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# Equality Work in Finnish Ministries

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# Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to knowledge about the equality work in public sector organisations. Especially, my aim is to bring light into everyday experiences of doing equality work. This is achieved through interviewing equality workers in Finnish ministries. The study draws also on my personal experiences as an equality consultant. The main question I ask is: Which issues influence the content of equality work? According to feminist research, promoting equality is always a political process, which includes conflicting interests. These conflicting interests are, however, not visible in official descriptions of equality work. For example, ministries' equality policies mostly hide the various interests under vague definitions and beautiful structures. Despite the invisibility of the tensions in written documents, equality workers describe the negotiative nature of equality work by providing examples of equality negotiations in their organisations. In my analysis I conclude that equality workers are aware of their organisations' capacities to change and, in their work, they adapt to these limitations by choosing their strategies to do equality work accordingly. The content of equality work reflects the strategies, which are carefully chosen based on the knowledge about the organisation. I argue that this process of choosing equality strategies by equality workers is one of the overlooked factors shaping equality work in organisations.

Key words: equality work, equality policies, equality, gender, diversity, gender mainstreaming, public sector, organisations

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# Chapter I: Introduction

## The Story of Negotiating Equality Policies

My thesis deals with equality work and the making of equality policies in public sector organisations. I begin by explaining why this kind of equality work exists. The most straightforward answer to the existence of equality work is that the legislation requires organisations to do equality work. I will explain the equality legislation in Finland in more detail later on. At this point it is enough to understand that, according to the law, ministries and other public organisations in Finland are required to promote gender equality and diversity in all their functions. Organisations are also required to draw up certain written policies regarding the promotion of gender equality and diversity. Requirements in the national legislation are one of our starting points in the journey with equality work.

Equality legislation, nor other legislation in a democratic system, does not simply happen. The formal requirements in the current equality laws are a consequence of working hard in many international and national arenas. This legislation is a result of doing national politics and European politics, networking, lobbying, doing activism, doing research and thinking together. The work has been done in cooperation with many different organisations, such as so called tripartite cooperation, which includes trade unions, employer's associations and the government, and in many non-governmental organisations, such as women's organisations, antiracist organisations and LGBTI-organisations. The cooperation of different parties means that sometimes there is a conflict of interests. Hence, the work for establishing and improving equality legislation has involved negotiations and compromising.

As a result of the negotiation process the requirements in equality legislation have been formed to their current state. The latest change to the equality legislation came into force on the first of January in 2015. There are two main equality laws in Finland. One of them covers gender equality and the other one covers equality regardless of the other personal characteristics, which are, according to the current legislation, following characteristics: age, origin, citizenship, language, religion, belief, opinion, political actions, trade union actions, family relations, health, disabilities, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. On the first of January the equality law, which covers equality regardless of the other personal characteristics, was re-written. At the same time the gender equality law was amended. After the amendment the gender equality law prohibits explicitly also discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression. Negotiating these changes to both laws took several

years and in the end the package of legislative proposals submitted to the Parliament was 212 pages. This process of changing the legislation is an interesting example of the political negotiations.

However, the negotiation process in equality work is not accomplished when the laws have been agreed upon and come to force. Equality work inside organisations is also a negotiation process: organisations decide what kind of equality is going to be promoted in their organisation and what the organisation needs to do in order to achieve this. My thesis focus on this part of equality work. I study equality work in Finnish ministries by interviewing equality workers, who are also public servants. The equality negotiations and lobbying nature of equality work becomes evident in their interviews.

As opposed to the political debates these negotiations inside the organisations are mostly hidden. For example, the negotiations and different opinions are not visible in ministries' equality policies, which are often written in such a style that it seems that the equality goals and measures have been chosen in a consensus. Often the definitions, goals and measures for promoting equality are also left rather vague. My aim is to make visible the processes behind choosing the content of equality work. I show that the strategies for doing equality work inside organisations are carefully chosen by equality workers. For example, the vagueness of equality policies implies the usage of negotiation strategies. The thesis answers to the question of which issues influence on the content of equality work in public organisations. I believe that making visible the process of choosing the content of equality work is also crucial in understanding the making of equality policies and in implementing them.

The negotiations about equality on different arenas inside and outside organisations bring results. Only the fact that I have been able to find people to talk about equality work proves that something is done in these organisations. Also, my thesis defines rather systematic ways of organising equality work in many Finnish ministries. However, equality workers tell also examples about difficulties and backlashes. The current content of the equality policies, and the strategies needed in doing equality work, demonstrate the equality negotiations inside organisations.

My thesis contributes to the current literature on equality work in public sector organisations by providing a new example from Finland. I examine the strategies used in equality work in Finnish ministries and discuss the negotiative nature of equality work. My hope is that the knowledge equality workers have on their organisations could be understood

better and valued more. This knowledge on equality work inside organisations is very valuable in fulfilling the requirements of equality legislation in a meaningful way.

