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TRANSLATING GENDER EQUALITY

A case study about the EU gender policy's politicising capacity

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the politicising capacity of gender equality policy in the European Investment and Structural funds (ESI funds). It takes off from studies on the implementation of the policy, which indicates that it is not able to politicise gender – because it does not articulate gender equality in conflictual terms. Theories on a discursive understanding of politics and translation processes pose that the design and the translation of the policy may limit the politicising capacity. To investigate the translation process, attention is paid to the underlying problem formulation as well as the organisation of the policy.

The translation of gender equality policy in Community Led Local Development (CLLD) in Sweden and the region Halland is used as a case study. CLLD is a method for implementing the ESI funds local based initiatives, which enables analysis of three levels: the level of the EU (with involvement from the European Commission, European Parliament and the Council), the national administrative agency in Sweden (Board of Agriculture) and the CLLD group in the region of Halland. Interviews are conducted with public officials at the Board of Agriculture and members of the CLLD group, to investigate their understanding and prioritisation of the gender equality policy. Policy documents which guide the implementation of CLLD are analysed to expose the underlying problem formulation. This material is used to elaborate on what politicising potential the policy has.

It is found that the policy does not imply any politicising measures. Instead, it mainly focuses on how gender equality can be used for economic goals, how it loosely prescribes equal representation in decision making groups, how to avoid discrimination in the implementation, and how knowledge will help the policy actors to understand more exactly what do with the policy. The policy actors do not perceive gender equality to have priority over other goals. At EU and national level, the gender equality policy is presented as a solution which enhances other measures, making them more profitable. At the local level, the gender equality policy is understood as useful when it is instrumental to reach other goals, and may cause tension in certain cases.

Content

Introduction

Europe is nowhere near gender equality. In every country, in every society, men have more power than women. Political, economic, and social. Gender equality has been on the EU agenda for over 50 years and the EU is considered one of the most progressive gender regimes in the world. Actions have been taken in the legal domain, for example regarding the equal pay for equal work rule, which prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. Furthermore, the EU keeps statistics based on sex, which enables member states to be aware of their progress towards gender equality (Woodward, 2012; 85).

Policies are shaped and reshaped through constitutive processes in particular contexts. The EU gender equality policy has developed in a context shaped by feminist theorising, grassroots actors, and an intensified transnational focus on gender issues (Woodward, 2012; 86). Several scholars call attention to the fact that EU gender equality policy is particularly sensitive to shaping processes, because the concept of gender equality is open for interpretation (Bustelo & Verloo, 2009). Because there is no fixed meaning of gender equality, it can be used to promote other policy goals. A prominent example is how the gender mainstreaming policy has been used to promote growth, especially in a post-crisis context (Elomäki, 2016, Rönnblom, 2009).

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) is the approach used by the EU, and many national governments since the 1990's (Woodward, 2012; 89). The goal of GM is to prevent specific prioritised goals from competing with gender equality goals, through incorporating gender considerations into every stage of policy processes and in every policy domain. It aims to tackle the gendered nature of policy domains, change structures and processes that reproduce gender inequality, and influence the articulation of objectives (Bock, 2014; 732).

The GM proposes a formula based on the idea that gender equality can be taken into consideration without causing any "trouble". Gender equality enhances the policies, making them better and more profitable. The notion of "pain-free" politics approach is argued to have intensified since the mid-2000, as women and the issue of gender equality increasingly is described as a matter of an underused resource in policy texts (Elomäki, 2016). This raises issues about the capacity of EU gender equality policy to politicise gender equality – if the policy proposes a solution where gender equality will always be profitable, measures which acknowledge conflictual interests and therefore creates losers and winners are excluded (Rönnblom, 2009, Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016).

Translation process of gender equality in the CLLD

A recently highlighted issue regarding the GM approach is how the organisation of the policy sets limits for its transformative power. The GM depends on methods and tools, such as gender impact assessment, gendered budgeting, and gender equality indicators (Woodward, 2012; 98-99). Much of the decisions about the content of the policy is decentralised. It is shaped and translated by actors that are not political, which do not have a political mandate. In the case of the Swedish GM policy, Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) discuss how the New Public Management (NPM) influences in gender mainstreaming are ill-fitted to promote change in this complex issue. Kennett and Lendvai (2014) discuss the transnational policy translation processes attached to the diffusion of GM policy. It is argued that the GM policy is sensitive to who gets to translate it, what is translated, and how it is translated.

The European Structural and Investment funds (ESI funds) was one of the first instances where GM as gender equality policy were adapted (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; 441), and being the most important financial support available (Advisory Committee, 2012), the ESI funds are an important context to investigate the politicising potential of EU gender equality.

Community-Led Local Development, (CLLD), former called "LEADER" (acronym in French; "Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale", meaning "Links between actions for the development of the rural economy") is a tool for implementing the ESI funds, aimed at locally led development regions of Europe. The CLLD regions are formed by a Local Action Groups (LAG), with representatives from public sector, non-for-profit sector and the business sector. For the 2013-2020 programme period, LAGs have established Local Development Strategies (LDS), where local needs and opportunities have been identified as well as rules for establishing eligibility of projects. The LAG is assisted by national level public officials at the national administrative agency (European Commission 1, 2014). CLLD aims at encouraging the local level to develop bottom-up approaches that respond to territorial and local challenges calling for structural change, to stimulate innovation, promote community ownership, and function as an assisting entity for the multi-level governance, to accommodate community actors in the implementation of EU objectives. Although the implementation must align with EU, national and regional priorities, it is designed to take local needs and potential in consideration (European Commission 1, 2014). The main aspect, which makes CLLD interesting for study, is this clearly articulated multi-level governance. It provides an opportunity to study the translation process in detail.

Research aim

This thesis aims at investigating the built-in politicising potential of the gender mainstreaming policy within the structural funds programme Community Led Local Development (CLLD). The politicisation of gender means to acknowledge existent power relations in order to change patriarchal structures. As Rönnblom (2009; 179) argues, the transformative power of gender equality policy lies in the politicisation of the issue (Rönnblom, 2009; 179).

In order to discuss the built-in potential for politicisation, the translation of the gender equality policy of the EU in CLLD, will be investigated. Gender equality in the EU context is a concept without a fixed meaning (Verloo, 2005; 17), and the gender equality policy is a "soft" policy measure, meaning that there is room for interpretation on member state level (Lombardo & Forest, 2015; 232). This context means that it is important to go beyond the outcomes of the EU gender equality policy. The possible ways, which the policy can be conceptualised and translated, determines its politicising potential as well as its limits (Bustelo & Verloo, 2009; 259-260).

The CLLD provides clear incentives for translation and adaption to contextual circumstances in its bottom-up approach, which is argued to strengthen its usefulness and connection to local issues. At the same time, it is expected to comply with regional, national and EU level policy (European Commission 1, 2014; 23). The case of CLLD will enable the tracking of the translation of the EU gender equality policy from EU, to National and Local level, which will reveal its built-in politicising potential.

The aim of the study is to investigate the built-in politicising potential of EU gender equality policy as conceptualised and translated in the Community Led Local Development method.

The aim will be fulfilled through a single case study of the gender equality translation process from EU, to the member state Sweden, to the CLLD region Halland. Interviews and text analysis will be used to study the process.

Theoretical framework

Previous studies

European Union Gender Equality Policy

EU gender equality policy provides *soft* policy instruments*,* meaning that there is room left for member states to define what the policy means and entails in a process of translation, which some call a Europeanisation process (Lombardo & Forest, 2015; 232). A gender equality policy can have various outputs depending on the different member states and local settings (Woodward, 2012; 86). The nature of gender equality further complicates this. Europe-wide differences in cultural and political contexts - different gender regimes - affect how gender inequality is defined, as well as what solution is considered appropriate (Verloo, 2005; 17, Woodward, 2012; 86).

The EU policy approach to gender equality has evolved since the middle of the last century. In the 1950's to the 1970's, feminist activist fought and influenced EU laws demanding men and women to be *treated equally* and without discrimination. Feminists argued that women would catch up with men only if the structural obstacles, which caused unequal treatment, were removed. Scholars call this the approach of *sameness.* This approach changed with the second wave of feminism in the 1970's. An international women's movement found through structural analysis that equality before the law is not sufficient for de facto equality. As a consequence, *positive action* was introduced in the 1980's. The underlying logic suggested that governments cannot remain neutral, but has to act pro-actively to promote equality through positive or affirmative action. For example, this entailed the active recruitment of women in male dominated spheres (Woodward, 2012; 88).

The third, and current, policy approach to gender equality policy is the *Gender Mainstreaming* (GM). This came about as the concept of gender as a social construct came into general acceptance. Gender had implications for policy, because it meant that the matter of equality is dependent on an understanding of the structural preconditions, which enable unequal power relationships. This means that the policy process itself has to be transformed in order to promote gender equality. The idea is that gendered power relations would transform due to the awareness of what gendered implication or effects a policy might have on men vs women in policy planning, decision making and implementation. It requires that policy actions in all domains are to be systematically assessed in terms of impact on gender relations, to ensure that all policies contribute to gender equality (Woodward, 2012; 89).

The GM policy was originally launched by the UN in the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. This paved the way for the policy into the EU as well as several national governments, Sweden being a fore

runner (Verloo, 2005; 12). In 1996, the Commission adopted gender mainstreaming as its official strategy (Woodward, 2012; 97-98). The mechanisms for GM (monitoring of gender equality) grew as its objectives got declared in the Amsterdam Treaty; which placed equality between men and women as an explicit task of the EU. This obliged the EU to promote gender equality in all its tasks and activities. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), article 8, states that: "*In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women*" (Eur-Lex, 2012; 53).

Gradually, a standard working definition of GM got incorporated into manuals at European institutions. The definition was influenced by national experts, the Commission and the Council of Europe (Woodward, 2012; 97-98). The most commonly used definition of gender mainstreaming is the one of the Council of Europe (Verloo, 2005; 13):"*gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making*" (Council of Europe, 1998)

The EU GM policy has been subject to a lot of criticism. Verloo (2005) argues that the multi-level governance setting of the EU is unsuitable for this comprehensive and ambitious policy. The differences in understanding of the policy problem can result in different policy measures; there is no common "European" understanding of GM. What happens in this situation is that most implemented policies in Member States are continuations of previous policies, and nothing changes (Verloo; 2005; 13-14). Another criticism of GM is put forth by Hafner-Burton and Pollack (2000). They argue that the mainstreaming implies a tendency to integrate gender inequality issues into specific policies rather than making structural changes from a gender perspective, which threatens the transformative potential of GM.

Gender Equality Policy and the Structural Funds

On initiative from the Commission, the regulations for the structural funds (ESI Funds) have paid attention to gender mainstreaming since the early 1990's. The design of GM means that member states could hardly avoid engaging in GM. However, arguments, procedures, and instruments in order to put the policy in place seem to be lacking. A gender bias is persistent in the periodic evaluations of the ESI funds (Verloo, 2005; 12, Oedl-Wieser, 2014; 688).

Several researchers have investigated the results of the implementation of GM in the structural funds. Bock (2014; 741) finds that GM efforts within the structural funds only translate to specific women's projects which are beneficial for the women involved, but do not have any impact on the gender

structures of rural society. These women specific projects are found throughout Europe and demonstrate the lack of attempt to understand the local gender issues and structures in order to change them and make rural development more successful. Bock finds that the integration of gender equality into rural development programmes as "just another development goal" is a trivialisation of gender issues and results in an unchanged development agenda.

