in Q2, in the SOU-report there is a discussion about how to relate to oppression against women at the same time as being critical about cis-normativity. The report put these two issues in contrast to the other, and thereafter chooses to continue with an approach which exclude non-binary and trans-people. Their way of posing these questions in contrast to each other and then ignoring one perspective can be seen as a performative act of oppression through hierarchical power orders. The SOU-report does, as Butler (1990/1999) writes, a highly performative act when categorizing these political questions of identity as opposed to each other. The gender equality discourse overall is also highly performative in the sense that it suggest that the hegemonic norm of gender equality in Sweden builds upon and produces, as Martinsson, Griffin and Girilti Nygren (2016), writes; nationalist, hetero- and cisnormative and racialised positions in a postcolonial and neoliberal time and space. When not acknowledging our own society's oppressive role by stating that Sweden is 'being better than' other countries regarding gender equality (Sjöstedt Landén & Olofsdotter, 2016) this is a performative act that (re)produce individuals in Sweden as subject in contrast to "other" unequal countries. The SOU-report is in one way searching for the threat outside when they do not acknowledge other structural injustices and thus (re)create structural injustices. As Mouffe writes (2005) we mustn't ignore our own position as oppressors but understand that the threat is within our own repeating actions within the system.

One last important effect regarding subjectification, is the issue of being a subject in a neoliberal world. When Bacchi (2009b, p. 25) interprets Foucault she describes his view on

power as one of its prime effects is that "certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals." Certain bodies, gestures and desires that are being accepted in a neoliberal era is being describes by Brown (2005) as subject thinking in an economic way, not only regarding economics but in all areas of life. Hence, neoliberalism too can be seen as a regulatory power which affects the subject. We can thus only be understood as subjects within the frameworks of rationality and efficiency. Brown (2005, p. 653) claims that political rationality "is a specific form of normative political reason organizing the political sphere, governance practices and citizenship" which "governs the sayable, the intelligible, and the truth criteria of these domains." Linking this to Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1991), the neoliberal discourse disciplines us by rewarding subjects whose actions and identity are in line with this current discourse. Neoliberalism thus works normative. The ideal for neoliberalism is the individual's free choice, but the choices can only be perceived as free within the spectrum of the "normal".

To live in the (re)produced discourse

The lived effects of the representation of the problem in the SOU-report is the material impact of life and death. One might ask; what equality do the SOU-report want and on the expense on whom? In this thesis, the hegemonic feminism has been showed as reproducing a hierarchy of what is a societal problem. The (re)production of the categories of the normal and "the other" could on a societal level justify political efforts in favour of mostly certain normative groups of people. As an example, statistics disaggregated by sex has been explained earlier in this thesis as a way of measuring gender equality political efforts. When there is little statistics on other power structure apart from age and gender, political efforts cannot be evaluated. There is a great need of evaluation in gender mainstreaming programs (Callerstig, 2014), and thus if efforts cannot be evaluated they are less probable to be implemented. The lived effect are then that due to statistics disaggregated only by sex, more political investments could be done in this area and thus producing material effects of those it concerns.

Material and lived effects on non-normative people in a hierarchal society are, and could continue to be, many. The gender segregated labour market and unequal conditions for women and men are, for example, problems that are rarely affected in relation to the immigrant population's ability to raise self-sufficiency. The majority society's conflicts, contradictions and exclusionary mechanisms are not given room in discussions about

integration policy. Immigrant women and men are believed to be able to integrate into a society where class contradictions, homophobia, racism and sexism do not occur (de los Reyes & Kamali, 2005, p. 8). The idea of the Swedish model and partnership for growth and equality has been a cornerstone not only for the construction of the national community but also for Sweden's profile in international contexts. (ibid, p. 9), such as when Sweden was named the world's most equal country (Tollin, 2011). It is not just discrimination in areas such as the labour market and housing mentioned, but also the passive attitude of governments towards everyday racism and racist organizations (de los Reyes & Kamali, 2005, p. 9). I would say that a lot of the effects I can detect in the report are a (re)production of the current conditions in society. The normative women, and men, will probably benefit from this representation of the problem whereas non-normative people won't. Non-normative people might instead be harmed since the political efforts might not come to their advantaged, or worse come to their disadvantage. As Fahlgren and Sawyer (2005) writes, the people whose in their bodily appearance isn't targeted in political effort to the gender equality objectives might themselves be seen as the cause in this emerging neoliberal and individual society.