## My Story as a Negotiator

It took me some time to arrive to this point and write my thesis about equality work in Finnish ministries. The topic is not new to me. I have been involved in the ministries' equality work in many ways. In my work as an equality consultant I have been organising equality trainings in different ministries. For example, we have trained law makers in doing gender impact assessment in the process of drafting new legislative proposals. I have also read the equality policies of Finnish ministries in many occasions due to my work and written a survey about them. I have even been consulting some ministries in drawing up their equality policies. This work with equality issues in the ministries has created a desire to ponder upon certain questions more and write about them.

For the last couple of years the distance studying programme in Linköping University has provided me a wonderful opportunity to both work and study at the same time. Studying has supported my work in many ways and the other way round. I have had an opportunity to systematically reflect on my work through studies. I have also had the opportunity to explain my work and ideas to co-students and staff members at the university.

Also, studying in Sweden made me to want to tell “the Finnish story”. Although I have lived in Finland throughout my studies, regularly discussing about my work in the Swedish context has created a new point of view for me. Studying in Sweden started a special kind of integration process in my head. I have not moved to another country but I have been studying in a foreign context. This context is very familiar for me in many ways: Sweden and Finland have many similarities in the organisation of the equality work. This has created privileges for me in the usage of knowledge. At the same time I have not had the same kind of situation than studying the same subjects in Finland: I cannot assume that teachers and co-students would automatically know the basic facts about equality work in Finland or place these facts and discussions familiar to me in the centre of their teachings. This mixture of Swedish and international academic context and the context of being a practical equality worker in Finland has shaped the story I am telling.

Of course, our group in Linköping University is not just a Swedish context: the students and teachers in the programme come from and are currently living in different countries. We create a context of our own every time we meet online or in Linköping. Also, intersectional gender studies is a multidisciplinary programme. Focusing on practical equality work in

public organisations is not the only or even very usual topic in the programme. Other students have written their theses about other subjects, such as cultural studies, activism or, for example, the stories of migration. Some focus on areas close to my subject, for example, equality work in another country. Discussing about equality work in this multidisciplinary context has provided new perspectives for me.

My studies in Sweden have also made me ponder, what kind of a geopolitical location Finland is for a feminist, especially in comparison to its neighbouring countries. I have written one of my course assignments on this subject. In the assignment I examine the lag and progress discourses in Finnish feminist writings. (Tanhua 2014) In the usage of the concepts of lag and progress discourses I refer to Redi Koobak, who has studied the postsocialist Eastern European feminist movement and argues that the movement itself depicts that the feminist movement in Eastern Europe is “lagging behind” the “West” (Koobak 2013: 104). Marina Blagojević adds to the same discussion by explaining how lag discourse is created in “semi-peripheries”. The semi-periphery means that the centre is located somewhere else, and the centre is seen as a norm (Blagojević 2009: 57). The lag discourse exists also in Finland, especially in comparison to its neighbour in the West. I experienced one form of lag discourse during my studies in Sweden: when I talked about my studies with Finnish colleagues, nobody questioned why I had chosen to study in Sweden and many argued that Sweden must be ahead of Finland in feminist thinking and gender studies. However, when I went through contemporary writings about Finnish feminism I found out that the Finnish authors are more focused and more critical towards the Finnish progress discourse than the lag discourse. In my assignment I conclude that it is important for Finnish feminists to be aware of both lag and progress discourses and to aim for decolonial knowledge production practices. (Tanhua 2014)

Having the lag and progress discourses and ideals of decolonial knowledge production in mind, it was not an easy task to choose the focus of the previous research and the theories to use in this thesis. I had an urge to refer to Finnish authors, authors in various countries, and also to some of the brilliant ideas of my co-students in the program. However, I also felt that I wanted to present the knowledge and authors we had studied in the official program, and in the programme the theories regarding equality work include mostly material available in English by hegemonic feminist authors and some perhaps less well-known Swedish authors. Finally, the last aim influenced more my choice of references. I present mainly European and American material, which is available in English and, in addition, Swedish and Finnish material. The references used in this thesis reflect our programme and, in addition, I have added Finnish authors. My position as a student writing my Master’s theses has influenced my

choice of literature and theories. I also believe that this way I can add especially to the Nordic discussion about equality work in a meaningful way. I also introduce the Finnish context and Finnish legislation in detail in order to provide enough information about the Finnish context also for those readers who are not familiar with it.

In addition to telling a Finnish story, I am telling a story of equality workers. Since I have worked for almost ten years primarily with equality issues, I have a strong identity as a practical equality worker. Although most of my interviewees work primarily with other issues and doing equality work is only one part of their tasks, they also identify as equality workers in the interviews. My aim is to talk about practical equality work on everyday level, based on the experiences of equality workers.

It is a special position to do equality work inside an organisation. Debra Meyerson has used a concept of “a tempered radical” in order to explain one tactic of surviving as a negotiator in an ambivalent position. A tempered radical is someone, who works inside an organisation and supports the overall objectives of the organisation but also acknowledges the unequal practices in the organisation and wants to change them (Meyerson and Scully 1995). I will explain Meyerson’s theories in more detail in the chapter about the theoretical framework of this thesis. Here I will, however, already use the concept for positioning myself. I view myself as a tempered radical in relation to the Finnish government. I relate to authorities and their objectives in many ways but also acknowledge unequal structures and practices and believe in the possibility of changing them through tempered change work.