Prügl (2010; 467-468) comes to similar conclusions after comparing the implementation of gender mainstreaming in two LEADER (former CLLD) programmes in two rural regions of Germany. Despite the different characteristics of the regions, neither fully implemented gender mainstreaming in their LEADER programmes. She argues that there are clear limits to the gender mainstreaming as a technocratic strategy which relies on the capability of the bureaucracy to address the political goal of gender equality. When the bureaucracy apparatus claims objectivity, it tends to favour the continuation of operations as usual, and therefore does not change the existing structures of bureaucratic masculine norms. Bureaucratic values emerged as techniques of power that hindered the adoption of gender mainstreaming.

Oedl-Wieser (2014; 693-695) likewise concludes that the implementation of gender mainstreaming in structural funds programmes is insufficient. Gender equality aspects in the regional development process are often not more than a rhetorical reference. Only when gender issues are relevant in economic terms, for example through a targeted budget, will national and regional stakeholders take it more serious. Although rural development programmes are considered "gender neutral", they often have different impacts on men and women, which reproduces inequality and reduces relevance and efficiency of regional policy interventions.

Theory and concepts

As previous studies show, there is considerable amount of critique of GM as it does not seem to produce any outcome which have transformative potential. Turning to the focus of this thesis, this theoretical framework will provide the basis for analysis of the translation of GM in the CLLD programme, which will elucidate on the potential for politicisation of gender equality.

Politicisation of gender equality

Rönnblom (2009) argues that the reason why GM lacks transformative power in the structural funds programme for 2000-2006 is that it does not *politicise* gender. She refers to three prerequisites for politicisation; the matter has to be expressed in a collective, not individualistic manner, it has to be placed on the public agenda, and it has to be articulated in terms of conflict. The politicisation of a question is to acknowledge existing power relations and create opportunities for change. Rönnblom

(2009) finds that although the commission acknowledges that there are structural inequalities in the structural funds programme for 2000-2006, this is not expressed in a conflictual manner. This becomes clearer, the closer the text comes to implementation and actual activities.

Rönnblom and Alnebratt in "*Feminism as bureaucracy*" (2016) elaborate on the politicisation of gender equality through the Swedish policy of *Jämställdhetsintegrering* (which essentially translates to gender mainstreaming). The authors elaborate on why the policy does not seem to have any transformative impact as to yet, although it was launched as early as in the beginning of the 1990 (Rönnblom & Alnebratt 2016; 124). Part of their critique of the policy relates to its lack of a political problem formulation. A political matter is characterised by competing interests and struggles over justice and redistribution between different groups. The Swedish gender equality goals are the description of the ideal situation, but there is no political answer to why or how inequalities should change (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 126). The goals are wide and ambitious, which means that they do not imply any specific actions and do not contribute to change (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 39).

The measures which are justified by the goals are also wide and ambitious; the integration of the gender perspective. What this gender perspective is, is not explicit due to the lack of political problem formulation (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 44). The integration of the gender perspective in Sweden boils down to a repeated request for knowledge about the gender equality goals within the public administration. As these goals themselves are wide and not connected to any concrete issues, the policy is an insufficient tool for change (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 54).

What is the problem represented to be?

Through elucidating on the underlying *problem formulation* of the EU gender equality policy, one can elaborate on the design of the policy and what capacity for politicisation it has. Therefore, the theoretical underpinning of this study is a discursive understanding of politics. A guiding work will be Bacchi's (2010) approach on policy analysis; '*What is the problem represented to be'?* (WPR). The theoretical standpoint is that policies exercise productive power. A policy contains a representation of the policy problem it aims at addressing, it produces the very understanding of a problem. Policies are productive or constitutive processes. They gives shape and meaning to the problem which they aim at addressing. The representation of a problem has important effects for how it is seen as problematic. Political actions in fact articulates the 'real' problem.

Growth narrative influencing the problem formulation

The issue of the growth narrative and the bending of GM goals towards growth is frequently discussed in the literature on EU gender mainstreaming (GM) policy. This critique is important for this study

because it argues that the growth narrative in the EU context steers what goals are set, and thereby impacts the problem formulation of GM and the potential for politicisation. Bending gender equality towards growth is the process when gender equality is adjusted to fit a certain political goal that is not gender equality itself (Rönnblom, 2009; 194).

Growth, or sustainable growth within the EU is defined primarily in the economic sense, but also in its ecological and social dimensions and is presented as a self-evident policy goal. It can be perceived as a 'master narrative' (Rönnblom, 2009; 176). Rönnblom (2009) analyses the EU GM policy in the ESI funds in the programme period 2000-2006. Her analysis concludes that the constructions of gender equality in the neoliberal discourse of the ESI funds leave very little room for politicizing gender equality because of the lack of articulation of the problem in terms of conflict. Gender equality is merely 'added on' the policy of growth, bent towards making women fit into the overall growth goals. These goals are articulated in neutral terms, but still favour actors that are the norm within gender, class and race. Here, the scope of gender equality has shrunk as it is bent into issues of how women can become entrepreneurs and self-employed people (Rönnblom, 2009; 193-198).

Elomäki (2016; 298-299) also identifies that there is a change in discourse on gender equality within the EU, towards increasingly market-orientation. She argues that the European institutions, mainly the European Commission and the council, have since the late 1990's developed a market-oriented gender equality discourse, which she calls *the economic case for gender equality*. Gender equality is translated into the language of economic thinking and women are represented as objects, whose potential could be 'tapped' 'used' or even 'exploited' in a better way (Elomäki, 2016; 292). An example of the developments is the differences between the gender equality policy in the Lisbon Strategy (which Rönnblom (2009) analyses) and the Europe 2020 Strategy; the latter lacks gender-specific targets, and only addresses GM in a superficial manner, in contrary to the former (Elomäki, 2016; 295).

Elomäki finds that the economic case for gender equality legitimises EU's current economic priorities and policies, even though privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation might have gendered consequences and negative effects on gender equality. The economic case for gender equality produces a gender equality discourse that supports and reinforces gender biased economic theory and economic policies instead of challenging them (Elomäki, 2016; 297).

Translation
The concept of translation of EU gender equality policy is important due to the multi-level governance setting of EU politics and in this case, the structural funds and the CLLD. Every actor in the multi-

level governance has mandate to interpret the GM policy due to its "soft" character (Lombardo & Forest, 2015; 232). The CLLD is a bottom-up programme, which aims to serve local purposes. At the same time, the EU still expects the CLLD to be coherent and consistent with regional, national and EU level objectives (European Commission 1, 2014; 23). This sets the stage for a rather complicated translation of gender equality policy, which should not only respond to local needs, but also to regional, national and EU priorities.

Kennett and Lendvai (2014) discuss the global translation of GM. Their concept fits in a EU context, because of the soft character of the GM policy within the EU. Kenneth and Lendvai (2014) treat translation as a metaphor which "aims to capture how policy is produced, made, remade, assembled and reassembled as it travels across spaces and scales". Policy translations are processes of representation and association where the translation refers to the making of new associations, to re-associate or even re-assign (Kennett & Lendavi, 2014; 9-10). The translation of GM is a political process, which is shaped by who gets to translate, what is translated and how it is translated. Their analysis specifically highlights the issue of disjuncture. Frictions are described as important attributes of the policy translation as they steer its direction (Kennett & Lendvai, 2014; 11). They argue that bureaucratic processes of GM masks deep conflicts and messages in the translation, and that social, political and cultural contexts constructs and enacts power which are imperative for the transformative power of the policy. They point to that the institutional, elite and top-down focus of the global policy paradigm does not resonate with local narratives on gender issues. The local pressure for change is posed as having transformative potential. Therefore, the translation of GM in the CLLD serves an opportunity to study the GM policy in a form where it is implied to function from a bottom-up perspective.

New Public Management within gender policy

What happens in the Swedish translations of EU GM in the CLLD need to be understood in the context of *New Public Management* (NPM). In their analysis of the politicising potential of gender equality policy in Sweden, Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) argue that market-inspired governance models are ill-suited for the complex societal change that gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming aims at (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 118-146). Among these governance models is management by objective, which means that the politicians set goals for gender equality, but decentralise the articulating the problem formulation to the bureaucracy (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 133-134). As a result of this governance model, gender equality politics in Sweden is being pushed from the political to the bureaucracy. These bureaucracy cannot articulate a problem formulation and politicise gender equality, because their focus is on support, knowledge and administration rather than analysis, review and reform (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 79). The more

peripheral the gender mainstreaming responsibilities become within the organisation of politics, the more arbitrary the implementation becomes (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 81-83). The authors also identify that the area of gender politics is dependent on single individuals. Because of the lack of political will and direction, people have great influence since there is no concrete guidance on how to reach gender equality goals (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016; 116-117).

The type of commonly used assessment criteria or indicators in evaluation and review of the Swedish gender politics are other problematic elements of the gender mainstreaming policy. The indicators only measure quantifiable factors, such as statistics on share of women at high positions, which does not allow for an in-depth assessment of gender equality development. The authors argue that these criteria or indicators shape the problem formulation of gender equality, as attention will be limited to actions that produce better results on these measurable indicators. In that way, the assessment criteria become a producer of truth (Rönnblom & Alnenbratt, 2016; 135).

Governance and organisation of politics in the EU and ESI funds context is likewise important for the politicizing potential of EU GM. Shore (2011; 297-298) discusses a "governmental turn" within the EU where NPM ideas increasingly characterise the multi-level governance. The authority and decision making is decentralised to a range of actors such as NGOs, municipalities and firms. This is found to be de-politicising because of the blurredness of accountability and remoteness of decision-making. Soft policy (such as gender equality policy) is an example of this new form of multi-level governance. Soft policy binds member states to a varying degree without directives, regulations, or decisions. It is characterised by control mechanisms that are focused on diffuse techniques and disciplinary power, and binding norms are enforced through non-enforceable peer evaluation and self-regulation such as "target setting" or benchmarking, under the surveillance of the European Commission (Shore, 2011; 298-299). The soft policy, with decentralised decision-making and control mechanisms, is similar to a management by objective approach as objectives are articulated at EU level and is decentralised to member states, which will put effort into fulfilling the specific, quantifiable objectives.

Research Design

Research Questions

The theoretical framework has presented different arguments which bear importance for the **aim of this study; the investigation of the built-in politicising potential of EU gender equality policy as conceptualised and translated in the CLLD method.**

The main research question for this thesis is based on previous studies which point to the fact that the EU gender equality policy in the structural funds do not seem to be designed in a way which allows for a politicisation of gender equality (Bock, 2014, Rönnblom, 2009, Oedl-Wieser, 2014, Prügl, 2010), and reads as follows:

1. Why does not the gender equality policy in CLLD politicise gender equality?

Scholars find that the built-in politicising potential of gender equality policy in Sweden, and in the ESI funds in the 2000-2006 programme period, is limited because the problem formulation does not articulate gender inequality as a conflictual dimension. Therefore, this thesis finds it important to investigate and expose the problem formulation of gender inequality in CLLD for the 2014-2020 programme period, in order to expose what built-in potential this problem formulation has for politicising gender equality. The research questions which will shed light on the issue are:

1.1 What problem formulation of gender (in) equality is represented in the gender equality policy of CLLD, at EU, national and local level?

1.1.1 What problem formulation of gender (in) equality is represented by the public officials at the national administrative agency, and the members of the LAG?

1.1.2 What problem formulation of gender (in) equality is represented in the documents on EU level, national level and local level?

The scholars also argue that the translation process bear importance for the built-in politicising potential of the gender equality policy. Kennett and Lendvai (2014) argue that the transformative, politicizing power of gender equality policy is often lost in top-down approaches which does not pick up and make use of the local pressures for change. As the CLLD programme is essentially built in order to make use of local resources through a bottom-up strategy, this would imply that the policy has a built-in politicising potential. To the contrary, Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) and Shore (2011) argue that the NPM governance used in gender equality policy in Sweden and the EU, involves a critical decentralisation; instead of politicians, the mandate to form and articulate the policy is given to the bureaucracy, NGOs or municipalities. This limits the built-in politicising potential because these

actors are not political. The use of quantifiable indicators for evaluation and review further limit the built-in politicising potential, because these criteria will determine the content of the policy. The research questions which will clarify the role of translation for the built-in politicising potential of gender equality policy in CLLD are:

> 1.2 How do the public officials at the administrative agency and the members of the LAG understand and prioritise their mandate to translate the gender equality policy?

