



## **Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies**

European Commission Sixth Framework Programme  
Integrated Project

Elin Kvist

With additions by Malin Rönnblom

### **Report Analysing Intersectionality in Gender Equality Policies for Sweden and the EU**

Institute for Human Sciences (IWM)  
Vienna  
2008

Preferred citation: Kvist, Elin (2008): *Report Analysing Intersectionality in Gender Equality Policies for Sweden and the EU*, QUING Project, Vienna: Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), available at [http://www.quing.eu/files/results/ir\\_sweden.pdf](http://www.quing.eu/files/results/ir_sweden.pdf).

## 1. Introduction

In chapter III on Equality in Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union 2000 it is stated that *Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.* (Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union 2000/C 364/01)

These claims are not accompanied by a reasoning or theory on how to conceptualise the relationship between various inequalities. In the STRIQ part of the QUING project such a conceptualisation will be provided through individual reports for every participating country on how inequalities are produced and reproduced in each society. In this report we will study the implications of the intersections of multiple inequalities in Swedish gender + equality policies.

The aim is to investigate how inequalities and their intersections are conceptualised in terms of their structure and mechanisms. To what extent does context matter in (re)production of inequalities? When implementing and making Swedish gender equality policies, what other structural inequalities must be taken into consideration?

Chapter 2 of this report is a literature review ending with a list of specific analytical questions that will be addressed in the following chapters of the report. In chapter 3 the gender+ equality policies that are being discussed are presented and motivated; stated here are also the texts that have been selected. Chapter 4 provides a contextual and historical background to gender equality policies. In this chapter we also discuss the construction of the concept of gender equality in gender+ equality policies. Chapter 5 is devoted to the concept of intersectionality and starts with how the concept is used in relation to gender+ equality policies and which implications this usage will have. In this chapter, we also highlight significant turning points in the framing of the presentation of gender+ equality policies in the Swedish case. In chapter 6 the intersectionality of the four sub-issues are analysed one by one and the report ends with a concluding chapter 7 where the implications of the intersections of multiple inequalities in Swedish gender+ equality policies are analysed and discussed.

## 2. Literature review

How to understand classism, racism, ethnocentrism and heterosexism in relation to sexism? Or, how to understand sexism, classism, racism and ethnocentrism in relation to heterosexism? In the scholarly discussions of intersectionality, one main question has been how different power relations should be related to each other. Could one dimension be given priority in relation to another? Should different power relations be added to each other? Intersectionality could be regarded as an answer to the critique of feminist research as disregarding 'other inequalities' and thus producing narrow constructions of the meanings of 'gender' and 'women'. Much of the intersectionality literature also state the importance of avoiding an 'add-on-thinking', and there are several examples of how to relate several power dimensions to each other that mirrors different approaches in feminist research, from more structural to more post-structural understandings of power (cf. Hill Collins 1998 and Staunes 2003). We also believe that it is both impossible and uninteresting to try to find a way of 'balancing orders of identity' (Fornäs 2005: 65). Such a balance does not exist, and Fornäs, among others, concludes that the choice of which power relations should be given priority in the analysis has to be decided *in relation to context* – both regarding research questions and research focus. There are several scholars that question the possibility of 'joining all power relations in one and the same analysis and argues for the need of acknowledging that each social division has its own ontological basis (cf. Yuval-Davies 2006). For our part, we cannot see it any other way than that an intersectional analysis in some way must bring different power relations together in the same analysis, without disregarding the necessity of bringing in different kinds of scholarly work in order to understand these intersections (cf. Carbin and Thornhill 2004). Here, it is also important to state the form of power analysis that the researcher has chosen to apply.

Feminist theories on intersectionality are currently 'fast travelling theories' (Knapp 2005) within feminist scholarship and Kathy Davies argues that the 'buzz word' intersectionality has been given a quite odd status in feminist research (Davies 2008). She presents 'intersectionality theory' as a meeting place between feminist scholars, and as a way of transgressing epistemological divisions between structural and post-structural understandings of power. Davies argues further that the 'twist' with intersectionality is that it offers a novel link between critical feminist theory on the effects of sexism, class and racism *and* a critical methodology inspired by postmodern feminist theory. 'Intersectionality fits neatly into the postmodern project of conceptualising multiple and shifting identities.' (Davies 2008: 71).

The term intersectionality was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, as an intervention in traditional identity politics, but the genealogy of intersectional thinking has a long history in feminist scholarship going back to both the work of women of colour and the Marxist/socialist tradition (cf. Hill Collins 1998, Brah and Phoenix 2004). This genealogy points to the strong tradition of combining 'race-class-gender' in intersectional research while the intersections in relation to sexuality are not explored in the same way, at least not in research that relates to a more structural understanding of power. For example, black feminist Patricia Hill Collins defines intersectionality in the following way:

'As opposed to examining gender, race, class and nation as separate systems of oppression, intersectionality explores how these systems mutually construct one another ...' (Hill Collins 1998:63).

Feminist queer studies has on the other hand explored how gender and sexuality are intertwined and impossible to separate when understanding how power works (cf. Butler 1990) and research inspired by this post-structural way of understanding power, combined with influences from feminist post-colonial scholarship (cf. McClintock 2005) has developed intersectionality studies in a more post-structuralist understanding of power and thus how intersections between different power relations are understood in terms of 'doing', in this context how gender equality is constructed through how class, gender, race and sexuality are 'done' in an ongoing process (cf. Stauness 2003). Following this approach gender in itself could be seen as constructed through other dimensions like ethnicity/race, sexuality, class and ability (see Bredström 2006). A reason for pointing to the usefulness of including feminist queer theory is that we believe that researchers working in a social constructivist tradition, and who are interested in including several power relations in their studies of for example political policy have a lot to gain by turning to this theoretical tradition. Here we especially stress how power is understood and studied in feminist queer theory. This theoretical approach, as all other approaches, are of course not 'one' but several. We do however believe that it is possible to ascribe this scholarly tradition a special usefulness when *doing* power analyses. To understand 'different' power relations not as different but as always in an intertwined process, and to focus on how 'the traditional', 'the established' or 'the normal' are produced, not least in policy. The methodological thinking about how gender and sexuality are constantly produced could in other words work as an inspiration to include further dimensions such as race/ethnicity and class.

We regard intersectionality not as a theory but as (different) methodological approaches which each need to be connected and developed in relation a coherent way of understanding power. Here we depart from a Foucauldian way of understanding power where power is understood in terms of process and relations (Foucault 1980). Knowledge and 'facts' about the world – what is perceived of as normal and neutral – is produced in power relations and could be described as dominating discourses that are, in some way, always challenged by alternative ways of seeing the world. Consequently we consider concepts presented in policy texts – concepts such as gender equality and intersectionality, if it is used in policy – as 'empty signifiers' (Laclau 1990). That is, we do not take their meanings for granted, but rather analyse *how* they are constructed in the policy debates. By finding out what the consensus is, we think that we also can find out how normativities are constructed within gender+

equality policies – and in this report the focus is how these normativities could be read in relation to several power dimensions, which also means treating ‘gender’ as constructed through other social inequalities. We also believe that it is important not only to map what the problem is, but to try to analyse what is not mentioned – the borders or the limits of the discourse. Coming from this perspective of thinking of intersectionality as a methodological tool, a way of understanding how several power dimensions are intertwined when policies on gender+ equality are produced, the following analytical questions will be in focus:

- What are the problems represented to be in gender+ equality policies?
- What are the problems represented in the different issues (and sub-issues)?
- How is the concept of gender equality constructed in gender+ equality policies?
- (How) is the concept of intersectionality constructed within gender+ equality policies?
- What categories/social groups/inequalities are mentioned within gender+ equality policies? How are these constructed? In relation to what problems? How are different categories seen as victims of different types of problems or as those causing problems?
- What is seen as consensus and what is debated within the four issues?
- What normativities/inclusions and exclusions can be found; what categories/social groups/inequalities are excluded from gender+ equality policies? What problems are excluded?

### **3. Research material and context for the analysis**

In the QUING project, we are studying gender+ equality policies in four areas, *general gender equality, non-employment, intimate citizenship and gender based violence*. When choosing policies we have primarily taken into account the most recent policies and discussions, but also the latest and most controversial policies and discussions.

The politicization of gender equality and the formation of *General Gender Equality policies* first started in 1972, when the *Delegation for Equality between Men and Women* was created. A long series of reforms showed that the government was taking a new grip on the issue of gender equality. The objective was to create equal rights, obligations and opportunities for men and women (Florin Nilsson 2005). An act on gender equality was first introduced in 1979. In 1992, a new gender equality law came into effect that included regulations regarding so called active measures and prohibitions against discrimination; it also banned indirect discrimination. Since its introduction, the new gender equality law has been discussed and amended again and again. The latest suggested changes concern a fusion of the various equality laws into one general law prohibiting discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality and age, in a wide range of societal areas.

The main policy discussion taking place during the last years has dealt with the comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and the equalities machinery: whether or not to gather the different discrimination authorities in a single equality machinery. Resulting from the 2006 Government Bill (Proposition 2005/06:155) on new goals for the (gender) equality politics, the new Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality was established, gathering the various Ombudsmen and other Government Agencies concerned with equality issues into one Ministry. This Ministry will be responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the equality policy and for the follow up of the results of equality policy (SOU 2005:66).

In this part of the QUING project the suggestion for a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and organisation are studied through analysing the latest Action plan on gender equality (Prop 2005/06 :155), *Power to shape society and one's own life – new goals in the gender equality politics*, *The equal opportunities Act* (1979), a fact sheet from the government on comprehensive

discrimination legislation, a speech by Nyamko Sabuni, minister of Integration and Gender Equality, parliamentary debates on discrimination and the new goals in the gender equality politics. Also analysed are referral statements from civil society actors: the Swedish women's shelter organisation on the governmental bill about comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and the Swedish Women's Lobby on Governmental Bill: Power to shape society and one's own life – new goals in the gender equality politics.<sup>1</sup>

The most relevant discussions concerning the issue of *non-employment* in Sweden have, during the QUING-period, concerned issues of domestic services, child-care allowance, paternal leave, working hours and the gender pay gap. Part-time work is regarded as a question about equal treatment in employment and not as a question about the reconciliation of work and family life due to the current general debate on the issue. Under this issue we have chosen five topics. The texts selected represent the most recent legislative changes on each topic.