Q6: Revolting within the system

The aim of Q6 is to pay attention to the possibilities of challenging the representation of the problem (Bacchi, 2009a). In the *History of Sexuality* (1976/2002), Foucault writes that resistance against any power does not exists outside the prevailing discourse. Hence, criticisms towards the Swedish gender equality politics tend to stay within the frameworks of the prevailing discourse. Thus, it's not easy to find solutions far away from the prevailing society. Bacchi and Eveline (2010) however, recommend that more attention should be directed to the spaces where political change is most likely to take place. The discursive, subjective and lived effects from the report might with this interpretation be contested by our own "politics of doing". I have thus interpreted Q6 as concerning changes that can be made from a position within the prevailing system, and hence reflect upon societal changes in a broader sense in the concluding further discussion.

Every citizen's equal materialistic rights and recognition needs to be protected in the times to come. As has been an ongoing issue throughout this thesis, recognition of history (Þorvaldsdóttir, 2007), social power axes (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and recognition in order to question the hegemonic feminism is of great importance. Along with the pluralism of ideas,

intersectionality might be used as more of a theoretical concept than a tool for gender mainstreaming that entails how socially constructed categories intersect with each other, and thus better account for their complexity. Thereafter, one might be able to use categories with greater awareness, and to acknowledge power as something active not only regarding gender differences.

I have found one example in the SOU-report that I argue is an ambition in the direction of intersectional understanding, although not explicitly outspoken in the report. The example concerns violence against women and the societal co-operation to tackle this problem from different angles. Different governmental agencies are supposed to work together in order to understand the complexity of both origin and prevention of violence. This entails both social, economic and emotional dependency, but also the understanding of the complexity of the multiple positions the group "abused people" entail[45]. Co-ordination can be seen as a sort of reconstruction amongst governmental assignments which might lead way for a greater deconstruction of approaching inequalities. In comparison to McCall's inter-categorical approach, these two has similarities of focus on categories/governmental functions to identify patterns of relations between them. More co-operation between agencies regarding different equality issues could lead to a higher awareness of the complexity of different social categories and the (re)production of societal power when establishing these categories.

With the background of Ahmed's (2007) critique presented earlier regarding policies as an alibi, one might wonder why we even bother to write down any proposals at all. The benefits by this action however, as Ahmed (2007) continues, when viewing the plans as useful tools is that they can help describe a starting point for equality work. What then could be the focus is to evaluate the situation thoroughly on an annual basis focus on long-term activities (Svensson & Gunnarsson, 2012). If policy documents can leave the administrative board with an intrinsic value and actually become a part of the daily work, then they can help towards an ongoing reconstruction of practices (Bacchi & Eveline, 2009). Policy papers and such might then become more "non-static".

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[45] A report was released in connection to this SOU. There they write for instance that "there is a need for better coordination, structure and clarity regarding the work and efforts to combat men's violence against women and honor-related violence and oppression at national level" (SOU 2015:55:20).

Mouffe (2005) argues for a clearer distinction between the administrative politics and the space of political discussion and arguments – the political. I agree with her and claim that the distinction needs to be more marked. I would however also add that the un-political politics also needs to be even clearer about what it entails. People involved in forming political documents or the like must be careful not to make definitions based on normative assumption. Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2007) exemplify this when criticizing how "categories such as 'immigrant', 'ethnic group' and 'ethnic minority' have too often been employed as descriptive and self-evident categories" (ibid, p. 179). As Yuval-Davis (2005) writes we need to decide whether intersectionality is a technology or a tool; if intersectionality is a goal itself or a way of achieving other political goals, and whether it's supposed to work transformative or additive. There are no clear-cut answers to these questions but they emphasize that such discussion needs to be acknowledged. Or as Þorvaldsdóttir (2010) poses the question; "How far, deep and wide into various sectors in society should equality work reach?" (p. 45). The SOU-report is not clear about these questions, and so it is up to those who interpret the report to draw the conclusions themselves. We must be clear about what we mean, since there is much power within the implicit (Freidenvall, 2006). As the Foucauldian discourse theory claims, the power to control is within that which we do not question and thus take for granted.