A tempered radical is also often someone who partly fits into an organisation but also fits into another community which shares different kinds of values. I would like to add that the ambivalent situation can also be examined from the point of view of other communities. A tempered radical who belongs into some mainstream organisation and partly shares its values, can also be seen in their other communities as someone who only partly belongs in them. Leslie Feinberg’s novel about the queer community in New York provides a good example of this. In the story they use a term “day-sider”. A day-sider is someone who belongs to the queer community but is also able to get at least some of the mainstream privileges in the society (Feinberg 2006). I could categorize myself as a day-sider within the queer communities I belong to and also somewhat within the activist feminist communities I am connected with. I am not the only day-sider in these communities and some experience more privileges than I do. Despite this I can still say that, for example, I tend to trust authorities more than people in the queer communities I relate to generally trust them. These ambivalent

positions in between different communities make it easier for me to be tempered as an equality worker.

I believe that this position of having experiences of being privileged and having experiences of being discriminated against – or at least seeing how people with whom one can identify with or belongs in the same community with have been discriminated against – is a fruitful position for becoming a tempered radical and an equality worker. As also Meyerson argues, experiencing this kind of ambivalent positions creates a desire to act as a tempered radical and change the society and organisations. I also believe that an activist position can support ones work as an equality worker. Activist communities of many kind provide insights and support in coping with resistance experienced in equality work. In my case my work, studies, activism and relations to different communities all impact on how I write about equality work in Finnish ministries.

My position as a consultant who is not directly employed by the government but works in doing change work in governmental organisations, is also worth mentioning. I have become familiar with the ministries in cooperating with and consulting for them in different occasions. However, I am not familiar with them in the same way as someone who works for one ministry full time. I am still learning how ministries organize their tasks. I also do not get an insider's view in their work environments. On the other hand, I have gotten a glimpse of all of them and can make comparisons between them and different governmental and other organisations which I have been consulting for. My position as a consultant and student/researcher also impacts my position when I observe the ministries.

## Previous Research on Equality Work: Criticism, Resistance and Hope

My thesis contributes to the literature about equality work. Next, I am going to summarize the findings of previous research on equality work. I am categorizing the findings of previous research into three categories which are based on the feelings I have had throughout the years when I have been reading the results of research as a practical equality worker. The first category of findings is criticism. Practical equality work and certain strategies for promoting equality have been criticised, for example, for being too vague or technocratic. The second category of findings is tensions. Some authors have studied resistance that equality workers face and some have studied the tensions inside feminist groups about different focuses of equality work. The third category of findings is hope. Even after presenting very critical results, the authors often end their conclusions in hope for being able to change things. By categorizing the findings in these three categories I can present them and the feelings I have

had while reading them in the hope of finding something useful for my practical work and for grasping an understanding of different situations I have faced at work and elsewhere in life. Previous research is also an important background to this thesis.

### **Criticism: vague, technocratic, heteronormative, not intersectional**

In previous studies about equality work, different authors have criticized the content and results of equality work. Anne-Charlott Callertig (2014) argues that one of the central themes in the studies about equality work and gender equality policies is the difficulties in understanding the concept of equality. This includes studying the vagueness of gender equality objectives which is one of the prominent themes in studies about equality work. (Callerstig 2014: 75-76) In addition, researchers have often concluded that the definitions which are used in equality work are heteronormative and lack an intersectional perspective. Also, equality work has been criticised for being too technocratic. I provide some examples of these critiques, focusing specifically on Finnish studies of equality work in public sector organisations. The Finnish examples are also clearly in dialogue with some international feminist research.

Before providing examples of critical studies, I have to clarify what I mean by criticism. Even though I categorise this analysis of the content of equality work under the heading criticism, it is good to be aware that the authors of these studies do not blame equality workers or the bad choice of strategies in doing equality work. The authors are mostly very aware of the context in which equality work is done and the critique is directed towards the lack of possibilities for creating real change in these organisational, historical and cultural contexts. Still, I have often felt that the analysis of vague definitions and technocratic methods are critical also towards the ways equality work is done in organisations. The critical studies make practical equality workers ask themselves, whether doing equality work can do any good in organisations. Hence, I use the title of criticism here and in the last part of my analysis of previous research I provide examples of hope in equality work from the same authors I refer to here. Most researchers have themselves done practical equality work, and also I have both analysed equality work as well as worked as a practical equality worker.

In particular one strategy of doing equality work, namely gender mainstreaming, has been criticised for being a vague strategy for promoting equality. The idea of gender mainstreaming is that (gender) equality work is mainstreamed in such a way that it is everybody's responsibility to do equality work in an organisation, as part of their normal work. The aim is also that gender concerns are integrated into all policies and programmes

(EIGE 2015b). The critics of gender mainstreaming conclude that, in practice, gender mainstreaming is a vague strategy and that it is often used in a consensual and technocratic way (Verloo 2005). For example, the goal of gender mainstreaming is gender equality, but if there is no clear definition of gender equality, the goal of gender mainstreaming remains unclear. Gender equality becomes an empty signifier and Mieke Verloo argues that it might happen that, due to the vague practices, gender mainstreaming does not reach its transformatory potential (ibid.).