> 1.2.1 What assessment criteria are used to measure goal completion of the gender equality policy in CLLD?

Research perspective

This study is influenced by a discursive understanding of politics. Politics is a constant process of action. People act, and thereby dominating discourses are produced, re-produced and challenged (Rönnblom, 2009; 178). However, the study also acknowledges that social constructions have consequences in a particular context, and therefore relate to a context-bound causality. A can impact B, but A and B themselves are social constructs and depend on social time and place. The "causal link" between them is local and temporary (Dahler-Larssen, 2001; 335). The gender equality policy in CLLD is a representation of a constructed policy problem. At every translation a new construction is made, which may be influenced by previous translations, as well as it influences translations to come.

Analytic tool

In order to deconstruct the gender equality policy and expose its built-in politicising capacity, focus is put on the representations of the problem formulation. WPR is a method for policy analysis based on a discursive understanding of politics. Following the logic of the method, the problem of gender inequality is represented in the policy of gender equality (Bacchi, 2010; 111). WPR is a way to understand how problem representations sustain or challenge hierarchal power relations. Policies are not aimed to solve a problem, but characterise the problems in terms of what gets done. WPR encourages a critical thinking by questioning policy problems and imagining how they could have been solved differently. Two questions of Bacchis' six suggestions will be used in order to deconstruct the problem of gender inequality in the gender equality policy in CLLD (Bacchi, 2010; 117):

1. What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?

2. What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?

The first question will expose the implicit problem which the gender inequality the policy in CLLD represent. The second question will disguise what actions this problem justifies. The answers to these questions will expose the conceptualisation of the problem formulation of gender equality; what is considered the problem, and how it should be handled. This will provide answers for this thesis first set of research sub-questions, relating to the problem formulation.

The second set of research sub-questions, relating to the translation of the will be answered by investigating how the mandate is prioritised and understood by the different actors and what assessment criteria is used at different governance levels. Descriptions from the interviews will form the basis which answers the research questions, and no particular analytic tool is deemed necessary to interpret the answers.

In order to answer the main research question, the preconditions of politicisation will be used to elaborate on the translation of the gender equality policy. As mentioned, the precondition argues that a matter becomes political when it is expressed in terms of conflict, acknowledging existing power relations in society and aims to change them at a structural level (Rönnblom, 2009; 180 Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016). As discussed, the organisation of the policy also has importance for the politicising potential. Therefore, it is important to elaborate on how the policy actors understand, prioritise and are able to connect the policy to local pressures for change. It is important to assess to what extent the assessment criteria creates incentives for politicising measures beyond quantitative indicators. These preconditions for politicisation, will guide the analysis of the results from the sets of sub questions. In particular, the analysis is guided by:

- Is the problem formulation of gender inequality articulated in terms of concrete conflict between defined groups?

- Does the problem formulation acknowledge existing power structures and aim to change them?

- Do the policy actors understand the problem as one about conflictual interests?

- Do the policy actors perceive that they are mandated to take measures that aim to change existing power relations?

- Do the assessment criteria for goal completion provide incentives to take measures that aim to change existing power relations?

Sampling Plan

In order to answer these questions, the study will focus the analysis on people and documents in one policy translation process. The process starts from EU level, which provides the policy documents,

which are regulating and guiding the member states regarding the gender equality policy. From here, there are translation processes starting in all member states that apply the CLLD method. The Swedish translation process is chosen for this thesis. The administrative agency for CLLD in Sweden, is the Board of Agriculture (BA), which is responsible for the translation of the gender equality policy, which is presented to the LAGs all over Sweden, and which they use for their Local Development Strategies. The LAG chosen for this thesis, is CLLD Halland.

One rationale for the choice of an in-depth, single case study, is that in order to expose any built-in politicising potential of the gender equality policy in CLLD, there is a need to focus on a limited amount of material. With less material, there is more time for the in-depth analysis. Another rationale relates to the starting point of this thesis, which is that the gender equality policy itself has built-in limits and potential for politicisation. Therefore, it is argued that any single translation process, in any member state and any LAG could provide answers to the research questions.

However, some contextual factors make Sweden a particularly interesting case for study. Even though the built-in politicising potential could be studied in any context, the Swedish translation process is chosen on basis "most likely case". It is argued to be a critical case; if the built-in politicising potential is not exposed when investigating the Swedish translation process, it is not likely that it would be exposed in another member state (Tracy, 2012; 137). The argument for this is that Sweden is one of the most gender equal member states in Europe (EIGE, 2015), and has shown clear examples of politicising gender equality in the past. The abolishment of joint taxation and abortion rights happened in the 1970's, in the 1980's, the law against discrimination was established, and in the 1990's, the law against violence against women (Rönnblom, 2016; 13). The translators at the BA will have one of the best preconditions in Europe to pick up any built-in politicising potential of the gender equality policy in CLLD.

Another rationale for sampling Sweden, is the convenience; there are no language barriers, time differences and a common nationality is suspected to simplify the recruitment of interviewees (Tracy, 2012; 135).

No contextual factors are expected to make any particular LAG the more likely for exposing any built-in politicising potential of the gender equality in CLLD. Contrary to for example Prügl (2010), who chose two CLLD regions with maximum variation for a comparative study, this thesis is not devoted to comparisons, but to investigate how the translation process may expose the built-in potential for politicisation - what kind of politicisation is possible given the design of the policy. Therefore, any LAG could be chosen for the study, because they are all targeted with the same information from the EU and the BA.

However, an overview of the occurrence of gender equality in the 49 different CLLD groups' Local Development Strategies (LDS) show that some LAGs have described the issue more in detail. This is not an exposure of a built-in politicising potential of gender equality, but it is a sign that some the LAG has discussed gender equality to a greater extent. To study one of these CLLD regions could make for more dynamic material for analysis. The CLLD Halland is one of the CLLD group which has mentioned gender equality more than the majority of CLLDs in their LDS and is chosen as the region for study.

Methodology

This thesis will study representations of the problem formulation in the gender equality policy, found in the formulations in policy texts as it is translated from the EU, to the BA, to CLLD Halland. The deconstruction of the problem formulation exposes what the underlying problem with gender equality is, and what is considered justified actions. Interviews with public officials responsible for the translation at the BA, and members of the CLLD group are conducted for two reasons. First to make sure that the thesis comprehends the full picture of how the problem formulation is represented in the policy text. The second reason is to understand how the policy actors understand and prioritise their mandate and role in the translation of the gender equality policy. Interviews will not be conducted with EU representatives due to the difficulty of recruiting these interviewees. The material, both text documents and interviews, is analysed using the analytic tool which is presented in the previous section.

Identification of relevant documents

Regarding documents, these representations are argued to be found in documents from three levels of translation; in EU level policy documents aiming at the member states, in documents from the BA aiming at the CLLD regions, and in the LDS from the CLLD group in Halland, aiming at potential project initiators. The EU level and BA documents were identified through an informant interview with a public official at the BA. The informant declared what documents containing gender equality policy they receive from EU level, and what documents they produce and present to the CLLD groups.

The most important document from the BA is a guidance document, which is purposed to help the CLLD groups write their LDS (more on this under "policy documents"), which was a critical situation when the BA's translations of gender equality influenced the CLLD groups. It was also declared that this critical situation included a selection process - not all CLLD's would be able to be prioritised and receive EU funding. The LDS's of the CLLD's were judged by on the one hand a group of experts, and on the other hand a selection committee. These groups used assessment criteria which the BA had

developed based on their instructions from EU level. Therefore, the document containing the assessment criteria is another document relevant for analysis.

At the CLLD Halland, the LDS is identified as the only relevant document of study. This is their central document, and is expected to contain the translation of the gender equality policy and thereby a representation of the problem formulation.

Identification of relevant interviewees

As mentioned in previous sections, interviewees where identified at the BA and at the CLLD Halland. At the BA, several contact persons referred to a single public official who would be able to talk about their interpretation of the EU gender equality policy in the CLLD. This person became the only interviewee at the BA. Since the expert group and the selection committee also where part of the translation of gender equality through the selection process, representatives from both groups where considered potential interviewees. However, the two experts who formed the expert group declined my interview request, because they found that they had not done any interpretation in their assessment, they had only followed the BA criteria. However, 2 interviewees from the selection committee agreed to be interviewed, albeit a bit uncertain of how they were to be able to contribute to the study.

At CLLD Halland, interviewees from the LAG and from the administrative office where identified through their web-page. All 24 LAG members and all of the administrative office members where sent an interview request, and 4 LAG members and 1 administrative office employee responded positively. These are the 5 respondents from CLLD Halland. It should be mentioned, that the 4 interviewees might not provide a representative sample of the LAG. The LAG is composed by an even representation of members from public, private and non-for-profit sector, has a balance in gender as well as age. The members who responded positively where two older men from non-for-profit sector, one middle-aged man from public sector, and one young woman from private sector. This is not considered a major problem, because the interviews are complemented by the text analysis of the LDS, who all of the LAG members have signed off on. The interviewee from the administrative office was a middle-aged man, and had been particularly active in the production of the LDS.

Methods for data collection

Interviews

Respondents at national level (BA and selection committee) as well as in the CLLD group where asked the same questions in an interview guide in semi-structured life-world interviews (for guide, see appendix A). Through semi-structured life-world interviews, the interviewer is able to obtain descriptions of the translation process and the gender equality policy, with respect to the interpretation of what meaning this description has (Kvale, 2007; 51). To have some structure in the interview guide for all interviewees allows for consistency; it contributes to the credibility of the thesis because it safeguards that all interviewees talk about more or less the same things (Flick, 2007). The semi-structure of the interview also allows for analysis during the interview: the interviewer condenses and interprets meaning of the answers and is able to ask relevant follow up questions which reflect what the meaning that the interviewee conveyed, which the interviewee is able to confirm or reject (Kvale, 2007; 101-102).

The interview guide consists of two major themes. The first is the translation process, how the gender equality policy was translated, and what role the respondent thought they had in the translation. The second theme focuses on gender equality and what meaning and purpose the respondent considers it to have. The second theme included a question where the respondent should think about a good example of an implementation of the gender equality policy. This is important to make visible what the respondents consider to be the meaning of gender equality.

The interviews were conducted over telephone, and recorded through a mobile-app. The recordings were then uploaded to a computer. A software programme was used to facilitate the transcription of the interviews. According to Kvale (2007; 94), the most appropriate way to transcribe depends on the intended use of the interview. The interviews in this study are expected to contribute to how the policy actors understand and translate the problem formulation of gender equality, as well as how they understand their own role in the translation. On this basis, the transcription of the interviews disregards all non-verbal language; such as pauses, laughs, or sighs. Only the words are transcribed.

Analysis

The transcriptions are analysed on basis of the analytical tool described in the previous section. This is a theoretical reading, where the interviewer reads the interviews and reflects on themes that are interesting from a theoretical point of view, and write out an interpretation of the interviews (Kvale,

2007; 117). Because some analysis was made already during the interview, as described above, the material was not very extensive, and easy to work with. The policy documents were analysed using the same analytical tool as the interviews, in the same software programme, atlas.ti, using content analysis. A content analysis focuses on the content or contextual meaning of the text (Hsiesh & Shannon, 2006; 1278-1279). The content and contextual meaning of gender equality policy in the text is analysed.