We also need to recognize the political dimension. Mouffe (2005, p. 120) writes about different political ideas that "although they conflict and can never be finally reconciled they should nevertheless be considered as legitimate". The SOU-report should therefore try to establish pluralism, and not overcome it, to avoid oppression of opinions and discourses within. Expressing the background of the problem however is going against this neoliberal approach since it might highlight the capitalist relation of production as a root of numerous relations of subordination (Martinsson & Reimers, 2007). Equality politics is a highly political field and need to continue to be.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to examine examples of the SOU- report's (2015:86) ambition that intersectionality should be implemented into gender equality politics and to investigate the understanding this ambition gives to intersectionality when put in the context of gender equality politics. The overarching research question has been: What does the SOU-report (2015:86) do with our understanding of intersectionality? The WPR-method by Bacchi

(2009a) has been used to examine the intention of this proposed political ambition and the meaning and effects it could create. My initial concern about the unchallenged eager to use intersectionality in practice is still standing after this research process. My findings point to the proposal not being able to properly acknowledge the complexity within the intersectionality concept. This entails that the proposal fails to treat different social categories differently, thus concealing their diverse historical and political dimensions. I argue that this will likely have negative effects on the discussion of equality politics as well as for individual subjects, and that the SOU-report therefore is highly problematic. I have also argued that the report's level of intersectionality implementation intention is not only too unambitious, but also that the impact of this ambition will likely be harmful for non-normative subjects.

Specifically, my investigation has found the following. In Q1 I found that the representation of the problem within the SOU is that the two categories of men and women are too heterogeneous in themselves. Therefore, to provide gender equality efforts with a higher effect, intersectionality should be used as a method to understand this variation amongst the categories men and women. The assumptions that made it possible for the SOU-report to make such claims was investigated in Q2/Q4. Analysing the material revealed a structuralist view of power relations, a de-politicized version of gender equality and intersectionality and a view on gender as the most important social category to explain power inequalities. The report also seemed to assume that different social categories can be used in an un-problematic, interchangeable and additive way without acknowledging the different historical backgrounds between them. The historical and contemporary conditions that allow the representation of the problem and underlying assumptions to take shape were presented in Q3. The analysis showed that Swedish political institutions has had a long history of favouring gender as the most important factor when dealing with oppression, at the expense of non-normative women, and continue to hold on to a structural understanding of power inequalities. An increased use of a de-politicized version of intersectionality has been made possible by the increased neoliberal presence where disagreements in politics have been concealed. The effects, analysed in Q5, that are being (re)produced with this representation of the problem and the assumptions that underlie this construction is discursive to the extent that they are (re)producing gender as the most important factor to explain inequalities, and intersectionality undergoes a discursive transformation into fixation of both concept and social categories. The problem is thus that these discursive frameworks makes it almost impossible to claim that intersectionality is more than adding categories on top of each other in an analysis. On a

subjective level, the effects are essentialization of given categories that further polarize the dichotomy between the normal and the other. This may in turn increase material effects on non-normative people negatively. The revolting actions suggested in Q6 call for a clearer distinction between politics and the political.

To summarize, I have come to the conclusion that the term "intersectionality" in the report has been seen primarily as a useful tool in order to highlight differences between the categories of men and women. Though attempting to adopt an intersectional viewpoint the report still treats gender as a superordinate category; a way of prioritizing that necessarily happens at the expense of acknowledging other social categories in their fullest right. Put concisely: intersectionality is used more for the sake of gender equality than for the sake of an intersectional perspective itself. The discourse this proposal is (re)producing is highly hierarchal and in favour of the normative heterosexual, white, cis-woman, while other social categories are inserted first when fitting into this scheme. The social categories used are many, but are used interchangeably, un-problematically and without visualizing the differences in the various historical constructions of these different complex categories. This, I claim is due to Sweden's history of focus on oppression of women, which have (re)produced a very delimited version of how the non-normative subject can be understood. Institutions and their outputs, like this SOU, is (re)telling a story about gender as being the most prominent factor to (in)equality, at the same time as Swedish history is full of examples of gender viewed as the prime issue, likely due to our racist and gender binary past. The un-political approach towards a highly political and complex concept as intersectionality, I argue, has been influenced by a neoliberal development in Sweden which transforms politics into administrative tasks instead of political discussions. Our own "politics of doing" in institutions and daily life is (re)producing this discursive understanding with discursive, subjective as well as lived effects. The implications of this approach entail a (re)production of the existing inequalities, combined with a greater difficulty to question this prevailing un-political discourse. The (re)production of this hegemonic discourse, that favour white, heterosexual, women affects the ability of non-normative individuals to be understood as subjects. This will have lived and material effects, along with a limitation on what voices that can be heard and what political initiatives will be possible to implement.