Gender mainstreaming has also been criticized for focusing only on gender and ignoring intersectionalities. Many authors have argued that it would be beneficial for gender mainstreaming to not focus only on gender but also take into account issues related to intersectionality and diversity (Eveline, Bacchi, and Binns 2009; Hankivsky 2005; Squires 2010). According to Olena Hankivsky (2005), gender mainstreaming practices do not transform the mainstream as intended because gender mainstreaming framework is built upon an outdated theoretical foundation. They explain that gender mainstreaming is able to capture only partial and distorted understandings of women's conditions and has not moved beyond the male-female dichotomy. Hankivsky argues that, for this reason, there is a pressing need to integrate present feminist knowledge about intersectionalities into gender mainstreaming practices. (Hankivsky 2005) Similar arguments have been voiced by others. For example, Rachel Tolhurst et al. (2012) argue that gender mainstreaming policies often rely on dichotomous understanding of gender. Thanks to the critics also other terms have emerged, such as intersectional gender mainstreaming and gender and diversity mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming practices in the Finnish government have also faced similar critique. For example, Anna Elomäki (2014) argues that the Finnish model of gender mainstreaming is, depending on the perspective, either practical or technocratic. According to Elomäki, the gender mainstreaming practices in Finnish government have managed to promote equality only weakly. The reasons for this include simplified definitions, technocratic focus, inability to state the equality goals, lack of evaluation, lack of using external experts and lack of engaging stakeholders. (Elomäki 2014) Another study about the external equality work in Finnish public sector also concludes, for example, that equality policies are mostly too vague and lack visions about how gender equality should be promoted (Tanhua, Mustakallio and Niemistö 2015). I think that this notion regarding the lack of visions about gender equality is very similar to the argument Elomäki makes about the lack of equality goals in equality policies. I can conclude that especially based on the policy analysis method,

it seems that the problem is that equality work in the Finnish government is too vague: it lacks visions and concrete long term goals.

In addition to the government, external equality work and gender mainstreaming have been done in municipalities, although in Finland external equality work is less established in municipalities and regional organisations than in the central government (Elomäki 2014; Tuominen 2015). Meija Tuominen (2015) has studied gender mainstreaming in three Finnish municipalities which participated in a gender mainstreaming project. Tuominen is critical towards the level of gender mainstreaming in these three municipalities, and also in all municipalities in Finland. According to Tuominen, it could be argued that some municipalities in Finland have taken some steps towards gender awareness and created some prerequisites for gender mainstreaming but this cannot yet be called doing gender mainstreaming. In the end of their thesis, Tuominen provides a framework for analyzing the level of gender mainstreaming in a municipality (Tuominen 2015: 77). Tuominen also argues that analyzing equality work without the pressure of telling success stories, which are often required in the project language, would be very beneficial. (ibid.) For me, reading Tuominen's thesis was exciting also because the study focuses on the project I had participated in conducting. So I was especially happy about the critical but understanding approach. I think that the study provides meaningful knowledge from the project and equality work in general. Also, I agree that the project publications could not have provided this kind of perspective on the project.

Although this thesis does not focus on project work, I would like to note that one of the forums for doing equality work in Finland has been publicly funded equality projects. These projects have involved both public and private sector organisations and they have been conducted by different parties. Equality projects have also been studied from a wider perspective. Kristiina Brunila (2009) studied gender equality projects conducted in Finland and their material includes 99 publicly funded projects. Brunila argues that during the period the study examines Finnish equality work has become more project oriented than before. Otherwise the resources to equality work have been small but the project funding from European Union has been an exception (Brunila 2009: 73). This has also influenced the content of equality work. Brunila has developed a concept projectisation which refers to a form of power that directs discussions of equality in the projects. Only certain discussions are heard in the context of the projects. According to Brunila, equality work in these projects is not supposed to threaten the existing structures or be in conflict with the economic goals government has regarding employment. The projects have also forced equality workers to describe good practices and idealised models. (ibid.) Also, this study of equality projects

includes some equality projects I have participated in. These projects were some of the earliest experiences on equality work I had, and the study helped me in seeing the projects as a part of the chain of projects.

An example from Sweden illustrates how Swedish equality work is also criticised for being too technocratic. Britt-Inger Keisu and Maria Carbin (2014) interviewed gender equality workers in three Swedish universities and they conclude that there are two possible positions for equality workers in the universities: equality workers can either be administrators or critical cynics. Administrators focus on tools for monitoring equality and critical cynics criticize the increasing monitoring and bureaucratization in equality work but they lack alternative visions and strategies. (Keisu and Carbin 2014) There are several explanations to the question of why equality work has become too technocratic. According to Keisu and Carbin, the reasons for technocratic equality work are, for example, the neo-liberal ideologies and new public management strategies which focus on efficiency and quality assurance. (ibid.)

Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014) provides a different kind of perspective on the usage of control mechanisms in equality work. Callerstig has conducted case studies about gender mainstreaming initiatives in Swedish municipalities and in one governmental agency. According to Callerstig, it seems to be a paradox but, increasing control mechanisms in public sector can help in creating change. Control mechanisms can grant access to new areas for gender experts and make it possible to reveal conditions that have previously been hidden. (Callerstig 2014: 164) However, Callerstig also argues that in one of the case studies the control seems to have turned into technicalisation, i.e. the procedures of control have had no real impact on gender equality but they have, nevertheless, been conducted instead of being able to change the strategy. (ibid.: 128-129, 164) I find Callerstig's systematic analysis useful for analysing the interviews I have conducted for this thesis.

Sara Ahmed (2007, 2012) has studied equality work done by the diversity practitioners in the higher educational institutions in the United Kingdom and Australia. First, Ahmed analyses the language of diversity and argues that the usage of vague concepts and definitions is often part of the strategy equality workers use in order to get their message through in universities. Ahmed analyses also equality and performance culture through examples of situations in which performing something and creating the right kind of appearance becomes more important than actually changing the organisation. For example, equality workers end up doing the document rather than equality work. In this case, the document becomes a fetish. Ahmed also analyses the uneven distribution of responsibilities for doing equality work and

argues that this uneven distribution of responsibilities can become a mechanism for reproducing inequalities. (Ahmed 2012: 91) I have found Ahmed's analysis eye-opening. Also, it has been interesting to note how many similarities there are between gender equality work and diversity work, at least based on Ahmed's writings and my experiences.

I have now provided some examples of the critics regarding the content, strategies and results of equality work. I have covered the main forums of doing external equality work in public organisations in Finland, including governmental organisations, municipalities, and equality projects. In addition, I provided some examples from Sweden and one example from a study conducted in the United Kingdom and Australia. The aim of the Swedish examples is to strengthen the Nordic dialogue. Ahmed's study from the UK and Australia is important in this thesis because it focuses on diversity work whereas most of the studies I have covered focus mainly on gender equality. I also come back to Callerstig's and Ahmed's theories later on in this study.

### **Resistance and Tensions**

Another theme that is widely discussed in studies about equality work is resistance towards equality work. Before providing examples of these studies I would like to note that resistance towards equality work can come from many different directions and this happens for different reasons. First, there is resistance towards equality work because people who now have privileges do not want to lose them. Secondly, some people resist equality work because they do not agree with the agenda for change in a certain equality initiative. For example, many gender equality workers argue that equality work has become too technocratic and, hence, they might resist some of the ways in which gender equality work is currently organized. Some people also resist certain gender equality initiatives because the initiatives are not intersectional. In this case, there is resistance to equality work because the initiatives address only some equality issues but leave other inequalities untouched and even promote some groups which are already privileged in comparison to other groups. Because the resistance comes from many different directions and for different reasons, it is also important to note the reasons for this resistance before trying to find solutions for getting over it.

Another way to categorise literature on tensions and resistance is to examine whether the focus is on the tensions inside feminist groups or in between feminist groups and other groups and organisations in the society. I provide few examples of both but focus on the literature which discusses about the resistance towards equality work. Also, here I mostly provide examples of resistance towards gender equality work.

First, I introduce a very practical Swedish example. Swedish feminists have written a book in which they analyse and provide examples of resistance towards feminist knowledge (Wahl and Holgersson 2011; Wahl et al. 2008). These examples consist of memories of situations in which feminist have experienced negative reactions to their attempts when they have discussed feminist topics. As the authors describe, the examples include situations which have happened in classrooms, seminar rooms, corridors, offices and parties. The authors also analyse in illustrative ways how resistance is often directed towards the person and body of the feminist presenting the knowledge. In addition, they provide solutions and aim to create a positive image of a feminist. (ibid.) I think that this collective publication is very useful for equality workers. It describes situations equality workers face in illustrative ways and aims to be empowering. However, the downside of the book is that the examples analyse resistance towards feminist knowledge mainly from the perspective that resisting implies resistance towards changing existing hierarchies and inequalities. As I described earlier, all resistance towards equality work cannot be put in this category because the reasons to resist vary. I think that equality workers should not aim for crushing all resistance but they should listen to different reasons for it. However, I also find the book empowering and refreshing because one of its aims is to create space for different kinds of reactions to resistance.