The software atlas.ti was used in order to facilitate the analysis of the policy text and the interviews. The analytical tool provides two predetermined categories; what is represented as the problem, and what effects are produced by this representation. The analytical tool does not provide any predetermined categories on what the problem formulation might be. In that way, the approach is both deductive, as the analytical tool prescribes that the analysis should investigate representations of problem formulations and what effects these have, as well as inductive, because there are no predetermined specified categories. As a second step in the analysis, the built-in politicising potential of the translated problem formulation will be discussed, using the preconditions for politicisation, as discussed in previous sections.

As a researcher, it is important to understand what impact one might have in the interview situation, as well as in the analysis of the texts. Because the thesis is theory driven, there is a risk that the researcher has expectations that are influenced from the theories, and that these impact the interview situation as well as the analysis. This risk is minimised through using open-ended interview questions, which the interviewees are free to interpret themselves. In the use of follow-up questions, the researcher refrains from posing leading questions and pays attention to what kind of reaction the questions induce. If the interviewee agrees to a follow-up question, but seem to have gotten the idea from the researcher, that answer would not be considered credible. Another way to minimise the impact from the researcher is to provide description of how the interviews are analysed.

Material

Governance level	EU	Board of Agriculture	CLLD Halland
Interviewees	n/a	1 public official, 2 members of the selection committee	4 members of the Local Action Group, 1 employee at the administrative office.
Policy	The Common Provision	Handbook on	Local Development

documents	Regulation (CPR). Guidance for Member States and Programme Authorities (G-MSPA). Guidance for Community Actors (G-CLLD).	Community Led Local Development (H-CLLD).	Strategy of CLLD Halland.

The Common Provision Regulation (CPR). The CPR lay down the rules for which all the structural funds are to be ministered. This document specifies the mandate to mainstream gender within CLLD. It lay down the rules for which all the structural funds are to be ministered. The Common Strategic Framework (CSF) is an annex to the CPR and provides strategic guidance for member states on how to effectively, in accordance to EU priorities, use the structural funds.

Guidance for Member States and Programme Authorities (G-MSPA). This is a guidance document from the Commission to the administrating authority in the member state. The G-MSPA is of a non-binding nature, it is a complement to the legal act and is issued by the European Commission. It is intended to help the managing authorities in member states to create conditions for effective use of CLLD.

Guidance for Community Actors (G-CLLD). This document is produced by local development experts and is reviewed by the commission. It is aimed directly towards the Local Action Groups (LAG), and complements the G-MSPA. It is written by local development experts, reviewed by the commission. It is aimed directly towards the Local Action Groups (LAG), and complements the G-MSPA.

Handbook on Community Led Local Development (H-CLLD). This is the national level document is which is aimed to LAGs and provides guidance on how to develop a Local Development Strategy (LDS).

Local Development Strategy of CLLD Halland. This document contains the strategic plan for the region, and how the structural funds are supposed to help achieve this through projects. It also contains assessment criteria for potential project, including those concerning gender equality considerations.

Quality of research

The single case study as a qualitative study is not able to provide any wide, formal generalisability of the results (Tracy, 2012; 238-239). Since the research perspective acknowledges that the constructions of the problem formulation and their consequences are dependent on contexts, the study will only be

able to exposure any built-in politicising potential of the gender equality policy in the particular case of translation process. The results will not be generalisable for other translation processes of EU gender equality policy, in ESI funds or other EU operations.

However, the guess is that Sweden's translation process is the most likely case where one could expose any built-in politicising potential. This leads to the assumption that if the result does not show an exposure of built-in politicising potential, it is not likely that this would be found in other members states' translation processes of gender equality in CLLD either. This generalisability is however very limited, because it cannot be established that the Swedish context is the most likely case. Additionally, it is not certain that CLLD Halland is the most likely case for exposing built-in politicising potential. If there no built-in politicising potential is found in the context of the translation process into CLLD Halland, this does not mean that another CLLD region cannot expose built-in politicising potential.

Generalisability is generally considered a less useful quality criterium qualitative studies. This study provides a much more relevant criterion, which is transferability. The transferability relates to the idea of transferring findings, which is more important than formal generalisability in qualitative research (Tracy, 2012; 239). The design of this study is unique. The idea to expose any built-in politicising potential in a policy through studying the translation process, is put together on basis of previous research and existing policy analysis methods, but the components are never used in this combination before. If it shows fruitful, it may be used to investigate built-in politicising potential of other EU soft policies. Furthermore, the transferability of this study relates to the more general problem of politicising gender. Limitations in the policy design may facilitate the understanding of why gender equality is not reached in Europe, despite policy efforts from individual member states and the EU institutions.

Another traditional quality criterion is the reliability of the research, which relates to the possibility to replicate the study; the study can be conducted by any other researcher, at any point in time and produce the same results (Tracy, 2012; 228). Because this is a qualitative study, it is not replicable. As discussed in the research perspective, it aims to study a socially constructed phenomenon in a particular context, which always changes over time. Instead of being replicable, the logical inferences and interpretations will be strengthened through the explaining the results for audiences through transparent interpretations. Transparency is considered throughout the research process, in matters of design, interactions with the context, analysis methods etc. The process should be honestly, self-critically and openly described and explained (Tracy, 2012; 234).

The transparency is related to another important feature in qualitative research; self-reflexivity. Because the methods for data collection and analysis depend on the researcher, it is important to

acknowledge one's role and impact in the scene. This is done through sharing the motivations behind the study, goals, hopes, mistakes and a discussion about how these issues implicates fieldwork and analysis (Tracy, 2012; 234).

Another important quality criterion for qualitative research is credibility, to express a reality that is plausible and seems true (Tracy, 2012; 235). This relates to the traditional criterion of validity, which means that the researcher measure what is intended to measure (Flick, 2007). In this study, validity and credibility is assured through the triangulation of methods. In order to be confident that the study describes the real problem formulation of gender inequality, both documents and the people are studied. The text analysis of policy documents allows for the study to pick up on formal translations, while interviews provide the policy actors opportunity to explain how they translate the policy.

Delimitation

As mentioned previously, this thesis is focused on exposing any built-in politicising potential in the gender equality policy in CLLD. It is not focused on the actual results of the implementation of the policy. A lot of things may impact the implementation of a policy, and there are a range of theories which treats this issue. This thesis investigates what is possible to produce, given the policy design. In a discursive understanding of politics, the design of a policy inhibits its transformative potential. Discursive processes are a key dimension of the design of gender equality policies. They shape the initial and continuous policy-making process; as the policy is defined, represented and addressed, in different context and by various actors – its translation. These discursive processes shape what impact a policy may have (as well as that impact shape the translation). The conceptualisation and translation of a policy likewise offers a rationale for interpreting the results of the implementation (Verloo & Bustelo, 2009).

Another delimitation of the thesis is that it will not treat rurality of the investigated local level translation as factors which affect the politicization potential of the GM. CLLD was originally aimed towards rural areas, it was introduced to urban areas only in the last programme period (European Network for Rural Development, 2017). The rurality of the people translating the GM in CLLD will not be paid any special attention, as it is not expected to affect the interpretation in any particular way. This is backed by studies showing that levels of gender equality are similar in urban and semi-urban rural areas. Modern means of transport and communication are factors that take away the traditional barriers for women in semi-rural areas. In *remote* rural areas with limited spatial and social mobility, more traditional gender roles and inequalities prevail (Bock, 2014; 740).

Ethical considerations

Procedural ethics means to pay consideration to procedural rules and regulations; to do no harm, avoid deception, get informed consent, ensure privacy and confidentiality (Tracy, 2012; 243). In order to fulfil these requirements, the study pays attention to its interviewees and informants. It is ensured that the interview situation is a safe and respectful conversation. The interviewee is encouraged to tell their story, and the interviewer acknowledges their point of view, making sure that the interviewee understands that their contribution is meaningful. Prior to the interview, the interviewees receive an interview request and a letter of consent with the full purpose of the study. They are ensured that their participation is anonymous, and this will be respected throughout the collection of data and analysis, as well as in the presentation of the thesis. The interview transcripts and audio files are safely stored on a private, password-locked computer.

Situational ethics means to understand and respect contextual-specific ethical considerations (Tracy, 2012; 244). For this study, it is kept in mind that the last stage of translation, the LAG group, are volunteers. Unlike the public officials at the BA, these members have taken on the membership of the board as a non-for-profit engagement. Therefore, it is considered extra important to make sure to build a trusting relationship between the interviewer and these interviewees in this situation, because they might not feel as "obligated" to contribute to the study as interviewees at the BA. Also, they probably cannot make time for the interview during work hours (because their main occupation is something else).

To be aware of one's role and impact on relationships and treat participants as people rather than subjects in a research project is the relational ethics (Tracy, 2012; 245). In this study, this is taken into account in all encounters with interviewees, from scheduling interviews, to the actual interview, to contact post-interview if the interviewee wishes to take part of the results. The interviewees' wellbeing is prioritised, through for example keeping scheduled interviews, calling them on time, answer any questions they might have, let them take their time etc.

Results

This section will provide answers to the sub-questions of the thesis. The overarching research question is going to be answered in a separate section, in a discussion of the results of the sub-questions.

EU Level Policy

Problem formulation

Discrimination

In the Common Provision Regulation (CPR), gender inequality is represented as a problem of discrimination, as the document refers to the ordinary legislative procedure, where the Member States should seek to *"...combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"* (Eur-Lex, 2013; 321-322).

The discrimination representation reappears under Article 7, *"Promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination"* (Eur-Lex, 2013; 342). Gender equality and non-discrimination are discussed in two separate paragraphs. Sex is recognised as a basis for discrimination among; racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation. Gender inequality is considered a problem near discrimination, and sex is acknowledged as a basis for discrimination. It is not explicit that women is a discriminated group. The document does not contain any more concrete problems which discrimination might cause.

In the G-MSPA the discrimination problem is represented in the section on how to use the CLLD to tackle unemployment and social inclusion issues; through stating that *"the integration of marginalised communities like the Roma and combating discriminations based on sex, racial, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"* (European Commission 1, 2014; 14-15). Sex is connected to discrimination, but women are not explicitly acknowledged as a disadvantaged group.

Lack of growth

In the CPR, gender equality is mentioned and described as an investment side by side with other investments that will lead to economic, territorial, and social cohesion (Eur-Lex, 2013; 321). This implies that gender equality is not mainly considered a goal by itself, but a means to reach other goals, including those of economic nature. In the CSF, it is suggested that member states should pay attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups in order to improve their integration in the labour market and in

society (Eur-Lex, 2013, 419). This adds to the representation of gender inequality as being a problem for employment and growth.

In the G-MSPA, there is guidance on how to use CLLD to tackle unemployment and social inclusion issues. ESF is argued to be useful for *"promoting equality between men and women in access to employment and career", "combating gender stereotypes in education and training, reducing gender based segregation in the labour market, developing female entrepreneurship"* and *"promoting reconciliation of work and personal life for men and women"* (European Commission 1, 2014; 15). These quotes indicate that gender inequality is a problem relating to the unequal labour market. Men and women are treated like two groups whose lack of presence in the labour market is a problem. Women are specifically targeted regarding "female entrepreneurship". This term contradicts "reducing gender based segregation in the labour market", because it indicates that women should be encouraged to develop a business sphere separate from traditional business, instead of making traditional entrepreneurship more female friendly. h.

Justified actions

Integrate the gender perspective

Regarding what actions that are justified given the problem formulation of gender inequality, the EU level policy documents only refer to the gender mainstreaming principle twice (Eur-Lex, 2013; 418 & 454). At these instances, the policy is not elaborated on, only mentioned. Article 7 represents an imprecise justified action, without connection to concrete tools, as it refers to the "*integration of the gender perspective*". It states that the "*gender perspective should be taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes*", and that *"The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination…"* (Eur-Lex, 2013; 342).