*Domestic services* have, in Sweden, been discussed as an issue of access to the labour market as well as an issue of tax benefits and reconciliation of work and private life. The arguments have been that by enabling people to pay for these services by, for instance, introducing tax-deductions as a way to lower the costs, women can cut back on their household work, thus coming closer to doing as much (or little) as their male partner. The counter arguments have been concerned with domestic services being conceived as a 'woman's trap' in the sense that it is a non-qualified, and thus a low-paying, vocation that mostly women will do. Domestic services are, furthermore, argued to enable immigrants to find employment, specifically female immigrants, who have a hard time to find employment. Now, in 2007, the right wing Alliance Government has made domestic services tax-deductible. The texts that are analysed in for this issue are the governmental bill *Tax deduction for domestic Service* (Proposition.2006/07:94), a governmental plan and also a parliamentary debate. Also analysed is a referral statement from the Union of Commercial Employees on Tax deduction on Domestic Services.

*Parents' insurance* in Sweden consists of several parts: parental allowance; paternity leave<sup>2</sup> and; fathers' and mothers' quotas (Bergqvist 1999). Parental insurance is given to families, not individuals, meaning that the mother and father decide who should stay at home, when and for how long. The most recent debates on parents' insurance have been concerned with child-care allowance and a gender equality bonus. Child-care allowance is an allowance with the purpose to render parents an opportunity to stay at home longer with their children. The gender equality bonus is a financial bonus that will be given to parents who share their parental leave equally. The material analysed in this issue is governmental plans on child care allowances *Fact sheet on the Budget Bill 2008, Child care allowance etc., Ministry of health and social affairs* and gender equality bonus *Gender equality bonus – a family policy reform, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs* (Ds 2007:50) and parliamentary debates: *the Minister for Health and Social Affairs answers questions about child-care allowance and gender equality (Parliament records 2007-04-13)* and *on family policy and gender equality( Parliament records 2007-10-18)*.

Also analysed are a statement from the Social Democratic Women and a Debate article concerning the Gender Equality Bonus, written by the chairman of the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees, Sture Nordh (DN-debatt 2007- 05-08).

*Part-time work* has been extensively debated and legislated on. Working hours have been debated as an issue of equal pay, access to labour market, and reconciliation of work and private life. During the

---

<sup>1</sup> The documents referred to in this chapter are described with full references in D33, List of documents for coding, Sweden.

<sup>2</sup> Alongside the mother taking maternity leave, fathers have the right to paternity leave for a period of ten days immediately following child birth. The idea with these ten days paternity leave is to give the mother support during those first days and for the father to bond with his child/children.

1970's the debate and legislation were concerned with allowing (women) employees to only work part-time, so as to enable them to combine family life with gainful employment. Later, the debate has turned towards the issue of the right to full-time employment, which has also been construed as a women's issue. The reason for this is that the parts of the labour market (e.g. hotels and restaurants and cleaning services) that primarily hire people on a part-time or hourly basis employ mainly women. Other arguments for the right to full-time employment have been concerned with the lower wages that women earn as a consequence of being employed only part-time, with consequences for the development of their pensions and other social insurances.

Analysed in this issue are parts of the The Budget and Finance Bill 2008, chapter 13 Labour market (Budgetproposition 2007/08:1) on changes with regards to part time unemployment benefits, a *Fact-sheet on the budget bill: Continued reform work strengthens the labour line* (Faktablad om budgetpropositionen för 2008 'Fortsatt reformarbete stärker arbetslinjen'), September 2007. Also analysed is a parliamentary debate on part-time unemployed women's situation in the labour market (Parliament records 2007-11-16). Also included is a Statement by Swedish Trade Union Confederations chairman Wanja Lundby-Wedin on the full-time investigations proposal (2005-11-30). The *Gender pay gap* has been a crucial question within the question of non-employment. According to amendments to the Gender Equality Law, employers must map out and analyse regulations and practices concerning wages and other employment conditions as well as pay gaps between women and men who perform equal work or work of equal value. Further, the law states that the employer is obliged to set up and evaluate action plans for equal pay and to share this information with employees' organisations (trade unions). Included in this analysis are debates and other texts relevant to the legislative amendment concerning equal pay. Furthermore, the most recent (Social Democratic) Government *Action Plan for Equal Pay* is also included (Missive 2005/06:213). The action plan takes its starting points in work-sharing, distribution of paid and unpaid work, working hours and type of employment as well as discrimination. Also analysed is a debate article from the Chairman of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union, Ylva Thörn, questioning the government's policy on low-paid women (DN-debatt, 071028).

Issues concerning heterosexual marriage, divorce, and adoption have been settled before the QUING-period. The most relevant discussion regarding *intimate citizenship* during the QUING-period instead concerns registered partnership, homosexual adoption, assisted fertilization for lesbians and most recently, homosexual marriage.

*Registered partnership* was instituted in Sweden 1995. Today, a proposal suggests to revoke the legislation on registered partnership and to replace it with the right of same-sex couples to enter into marriage. This development has been preceded by changing the legislation on common laws to make it a gender neutral joint legislation for both homosexual and heterosexual common laws. The arguments against allowing same-sex couples to enter into marriage have been to maintain the marriage as an ancient tradition of the union of woman and man; that marriage per definition is a heterosexual institution; that the purpose of marriage is to promote the position of the family and to create a good environment for children to grow up in. Within this issue we have studied the *Registered Partnership Act* (1994:1117), Parliamentary debates on *Marriage, partnership, common-law partnership* (Parliament records 2004-04-28). Also studied is a statement from the Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in regards to the report on Marriage for same-sex couples (SOU 2007:17).

In 2003 *registered partners and homosexual singles* were allowed to be tried for *adoption* on equal terms as heterosexual married or single people. This legislation was prepared in a Committee appointed in 1999 to inquire into the issue of children in homosexual families. In their report in 2001, the Committee concluded that children of homosexual families fared just as well as children of

heterosexual families. We have studied a governmental bill: *Partnership and adoption* (Proposition 2001/02:123) a *fact sheet from department of Justice on laws on Partnership and adoption* (2003) and record of the Parliament's Plenary session concerning a consideration on Partnership and adoption (Parliament records 20020605). Also included is a statement from Christian Council of Sweden on the Governmental report Children in Homosexual families (SOU 2001:10).

*Assisted insemination for single women and lesbians.* Debates on the right to assisted (artificial) insemination for homosexual women can be traced back to 1983. The issue was however not legislated on until 2005. . Criticism towards this legislation has not only been concerned with the issue of allowing lesbian women the right to assisted insemination in the first place, but also with the regulations concerning the judicial parenthood following such legislation. Arguments were also concerned with children's rights to knowledge about their origin and (genetic) heritage. Texts studied are governmental Bill: *Assisted fertilization and parenthood* (Proposition 2004/05:137), *Assisted fertilization and parenthood*, Fact Sheet from the Department of Justice (2005) and a Parliamentary debate on assisted fertilization and parenthood (Parliament records 2005-06-03) Also studied is a statement issued by the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education on the governmental report o children with same-sex parents(SOU 2001:10).

The so-called 'Kvinnofridslagstiftningen' (Women's peace legislation) collects various forms of violence against women under the same legislation. The topics focused on below are men's violence against women in intimate relationships, rape and honour crime.

*Men's violence against women (in intimate relationships).* Since 1991, the Swedish Government and Parliament understand men's violence against women as an expression of unequal power relations. Since 1998, the legislation on Women's peace offences has been sharpened, then clarified. Besides the civil society text, the texts chosen here are expected to reflect the government's current position on the issue of men's violence against women. Texts studied are *Women's Peace Bill* (Proposition 1997/98:55, Kvinnofrid) 1998-02-05, The governments *national action plan on men's violence against women, honour crime and violence in same-sex relationships* (2007), Record of parliamentary debate; Answer to a question concerning the governments measurements taken regarding men's violence against women (2007-11-29) Also studied are a statement from the Swedish Association for Victim Support on the national plan on gender equality *Power to shape society and one's own life – new goals in the gender equality politics*, (2005-12-05).

*Rape.* In 1998, the government appointed a parliamentary committee with the assignment to conduct a complete overview of the legislation on sexual crime. The committee, called 'Sexual crime committee', handed over their report (SOU 2001:14) in 2001, resulting in 2004 in a proposal (2004/05:45) for amendments to the sexual crime legislation. The amendments came into effect in 2005 and aim to improve the protection against sexual abuse and to further strengthen the sexual and personal integrity. In this issue the government's *National action plan on men's violence against women, honour crime and violence in same-sex relationships* 2007 is also analysed. Further texts analysed include parliamentary debates on sex crime (Parliament record 2005-03-02), and a Statement by ROKS regarding the Sexual Crime Committee's report Sexual Crime..

*Honour crimes.* Although debated both in civil society, parliament and government, there is no legislation on honour crimes in Sweden. The texts offered here are reports on actions taken as well as the government's current action plans on the issue. The four texts selected reflect the discussions and measures taken against so-called 'patriarchal violence', which is how honour-related violence is often named in Swedish discussions. Text analysed include: the government's *National action plan on men's violence against women, honour crime and violence in same-sex relationships*; a fact sheet on *Initiatives to help young people at risk of violence and oppression in the name of honour*, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality; Fact sheet( 2007); a parliamentary interpellation concerning support for persons who are threatened with honour-related violence (2005-02-10); and finally a debate article

are studied were representatives from two organisations dealing with the question of honour related crime questions the Integration ministers politics (Ghasemiani Soleyman & Mohammad Sara, Sydsvenskan 2007-03-20).

#### **4. 'Gender equality' in gender+ equality policies**

##### **4.1. Current context and historical background to gender equality policies**

The 1970's was a time of politicization of gender equality in Sweden (Florin and Nilsson 2005). The central issue during the 1970's and early 1980's was women's rights and actual possibilities to gainful employment. The idea was that gender equality in the labour market would lead to gender equality in other areas of society. At the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's, the focus shifted towards issues of power and influence. In the mid-1990's, all areas of society were charged with the responsibility to contribute to gender equality and this marked the start of the work for gender mainstreaming.

During the 1970's, it became clear that the issue of gender equality had acquired political legitimacy and was on the political agenda of all political parties. The so-called second wave of feminist movement appeared simultaneously with the institutionalisation of women's politics, but the institutionalisation could not really be seen as an answer to the movement's demands. The slogan 'the personal is political' was the starting point of consciousness-raising groups; not a starting point to put pressure on the authorities. The second wave feminist organisations were more likely sceptical to public solutions to problems confronting women. Instead, the institutionalisation could be seen as the answer to the first wave feminist movement's demands for wider public responsibilities and greater efforts to solve problems inherent in women's situation (Haavio-Mannila and Badcock 1985).