Emanuela Lombardo and Lut Mergaert (2013) examine the resistance expressed in gender trainings that are conducted in order to mainstream gender perspective into policy-making. They have gathered their information through participatory observation of trainings, expert meetings, conferences, and online forums which were part of a European research project called QUING, and a transatlantic research project called TARGET. Lombardo and Mergaert argue that exploring resistance to gender training can improve the implementation of gender mainstreaming. They define resistance as a phenomenon that emerges during processes of change and is aimed at maintaining the status quo and opposing change. (Lombardo and Mergaert 2013) In other words, this article leaves out different reasons for resisting change. Authors determine the types and forms of resistance, for example, denial of the need for change, trivializing gender equality, and refusing to accept responsibility. They argue that resistance should be taken into account better in gender trainings. The article by Lombardo and Mergaert is one of the articles published in the theme issue on “Feminist resistance – Resistance to Feminism” in the *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* (Stoltz and Hvenegård-Lassen 2013). Thematic issue on resistance indicates the importance of the topic in feminist academic literature, especially in Sweden. Although Lombardo and Mergaert refer to international research projects, most of the submissions for the thematic

issue are by Swedish researchers and discuss policy measures and feminist debates in Sweden. (ibid.)

Next, I provide a few Finnish examples. Hanna Ylöstalo (2013) discusses about resistance towards gender mainstreaming initiatives in the Finnish Ministry of Defence. The empirical material consists of the interviews of the members of ministry's equality working group, and interviews of three project practitioners. The first part of the article discusses the vagueness of the goals of gender equality. The second part of the article examines resistance. Ylöstalo argues that resistance is part of everyday experiences of those people who work for promoting gender mainstreaming. According to Ylöstalo, this resistance should be taken into account better in gender mainstreaming initiatives and research about gender mainstreaming. Resistance often occurs as non-doings and non-happenings rather than as an active opposing. They also provide examples of the low prioritisation of equality work in the ministry. Ylöstalo concludes that discussions and negotiations in between different parties in the ministry, including equality workers, can help personnel and the organisation to commit to improving equality. (Ylöstalo 2013) I think that Ylöstalo's descriptions of the resistance faced in the Finnish Ministry of Defence provide interesting information about equality work conducted in Finnish ministries. Their examples have similarities to the examples I provide in this thesis by examining equality work in three other Finnish ministries.

Another article examines the notions of power and legitimacy in the context of Finnish debates on gender equality (Nousiainen et al. 2013). Authors argue that legitimate and illegitimate power can be understood as a binary opposition and an outcome of productive power. They have also developed two theoretical concepts to describe the states that seem to fall in the grey zone of legitimacy. (ibid.) Examining the limits of what is legitimate to say and do are one part of examining resistance, too.

Some feminist researchers have focused on the tensions inside feminist and other groups. I provide one example of this. Akinyi Margareta Ocholla explores the tensions and contradictions of being *African*, feminist and activist within sexual and gender minority social movements. Although they use the terms African and feminist, they also note that they have not always accepted these concepts unquestioningly: these terms are not concepts with obvious and clear meanings and implications. Ocholla concludes that activism would benefit from activists' more thorough self-reflection, self-revelation, analysis of their individual differences, and also their own ways of oppressing others. (Ocholla 2014) I believe that this kind of analysis and self-reflection is also beneficial to equality workers and not only for activists. Our perspectives on equality are always influenced also by our personal experiences,

identities, and experiences of belonging to different groups. The influence of belonging to different communities and having identities of difference in comparison to the mainstream identities in an organisation, is also studied by Debra Meyerson (Meyerson 2001). I come back to their study in the chapter on theoretical framework.

Also, the debates over which inequalities should be prioritised have been an important part of discussions regarding equality, and also resistance towards certain kinds of equality initiatives. For example, intersections of gender and race have been a significant issue of the debates in the USA. In Europe, the debates on intersections have focused more on gender and class. (Lykke 2010: 75-78) The discussions about gender mainstreaming, intersectional gender mainstreaming and gender and diversity mainstreaming are also part of these debates.

### **Hope in Equality Work**

I have noticed that very often feminist authors end their critical analysis of equality work in hopeful sentences. For example, Keisu and Carbin (2014) conclude that gender equality is not yet fully influenced by the audit culture. The position of the administrator could open up opportunities to become involved in micro-political strategies, which might create change. The critical cynics, on the other hand, do not necessarily only set limits for action, but might also constitute a platform for agency. (Keisu and Carbin 2014) Also, Lombardo and Mergaert end their article by saying that resistance is a learning opportunity and, if embraced with openness and preparation, resistance also offers a chance to engage with entrenched patriarchal and other norms, values, and stereotypes (Lombardo and Mergaert 2013). I conclude that the belief that organisations and societies can be changed for better is the motivation behind doing equality work and also behind studying it.

Most of the studies about equality work include also suggestions for improving it, for example, both the study by Inkeri Tanhua, Sinikka Mustakallio and Charlotta Niemistö (2015) and the study by Anna Elomäki (2014) include ideas for improving gender equality work in Finnish government. The desire to be hopeful is one reason for writing this kind of suggestion lists. They can, of course, sometimes be useful in improving equality work. However, sometimes reading critics and improvement lists can be frustrating. Equality work is usually done in a certain way due to good reasons. For example, due to resistance towards doing equality work in more efficient or clear way. The suggestions are not necessarily easy to implement in practice due to different forms of resistance. Hence, the hopeful endings and improvement lists do not necessarily make the practical equality worker feel better about their work.