The CSF also contains a vague set of justified actions, stating that: "*When pursuing the objectives of Article 7, Member States shall describe actions to be taken, in particular with regard to selection of operations, setting of objectives for interventions, and arrangements for monitoring and reporting* (Eur-Lex, 2013;418). There is no definition on what the actions should imply.

Increase knowledge

The action of increased knowledge appears in the CSF, which suggests that member states should "*...ensure adequate structures in accordance with national practices to advise on gender equality, non-discrimination and accessibility in order to provide the necessary expertise in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the ESI Funds*" (Eur-Lex, 2013; 418). This is further specified in the appendix 11 of the CPR which describes the general preconditions for access to the structural funds.

An assessment criterion is the member state's ability to provide training and advice for public officials on the union strategy of gender equality (Eur-Lex, 2013; 438).

Quantitative measures

To request gender-balance in groups with decision-making power represents the justification of quantitative measures to tackle the problem of gender inequality. There is no such request in the CPR or CSF, but the G-MSPA suggests that the composition of the selection committee should "*aim at gender balance*" (European Commission 1, 2014; 43). It also suggested that the Local Action Group should "*aim at being gender balanced and have a fair representation of specific target groups addressed by the local development strategy, such as young people, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged people, vulnerable groups, etc.*" (European Commission 1, 2014; 26).

National Level

Problem formulation

Discrimination

The interviews with the public official at the Board of Agriculture, and the members of the selection committee, disclosed the problem formulation of discrimination, or the variation; disfavouring. The prominence, frequency, and depth of the elaboration of the problem formulation differ between the interviewees. A few refer to discrimination/disfavouring as being caused by male norms and structures. The problem formulation of discrimination is not explicitly connected to concrete discrimination issues – wage gaps or sexism etc. The most concrete representation is that no one should be discriminated in the access to the structural funds. All interviewees mention other basis for discrimination as well, such as age or race. A representative pool of beneficiaries is considered the goal with gender considerations, which in fact is considered to be met, because neither of the sexes outweighs the other among the project participants.

In the "Handbook for Community Led Local Development" (H-CLLD), the problem formulation of discrimination is represented in the section about horizontal criteria. The matter of equal treatment, and non-discrimination is discussed – with reference to the CPR as well as Swedish law. The section declares that the implementation of the structural funds shall be guided by the "*principle of non-discrimination based on sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or faith, disability, sexual orientation, age and the principle of equality between men and women*" (Board of Agriculture, 2014, 26).

Lack of growth

Lack of growth is a prominent problem formulation of gender inequality represented in the interviews with the national level public official and the selection committee. Several interviewees describe gender equality in the CLLD as a tool, or something that needs to be fulfilled in order to reach goals linked to growth and development – which in the end, everyone will gain from. Some goals that are mentioned are increased employment rates, the effective use of available competence, and maintaining competitiveness.

The H-CLLD mentions that *"non-discrimination means to see peoples' differences as an asset, a tool which makes the efforts for sustainable development more effective"* (Board of Agriculture, 2014, 25-26). In the funds-specific guidance found in the H-CLLD, the ESF is described as useful for contributing to Swedish goals regarding the inclusion of isolated groups into the labour market. Women is mentioned as one of these groups among with youths, newly arrived immigrants or people with disabilities (Board of Agriculture, 2014; 12). These texts represent the idea of disadvantaged groups and women as under-used resources in the quest for development, and that a problem with gender inequality is that women do not participate in the labour market to the same extent as men.

Justified actions

Quantitative measures

All interviews contain representations which point to that justified actions against gender inequality in the CLLD involves quantitative measures. One concrete, mandatory, measure is described by the public official at the Board of Agriculture; neither men nor women should hold more than 60 % of the seats in LAG board. The interviewee mentions that this would not have come naturally, and that the LAG is a key group where it is important with equal representation. This measure is developed by the Board of Agriculture. The gender balance in the LAG is expected to generate gender balance in the pool of beneficiaries. Other decision-making bodies, such as the election committee within the LAGs, are also expected to reflect a gender balance.

The integration of the gender perspective

The interviews also contain representations of imprecise actions that are justified for gender equality. The interviewees refer to the integration of the gender perspective in all the operations, in policy design, in all stages of the CLLD programme – at the national agency, at LAG and in the projects. Gender mainstreaming is mentioned. Examples are to implement a gender perspective in encounters with people, in the processing of complaints, and in the general administration. However, it is not specified what the gender perspective should change, in concrete terms.

The H-CLLD further represents the justified action of integrating the gender perspective, through reciting the CPR and prescribes that the gender perspective shall permeate the CLLD-process throughout the preparation, implementation of CLLD – including monitoring, reporting and evaluation (Board of Agriculture, 2013, 26). Additionally, the H-CLLD prescribes that all information material and information channels are to be analysed from a gender perspective. There are no further instructions on how to integrate the gender perspective in the document, or how it should solve the problem of gender inequality.

Local Level

Problem formulation

Segregated labour force
The interviews with LAG members represent a reoccurring problem formulation of gender inequality at local level; the segregated labour force. Traditional gender roles, where women are not as engaged in paid work as men, is considered typical for rural areas and connected to societal structures such as depopulation. Another dimension of this problem formulation comes from the idea that women pursue rural businesses outside the traditional, male dominated agricultural sector, and that this female entrepreneurship is not valued as much.

" ...take for example agricultural businesses. Often, the husband work for the business and the wife is home with the kids."

" ...society is developing, and why should not gender equality? I mean, we live in the 21st century, and the woman is not restricted to the kitchen anymore, as some people still think today."

In the Local Development Strategy (LDS), wage gaps between men and women in the region are acknowledged. Despite higher levels of education among women, men make more money. Possibly because they are more likely than women to commute to a larger city for qualified work (LLUH Halland, 2015; 15). The SWOT analysis identifies segregation in the labour force as a weakness for the region in general, but notably not in the fishing sector.

Discrimination
It is stated in the interviews that gender equality within CLLD is important, because everyone should have the same opportunity to initiate a project if they have ambition to do so; *"For all to feel like they*

can do something, in a project. That it is not relevant who you are, but that anyone can do a project with a bit of will-power."

Several interviewees likewise mention the importance of projects and activities that benefit people in an equal manner, and that one is excluded. This implies a problem formulation of gender inequality to be an issue of the right to access the structural funds, as a project initiator or a beneficiary, to not be disfavoured or discriminated. Although, the word discriminated is not used by the interviewees.

The LDS imply that gender inequality is a problem of discrimination within the CLLD programme. It is stated that the CLLD group will have a wide interpretation of equality, where intersectionality and norm criticism is important and are to be taken into consideration in their non-discrimination efforts. The LDS states that it is of *"utmost importance to make sure that no one is the victim of discrimination in contact with the CLLD programme…regarding sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or faith, disability, sexuality or age."* (LLUH Halland, 2015; 44).

The LDS also identifies what it calls a qualitative aspect of gender equality; that everyone should have de facto influence, which could imply an acknowledgement of that all groups do not have the same influence, that they are discriminated against or disfavoured (LLUH, 2015; 45).

Lack of growth, local development & competitiveness

Gender equality as a way to enhance growth is voiced in one of the interviews. The interviewee states that women bring in new ideas and perspectives, which is positive for local development. A general theme in the interviews is that gender equality is enhancing CLLDs results for the local development, although growth is not always explicitly mentioned.

The strategy prominently represents the lack of growth problem of gender inequality. Growth is represented an important goal for the gender equality through gender mainstreaming; *"CLLD in the region will use gender equality as a tool for a positive development work and reach a sustainable development"* (LLUH, 2015; 45). The strategy further identifies that gender equality will lead to *"enhanced growth, reduced alienation and reduced unemployment"* (LLUH, 2015; 21). To support female entrepreneurship is described as necessary in order to combat unemployment (LLUH, 2015; 16).

The strategy also presupposes synergy effects of promoting gender equality, and identifies these; *"providing men and women the same possibilities to start businesses, increase the knowledge of gender equality, promote the opportunities to combine work and private life, and a more equal distribution of care duties"* (LLUH, 2015; 43-44). The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is discussed regarding possible synergy effects, and it is mentioned that "*EMFF was*

dominated by men in the former programme period, and the same fund has problems with slow innovation, lack of youth participation and opportunities to develop the tourist sector." This quote implies that a more equal representation of men and women in EMFF would be positive for innovation, youth, and opportunities to develop the tourist sector.

Notably, the LDS also contains representations of the lack of growth problem where growth is not the only goal. Gender equality efforts (in society as a whole) are considered necessary in order to reduce human suffering, as well as reach an inclusive growth where everyone can access the economy (LLUH Halland, 2015; 44).

Justified actions

Quantitative measures

When talking about how to make CLLD gender equal, the interviewees mention the importance of gender mainstreaming through equal representation. To have a gender balance (and a representativeness of other groups as well) in LAG, selection committee and in projects is regarded to be one of the approaches to implement gender mainstreaming. Women´s presence safeguards the gender perspective. One of the interviewees mentions that LAG has a lot of engaged women, both in the board and in the administrative office, and that women are probably the most active when it comes to initiating projects regarding rural issues. It is argued that CLLD is relevant to women because it supports initiatives and activities that are not traditionally dominated by men. Therefore, the perception is that the CLLD is gender equal.

The justification of quantitative measures also become salient when an interviewee describes a good example of a project in terms of gender equality. The project was argued to be working well with gender equality because they had a fair representation, not only between men and women, but also young people and newly arrived immigrants. Another example of how the quantitative measures are considered justified is illustrated by the situation when a project group was not considered eligible for funding due to its board's composition; the case was a skateboard group with only male board members who applied for funding of a new skate-park. The group protested and pointed to the female *members*, but the LAG's decision was to deny funding and tell them to work on getting a representative board, because in the absence of such, the group was not considered gender equal.

However, the justified actions of equal representation are not considered to fit at all times. Several interviewees mention that the importance of gender equal representation differ depending on the nature of the projects – gender equality and representation is argued to be more important in projects with goals of social inclusion. Conversely, one interviewee mentions the fishing and maritime sector to not be as negatively affected by lack of female representation. It should be noted that this is not a

unanimous attitude, as another interviewee claim that the fishing and maritime sector in particular could benefit from gender considerations.

"Well, it might be that some groups feel threatened if there comes people who are not part of their group. That is a clear conflict. There may also be conflicts if one proceeds to fast, or wants to do something and not everyone is on board."

As the quote above describes, one interviewee identifies that there might be friction created when trying to resolve the gender inequality problem through representation in a male dominated sphere, as the dominating group might feel threatened.

The interviewees also mention the justified quantitative measures regarding how gender equality is pursued through securing a wide and representative pool of beneficiaries (wide in terms of gender and other dimensions, such as race and age). To have wide projects that reach a lot of people is a way to promote gender equality.

In the local strategy, the quantitative measures for gender equality are clearly described; the quantitative aspect is described as half of the work regarding gender equality, why there should be equal representation in LAG, election committee, project and steering committees, and in the administration office (LLUH, 2015; 45). There are clear requirements for the composition of LAG. It is stated that the election committee shall put forth 16 candidates, and that 8 of them should be of the same legal sex. It is stated that the gender equality will be secured through analysis of the beneficiaries of projects – which should reflect the region's population of women as well as other groups.

Knowledge / Visibility

"I think it is about educating and informing and talking and displaying good examples. A lot of information and to highlight these questions in all contexts."

As the quotes illustrates, the justified actions for gender equality is also to increase knowledge and visibility about gender equality. Projects are considered gender equal when they incorporate people with competence of gender equality, as well as mention and describe how they will work with gender equality.

The justified actions of increased knowledge are connected to the idea of mainstreaming gender in CLLD. The LDS states that in CLLD there is a need to increase knowledge about gender equality, gender theory, and norm criticism, as well as knowledge on how to plan gender mainstreamed operations – in the implementation process, the planning, implementation, and evaluation. Therefore,

the LAG board members, selection committee, project and steering committee are all going to be educated about gender equality. The LAG is also supposed to map out and analyse their activities from a gender perspective (LLUH, 2015; 45).