There was actually no active opposition from the right to the issue of gender equality. Groups that, from an international viewpoint, have been opposing gender equality such as the Church or politically conservative groups were in the 1970 wholly marginalised. Instead, the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party both tried to seize hold of equality issues, eager to gain the votes from 'young career women' whose ambition was to be both parents and working women (Florin 2005). The institutionalisation of gender equality could also be seen as a result of the need to expand the work force. The most distinct features of the Nordic countries' economies during the 1950s and the 1960s were full employment and minor market fluctuations, women were needed in the work force and equal pay and equal status were seen as prerequisites for getting women out of the home and into paid employment (Haavio-Mannila and Badcock 1985).

However, during the first five years of the 1970's, the Social Democratic Party resisted gender equality legislation on the grounds that it would represent an expression of bad faith in the ability of the workers' and employers' organisations to come to an agreement on their own. Still, and despite the trade union federations' persistent opposition, the decade came to be a prolific time of gender equality laws: 'laws on individual taxation, abortion, the family, the extension of day nurseries, parental insurance, equality of opportunity in working life, and more. Also, equality was introduced in the school curriculum. A special political arena was created for gender equality with delegations, commissions, ministers, officials, ombudsmen etc.' (Florin and Nilsson 2005:304). However, although the 'formal obstacles to a citizenship of equal value for both sexes were quickly removed ... actual gender equality was slow to come. The division of labour between the sexes was not greatly changed, nor were wage differentials' (Florin and Nilsson 2005:316).

In 1979, after much debate, the Government, lead by the Centre Party in coalition with other right-wing parties and with the Liberal Party as the most powerful driving force, passed the *Equal Opportunities Act* (act 1979:1118), commonly referred to as the Equality law, which entered into force in 1980. The Act prohibits sex discrimination and salary discrimination in the labour market and requires that all employers, whether in the public or private sector, shall actively promote equal opportunities for men

and women in the working environment. All employers with a minimum of ten employees are required to prepare an annual equal opportunities plan as well as a plan of action for equal pay. The purpose was to promote women's and men's equal rights regarding work, working conditions and development opportunities. However, equal pay was not regulated in the Act. The Social Democrats and the trade unions were opposed to the prescriptive element of the Bill, as well as to the creation of an ombudsman's office.

#### **4.2 The organisation of Gender Equality Policy**

The responsibility of gender equality policy in Sweden has alternated between Ministers with different portfolios and has been placed at different Ministries, more or less related to the labour market area. 'Thus, the ministers for immigration, the labour market, home affairs, culture, social affairs, and the office of deputy prime minister have all shouldered responsibility for gender equality at one time or another' (Borchorst 1999:176). The Minister in charge has predominantly had other responsibilities beside gender equality on her/his portfolio, varying from agriculture to today's integration and democracy.

The organisation of the equality mechanisms today can be divided into varying functions: a policy-advisory (political) function, law-enforcing (judicial) functions, administrative functions within the ministerial hierarchy, and a Minister for Gender Equality (Borchorst 1999). These varying functions were gathered into one ministry – the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality – as of January 1 2007. This Ministry is responsible for human rights, gender equality, integration issues, and minority issues, among other areas. The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality coordinates and develops initiatives to promote and protect human rights at the national level and is responsible for protecting the rights and opportunities of all members of society, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background. Further, the Ministry is responsible for the coordination of the Government's gender equality work and special gender equality initiatives, as well as for issues concerning the protection and promotion of Sweden's national minorities and historical minority languages.

Relating to the above responsibilities, the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality is principal of the following *Government Agencies* (year in parenthesis states the year the Agency was established):

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) (1976)

The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman (Jämställdhetsombudet) (1980)

The Equal Opportunities Commission (Jämställdhetsnämnden) (1980)

The Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination (Ombudsmannen mot etnisk diskriminering) (1986)

The Board Against Discrimination (Nämnden mot diskriminering) (1986)

The Swedish Disability Ombudsman (Handikappombudsmannen) (1994)

The Ombudsman against Discrimination on grounds of Sexual Orientation (Ombudsmannen mot diskriminering på grund av sexuell läggning) (1999)

The four Ombudsman Agencies will soon be merged into one Government authority.

#### **4.3 The Concept of Gender Equality**

The Swedish equality terminology differentiates between gender equality ('jämställdhet') and equality ('jämlighet'), in a equal manner as in Norway and Denmark, to differentiate between class equality and gender equality (Borchorst 1999). The term 'jämställdhet' suggests that measures are taken to make two parties, deemed unequal, more equal (Hirdman and Maktutredningen 1990). In the 1960s the word *jämställdhet* (gender equality) was established, replacing the earlier definitions of 'women's cause' or 'the equality of women'. The intention with the new concept was to avoid arguments based on biological differences between women and men. The concept of *Jämställdhet* also emphasised that it was an issue concerning the relations between women and men, not just women (Magnusson 2000). The gender equality policies have traditionally been focusing on labour market issues and ways of increasing women's possibilities to full employment. The Equal Opportunities Act states that 'the intention of the Act is to improve in the first instance the conditions for women in working life.' Consequently, violence against women was for long treated as an issue belonging to the area of

health and social issues or family issues. But from the 1990s and onwards this social problem, labelled as 'men's violence against women' has been defined as a gender equality problem. In the Government Bill (Proposition, 1990/91:113), which also proposes a new Equal Opportunities Act, an action plan emphasising regional development work and training of relevant personnel groups as well as improved emergency protection for women exposed to violence or threats thereof was presented. Men's violence against women is described as an expression of an imbalance in the power relations between women and men. This change of definition could be seen as the result of the engagement of feminist researchers and women's movement, such as for instance the women's shelter movement.

#### **4.4 How is the concept of 'gender equality' constructed in gender+ equality policies**

The concept of Gender Equality is well established in Swedish politics and is used in most of the texts selected for this project. Gender equality is mentioned in almost all of the texts associated with general gender equality policies, and that is also the case in the texts regarding gender based violence and non-employment. The fourth sub-issue in this project named intimate citizenship seems, on the other hand, not to be regarded or defined as a question considering gender equality. Gender equality is not mentioned in any of the selected texts. The social problems addressed in the selected texts mainly deals with different aspects of homosexual parenting and partnership registration. What social problems that are defined as gender equality problems become apparent when studying the official definitions of gender equality that could be found in for instance in the latest *Action plan for gender equality* adopted in 2006. In this action plan, the government's main policy objective is that 'women and men shall have equal power to shape society and their own lives'. To accomplish this, the Action plan states that it is a prerequisite that women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. The interim objectives are described as equal distribution of power and influence, economic equality between women and men, equal distribution of unpaid care and household work and that men's violence against women shall come to an end. In none of these texts is gender equality discussed in relation to other structuring factors such as age, sexuality, class, race or ethnicity. The problems associated with gender inequality are as Langvasbråten points out, linked first and foremost to an uneven distribution of power between the two sexes. 'Women' and 'men' are each constructed as a non-differentiated category consisting of similar individuals faced with the same potential problems and discriminations (Langvasbråten 2008).

An important feature of the Swedish gender equality policy is the 'gender-power system', which largely is presented as the cornerstone of Swedish gender equality policies. Gender relations are according to this system described as a system in which women as a group are claimed to be subordinated to men as a group, due to the structural reproduction of persistent gendered hierarchies. This structure operates solely on the grounds of gender in which the general male category is positioned above the female equivalent, other structuring factors are not mentioned (Langvasbråten 2008). The gender power system is perceived as an order, or social system, in society that maintains unequal power relationships between women and men. In this order, women as a social group are regarded as subordinate and men as superior.

Developments in later years and a suggestion from a parliamentary committee on a coherent anti-discrimination legislation (En sammanhållen diskriminerings-lagstiftning, SOU 2006:22) might challenge this one-dimensional approach to inequalities. The report from the parliamentary committee has been circulated for comment and is now under consideration by the Government Offices. The Government intends to propose that the different anti-discrimination laws be combined into one piece of general anti-discrimination legislation, and that the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, the Office of the Disability Ombudsman, the Office of the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination and the Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination because of Sexual Orientation be merged into one government agency.

The selected texts are seldom clearly pointing out social groups to 'blame' for causing gender inequality. On a few occasions, men are seen as responsible for causing the problem of gender inequality, particularly in the gender based violence texts. Most commonly appointed responsible actors include the government, the parliament, the legislative system or the political parties, but also the labour market. Social groups affected by gender inequality are most often named as women, girls, and children; men are named on a few occasions. The social groups mentioned are numerous, and include the discriminated, parents, victims, single mothers etc.

There is a consensus among all actors that gender equality is necessary and an essential political goal, and the same goes for the need to stop men's violence against women. However there is not always a consensus on what gender equality means, neither as a goal nor as a strategy (cf. Rönnblom 2005, 2007). In the policy texts there are clearly identifiable conflicts around how to achieve gender equality, by laws and regulations or by encouraging free choices and giving incitements. One side of these conflicts mainly comes into light in the discussions around parental leave, gender equality bonus and child-care allowance. An essential mean to achieve gender equality is by many believed to be that men and women should share the parental leave more equally. In sharing parental leave men are believed to get more involved in the children and the household shores. Equal sharing is also believed to accomplish better opportunities for women in the labour market. The other position is more closely related to the relationship between work and family responsibilities. Is it gender equal to have two full time working parents that pay someone else to do the cleaning and child caring? Or is it gender equal to have two parents working part-time and sharing the care for children and home? Here it is perceived to be important that men and women have the same possibilities to engage in their career and that buying household services could be a way of 'gaining more time' when trying to get the 'life-puzzle' together. These arguments are most apparent in the debates around tax deduction on domestic services.

Another conflict is whether all forms of discrimination could be regarded as the same and, if so, all actors discriminated against and the discriminators could be regulated within the same laws, regulations and organisations or whether there are some discriminated groups that are more 'essential' and 'extensive' than others, and therefore in need of special regulations, laws and organisations. There seems to be a near political consensus on the need of coherent anti-discrimination legislation, but some women organisations in civil society are critical towards this suggestion, fearing that women will be affected negatively by the legislative change. What we see as an interesting shift, but which is not (yet) articulated in the policy texts, is what a coherent anti-discrimination legislations will mean for the focus of gender equality policy. Through the emphasis on 'the gender-power system', Swedish gender equality policy has had a structural focus, men and women are mainly perceived of as groups in society and policy actions are often directed towards changing structures. One implication of a coherent anti-discrimination law could be that this structural focus is replaced and instead the discriminated individual is put in focus, and thus also leaving the structural ambitions behind.