For me, the experience of reading studies about equality work as a practical equality worker, has sometimes been frustrating. Although the authors acknowledge the complexity of the contexts in which equality work is done, their critics and suggestions for improving equality work have not always felt nuanced enough. The craving for more nuanced studies is also shared by others. For example, Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014) argues that in particular we need research which can nuance the picture of gender equality as a hopeless field for implementation but still take into account the difficulties. Callerstig also argues that the specific area of developing equality policies by public servants has not been studied much. (Callerstig 2014: 54) My aim in this thesis is to provide this kind of nuanced research about equality work done by equality workers in public organisations. I hope that I can convey the message of valuing the experiences provided by equality workers.

While I argue that reading previous research as a practical equality worker has sometimes felt frustrating, I would like to emphasise that I have also been writing studies and reports about equality. As an author of these analyses, I have also experienced a desire to be both hopeful towards and critical of the possibilities of creating change through equality work. Even in writing this thesis it is a challenge to create a reading experience, which would not be frustrating for practical equality workers. The positive side of the frustration is that it can motivate more discussions. I encourage also other ways of seeing and interpreting the analysis presented in this thesis.

I also have to note here that in this introduction I have not covered all the authors who have written about equality work in Finland. Instead of providing a summary of Finnish literature, I have focused on providing a picture of reading studies about equality work as a practical equality worker. Some other studies on equality work in Finland include studies from following authors: Elina Ikävalko (2014), Milja Saari (2012), Anna Ylöstalo (2012), Reetta Siukola (2006) and Jeff Hearn (Hearn 2013; Hearn et al. 2015). Despite the effort of these authors and the Finnish authors mentioned earlier in this introduction (Brunila 2009; Elomäki 2014; Nousiainen et al. 2013; Tanhua, Mustakallio and Niemistö 2015; Tuominen 2015; Ylöstalo 2013), I think there are relatively few studies about equality work in comparison to the strong legislation which requires organisations to do equality work. I argue for the need to study the realities of doing equality work more.

## Structure of the Thesis

I have now provided an introduction to my study about equality work in Finnish ministries and examined the previous literature on equality work from the perspective of a practical

equality worker. The next chapter continues the story by providing an introduction of the key concepts I use in the thesis. This is necessary for understanding how I use these terms and concepts in this thesis because the terms are used in different ways by different authors. The next chapter also includes background material for understanding ministries as organisations, and understanding the context of Finnish equality legislation and international commitments to promoting equality.

In the third chapter I introduce the theoretical framework used in this study. The main authors whose theories I use in this thesis are Debra Meyerson, Sara Ahmed and Anne-Charlott Callerstig. I have also already introduced their work in the introductory chapter when I discussed previous research on equality work.

I begin the fourth chapter of the thesis by discussing epistemologies and the aims of feminist knowledge production. Then, I explain my choice of methods and methodologies, and describe the research process of this thesis. For my main method of gathering empirical material, I have conducted six in-depth interviews with equality workers in three Finnish ministries. I also discuss on ethics in the fourth chapter.

In the fifth chapter, I present the results of the interviews. I begin by describing the organisation of equality work through equality working groups and equality policies. Secondly, I discuss the strategies used in equality work. Specifically, I focus on equality negotiations in the ministries. Thirdly, I examine the places where equality work gets stuck or does not happen despite the statements for promoting equality. I also examine how politics and organisational history influences equality work and, finally, I discuss equality workers' various perspectives on equality.

In the sixth chapter, I analyse the results of the interviews. The analysis chapter is structured based on my research questions. My main research question is: Which issues influence the content of equality work? Other research questions support this main research question by, for example, asking what kind of strategies are used in equality work. The last chapter consists of my conclusions.

## Chapter II: Key Concepts and Background

### Definitions and Analysis of the Key Concepts

Here I will provide a brief discussion regarding the most significant terms I use in this study. These terms include: equality, gender equality and diversity, intersectionality, gender, gender mainstreaming, equality policy, external and internal gender equality work, equality workers

and organisation. The terms can be used in various ways in different texts and different countries. Hence, it is important for the reader to know what I mean with the terms in this study. My definitions also provide a brief introduction to the usage of the terms in practical equality work and to the discussions about the terms in gender studies.

In this thesis, the term *equality* is used to describe the work of promoting gender equality and diversity in organisations. When equality is understood this way, the content and goals of equality work are in continuous movement and there is no one way to describe an ideal equal organisation. However, at the same time the choice to use the term “equality” shapes the content and goals of change work. The term suggests that currently an organisations is not equal and that something can be done in order to improve equality. I like to use the term equality because of this connotation: its usage means that we acknowledge that an organisation is not perfect and that something can be done in order to make it more just. The usage of the term has, however, also its downsides. Margit Shildrick argues that the term equality is problematic because its usage does not encourage to question the norms. According to Shildrick, it sounds like the aim of promoting equality is to make a group of people fit into the norms in order to be equal, i.e. those who are not equal have to change. (Shildrick 1994) I do not see the term equality this way, and I believe that norm critical thinking and the term equality can fit together. However, I agree that there are problems in using the term.