An observatory group within the LAG board are to be extra attentive on gender and remind the rest of the group about the horizontal goals, where equality is one of them (sustainable development the other) (LLUH, 2015; 41).

The action plan in the LDS describes what activities that are eligible for funding under the focus area of equality, these activities also represent the actions for how to increase equality. *"Competence development within equality, gender, intersectionality and norms"* is one such activity, and to *"develop methods for a gender mainstreamed organisation and work for non-discrimination through increased knowledge and action"* is another (LLUH, 2015, 24).

The LDS also identifies ways in which projects under CLLD can contribute to gender equality. It is stated that project groups may have gender equality competence, they may have a gender equality analysis in their problem formulation which guides the implementation, and that the gender perspective is incorporated in the evaluation of the project (LLUH, 2015; 45).

For women to engage increasingly in the labour market

There are no clear representations of actions relating to women's engagement in the labour market in the interviews. However, two interviewees vaguely mention that it is positive for employment rates if both sexes are supported in CLLD. These interviewees state that:

"Of course, one should create employment opportunities for both sexes. Employment should not be something exclusive for one of the sexes."

"If you have twice as many who believe they can do something, well you will get more done".

The LDS includes slightly more defined representations of actions relating to women's participation in the labour force. It is stated that CLLD may promote gender equality through their efforts relating to increasing the share of women in businesses and reducing wage gaps (LLUH, 2015; 59). The actions are also represented in connection to the aforementioned expected synergies from gender equality within the region; gender equality will be supported by the facilitation for women to start their own businesses, the promotion of combining work and private life, and the promotion of equal distribution of care responsibilities between men and women (LLUH, 2015; 43).

Gender Equal Communication

Another action for gender equality concerns gender equal communication. This is described as part of the qualitative aspect of gender equality in the LDS (LLUH, 2015; 45). The action reappears when the LDS describes the strive for equal communication, where the goal is to reach target groups without reproducing gender stereotypes. This is pursued through gender-analysis of the communication material to make sure it contains representativeness and diversity.

Mandate

As presented in previous section, the EU level does not provide any details regarding how the LAGs should gender mainstream CLLD. In the process of developing the strategic plan, the LAG receives support from the BA through dialogue and information sessions. However, due to the bottom-up nature of CLLD, the agency does not want to govern the LAGs more than necessary. The concrete manner in which the Board of Agriculture chooses to use their mandate, is to put a limit that no sex is to gain more than 60 % of the seats in LAG. Additionally, they provide information material to the LAGs.

In the selection of eligible CLLD regions, the SC had a mandate to evaluate the strategic development plans through criteria from the board of agriculture, and rank the LDS based on how well they fulfilled the criteria, including the criterion on gender equality. The SC worked with the selection of regions for a couple of weeks, and prior to their assessment, private consultants had been procured to do a first-hand assessment. This is in line with the EU instructions, found in the G-MSPA (European Commission 1, 2015; 42).

At CLLD level, the LAGs can themselves define gender mainstreaming and decide what actions it justifies. Through the LDS (including its gender equality indicators – discussed under "Assessment criteria"), and in the assessment of projects. The CLLD groups design these areas and criteria themselves. The do not have to include gender equality in the criteria. In the assessment procedure, the LAG members are the ones who decide whether or not the project application meets the criterion on gender equality or not.

In the investigated region, a decision was made to focus on equality and sustainable development as the "horizontal priorities" for the current programme period, meaning that these issues are to gain attention in all of the CLLD activities (LLUH, 2015; 21), and that projects are to be assessed with

regards to these principles. Horizontal goals in the ESI context means certain priorities that have importance across all policy domains (Gore & Wells, 2009; 158). It was the president, vice president and the operations developer (latter is administrative staff) who produced the strategic development plan and took these decisions regarding gender equality. It was approved by the rest of LAG and all project applications are presented and judged by the whole LAG.

The assessment of projects and their gender equality dimensions is an instance where the LAGs have mandate to define the policy on gender equality and what priority it should have in the projects. The interviewees describe that gender equality is supported and encouraged throughout the process of a project. In the early phases, when the administrators assist the project initiators and give general advice regarding the application, they inform about the gender equality criterion. Subsequently, the project initiators present their idea at a LAG meeting, where the LAG members can ask about gender equality considerations. In the succeeding meeting, the LAG members receive a questionnaire where they assess the project application based on the criteria in the LDS, where one basis for assessment is how the project works with equality. However, it is noted by the interviewees that gender equality is not important for all projects.

The administration office has an extended mandate when it comes to gender mainstreaming, which is defined in the LDS (LLUH, 2015; 39). Interviewees point out that the administrative office has been actively engaged in the incorporation of gender equality in the LDS, and in the promotion of and guidance on gender equality in contacts with project initiators. The administration office will also be responsible for the follow-up, which is to take place in the near future. They have the mandate to prepare reports for the project groups where they declare how they have worked with gender equality. The administration office also states that they are going to initiate an educational programme in order to promote gender equality for the LAG.

Understanding

National Level – Board of Agriculture and Selection Committee

The national level understands their mandate to mainstream gender in the CLLD as partially informed by EU regulations. The EU regulated nature of the policy is mentioned in interviews with the BA as well as in the interviews with the selection committee. However, it is highlighted that the restrictions on gender composition in the LAG is developed on the national level, at the BA. It is also conveyed that gender mainstreaming aspects is not the main priority for the CLLD programme. Consequentially, information about gender mainstreaming has to compete with other priorities when it comes to the communication forwarded to the LAGs. The BA considers that the CLLD programme is not

problematic – it is already gender equal because there is no misallocation of funds based from a gender perspective. From the BA, there is no ambition to do more regarding their gender mainstreaming mandate.

Since the SC's contribution – the assessment of strategic development plans - took place in 2013, the interviewees do not have a fresh memory of the process. The SC presents a variation in how they experience the focus on gender mainstreaming. One of the interviewees mentions that many, but not all of the strategic plans were rather weak regarding how they were going to work with gender equality. Therefore, the SC specifically gave notice that this needed to be developed further. Another interviewee points out that the issues of gender equality tended to get lost in the mass of the assignment. There were extensive assessment criteria and a lot of material to go through: 48 regions and every strategic plan is around 40-60 pages. This interviewee points out that measures for increased employment were a much more central assessment criterion than gender equality. The interviewees both mention that their role did not contain an independent mandate, because in the end, BA decided which regions would receive funding.

Local Level

The administration and the LAG members view their mandate as being informed, mainly by national level; the BA who has been their main discussion partner in the development of the strategic plan and the mandate regarding gender mainstreaming. But there is knowledge about the influence from the EU as well. For the operative activities, many LAG members mention the importance of the administrative office. It is mentioned that one of the employees in the office has a special interest for gender equality issues, and that this is reflected in the region's focus on gender equality. The same employee is responsible for a plan to provide the LAG members with an education programme regarding gender equality.

The administrative staff and the LAG members at regional level discuss their mandate regarding gender mainstreaming and efforts against inequality as being closely related to efforts regarding the wide definition of non-discrimination and equality between a range of different groups in society. Recently arrived immigrants, youths and people living in rural areas are specifically mentioned.

The interviewees in the LAG and administrative office of the investigated CLLD group believe that gender equality considerations are something that the projects pick up on, and incorporate in the implementation of their project, for example regarding the composition of work-groups. The LAG and the administration office offer to assist project groups here. One of the interviewed LAG members reflects about the skate-board park, and that they did have an important mandate there, to request a

more gender equal board. Several of the LAG members find that the responsibility to remember gender equality considerations lies with everyone that is involved in LAG.

Gender equality is a general assessment criterion, meaning that it applies to all projects, but it is not a necessity (LLUH, 2015; 70). The interviewees describe that there are 25-30 other criteria a project may score points from. Projects get a bonus for gender equality, but it is not an absolute demand. One of the LAG members acknowledges that it is generally accepted that a lot of projects describe and mention gender equality, without developing it further. Although it does not provide the highest score on the gender equality criterion. For projects with larger budgets, several interviewees mention a preference for a more elaborated strategy regarding gender equality.

Assessment criteria & goal completion

EU Level

The relevant policy documents which inform or regulate the issue of indicators for goal completion at EU level are the CPR, the G-MSPA, as well as a document which complements the Guidance document from the Commission, called: "Guidance on Community Led Development for Local Actors" (G-CLLD). The latter guide is aimed at LAGs. It is prepared by European experts in the field of Community Led Local Development and reviewed by the European Commission.

In the CPR, the implementation reports are described. It is stated that in the member states' annual reports, they are to assess the implemented actions on their incorporation of promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination (Eur-Lex, 2013; 368). In the CSF, it is stated that the managing authority should, along with a surveillance committee, provide evaluation studies or self-assessments to investigate the application of the gender perspective (Eur-Lex, 2013; 418). There is no specification on what indicators these evaluation studies would investigate. In the G-MSPA, in the chapter about evaluation and monitoring responsibilities for the member state's managing authority, there is no mention of specific evaluation of gender equality. Rather, the focus is that the CLLD programme is *"implemented within the framework of Member States' programmes and their priorities, by achieving the objectives of the local development strategies, local action groups contribute towards the objectives of the relevant programmes"* (European Commission 1, 2014; 52). The EU does not provide any assessment criteria for the national level evaluation to use. From a bottom-up perspective, the fulfilment of local strategies indicators is considered to implement EU level goals on gender equality.

In another section of the G-MSPA, it is stated that despite the bottom-up approach and mandate for the LAG, *"CLLD should not be regarded as competing with or opposed to top-down approaches from national, regional authorities or local authorities, but instead as a tool interacting with them, in order*

to achieve better overall results." (European Commission 1, 2014; 7). Furthermore, it is also stated that *"…specific objectives and priorities need to be set at local level to respond to local needs, while being consistent with the policy goals set out in the programmes."* (European Commission 1, 2014; 23). The CLLD is a bottom-up programme, while at the same time, it has to comply with programme goals, which are EU goals, meaning that the goals and indicators for goal completion has to relate to the EU, regional, national and local level policy goals.

The G-CLLD guides LAGs on how they should interpret the EU demand on measurable goals, qualitative or quantitative. It is stated that the LAGs should aim to develop "SMART" goals, meaning that they are Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic and Timely. Gender equality is not specifically mentioned here, but since no other area is either, it would be interpreted as relevant for the gender equality field. It is encouraged that the overarching goals are divided into smaller, measurable goals with direct connection to the projects.

National Level

National level interviewees mention that the BA performs review of the gender composition of beneficiaries and the LAGs. Regarding the gender balance in LAG, no sex is allowed to have more than a 60 % majority. This is the agency's assessment criterion and goal relating to gender equality in CLLD. In the selection process of the CLLD regions eligible for funding, the SC worked with a pre-defined assessment criterion, designed by the BA, based on the EU level documents. Regarding gender equality, the criterion on which the strategies are to be assessed is: *"The Strategy contains a description of how the implementation shall regard gender equality and non-discrimination".* There is also a reference to the *"reference/assessment tool"* for the gender equality criterion – which includes the CPR and the G-MSPA. This assessment criterion does not imply any particular action on behalf of the CLLD regions. In the CPR and the G-MSPA, there is no concrete instruction on how to work with gender equality, except that LAGs should aim for gender balance (European Commission 1, 2014; 26).

The document from the BA produced with specifications on the assessment criteria and goal completion, is the H-CLLD. The idea of SMART goals is repeated here, and it is specified that every goal should be connected to focus areas and should be *quantified* for the complete programme period when the LAG has received their budget. The fulfilment of goals should be related to each project, which contribution should be estimated on beforehand and evaluated ex post is mentioned. Obligatory indicators per structural fund is also presented, all are quantitative; number of new employment opportunities, number of participants etc. No specific assessment criterion for gender equality is presented (Board of Agriculture, 2014, 17-18).