## **5. 'Intersectionality' in Gender + equality policies**

### **5.1. The context with a short historical background**

The first anti-discriminatory act that entered into force was the Equal Opportunities Act 1979 regulating against sex discrimination in working life. In 1999 the Act (1999: 130) on Measures Against Discrimination in Working Life Because of Ethnic Background, Religion or Other Religious Belief came into force, shortly followed by the Prohibition of Discrimination In Working Life of People because of Disability Act (1999:132); the Act (1999:133) on Ban against Discrimination in Working Life because of Sexual Orientation. Gender is never mentioned in any of the discrimination acts from 1999. But in the discrimination acts following after that, broader grounds of discrimination are addressed and sex is

explicitly mentioned as a discriminatory ground. In the Equal Treatment of Students at Universities Act (2001:1286) the discrimination grounds were sex, ethnic background, religion or other religious belief, disability and sexual orientation. The 2003 Prohibition of Discrimination Act includes the following grounds of discrimination: sex, ethnic background, religion or other religious belief, disability and sexual orientation. This act also widened the areas of regulation to include labour market policy operations such as setting up or running business operations, practicing professions, membership etc. of employee organisations or employer organisations and professional organisations, goods, services and housing, the social insurance and related benefits systems and the unemployment insurance system, the health and medical care services and public study support.

All issues of intimate citizenship have, thus, during the period of interest to QUING, been primarily concerned with whether or not to expand the rights of homosexuals, and the issue has not been articulated in gendered terms. *Registered partnership* for same-sex couples was finally introduced and entered into force in 1995, after many years of debate. Arguments against registered partnership have been concerned with the issue of avoiding categorising and setting people apart. The arguments for the legislation were concerned with the importance of eliminating all remaining forms of discrimination against homosexuals and the legislation was preceded by legislation on same-sex common laws. Many see the statement in Parliament in 1973 that cohabitation between two people of the same sex is a fully acceptable form of living as an important moment for the continued development towards registered partnership legislation. Still, legislation on same-sex common laws was a long time coming after the initial statement in Parliament and did not enter into force until 1987 and was the result of a Governmental inquiry presented in 1984 (bet. 1984:63). The inquiry concluded that there is a need of and reasons for family judicial legislation for couples of the same sex and that it therefore was important to legislate on homosexual cohabitation. Today, a proposal suggests to revoke the legislation on registered partnership and to replace it with the right of same-sex couples to enter into marriage. Changing the legislation on common laws to make it a gender-neutral joint legislation for both homosexual and heterosexual has preceded this development. The arguments against allowing same-sex couples to enter into marriage maintain marriage as an ancient tradition of the union of woman and man; that marriage per definition is a heterosexual institution; that the purpose of marriage is to promote the position of the family and to create a good environment for children to grow up in.

The debates on *homosexual adoption* and *assisted fertilization for homosexuals* have been constructed on a heteronormative basis as an issue of the right of children to both a mother and a father. The debates have, furthermore, questions the suitability of gay and lesbian parents. Debates on artificial insemination for lesbians can be traced back to 1983 but legislation awarding lesbians the right to artificial insemination was not passed until 2005. Criticism towards this legislation has not only been concerned with the issue allowing lesbian women the right to artificial insemination in the first place, but also with the regulations concerning the judicial parenthood following such legislation. Arguments were also concerned with children's rights to knowledge about their origin and (genetic) heritage. Homosexual adoption was legislated on in 2003, allowing registered partners and homosexual singles to be tried for adoption on equal terms with heterosexual married or single people. This legislation was prepared in a Committee appointed in 1999 to inquire into the issue of children in homosexual families. In their report in 2001, the Committee concluded that children of homosexual families fared just as well as children of heterosexual families.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the equality mechanisms are organised into varying functions that as of January 1, 2007 were gathered into one ministry, the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, which in turn is placed at the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication. The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality coordinates and develops initiatives to promote and protect human rights at the national level and is responsible for protecting the rights and opportunities of all members

of society, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background. The Ministry is also responsible for the coordination of the Government's gender equality work and for special gender equality initiatives.

In 2006, a parliamentary committee submitted a report on coherent anti-discrimination legislation (En sammanhållen diskrimineringslagstiftning, SOU 2006:22). The report has been circulated for comment and is now under consideration by the Government Offices. The Government intends to propose that the different anti-discrimination laws be combined into one piece of general anti-discrimination legislation, and that the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, the Office of the Disability Ombudsman, the Office of the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination and the Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination because of Sexual Orientation be merged into one government agency. The coherent discrimination act has the purpose of combating discrimination and in other ways promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, sexual identity, ethnic background, religion or other religious belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. The act will apply to working life, education, labour market policy activities, the setting-up or running of business operations, practising professions, membership, etc., of employee, employer and professional organisations, goods, services and housing, public meetings and public events, social welfare services, etc., the social insurance system, unemployment insurance, health and medical care services, public study support, compulsory military and compulsory civilian service, and to public appointments and public assignments. In sum, the intention with the act is to cover as many public situations as possible where discrimination may occur.

As mentioned above, gender equality policies has for a long time mainly focused on gender without any reflection of other structuring factors such as age, sexuality, class, race or ethnicity. The problems associated with gender inequality have been, as Langvasbråten (2008) points out, linked first and foremost to an uneven distribution of power between the two sexes and there has been little integration of ethnicity or religion into the Swedish gender equality agenda. In 2002, the brutal murders of two young women with immigrant backgrounds, performed by their relatives in 'the name of honour', (temporary) challenged the gender equality agenda (cf. Carbin 2008). In the debates following the murders the problem of the 'gender power system' with its two excluding categories of 'men' and 'women' was questioned and debated within the feminist movement but also in society at large. This debate resulted in an increased amount of policy initiatives directed towards so called vulnerable girls and to a certain extent, it gradually changed the dominant framing of 'men's violence against women' by introducing 'culture' and religion as dimensions that needed to be acknowledged. In the (from time to time harsh) debate in the feminist community, and among some politicians and femocrats, revealed two main lines of argument; (1) men's violence against women is mainly about gender power relations, culture and religion should not be taken to account in the discussion, and (2) men's violence against women could not be understood unless it is contextualised in relation to other societal dimensions like culture, ethnicity and religion.

Just as the establishment of gender equality policies and machinery was subject of a struggle with conflicts and resistance, the initiatives to establish laws and regulations against ethnical and religious discrimination initially faced problems. When the gender equality regulations were in the making influential actors such as the parties of the labour market (the social partners), employers and employees organisations, were strongly against regulations such as the Equal Opportunities Act and the Equal Opportunities ombudsman. Another important opponent was, initially, the Social Democratic party putting class interests before gender interests. In the same manner the initiatives to establish an anti-discrimination act against ethnic and religious discrimination in working life was at first resisted by the social partners. But recurrent remarks from the UN that Sweden lacked an anti-discrimination act regulating ethnical and religious discrimination on the labour market put pressure on the Swedish government (Utredningen om strukturell diskriminering på grund av etnisk eller religiös tillhörighet 2005). The UN remarks, and other initiatives, eventually lead to the Act (1999:130) on Measures

Against Discrimination in Working Life Because of Ethnic Background, shortly followed by other acts regulating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and disability.

To sum up, the challenges of other power relations than gender, especially ethnicity and religions, highlighted how Swedish gender equality policies have been built on a notion of gender as a clear cut category but at the same time connected to the dimension of class mainly illustrated by the strong focus on the labour market and on men's and women's possibilities to share both parenting and working life.

## **5.2. (How) is the concept of 'intersectionality' used and what are the effects?**

The concept of 'intersectionality' is never mentioned in any of the texts chosen for the QUING project, but in many texts different forms and formulations of groups related to different inequalities are mentioned. In the debates, policy texts and civil society texts discussing the coming coherent anti-discrimination legislation socially structuring categories such as class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and disability are mentioned. In the non-employment text, the interacting inequalities are mainly class and gender, brought to the agenda by trade unions, by civil society or left party or Social Democratic Party parliamentarians. For instance, tax deduction on domestic services, child care allowance and gender equality bonuses are all addressed by the trade union and socialist speakers in terms of reforms mainly meeting the needs of the privileged classes. In these cases class and gender are addressed as intersecting.

*'There is not a solution to the gender equality problems within the homes that low paid women from the worker union collective should clean high-income earners homes.'* Referral statement from the Union of Commercial Employees on Tax Reduction on Domestic Services.

In the Plan for Equal Pay ethnicity is mentioned briefly through a reference to a report from a Union but on the whole the plan mainly talks about men and women.

Gender equality is not addressed by the intimate citizenship texts. Issues concerning heterosexual marriage, divorce, and adoption have been settled before the QUING period. The most relevant discussion regarding intimate citizenship instead concerns registered partnership, homosexual adoption, assisted fertilization for lesbians and most recently, homosexual marriage. In some of the chosen texts formulated by the Christian Democratic Party and one church association, children's interests and rights are presented as challenged by homosexuals' rights. Age and sexuality are believed to be competing inequalities, and the speakers urge the parliament to listen to the best interest of the child instead of homosexual rights.

The so-called 'Kvinnofridslagstiftningen' (Women's peace legislation) collects various forms of violence against women under the same legislation. Since 1991, men's violence against women is, by the Swedish Government and Parliament, perceived of as an expression of unequal power relations. After the legislation was passed, a series of acts of violence directed at girls and young women by their close relatives (presented in the last section) have raised the awareness by the authorities about a phenomenon that has come to be referred to as 'violence and oppression in the name of honour'. In later years the concept of violence and oppression in the name of honour' has been added to the policy field of 'men's violence against women', covering not just girls and young women, but also boys and young men, young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. In the analysed documents on the issue of Gender based violence intersecting inequalities are addressed such as gender, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, and also sexuality with reference to 'violence in same-sex relationships'.

Overall, there seems to be a development within the gender equality field towards a more intersectional understanding of inequalities. Still the gender equality machinery and understanding of society are dominated by the gender power system understanding, where the main inequality is

understood as gender and the relationship between men and women. The civil society organisations engaged in the gender equality area are basically still organised as women's organisations and as such in some manners interested in preserving 'gender' as the most essential and important social structuring principle. In the parliament the Left party is maybe the party with the strongest connections with the feminist movement, which is also illustrated in their hesitation toward the cohesive anti-discrimination legislation. The critique from the feminist movement could be interpreted as a way of securing the battles that have been won by mainly focusing on the gender issue as a question relating to women and men solely and also a fear that a cohesive anti-discrimination legislation will be too lame with many discriminated groups but no defined discriminators.

*'We see a big risk with this suggestion and believe that it could undermine thirty years of gender equality work for women's equal rights and opportunities'* (Referral statement from ROKS- the national organisation for women's and girl's shelters on the cohesive discrimination legislation)

The preservation of a gender equality policy field as a strict matter of gender, risks a normative construction of women (and men) as a group as white middleclass, heterosexual, with able-bodied. An unreflected adding of inequalities risks creating a policy field of many discriminated groups but no responsible discriminators.