The understanding of intersectionality that the SOU-report (2015:86) (re)produce can be understood as the opposite of what might have been its intention. By its use of the concept,

intersectionality becomes a way of continuing to reproduce the hegemonic norms about inclusion/exclusion and privilege/subordination. This then only makes it harder to question the order since it sounds like it is what is appropriate. To oppose this development of hegemonic feminism we must continue to fight for a greater recognition of pluralities of histories, subordinations and positions. Even though an intention may be formed from a good purpose, this does not mean that it should be left unquestioned. Especially since discourses that are reproduced provide a framework for how we can think about equality in the future. By questioning the verifications taken for granted, we can ask what is really meant and ask politicians to be responsible for the discourse that is (re)produced.

Further discussion

As a last attempt to situate myself within this research field, I want to discuss whether I am over-interpreting the SOU-report's intersectional ambition or not. I have in this thesis taken the SOU- report by the words when it discusses intersectionality and not, as would have been more charitable, interpreted the intersectional proposal as another word for norm criticism or such. But this is the problem when translating a concept from research to practice – different connotations stand out. And it would have been wrong by me, I think, to not take their words for what they say. My outset has also been to question the report's seemingly implicit assumption that gender should be the base in an intersectional understanding. It might seem strange to think this way for those working daily with the gender equality objectives, but my intention has been to question the taken-for-granted assumptions, and this also includes the established way of viewing gender equality politics as foremost about gender.

In Q6 I discussed ways in which we can show resistance towards this discourse, however still within the frameworks of the current societal order. As a further discussion point, I would like to take the opportunity to take this one step further and discuss more revolutionary, structural changes. Specifically, how may an intersectional political practise other than the one dissected in this thesis look like? Or in the words of Hankivsky and Cormier (2011, p.1):

> "Instead of designing policies that create a talented tenth or a fortunate fifth
> of a marginalized group, how might we redesign domestic and foreign
> policies to ensure that *all* members of any marginalized group are enabled to
> empower themselves?"

This quote refers to a perspective of evaluation that tries to understand the consequences for all, instead of just for the static groups of men and women. According to Hankivsky and

Cormier (2011), an intersectionality perspective on public policy should be a way of understanding how different policies problem definitions, solutions and implementation have different outcomes for all people in the society. I argue further that it is crucial to question the institutional discursive power when politics are making claims about intersectionality and equality. In turn, the focus on (re)production of discourses will help critically investigate consequences of different political attempts and approaches.

To look beyond the categorical way is going to be, I argue, the main intersectional issue in politics in the future. A first step would be to try and overcome the problem of using intersectionality to focus on specific groups. One way would be to instead discuss privileges, similar to the approach of critical whiteness studies. By focusing on whiteness, or in a wider term the hegemonic, normative Woman in general, politics might easier understand that (re)production of power structures isn't something that only happens to minorities, but to all people. For example, in order to understand how racialization processes change the conditions of gender relationships - in other words how intersections of social categories are non-additive - regarding whiteness as a discourse for the privileged, privileges becomes important. Whiteness thus becomes a point of departure for protesting inequalities. On the other hand, Mattsson (2010) warns that privilege as point of departure can become a safe space for – in this case white - researchers by focusing on normative people's experiences. In the context of Swedish politics, it could be dangerous if we do not acknowledge our oppressive history towards non-normative groups of people. This perspective might then lead to equality politics becoming even more de-politicized.

I think that investigations like this thesis are important in order to understand the gap between gender studies in research and practice. This thesis attempts to raise awareness of discursive and subjective effects that might stem from many situations where intersectionality is being used in an un-reflected way. Hopefully, it will have given rise to some new thoughts about how we can and should make social change in politics. I think that by gender studies ability to deconstruct what is taken for granted, we might be able to see how political efforts might (re)produce injustices, even though the ambition might have been the opposite. I believe however that still more research needs to be done. For example, it would be interesting to investigate how policies like the one examined here are being interpreted on different levels of governmental agencies instead of even more analysis of the policies themselves. Taken together, we must keep challenging the assumptions and representations of problems that are

being taken for granted. We have to, I argue, keep being what Sara Ahmed calls "feminist killjoys", and continue to destroy the comforting idleness of ordinary consensus politics.

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