The H-CLLD states that the horizontal criterion of gender equality is of particular importance in the selection of projects funded by the ESF. For the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), gender equality is mentioned as an example of a horizontal criterion that is to be respected in the selection of projects. In the European Maritime and Fisheries fund (EMFF), and the European Agricultural Fund for rural development (EAFRD), the criterion of gender equality is not mentioned (Board of Agriculture, 2014; 29-34).

Local Level

In the investigated region, *"increased knowledge about equality"* serves as a general criterion, for which all project applications are to be assessed upon (LLUH, 2015; 70). The requirements for a project to receive the highest score from this criterion is: *"the project plan and action plan clearly describes how this (increased knowledge about equality) is expected to be achieved, and there is competence connected to this theme in the project. The goal stands in relation to the project budget"* (LLUH, 2014; 70). The administration informs prospective project initiators about the criterion. The interviewees convey that they take the criterion in consideration, and are for example attentive on the gender composition of for example project boards (as in the case of the skate-park). Since the criterion relates to "Equality" in a wide sense, all interviewees refer to equality between a ranges of different groups when they talk about indicators, women being one of these groups.

Regarding evaluation and follow-up of projects and their work with gender equality, the interviewees state that no projects are completed in this programme period as to yet. It is indicated that when guidelines for reports are designed, the issue of gender equality will be incorporated. The projects will show how their activities have fulfilled the goals relating to equality which they set at the outset.

Analysis

1. Why does not the gender equality policy in CLLD politicise gender equality?

In order to answer the overarching research question about CLLD's built-in inability to politicise gender equality, this analysis will discuss how the EU sets the basis for politicisation, and how the BA and CLLD Halland has been able to translate the gender equality policy with its implicit problem formulation.

The EU level basis for politicisation

Similar to earlier studies, such as Rönnblom 2009, the results from this study shows that the EU problem formulation of gender inequality in the gender equality policy in CLLD has limited built-in politicising potential. Gender inequality is represented as a problem for *growth* where women should be supported to enter the labour force through women specific entrepreneurship. This implies that CLLD should make use of women's value creating potential, and that women should be encouraged to find a way to fit into the existing structures, rather than changing them. Gender inequality is not articulated in terms of conflict where justice is at stake; but a problem where growth is at stake. It does not imply a challenging of the prevailing gender structures (as discussed by Rönnblom, 2009).

The acknowledgement of sex-based *discrimination* fails to politicise gender because it does not refer to concrete issues such as wage-gaps, sexism etc. Sex based discrimination is treated as an issue which everyone knows the meaning of, when in fact, there is no consensus (Verloo, 2005). The general nature of the problem means that the concrete conflictual dimensions are missing. As Rönnblom & Alnebratt (2016) discuss, this fails to give incentives for politicisation.

The EU level action which prescribes the *integration of the gender perspective* does not politicise gender equality, because the text does not provide a political explanation on what the gender perspective means. Without content that articulates gender equality in terms of conflict, the gender perspective does not provide any guidance on what interests to prioritise if a conflictual situation where to arise in implementation. To abstain a political position about the issue means that it will not guide any political solutions (as discussed by Rönnblom and Alnebratt, 2016). The win-win character of this action – meaning that it presents a solution which no losing parties – is symptomatic when the problem formulation of gender inequality does not describe any tensions or conflicts (Rönnblom, 2009).

The EU level action which prescribes that member states should provide *knowledge* about gender equality for the policy process, is also "tension free" politics. It grants the member states mandate to prescribe what should be done about gender equality. This could be a decentralisation of decisions-making out of the political sphere into the bureaucracy, which does not have mandate to take politicised decisions (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016). On the other hand, it could mean that the policy is influenced by local pressure, which could strengthen the politicising potential (Kennett & Lendvai, 2014).

To recruit members of the LAG and SC based on sex is to articulate gender equality in terms of conflict, because it means a decrease in men's influence and an increase in women's influence and power. However, the quantitative measures are too vague to have any politicising potential since the measures are not coercive. The purposed assessment criterion has a strong focus on measurable goals; which often translates to counting women. As Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) argue, the use of quantitative indicators imply that attention will be put on equal representation, and other measures will be neglected.

Translation of the policy at the BA

The problem formulation of discrimination at EU level is on the one hand translated into that no one should be disfavoured or face *discrimination* within the CLLD. In the interview with the BA public official and in the documents from the BA, discrimination based on sex is considered to be something which the CLLD should avoid in its operations. The interviewees acknowledge structural discrimination of women in society, but the policy translation does not imply that the CLLD should be used to prevent or change societal structures of discrimination outside of the CLLD. The BA translation articulates gender as a conflictual dimension within the programme; when women may face discrimination in access to the funds due to existing power structures. This means that the programme may benefit the women who participate in the programme, but there is no ambition to prevent discrimination of women in general; it does not articulate gender inequality as a problem of conflictual interests outside of the CLLD programme (similar to the results from Bock, 2014; 741). Therefore, the politicising potential is argued to be limited to the domain of the CLLD programme.

Regarding the translation of gender inequality as *lack of growth*, the guidance document imply a translation which see non-discrimination and gender equality as a tool to reach increased growth, and it is even more articulated than the EU problem formulation. The guidance document described disadvantaged groups as assets for more effective sustainable development. It also relate how the ESF

goals about labour market participation in CLLD can contribute to Swedish political goals. This is an instance of how the BA has attached contextual macro-economic political goals to the policy, but the attachment of egalitarian goals are missing. The interviewees see that these macro-economic goals has great relevance in their mandate, and that gender equality is important because it increases the possibility to reach these goals. Measures for gender equality are not understood as conflicting with macro-economic goals. This translation lacks politicising potential because gender equality considerations are the most relevant when they contribute to growth and macro-economic goals, rather than egalitarian goals. Also, gender considerations which would have negative implications for growth are out of the question (as discussed by Rönnblom, 2009).

The concrete measures which the BA takes to ensure gender equality in the CLLD, is that neither men nor women may hold more than 60 % of seats in the LAG groups. This is considered to contribute to non-discrimination. A reflection on behalf of this analysis, is that it does not intuitively harm the potential of CLLD to contribute to growth either. The 40/60 gender balance is a translation of the commission's guidance to "aim at gender balance", and may expose somewhat of a politicising potential. The interviewee indicated that women would not hold minimum 40 % of the seats had it not been for this measure. This means that the interviewee understands the equal representation as an issue with conflicting interests, where they aim to strengthen women, which has the consequence that men potentially loses power. It is a politicised measure because it is not of win-win character (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016).

Had the BA defined gender balance as 50/50, it would be an even more politicised measure, because it would be clear and that equal representation is an important part of the CLLD. Contrary to Kennett & Lendvai (2014), the BA argues that the bottom-up logic of the CLLD means that they should not interfere with more formal gender considerations. This means that the BA does not connect the gender equality policy to Swedish issues or goals, but forwards the opportunity to connect the policy to contextual goals the CLLD groups. The BA does not have any political problem formulation from above, and therefore does not perceive that they are mandated to make equal representation a clearly political issue. As mentioned in the design chapter, Sweden is argued to be a "likely case" to expose any built-in politicising potential in the gender equality policy of CLLD, if it exists. The translation into 40/60 strengthens the argument that decentralisation is negative for politicisation, because if no built-in politicising potential exists in Sweden, it is rather unlikely to exist at all.

To have the only concrete measure focus on numbers also sends a clear message that it is equal representation which is the most important for achieving gender equality. This could take away focus from other measures which are important for gender equality, and therefore limit the politicising potential, according to Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016). The focus on numbers reoccurs regarding the

assessment criteria. The BA follows up the distribution of the funds in CLLD, and identifies that the programme reaches men and women equally. The BA argues that this makes CLLD gender equal.

The BA does not identify that gender equality is their main focus, and the same goes for the interviewees of the SC. As described, the gender equality policy in CLLD is not considered a means to change gendered power relations, but to avoid discrimination and to ensure somewhat equal representation in LAG. The interviews propose that this has to do with practical issues. The public official at the BA mentions that they have to make cuts when it comes to what information is forwarded to the CLLD groups, and that gender equality is not the most important. The SC mentions that the selection process meant large amounts of text, and that the gender equality perspective was not the most salient.

Although these issues might have affected the implementation of the gender equality policy, the design of the gender equality policy is argued to be the underlying problem, because it does not provide a political problem formulation which justifies politicising measures. The lack of political problem formulation is brought up by Rönnblom & Alnebratt (2016), who also argue that the decentralising of gender politics also means that bureaucratic actors rather than political, such as the BA, are not able to attach the gender policy to political issues. In the case of the BA, this means that they do not perceive their mandate to include measures for gender equality beyond the representative distribution of funds and representation in LAG.

Apart from the formal measures for gender equality, the BA point out that gender equality is to be taken into consideration and permeates the processes of CLLD the BA is involved with. This might be a translation of the "integrating the gender perspective" measure from the EU. However, there is no clear definition of how this is carried out, or followed up. The BA argues that it is somewhat difficult for them to know how the LAGs have interpreted these guidelines. The most concrete way which the BA are able to measures their gender equality efforts are through measuring the results from their concrete measures; representativeness in the beneficiaries and in LAG. This is done through quantitative indicators, which means a risk of that the main focus of the policy stays with the quantitative measures. As Rönnblom & Alnebratt (2016) discuss, what is measurable sets the limit for what is done.

Translation of the policy at CLLD Halland

Regarding the bottom-up perspective, the CLLD Halland has mandate to attach content to the gender equality policy. The BA forwards the mandate to take measures for gender equality to the CLLD. This

is argued by Kennett & Lendvai (2014) to be positive for the politicising potential, because it allows the policy to pick up on local pressures.

CLLD Halland acknowledge gendered power structures through their LDS, which identifies that a gender inequality problem of the CLLD region is a segregated labour force and a wage-gap caused by unequal distribution of home duties. Likewise, the interviewees identify gendered power structures that are particularly visible in the region; male dominated sectors are more highly valued than female dominated sectors. In line with Rönnblom (2009), this acknowledgement is a step towards politicising gender equality. In line with Kennett and Lendvai (2014), this provides an example of how the politicising potential is able to arise in bottom-up approaches which makes use of local pressures.

But when the problem formulation is developed further, it fails to articulate conflicting interests. CLLD Halland identifies equality *and* growth as goals for the gender equality policy. Gender equality is considered "pain free politics"; it is considered instrumental as it is expected to create *synergy effects* for growth. As discussed by Rönnblom (2009), it presents a win-win situation, and is not suited to politicise gender equality. The focus on women's participation in the labour market implies that gender equality is the most important when it stimulates growth. The egalitarian character goal of reduced alienation is co-mentioned with the macro-economic goal of reduced unemployment (LLUH, 2015; 21). The goal of equal distribution of care-duties is mentioned in relation to the promotion of combining work and private life (LLUH, 2015; 43-44). Reduced alienation and equal distribution of care duties are not explicitly described as a means to change power structures – such as the aforementioned wage gap.

Women are promoted in ways that contribute to growth, but does not aim to change power structures and is ill-fit for politicising gender equality (as discussed by Rönnblom, 2009). For example, the LDS implies that engagement from women may help develop tourism in the maritime sector, and that female entrepreneurship should be supported. This implies that women should be helped in ways which does mean that they compete with or challenge the power which men have in traditionally male dominated sectors.