### **5.3. Significant 'turning points'**

Within the gender equality policy field two major turning points that highlight that other inequalities are challenging the earlier understanding of gender could be identified during the QUING period. A series of acts of violence directed at girls and young women by their close relatives in 2002 started a debate and initiated measurements against what came to be called 'violence and oppression in the name of honour'. The earlier policies and measurements, intended to counteract 'men's violence against women', were no longer applicable and government agencies did not know how to handle this problem. This phenomenon also initiated debates within the feminist movement on how to understand and interpret violent acts performed by close relatives (not solely men) and directed towards victims including girls and young women, but also boys, young men, young lesbian, gay and transgender persons. This new and more complex understanding of men's violence against women also brought religion and beliefs onto the agenda, something that has been quite rare in the Swedish gender equality debate. These 'honour related crimes' also came to challenge the important feature of the Swedish gender equality policy, the 'gender-power system', especially concerning the part of the policy that was directed towards men's violence against women. This discussion also moved the overall focus of how gender equality was discussed both in Swedish politics and overall in the public debate from issues concerning political representation and equality in the labour market towards questions relating to violence and women's bodily integrity (cf. Gustafsson et.al. 1997)

The other significant turning point within gender equality policy is the developments in later years including a suggestion from a parliamentary committee on a coherent anti-discrimination legislation (En sammanhållen diskrimineringslagstiftning, SOU 2006:22). This new anti-discriminatory act might come to further challenge the one dimensional approach to inequalities that has dominated the gender equality field, the gender power system, opening up for a more intersectional understanding of discrimination in society. Here we also see an emerging shift from a focus on structural understandings of power to stressing the individual level, a shift that could be related to the overall change of political practice towards a neo-liberal discourse of politics where the citizen is constructed as a consumer (of rights) (cf. Rose 1999).

## **6. Intersectionality in the four QUING issues**

### **6.1 intersections and construction of problems in General Gender Equality Policies**

The main problem that is identified in the Equal Opportunities Act is discrimination of women in the labour market. In the governmental proposal on new Gender Equality Policies, implemented by the former Social Democratic government, the major problem identified is the unequal power distribution between men as a group and women as a group. The current centre-right wing government emphasises discrimination as a major problem, alongside economical dependence of women, restriction of entrepreneurial opportunities within the public sector, and violence and honour related violence. The Government intends to propose that the different anti-discrimination laws be combined into one piece of general anti-discrimination legislation, and that the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, the Office of the Disability Ombudsman, the Office of the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination and the Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination because of Sexual Orientation be merged into one government agency.

The Coherent Anti-Discrimination Act has the purpose of combating discrimination and in other ways promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, sexual identity, ethnic background, religion or other religious belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. In the parliamentary debates of the suggested legislation, discrimination is regarded as a major problem. The problem mainly concerns women, but also against many other groups such as the elderly, disabled, immigrants and transgendered persons. In the parliamentary debate, the classic dividing line between left and right is apparent. The representative from the right wing Moderate party claims that 'people should have the right to be treated as individuals not as part of a group' and the representative of the left party criticises the right wing parties of 'individualising the conditions of life and not acknowledging that the lack of gender equality is a matter of power distribution and structures, where men as a group are dominating women as a group'.

The NGO Swedish Women's Lobby, which agrees in all essentials with the presented analysis and shares the majority of its conclusions, received the new Gender Equality Policies positively. In a statement from the NGO ROKS (the national organisation for women's and girls' shelters in Sweden) on the new Discrimination Act, their fear is expressed that the merging of the ombudsmen into one authority will mean that women's interests will be disregarded. ROKS is critical toward the comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and believes that the suggestions risk 'undermining thirty years of gender equality work'. ROKS is an important actor in the Swedish women's movement and has played an important role in the establishment of men's violence against women as a policy area. Their critique of the cohesive anti-discrimination legislation and of merging the ombudsmen could be understood as a fear of losing again the successes that have been won in this area. ROKS's statement also illustrates that the Swedish women's movement has been characterised by building on the same homogenous category of 'women' as Swedish politics, and Swedish feminist research. The functioning of the so-called honour related murders as a wake-up call in relation to Swedish gender equality policies largely applies to the Swedish women's movement and to quite a large extent to Swedish feminist research (cf. Dahl 2004).

### **6.2 Social categories in General Gender Equality policies**

The group that the gender equality policies are directed at are most commonly women, but it is also common with the more vague notions of 'discriminated' or 'people'. In the policy plans there are only women and immigrant girls that are mentioned as objects of the policies. But immigrant girls are only mentioned in relation to 'violence and oppression in the name of honour'. In the texts centred around the cohesive anti-discrimination legislation groups that are named and mentioned as discriminated are disabled, transgender persons, people with foreign background, single mothers, elderly, immigrants and 'men and women'.

When considering questions about discrimination on a general level the groups responsible for the discrimination are vaguely formulated, most often undefined or defined as for instance 'society'. But when the texts are discussing more defined groups, for instance discrimination of people with foreign background, the problem holders are often more clearly defined, for example as employers or the working life. When the gender power system is described as the problem, men as a group are seen as a problem holder. Men are also considered as the problem holders in questions regarding men's violence against women. In the case of honour related crimes, the problem holder is somewhat unclear, identified as 'oppressive honour cultures'.

The responsible actors to perform the policy actions within the policy area of gender equality are solely institutional actors, state, and civil society. State actors are the government, police, social services, legal system, the committee against discrimination, and employment services. In the Equal Opportunities Act employers are mentioned as responsible actors, this is the only time a 'non-state actor is mentioned. The people that are targeted are women, men, immigrants, girls who could suffer from honour related crime and families with children. The only time an institutional actor is mentioned is when an NGO urge the government to consider gender equality as equally important as all other policy areas. Both men and women are often mentioned as the target groups of general gender policies; due to the assumption that both men and women could be considered as benefitting from a gender equal society.

Some of the policy actions target institutional actors. Trade unions are suggested to be able to directly contact the discrimination committee on behalf of their members instead of always through the ombudsmen. Another target group is employers, it is suggested that they should be punished if they commits crimes against the discrimination act. Women's shelters are also mentioned as targets of evaluation and development. Policy action target groups are children with other mother tongues than Swedish, disabled, health care employees, families with children, high-income parents, low and average income earners, homosexuals, girls in oppressive honour cultures, immigrants, men, newly arrived refugees, unemployed, women, women victims of men's violence, women perpetrators. Men as a target group are mentioned in connection with paternity leave.

The target groups of policy actions within the general gender equality area are as illustrated above diverse and extensive, but the actors are fewer and more vaguely defined. This construction of the gender equality policy area risks causing a scenario where almost all people are discriminated but no one is discriminating. This construction of the problem makes it hard to create constructive changes due to lack of responsible actors and a too complex problem. But earlier experiences of preserving the groups targeted within gender equality policy to women only, bring the risk of creating a hegemonic picture of femininity. A picture of femininity that hides differences and power relations between women risks, for instance, construct/create 'immigrant women' and 'working class women' as 'non-women' (De los Reyes, Molina et al. 2006).

## **6.2. Intersections and construction of problems in Non employment**

The issues that are dealt with within the Non-employment issue are far too diverge to be analysed all together. The five sub-issues are dealt with under three headings; tax benefit policies, childcare and equal treatment in employment.

### **6.2.1 Construction of problems within Tax-Benefit Policies**

The question about tax deduction on domestic services was and still is controversial in Sweden and has been highly morally and ideologically charged (Platzer 2007). It was first suggested in 1993 by an economist that argued from an economical point of view that by tax deduction on domestic services household work could be performed as paid labour instead of unpaid, and in that sense the

households could become a part of the productive market. The suggestion was also a way of creating economical opportunities for women to become housewives.

Many people immediately questioned the proposal and an economist from the confederation of trade unions expressed concerns that an introduction of such reform would lead to a re-establishment of a 'maid-society'. He referred to a society before the 1970s, where income differences and class differences had been greater and it was common that young women from the countryside performed household work in the wealthier homes. Due to this reference, the debate that followed came to be known as 'the maid debate' (Platzer 2007).

The problem the government wants to solve through the tax deduction on domestic services is constructed to be that many families have too little time to do domestic work and that the tax on domestic services is too high. This has led to a rising demand of illegal 'black' labour. The government also considers it to be economically ineffective to have highly paid women do unpaid housework. In the debate following the proposal, tax deduction on domestic services was criticised. The problem was considered to be the unequal sharing of household tasks between men and women, that the problem of tax evasion could not be solved through tax deduction, and that the tax deduction would favour high income earners. In a statement by the Union of Commercial Employees the proposal was strongly rejected, because it is seen as expensive, ineffective, and incomprehensible. They even find the proposal offensive and assume that the often low paid members of their trade union will end up subsidising rich household consumption of domestic services. Both parties to this conflict are arguing that their side of the dispute promotes gender equality.

The solution to the problem is constructed as to introduce tax deduction on domestic services and in that way ease the lives and lift the double burden of domestic work, child care and paid work from the household, from women and men. This policy action is also supposed to create a legal labour market for illegal workers and a labour market for other potential employees such as those with low levels of education. The solution to the problem as constructed by the opponents is to stop the proposal and in that way save money from all taxpayers by preventing their tax money from subsidising domestic work for high-income earners. The whole discussion is built on a self-evident norm of the family as consisting of a man and a women, thus sexuality as a social inequality is rather reproduced than challenged.

### **6.2.2 The construction of problems within Child-Care policies**

The Child-Care Allowance was primarily promoted by the Christian Democrats, but also by the Moderates, the Green Party and several independent debaters. It was first introduced in 1994 by the right wing government, but was discontinued after the Social Democrats came back to power in 1994. This child-care allowance was payable for children between the ages of one and three years, and only if the child was in child-care for less than 30 hours a week. The allowance was, however, decreased if the child was in day care, even if for less than 30 hours a week. During the years 2005-2006, three local governments (Nacka, Sollentuna and Tyresö) introduced a child-care allowance on the local governmental level and several other local governments followed. The decision to introduce child-care allowance was appealed in Nacka and Sollentuna, but the right wing 'Alliance' parties who returned to government in 2006 decided to allow the continuance of these allowances on the local government level.

A Governmental Bill with the proposal was put forward in 2007 and the proposal was implemented as of January 1, 2008. The arguments for the local government child-care allowance were, among others, that it is discriminatory that only some forms of child-care receive financial support and that an increased liberty to choose is by definition something positive. Others have criticised the solution from a gender equality perspective and characterised it as a 'women's trap'. As a counterbalance to the

feared gender equality backlash of introducing the child-care allowance the liberal party launched the idea about a Gender Equality Bonus to parents who share the parental leave equally. In November 2007 the government presented its family policy consisting of both child-care allowance and a gender equality bonus.

The problem constructed within the policy reform of child-care allowance is that parents do not spend enough time with their children. The child-care allowance reform was launched in pair with another family reform, the gender equality bonus. In the latter reform, the problem is constructed to be the lack of gender equal sharing of parental leave and women's lower labour market participation during the years with small children. The child-care allowance reform has been on the political agenda for a long period of time. It has been a conflict between left and right, where the socialist parties and unions are against it and the Christian Democratic party and the Moderate party (conservative-liberal) have been in favour. In the parliamentary debate and the civil society texts the problem is constructed to be the government's suggestion of introducing the child-care allowance. The civil society text is positive to the gender equality proposal and sees it as a way of dealing with men's and women's unequal share of parental leave.

The solution to the problem of parents not spending enough time with their children and parents not sharing parental leave is constructed as the child-care allowance and the Gender Equality Bonus. The government is responsible for legislating on this and the target groups are families and parents. In the discussion regarding the parental leave there is a political consensus regarding that parents should share parental leave more equally. Many campaigns and efforts have been made to make men increase their take-up rate of parental leave. Same-sex parents are never mentioned as a group in any of the family reforms in question and the same heteronormative understanding of 'family' as in the sub-issue of tax-benefit policies is produced.

### **6.2.3 Construction of problem within policies on Equal Treatment in Employment**

Women's right to employment and possibility to be economically self-providing have been the backbone of the Swedish Gender equality politics. Since the 1970s the gender pay gap and part-time work has been on the agenda, even though the focus, understandings and constructions of these problems have shifted over time.

In the governmental texts on the gender pay gap and part-time unemployment a long row of problems is stressed, for instance women's career choices, educational choices, women's employment forms, work conditions, work time, lack of skill development, lack of promotion opportunities and the gender segregation of the labour market. Other problems that are stressed are families' unequal sharing of parental leave and domestic work. In the Action Plan for equal pay from 2006 the ethnic pay gap also is constructed as a problem.

In the parliamentary debate the ideological differences between left and right becomes apparent. The Centre-right wing government constructs the problem of the **gender pay gap** as due to that the welfare sector has too few employers and high employment fees in the service sector. This interpretation is criticised by the Left party and the Social democratic party that understand the gender pay gap as a due to discrimination.

*Yes, Gudrun Schyman (former party leader of the left party, at the time independent), we totally agree on that it is discrimination if women and men don't have equal wage for equal work, and this is occurring, so we totally agree.*(answer by Hans Karlsson, Minister of working life in former Social Democratic government, in parliamentary debate on women wages 2006)

*Part-time work* have been extensively debated and legislated on. Working hours have been debated as an issue of equal pay, access to the labour market, and reconciliation of work and private life. During the 1970's the debate and legislation were concerned with allowing (women) employees to work part-time only, so as to enable them to combine family life with gainful employment. Later, the debate has turned towards the issue of the right to full-time employment, which has also been construed as a women's issue. The reason for this is that the parts of the labour market (e.g. hotels and restaurants and cleaning services) that primarily hire people on a part-time or hourly basis employ mainly women. Other arguments for the right to full-time employment have been concerned with the lower wages that women earn as a consequence of being employed part-time only, with consequences for the development of their pension rights and other social insurances.

The centre-right wing government in office has reduced the possibility to unemployment benefits for part-time unemployed. It argues that this limitation of the unemployment benefit system will reduce the risk of consolidated part-time employments and over utilization of the unemployment benefit system. The reduction, together with the government's other reforms such as changes in employment security acts, cut backs in adult education and reduced sick pay, have been criticised by the Social Democrats, Left Party and from civil society organisations for their effects for low paid women. The government's policies are interpreted as especially benefitting high-income earners with reforms such as reduced income taxes, reduced property taxes, repeal of capital taxes and tax reduction on domestic services. In the labour market policies the ideological conflict between left and right is of course most apparent. Equal pay for women and men is maybe the gender equality question with the highest political consensus, but the measurements/policies suggested differ vastly depending on ideological position.

#### **6.2.4 Social categories in non-employment**

The debates concerning non-employment focus mainly *gender and class*, but other social categories are also mentioned and touched upon, such as ethnicity, family form and education. The sub-issues of tax deduction on domestic work, child-care allowance, gender equality bonus, and part-time unemployment are all interpreted as gender equality issues by all participants in the debates. Women as a group is mentioned by all parties to the debate. But in these debates, in the arguments positive to the above mentioned reforms, women are constructed as a non-differentiated category consisting of similar individuals faced with the same potential problems.(Langvasbråten 2008) In the arguments against the reforms, women are constructed as a more diverse category with different experiences due to class inequalities. In this issues class and gender are referred to as intertwining in the arguments from the opposing side, mainly unions and socialist members of parliament. The speakers claim that the reforms mainly meet the needs of the privileged classes at the expenses of the working class.

In the question about tax deduction on domestic services, the government addresses the issue as a gender equality issue and the opposition addresses it as a question about *gender, class and ethnicity*. The childcare reforms addresses *gender and family forms*, where the reforms are not adapted to single parents' living conditions. In the gender pay gap and part-time unemployment reforms, *gender and class* are addressed by the opposition, which also addresses *education and ethnicity*. Within the issue of non-employment, there is no mentioning of sexuality as a social inequality and with such a strong focus on family issues this silence is re-enforcing the heteronormative notion of gender equality policies in Sweden.

#### **6.3. Intersections and construction of problems in Intimate citizenship**

Within this issue the problem are mainly constructed to be unequal treatment and discrimination, for example the problems are understood as same-sex couples not having equal rights as different-sex couples in regards to marriage, the right to apply to become adopting parents, or the possibility to be

subject of assisted insemination. Intimate citizenship is therefore more of an issue considering equal rights for homosexuals rather than a question defined as a gender (equality) issue.

The problem of intimate citizenship is constructed to be that same-sex couples do not have equal rights as different-sex couples to marry, adopt children and to use assisted insemination to become parents. Problems addressed were that registered partners and homosexual cohabiters cannot be appointed as special appointed custodians exercising joint custody of children, which means that children in same-sex partnerships are legally unprotected. Another problem mentioned by the government regarding same-sex couples and international adoptions is that the countries of origin with which Sweden cooperates often hold different views on homosexual parenthood and that it is important to respect and comply to the limitations and terms that the countries of origin lay down.

### **6.3.1 The goals of intimate citizenship policies**

The major objectives of intimate citizenship policies are equal treatment and equal rights for homosexuals. One problem that is constructed in the debate is about the recognition of the diversity of family forms. According to this line of argument, we need to admit that we are living in a society in which there are different family forms and that the laws should reflect this. The best interest of the child is then understood to be achieved through granting all children legal rights independently of family constellation.

*Through the laws we are about to legislate we give these children (children born in homosexual relationships) a juridical safety with the focus on the best interest of the child. The child is entitled to information about their biological origin, as I said before. The child has the right to two parents, and the conception of the child is performed under medical and psychological control (Inger René (m), parliamentary debate on assisted insemination and parenthood, 2004/05:133; 20050603)*

The problem is constructed to be that the existing family laws do not reflect the actual diversity of family forms in society, leaving already existing children without legal protection. The goal of the intimate citizenship policies is to give these children legal protection.

### **6.3.2 Social categories/ inequalities in intimate citizenship policies**

Groups that are mentioned are either children or same-sex couples. In the case of assisted inseminations, women in same-sex relationships are referred to but not gendered. Both parties to the dispute are claiming to be speaking in the best interest of children. When studying the parliamentary debate on assisted insemination two major problem constructions were apparent, first the problem about children's right to a father opposed by the second problem about the need of recognition of diverse family forms. For those opposing the suggestion the problem is represented to be that children will be denied their 'natural right' to a father through this legislation and that the best interest of the child must be to have two parents of different sex.

*The most natural right in the world to a little child is to grow up with both their parents, with their father and mother, to have a male and a female role model to identify with. This natural right will be denied some children, those children conceived through artificial insemination of lesbian women. (Ingemar Vänerlöv (kd) parliamentary debate on assisted insemination and parenthood, 2004/05:133, 20050603)*

In this quote 'the natural right' of children is said to be two parents of different sex, the nuclear family, a ideal that is permeated with heteronormativity and, in this debate, preserved through naturalisation in the same manner as shown in an earlier study of the Danish debate (Stormhøj 2002). The same speaker draws an interesting parallel to the debates about quotation of parental leave and points to what he see as inconsistencies.

*It is really strange and inconsistent that the same persons that now want a law that has as its effect that children will be denied their fathers in other forum stand up and speak about the importance of the fathers wanting to legislate regarding fathers taking bigger responsibilities. I'm thinking of all those efforts taken to raise fathers take up rates of parental benefits.* (Ingemar Vänerlöv (kd) parliamentary debate on assisted insemination and parenthood, 2004/05:133, 20050603)

This quote could be seen as an illustration of the strong focus on 'the father' in gender equality policies, and consequently also in family policies, where the main focus has been to encourage fathers to take more responsibility in children's upbringing and care (Klinth 2005). This discourse of the importance of participatory fatherhood has come to influence and permeate most speech about family, children and parenthood (Ryan-Flood 2005). The quotes above from the debate about assisted insemination, illustrates the importance of fatherhood in the Swedish debate and the ideal of the heterosexual family. In this debate the best interest of the child is mentioned by nearly all participants and many times it is underlined, mainly from opponent of the law, that children's interest must prevail adult's rights. An apparent silence in the Swedish discourse of intimate citizenship is the lack of any forms of acknowledge of ethnicity/race and/or religion. In contrast to the discourse of 'men's violence against women', where the notion of family is discussed in relation to these dimensions, issues related to the rights of homosexuals seems to be all white.

### **6.3.3 Dividing lines in intimate citizenship policies**

In the debates following the suggestions on expanding homosexual rights, ideological differences between the political parties were apparent, most critical has the parliament members with conservative family values been mainly coming from the Christian Democratic Party. This could be illustrated with the parliamentary debate following the proposal that same-sex couples would have equal rights to adopt children. The liberal party was approving of the changes and debated against parliament members from the moderate party and the Christian Democratic Party. Those who were critical of the proposal, emphasized the rights of children two have parents of different sexes; that same-sex couple's adoption would lead to more psychological and psychosocial problems for the adopted children, claiming that marriage should be preserved for different-sex couples.