Discrimination is another acknowledged problem of gender inequality. The interviewees perceive their mandate to include the prevention of discrimination; but only within the CLLD. Also the LDS acknowledge and pay attention to how discrimination and disfavouring should be avoided within the CLLD. The interviewees argue that everyone should feel equally empowered to start a project, and all people should benefit equally from the projects. Very similar to the translation of the policy at the BA, the gender equality policy in the CLLD programme is not considered a means to fix discrimination issues in society as a whole. There is little ambition to change societal structures and politicise gender

equality. Justified actions regarding discrimination has little ambition to change the structures outside of the CLLD programme (similar to the translation of the gender equality policy at the BA).

Justified quantitative measures for gender equality also focus on equal representation within the CLLD. The LDS and the interviews refer to certain coercive measures relating to equal representation; the composition of LAG and project groups. The examples of projects which have worked well/poorly with gender equality also depict equal representation as important for gender equality. To focus on equal representation only within the CLLD group indicates that the policy actors do not perceive their mandate to include to use the gender equality policy to challenge structures of unequal representation in society as a whole. This could be a translation of the demands from the BA; that the CLLD should benefit men and women equally, and that no gender should hold more than 60 % of seats in LAG. If the CLLD has adapted to these guidelines and not picked up on local issues, this could indicate that the bottom-up logical does not facilitate politicisation, as Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) argues. Rather, the quantitative goals set by the BA justifies precisely these measureable actions, and it is not to expect that measures will be taken, which are not these measureable goals (as Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) discuss).

The LDS identifies that there are certain qualitative aspects of gender equality; de facto influence of women. The CLLD argues that equal communication are qualitative efforts for gender equality. The measure regards gender analysis of communication from the CLLD, similar to what the BA prescribed as a measure within the "integration of the gender perspective". To identify that gender stereotypes may occur in communication is a way to acknowledge gendered power structures. However, the goal of the measure is to reach a wide audience for CLLD. Therefore, this analysis argues that the purpose for the gender equal communication is clearly quantitative, rather than promoting women's de facto influence in projects or the LAG.

The justified action of the CLLD to fund and prioritise projects which have gender equality competence and a gender perspective in their problem formulation indicate that these projects should change something which has gender dimensions. Although this measure aims at changing structures in society, the politicisation potential is limited because there is no specification on how or in what direction the projects should work with gender equality. Here, the translation is forwarded to the project initiators. Additionally, the measure does not apply to all projects, at all times. Gender equality competence in the project is not a demand, but a bonus. As projects can go on without paying attention to gender competence, they can choose to not incorporate it if it conflicts with other goals.

Another feature of the translation of the gender equality policy is that the LDS and the interviews cluster gender inequality along with other inequalities, such as ethnicity or age. Whether this is

suspected to be positive or negative for the politicisation of gender equality is so far not discussed in this thesis, because it was not expected to be a salient issue. Lombardo and Verloo (2009) discuss how EU treats gender equality in relation to other inequalities, and argue that the *intersectionality* would improve the EU gender equality policy. Although a range of inequalities is mentioned in the interviews and in the LDS, it is not identified how or what implications these have when they intersect with gender. Therefore, the lack of understand of intersectionality would imply that the clustering of inequalities does not improve the politicising potential of the policy.

Regarding the practical equality work, the administrative office is pointed out to have an important role. The interviewees point out that their chief of operations has a particular interest in gender equality issues, and that this is a reason why a certain focus is put on this issue. As Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) argue, this points to an organisation of the gender equality policy which is dependent on engaged people, which in the long term is not an effective way to politicise gender equality. The administrative office regards the issue of gender equality as important, but their mandate to initiate politicising measures is in fact limited, both by the discussed measureable goals, but also because the bottom-up logic in fact cannot deviate from national, regional or EU priorities (European Commission 1, 2014). Therefore, they are somewhat dependent on political guidelines from any of these levels.

A measure related to the role of the administrative office and the LAG is that the CLLD group identify that they themselves would benefit from increased knowledge of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. As this was not represented among the justified actions of the BA, this might be inspired by the justified actions on EU level. However, as discussed relating to the knowledge in projects, this measure has little politicising potential because there is no specification on what the knowledge should change. To search for knowledge elsewhere is to once again decentralise decisions on what content to attach to the policy (Rönnblom & Alnebratt, 2016).

The EU, the BA and the LDS treat gender equality as a win-win consideration, which only strengthens other initiatives. However, the interviewees at CLLD Halland clearly identifies tensions which might arise when pursuing the gender equality policy. It is identified that gender equality cannot be considered a win-win policy at all times. As the interviewee identifies; there might be a conflict when a new group gains influence in a group where it has not yet been represented. Other interviewees point out that gender equality considerations are not equally important in all situations; other considerations may take priority. In contrast to the prescription of gender equality as a win-win situation, the reality is that gender equality considerations may create tensions, and when these tensions arise, there is no guidance from EU or national level on what to prioritise. Here, gender equality considerations risks to fall aside in order to not compete with other, more political goals. Had there been clear priorities from

EU or the BA that gender equality should take priority, there might be more potential for politicisation.

Here, Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) would argue that a political problem formulation at EU level would be important, that the EU and the BA acknowledge possible tensions; an acknowledgement of gendered power relations. Kennett and Lendvai (2014) argues that the tensions expose important, contextual factors which need to be explored in order to develop the gender equality policy to fit the particular context.

Conclusion

The conclusion from this study of gender equality policy translation from the EU, to the BA in Sweden, to CLLD Halland, is that the policy does not, in this study, expose built-in politicising potential. The analysis shows that even though power structures are acknowledged, it is rather rare that the policy is translated into measures which aim challenge them. Similar to Rönnblom (2009), it is found that the EU problem formulation is not political does not contain built-in politicising potential. As Rönnblom and Alnebratt (2016) argue, this leaves non-political actors to attach content to the gender equality policy. What this study adds to the research field, is an elaboration on why the policy actors at national and local level does not attach any politicising content to the gender equality policy.

The policy actors at BA do not perceive their mandate to be about promoting gender equality. They acknowledge gendered power relations to some extent, but since gender equality is not considered the main goal with CLLD, there is no ambition to establish measures to change local gender structures. It is considered to be up to the local level to establish these measures, as CLLD has a bottom-up logic.

At CLLD Halland, there are clear acknowledgement of gendered power structures, but still no attachment of content to the gender equality policy which may challenge gendered structures. This analysis argues that the CLLD in fact is rather limited to what they may attach. A suggestion from this study is that in the multi-level governance setting of the ESI funds, assessment criteria are one of the few things which concretely guide the translation of the gender equality policy in CLLD. The CLLD group are expected to develop measureable goals and report to the EU. The focus on measurable goals limits what can be done, as some progress on gender equality is difficult to measure. Even though the results from this study cannot be formally generalised, all ESI funds programmes include elements of reporting and evaluating. This implies that the ESI funds are in fact not a great tool for politicise gender equality.

Gender equality policy was included in the ESI funds as the commission initiated the approach of gender mainstreaming (Woodward, 2012). Since then, it is the largest investment for gender equality provided by the EU (Advisory Committee, 2012). As gender equality is not traditionally a competence of the EU, it might be wrong to even expect the ESI funds to politicise gender equality. As described, the politicisation of an issue means for politicians to take decisions which reflect a conflict dimension. To question how EU policy may contribute to a politicisation of gender equality implies that the EU should take political decisions in an area where member states still have formal competence.

Furthermore, the CLLD group is rather unaware about what could be done regarding the problems of gender inequality in the CLLD region. The lack of direction is a clear indication that the "local

pressure" as described by Kennett and Lendvai (2014) is not self-evident or unison. The CLLD groups argues that the best thing they can do is to learn more about gender equality; external knowledge is supposed to address this gap, which is to forward the attachment of content to the policy once again, to actors with even less political character or mandate.

As mentioned, the purpose of the gender mainstreaming principle is to prevent prioritised goals to compete with gender equality goals. Therefore, it is interesting that this study found clear tensions identified by interviewees at local level. These suggest that contrary to the design of the gender equality policy, gender equality in practice is not always of win-win character. If the policy tries to change the status quo, people are bound to lose power and gender equality will be prioritised over other goals. As Kennett and Lendvai (2014) argue that these tensions have potential to steer the translation of gender equality policy into a transformative character, it would be interesting to study instances of articulated tensions, to see what solutions or compromises that they produce, and whether these might expose politicising potential of the gender equality policy of the EU.

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Appendix A

Intervjuperson:

Position:

Datum:

Intervjuare:

Intro

- **Kan du berätta lite om din bakgrund och hur du hamnade i LAG gruppen?**

- **Har du någon tidigare erfarenhet av jämställdhetsintegrering? I EU program?**

Tolkning – Jämställdhetsintegrering som medel och strategi

- **Praktiskt sätt, hur gick det till när ni utvecklade den regionala strategin?**
    - **Vad var ert generella intryck av jämställdhetsintegrering som policy?**
    - **Vad såg ni, i er roll som LAG styrelse, som ert ansvar gällande tolkningen och implementeringen av jämställdhetsintegrering i lokalt ledd utveckling (leader)?**
    - **Hur mycket tolkningsutrymme hade ni? Vad hade ni för mandat, när ni utvecklade den regionala strategin? Hur stort tolkningsutrymme hade ni gällande jämställdhetsintegreringen av strategin?**

- **Vad vägledde er utveckling av regional strategi gällande jämställdhetsintegrering?**
    - **Var ni vägledda av EU eller nationell policy?**
    - **Vilka andra aktörer var inkopplade, vad var deras ansvar?**
    - **Vem har det slutgiltiga ansvaret för tolkning och implementering? Vem bestämmer hur jämställdhetsintegrering ska se ut?**

- **Kan du med korta ord beskriva vad du uppfattar att jämställdhetsintegrering innebär? Vad innebar det att "införliva jämställdhetsperspektivet"?** *Jag är bara ute efter personliga upplevelser, så det finns inget rätt eller fel!*
    - **Vilka konkreta åtgärder anser ni att jämställdhetsintegrering innebär? För att säkerhetsställa en lyckad jämställdhetsintegrering?**
    - **Var det denna definition som ni arbetade med när ni utvecklade den regionala strategin?**

- **Har ni utvecklat konkreta indikatorer som ni använder ni för att mäta och övervaka jämställdhet i genomförandet av EU medel i den lokalt ledda utvecklingen?**
  - **Representation av kvinnor/män i LAG grupp/projekt?**
  - **Annat?**
  - **Känns dessa relevanta, såhär i efterhand?**

- **Hur tror du att er utveckling av strategin kan ha påverkat tolkningen och implementering av jämställdhetsintegrering i projekten? ¨**

- **Tror du att olika människors bakgrunder spelade in för hur man tolkade jämställdhetsintegrering? I utvecklingen av den regionala strategin eller i projekt?**

Tolkning – Jämställdhet som problem/mål

- **Varför behövs jämställdhet inom ramen för lokalt ledd utveckling i er region?**
  - **Vilka konkreta problem finns det gällande jämställdhet?**

- **Kan du med egna ord beskriva det slutliga målet och syftet med jämställdhetsintegrering i er region genom lokalt ledd utveckling (leader)?**
  - **Kan du tänka på några goda exempel? Projekt som arbetat extra bra med jämställdhet?**

- **Är jämställdhet ett mål i sig, eller kan det hjälpa till med andra mål?**
  - **Är ekonomisk tillväxt ett sådant mål?**
  - **Ekonomisk tillväxt?**

- **Vilken roll har jämställdhet i relation till andra områden i den regionala utvecklingen under lokalt ledd utveckling (leader)?**
  - **Hur viktigt är jämställdhet?**
  - **Finns det gränser för hur mycket utrymme som jämställdhet kan ta i anspråk i den regionala utvecklingen?**

- **Hur stöttas jämställdhet bäst enligt er? Hur når man målet för jämställdhetsintegrering?**

Övrigt

- **Producerade ni några dokument som skulle kunna vara intressanta för mig att titta på? Utöver de regionala strategierna?**