Other problems were that the proposals had not been investigated thoroughly enough and that the government has not regarded the critical voices and existing research findings in their proposal. In the civil society text two different positions are illustrated, one by the RFSL—The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, and RFSU- The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education statement who are positive and another by Christian Council of Sweden (CCS), who are more negative. The Christian Council calls for caution regarding children's rights and what they call artificial family building methods. The other civil society texts are approving to the proposals, but also have further suggestions such as that the marriage registrars should be obliged to marry same-sex couples, and that more than two legal parents to a child should be possible if the family situation demands that.

## **6.4. Intersections and construction of problems in Gender based violence**

**Men's violence against women** is in Sweden mainly constructed to be a question about gender equality and human rights. It is characterized as a major societal problem that affects the whole society, both woman and men. In the women's peace legislation from 1997 the problem where defined as men's violence against women and it was explained as due to the unequal gender power system that permeates the whole society. In the 2007 *Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships*, the problem of gender based violence is defined as more divers. Gender based violence is here defined as widespread problem in society and a serious crime.

*Although Sweden has made considerable progress toward gender equality, the exposure of women to violence by men remains a major social problem. (Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships, 2007)* According to the National action plan most of the violence is perpetrated by a man with whom the woman is having a relationship or has had a relationship (intimate partner violence). It leads to physical and mental suffering and often affects the woman's life as a whole. Violence directed at a woman by a man with whom she is having or has had a relationship occurs in all social groups.

The action plan from 2007 also includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons exposed to violence by their partners. Violence in same-sex relationships and men's violence against women in close relationships is here interpreted as having much in common. According to the Action Plan they have similar patterns whereby one party seeks to restrict the other person's life, to exercise control, to threaten violence and to actually use violence. The power relationship between perpetrator and victim may be seen both as a cause of the violence and as a consequence of it. But there are also dissimilarities, which means that specialised knowledge of violence in same-sex relationships is required.

*All citizens at risk are entitled to the same kind of protection, support and assistances, regardless of their sexual orientation. (Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships, 2007)*

**Rape** is not discussed in terms of gender equality in the policy documents, it is mainly considered to be a problem of crime against the personal and sexual integrity. An exception to this is to be found in the civil society text formulated by a women's organisation where rape is stressed as a question about gender equality. A major problem that is identified is that the laws on sex crimes do not correspond with each other and that the relationship between different crimes is obsolete. A new legislation is needed on sex crimes due to changes in the public's minds about the seriousness of sex crimes and violations of sexual integrity. In the parliamentary debate the main problem that are addressed are that laws is not enough, that the whole judicial system needs to be updated. Many rapes are reported but few ends up in a verdict of guilt, due to mistakes and errors in the legal system.

**Honour crimes** In the 2007 *Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships* it is pointed out that the differences between men's violence against women and violence and oppression in the name of honour is due to the latter's:

*Collective nature, which means a number of perpetrators of both sexes may be involved and the victims may be either women or men, girls or boys. (Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships, 2007)*

The problem is also constructed to be acts of violence, arranged marriages and to strict control of behaviour that close relatives performs on girls and young women, restricting them from taking part in activities that are part of other young people's everyday lives. According to the National Action Plan from 2007 the cultural perceptions that surround men's violence against women in general and violence and oppression in the name of honour are rooted in gender, power and sexuality. In the Action Plan it is claimed that there are many similarities in the structure and mechanisms of the violence, including the fact that it often occurs within the family and that the victim is in one way or another dependent on and has strong emotional ties to the perpetrator or perpetrators. The different ways in which women's and men's sexuality are perceived is crucial to an understanding of the structure and mechanisms of the violence, both as regards men's violence against women in general and violence and oppression in the name of honour.

In another text a major problem is constructed to be that the government's agencies did not know enough about violence in the name of honour. In a civil society text the problem is constructed to be that the government ignores the significance of religion in honour related crimes.

#### **6.4.1 Goals in gender based violence**

There is an overall consensus that violence must be stopped and that all citizens should have the possibility to live free from the fear of being exposed to violence and abuse. In the civil society texts there are emphasises on that children should be acknowledged as victims of men's violence against women. In these texts a more multidimensional approach that includes both a structural and an individual understanding of men's violence against women is requested, in contrast to the gender power structural approach that has dominated the policy field. The argument for a more multidimensional approach is presented as improved tool for making it possible to both support victims and provide treatment to violent men. The overall objective is also that there should be effective and professional crime investigations and that the legislation is consistent with public sense of justice.

#### **6.4.2 Social categories/ inequalities in gender based violence**

In the National Action plan from 2007 some particularly vulnerable groups are appointed, women with mentally and physical disabilities, women with substance/ addiction problems, older women, younger women and immigrant women. But it is also pointed out that:

*Many who have personal experience of violence state that people focus more on their disabilities, their foreign background, their substance abuse/addiction or their age than on the fact that they have been assaulted. National minorities experience similar problems. The Government views this situation with concern and wishes to make clear that all women exposed to violence must be given the requisite support and protection based on their needs, whoever they may be and whatever background they may have.*

In all the texts on gender-based violence the most common group referred to as victims is woman. Girls and young women are often mentioned in relation to **honour related crimes**, but also boys, bisexuals, homosexuals, transgendered persons and men. The honour related crimes are described, as mentioned above, as different than other forms of violence due to its collective nature with a number of perpetrators and victims.

Within the sub-issue of **Rape** women are most often constructed as victims but it is also common that victims are more generally described as just victims of crime or victims of sexual crimes without further definition. Prostitutes are also mentioned as victims of sexual services within the Women's Peace legislation, referring to prostitution as undignified and unacceptable in a gender equal society.

The Perpetrators of men's violence against women are most often defined as men. In the cases of violence within same-sex relationships the perpetrators are not gendered. In this way women are not explicitly pointed out as possible perpetrators of men's violence against women, but implicitly through the recognition of the appearance of violence within same sex relationships. In relation to honour related crimes women are explicitly mentioned as perpetrators, concurrently with men and close relatives. In one text homophobic Swedes are identified as perpetrators of honour related crimes, in that case against homosexuals.

There are obvious intersections in the texts on men's violence against women and honour related crimes; intersections between gender, sexuality and age, but ethnicity, religion, race and disability are all mentioned. In the texts on rape, basically only age and gender are mentioned.

### 6.4.3 Dividing lines in gender based violence

*There is broad political agreement on the need to give men's violence against women high priority, but a cohesive strategy has long been lacking. Men's violence against women is a widespread problem affecting the whole community, both women and men. Ultimately, it is a question of gender equality and women's full enjoyment of all human rights to which every citizen is entitled. (Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships, 2007)*

As mentioned in the quote there is political consensus regarding the importance of ending gender based violence. There is also political consensus that gender based violence is defined as a gender equality question and a question about human rights. Rape is often emphasised as a question about justice and crime, but also as a question about gender equality and human rights.

One apparent conflict line in the chosen texts is found in relation to how to interpret and understand the social problem of **men's violence against women**. One civil society group is criticising the former social democratic government for being too one dimensional in its approach to gender based violence, claiming that its approach has been too structural and lacking the individual perspective, focusing too much on supporting victims and too little on treatment of offenders.

Another conflict illustrated by the chosen texts is between the current government and a civil society group. The civil society group is claiming that the Minister of Integration and Gender Equality is failing her promises to the victims of **honour related crimes** in that the Minister does not clearly enough address religion as a root to the problem of honour related crimes. In relation to the other QUING issues, it seems as if gender-based violence is the field where ethnicity/race and religion are most strongly articulated in relation to gender, thus challenging the homogenous category of gender underpinning the idea of the gender power order. Simultaneously there is a tendency of dividing the debate on gender based violence into questions concerning the Others – violence related to honour and culture – and questions concerning Us where the 'old' gender power system is still at work.

### 6.5. Summary and comparison

Gender relations have been on the Swedish political agenda since the late 1960s. During the 1970s a great number of actors contributed to the transformation of gender relations and to carrying through numerous new laws – on individual taxation, abortion, the family, the extension of day nurseries, parental insurance, equality of opportunity in working life and so on (Florin and Nilsson 2005). Since then a special political arena has been established for gender equality, an arena with delegations, commission, ministers, officials, ombudsmen etc. (Florin and Nilsson 2005).

When the discussion about a coherent anti-discrimination legislation became visible on the political agenda, some of the organisations involved in the successful establishment of gender equality on the political agenda started to fear that this could undermine the work that had been done in the area of gender equality. They feared that women would lose out on the merging of the different anti-discrimination acts and that this new act would be unusable due to its complexity. This is a way of reasoning similar to that of Nina Lykke, where she claims that the notion of intersectionality is unusable in feminist research because it is not possible to overlook and map out how all different dimensions intersect with each other (Lykke 2003). She suggests that we, i.e. feminist researchers should accept that intersectionality is unusable as a term and instead recognise the need to focus on some of the dimensions and preferable those that 'we' are qualified to handle, i.e. the gender dimension, leaving the other dimensions to 'diversity feminists'. As Carbin and Tornhill point out in a reply to Lykke, Lykke assumes that 'we' are white Nordic feminists (Carbin and Tornhill 2004). If we accept that sex as a category constantly is constituted in an ongoing process where among others race, class and

sexuality interconnects, there cannot be any gender without race and no race without gender (Carbin and Tornhill 2004).

Women's right to employment and possibility to be self-supporting has been the backbone of Swedish gender equality policies since the 1970s. The first formal governmental agency charged with gender equality question was placed at the level of the Cabinet office in 1972 and was called *the Delegation for equality between men and women*. Its main task was to increase the number of women on the labour market and in that way strengthen women's economical independence.

In this report and in the Swedish part of the QUING project, five different issues related to non-employment have been studied: tax deduction on domestic services, child-care allowance, gender equality bonus, gender pay gap and part-time unemployment. Within these issues, the ideological dividing line between left and right is most apparent division, manifested in the different emphasis on the importance of class. All parties of the policy discussions emphasise gender, but the class perspective is brought to the agenda by the Social Democrats, the Left Party and the trade unions. Here, class and gender are discussed as intertwining social inequalities, i.e. low paid women. Other social inequalities, such as citizenship status, family forms, ethnicity and education are also discussed to varying degrees, depending on which question is being discussed and thus 'intersected' with gender and class.

Intimate citizenship is not discussed as a question of gender equality in the documents analysed within the QUING project. Instead, the main emphasis is on sexuality and equal rights for homosexual persons. In the debates following the suggestions on expanding homosexual rights, ideological differences between the political parties were apparent, with the most critical voices coming from members of parliament with conservative family values been, mainly coming from the Christian Democratic Party. In intimate citizenship, gender as an inequality is scarcely articulated, and ethnicity/race and class in this issue could be described as 'silent categories' producing this issue as 'white' and 'middle-class'.

There is political consensus regarding the importance of ending gender-based violence. There is also political consensus that gender based violence is defined as a gender equality question and a question about human rights. Rape is often emphasised as a question about justice and crime, but also as a question about gender equality and human rights. There are obvious intersections in the texts on men's violence against women and honour related crimes, and ethnicity/race and religion are given a specific status in relation to gender. One apparent conflict line in the chosen texts is found in relation to how to interpret and understand the social problem of men's violence against women. One civil society group is criticising the former social democratic government for being too one dimensional in its approach to gender based violence, claiming that its approach has been too structural and lacking the individual perspective, focusing too much on supporting victims and too little on treatment of offenders.

Another conflict illustrated by the chosen texts is between the current government and a civil society group. The civil society group is claiming that the Minister of Integration and Gender Equality is failing her promises to the victims of honour related crimes in that the Minister does not clearly enough address religion as a rot to the problem of honour related crimes.

Even though the word intersectionality is never used in any of the texts that have been analysed, there are obvious intersections in the material. General gender equality policies have changed over the QUING period toward a more intersecting approach to gender equality, mainly depending on the coherent anti-discriminations law but also due to the strong position given to gender-based violence in the general framing of gender equality. Together with non-employment, gender based violence is the

major issue on the gender equality arena in Sweden. Gender based violence is, through the most recent National Action plan against men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour, and violence in same-sex relationship 2007, increasingly addressed as an issue that needs to deal with intersecting inequalities – predominantly gender with ethnicity/race and religion but also sexuality/sexual orientation. The intersections visible in non-employment are understood differently depending on ideological positions and the importance of class. From a left perspective, gender and class are interwoven, which also illustrates the social democratic legacy where gender for a long time was treated as of much less importance than class (a situation that still to some extent prevails). The issue of intimate citizenship stands out in the aspect that it is not understood as a gender equality question in the chosen texts, it is interpreted as a question about homosexuals' equal rights, and the issue lacks the intersections of other inequalities such as ethnicity/race and class.

## **7 Conclusions**

To understand the implications of the intersections of multiple inequalities in Swedish gender equality policies it is essential to understand the contexts of the politicisation of gender equality in Sweden. The uniqueness and 'success' (in terms of putting the issue on the political agenda) of gender equality policies in Sweden could be understood and explained by the strategic move to conceptually and politically separate gender equality from other inequalities. In a political discourse where class and class relations have had a dominant role and where the political system is based upon an agreement between the trade unions and employer organisations, gender and gender relations could have been doomed to invisibility. Through the politicisation of gender equality, gender and gender relations were established as an important and sometimes even the most important social inequality.

In the gender equality policy texts 'women' and 'men' are often referred to as unified groups with mutually excluding interest and living conditions, and an important feature of the Swedish gender equality policy is the 'gender-power system'. One problem with this framing of gender equality is that certain identities are marginalised and deprived of voice. The unified and cohesive voice of 'women' risks excluding voices of those women who do not fit into the general description, for instance disabled women or immigrant women.

The problem of the 'gender-power system' came into the open when honour related crimes entered the political agenda. The earlier policies and measurements meant to counteract 'men's violence against women' were no longer applicable and government agencies did not know how to handle this problem. The acknowledgement of the existence of 'honour related crimes' by the visibility on the political agenda challenged the homogenous gender equality discourse by bringing ethnicity and religion to the analysis. The queer feminist critique of gender equality policies, mainly expressed by activists and academics (cf. Rosenberg 2002) presented a challenge to this discourse as well. We interpret the introduction of a coherent anti-discrimination law – together with specific efforts in areas such as gender-based violence – as some of the answers to what could be called an intersectional challenge to Swedish gender equality policies.

According to the latest National Action Plan from 2007, the cultural perceptions that surround men's violence against women in general and violence and oppression in the name of honour are perceived as rooted in gender, power and sexuality. In the Action Plan it is claimed that there are many similarities in the structure and mechanisms of the two named forms of violence, including the fact that it often occurs within the family and that the victim is in one way or another dependent on and has strong emotional ties to the perpetrator or perpetrators. The different ways in which women's and men's sexuality are perceived are crucial to an understanding of the structure and mechanisms of the violence, both as regards men's violence against women in general and violence and oppression in the name of honour. In this National Action plan, violence within same-sex relationships is also addressed, challenging the previous one-dimensional understanding of men's violence against

women. At the same time, we also detect an ambition of holding on to a more general understanding of the 'gender-power-order', albeit loosened up through incorporating other inequalities.

In sum, the one-dimensional approach of gender equality policies in Sweden has been challenged during the QUING period and changes are starting to occur even though identity politics and the 'gender power system' still seem to dominate the policy field.

## Bibliography

Bergqvist, C. (1999). Childcare and Parental Leave Models. Equal Democracies? Gender and Politics in the Nordic Countries. C. Bergqvist, A. Borchorst, A.-D. Christensen et al. Oslo, Scandinavian University Press: 121-136.

Brah, A. and A. Phoenix (2004) 'Ain't I a woman? Revisiting intersectionality', Journal of International Women's Studies, 5, 3, 75-86.

Borchorst, A. (1999). Den institusjonaliserte likestilling. Likstilte demokratier?. B. e. al. oslo, Universitetsforlaget: 151-228.

Borchorst, A. (1999). Equal status institutions. Equal Democracies? Gender and Politics in the Nordic Countries. C. Bergqvist, A. Borchorst, A.-D. Christensen et al. Oslo, Scandinavian University Press.

Bredström, A. (2006) "Intersectionality: A challenge for feminist HIV/AIDS research?" European Journal of Women's Studies, Vol. 13, No. 3.

Butler, J. (1990) Gender Trouble. Feminism and the subversion of identity. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd.

Carbin, M. (2008) Honour related violence – the invention of a new policy problem in Sweden, in Magnusson, E., M. Rönnblom and H. Silius Critical studies of gender equalities: Nordic dislocations, dilemmas and contradictions, Gothenburg: Makadam.

Carbin, M. and S. Tornhill (2004). 'Intersektionalitet- ett oanvändbart begrepp?' Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift(3): 111-114.

Crenshaw, K. W. (1989/1995) "Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of colour", in Crenshaw (ed) Critical race theory. The key writings that formed the movement, New Press.

Dahl, U (2004) Progressive Women, Traditional Men: The Politics of 'Knowledge' and Gendered Stories of Development in the Northern Periphery of the EU. Dissertation, University of Santa Cruz.

Davies, K. (2008) Intersectionality as a buzz word, in Feminist Theory, vol.9, no. 1.

Fornäs, J. (2005) "Röster som gjorde skillnad. Korsande identifikationer i folkhemets populärkultur" (Voices that made a difference. Crossing identifications in the popular culture of the folkhem) in Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift, 2-3.

De los Reyes, P., I. Molina, et al. (2006). Maktens (o)lika förklådnader : kön, klass & etnicitet i det postkoloniala Sverige : en festskrift till Wuokko Knocke. Stockholm, Atlas.

Florin, C. and B. Nilsson (2005). Women's Questions on the Agenda. The Politicisation of Gender Equality in Sweden. Different Paths to Modernity. A Nordic and Spanish Perspective. M. Jerneck, M. Mörner, G. Tortella and S. Åkerman. Lund, Nordic Academic Press: 302-317.

Gustafsson, G. (ed) (1997) Towards a New Democratic Order? Womens Organizing i Sweden in the 1990's. Stockholm: Publica.

- Haavio-Mannila, E. and C. Badcock (1985). Unfinished democracy : women in Nordic politics. Oxford, Pergamon. Orig:s titel: Det uferdige demokratiet
- Hill Collins, P. (1998) Moving beyond gender. "Intersectionality and scientific knowledge", in Marx Feree, M. J. Lorber and B. Hess (ed) Revisioning gender, London: Sage.
- Hirdman, Y. and Maktutredningen (1990). The gender system : theoretical reflections on the social subordination of women. Uppsala, Maktutredningen.
- Hudson, C. and Rönnblom, M. (2007) "Regional development policies and the constructions of gender equality – the Swedish case", in European Journal of Political Science vol 46, no 1.
- Klinth, R. (2005). Pappaledighet som jämställdhetsprojekt. Makten att forma samhället och sitt eget liv - jämställdhetspolitiken mot nya mål SOU 2005:66, Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet 205-235.
- Knapp, G. (2005) "Race, class, gender: reclaiming baggage in fast travelling theories" In European Journal of Women's Studies, vol. 12, nr 3
- Laclau, E. (1990) New reflections on the revolution of our time, London: Verso.
- Langvasbråten, T. (2008). 'A Scandinavian Model? Gender Equality Discourses on Multiculturalism.' Social Politics **15**(1): 32-52.
- Lykke, N. (2003). 'Intersektionalitet - ett användbart begrepp för genusforskningen.' Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift(1).
- Magnusson, E. (2000). 'Party-political rhetoric on gender equality in Sweden : the uses of uniformity and heterogeneity.' Nora **8**(2): 78-92.
- McClintock, A. (1995) "Introduction. Postcolonialism and the angel of progress." In Imperial leather. Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest,: New York: Routledge.
- Proposition (2005/06:155). Makt att forma samhället och sitt eget liv – nya mål i jämställdhetspolitiken. Näringsdepartementet.
- Rose, N. (1999) Powers of Freedom: Reframing political thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan-Flood, R. (2005). 'Contested Heteronormativities: Discourses of Fatherhood among Lesbian Parents in Sweden and Ireland.' Sexualities **8**(2): 189-204.
- Rosenberg, T. (2002) Queerfeministisk agenda, Stockholm: Atlas.
- Rönnblom, M. (2005) Letting women in? Gender mainstreaming in regional policies? In NORA, vol. 13, no 3.
- SOU (2005:66). Makt att forma samhället och sitt eget liv – jämställdhetspolitiken mot nya mål. Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet, Jämställdhetspolitiska utredningen.

Staunes, D. (2003) 'Where have all the subjects gone? Bringing together the concepts of intersectionality and subjectification'. NORA, Nordic Journal of Women's Studies, 2-3.

Stormhøj, C. (2002). 'Queering the family : critical reflections on state-regulated heteronormativity in the Scandinavian countries.' Lambda Nordica 8(3-4).

Sverige. Diskrimineringskommittén (2006). En sammanhållen diskrimineringslagstiftning : slutbetänkande. D. 1. Stockholm, Fritze.

Utredningen om strukturell diskriminering på grund av etnisk eller religiös tillhörighet (2005). Det blågula glashuset: strukturell diskriminering i Sverige :betänkande. Stockholm, Fritzes offentliga publikationer.

Yuval-Davies, N. 2006. Intersectionality and feminist politics. In European Journal of Women's Studies, Vol. 13, No. 3.