In my internship report (Tanhua 2015) I concluded that in my own work as an equality worker the focuses regarding the usage and content of different terms, such as equality, gender and intersectionality, shift depending on the tasks I currently work with. I argued that it is significant to analyze how the terms and focuses are chosen and how change agents can or cannot influence on them. (ibid.) Following this thinking I argue that it is important to see that the usage of terms and their meanings change depending on the situation and purpose. The usage of certain terms, such as equality, is a result of long negotiation process, which includes also the political negotiations in forming the national legislation. The choice of terms is very meaningful. However, change agents cannot change the terms lightly without consequences. For example, the usage of the term equality legitimises change work in Finland because the term is also used in national legislation and governmental policies.

In this thesis the term “equality” is used as a synonym to “*gender equality and diversity*”. Also, the terms “equality work” and “gender equality and diversity work” are used synonymously. This usage of the term “diversity” differs from the Finnish discourse. For example, in Finnish legislation the term “equality” is used to refer to gender equality. Another

term, which also means equality when translated in English, is used for referring to equality regardless of other personal characteristics than gender. Because I write the thesis in English I have chosen to use the word “diversity” instead of this other term for equality. In Finnish language, however, I would use two different terms, which both mean equality but another one of these refers to gender equality and the one to equality regardless of other personal characteristics. Hence, the discussions regarding the connotations of the term “diversity” cannot be found from the interviews, which I have conducted in Finnish. Also, I do not discuss more about the word diversity here. The main idea of the usage of the term *diversity* is that in this thesis the term “equality” does not refer only to gender equality.

*Intersectionality* is also an important concept for this thesis, although the term itself is not used much in practical equality work in Finland. Shortly, intersectionality means that, for example, it is acknowledged that gender and ethnic background both influence the position of a certain person or a group at the same time, and not only separately. More profound definition can be quoted from Nina Lykke. According to Lykke (2010), intersectionality is a theoretical and methodological tool to analyse how historically specific kinds of power differentials and constraining normativities interact and produce societal inequalities and unjust social relations. These power differentials and normativities are based on constructed socio-cultural categorisations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother tongue and so on. Societal mechanisms can also be theorized by using the concepts of dominance/subordination, in/exclusion, recognition/misrecognition, power/disempowerment, possession/dispossession, privilege/lack of privilege, majoritizing/minoritizing and so on. (Lykke 2010: 50-51)

The term *gender* has been in the centre of many debates in feminism. Especially, after the writings of Judith Butler both gender norms and actual gender have been seen as being in the motion. Gender is constructed and deconstructed through performing gender repeatedly. (Butler 1990) This does not, however, mean that an individual could choose their gender freely. First, performances are read by other people in many different ways, and not necessarily the way an individual might hope for. The same performance can also be read differently in different cultures. Secondly, corporealism reminds us of our bodies, which we cannot choose freely either, although meanings attached to different kind of bodies do change. These philosophical discussions and feminist debates around the term “gender” are relevant background information for this thesis. In practical equality work the meanings attached to the word “gender” change depending on the situation. I argue that equality workers choose the definitions for gender depending on the situation although, similarly as in choosing to use the

term “equality”, the choice of the terms and definitions is very meaningful. In Finland, the new amendment to the national legislation added the definitions of “gender identity and gender expression” into the legislation. I believe that this amendment strengthens the discourse in which gender is not seen as meaning only men and women but as more than two genders.

Regarding the term “gender” I have to discuss briefly about the differences in English and Finnish. In English, the term “gender” usually refers to social gender and the term sex is used for referring biological sex. In Finnish, there is only one word meaning both sex and gender. Hence, it is easier to not to forget bodies when talking about gender in Finnish. Of course, the downside is that biological sex might be emphasised too much and cannot be separated from gender even in simplified examples.

In this thesis, *mainstreaming* means mostly the idea that equality work is mainstreamed in such a way that it is not only a responsibility of certain specialists but, instead, the promotion of equality is everybody’s responsibility in an organisation. The basis for the definition of mainstreaming is in the definitions of gender mainstreaming. The idea of gender mainstreaming is that that a concern for gender equality is brought into the mainstream of activities rather than dealt with as an add-on (*United Nations 2002*) and, as a result, gender concerns are integrated into all policies and programmes (*EIGE 2015b*). Also, it is often specified that gender mainstreaming should be done in an organisation by all its employees as part of their normal work: European Institute of Gender Equality expresses this by stating that the responsibility for implementing gender mainstreaming is with the entire staff, under the leadership of the management (*EIGE 2015b*). I discuss further the international commitments to gender mainstreaming later on in this background chapter.

I have chosen to use the term *equality policy* when I refer to written documents for the promotion of equality. They could also be called equality action plans and, when translated literally from Finnish to English, they could be called simply equality plans.

In Finland, equality work in organisations is commonly divided to *internal and external equality work*. The same applies, for example, to Sweden (Callerstig 2014: 48). Respectively, equality policies are divided into internal equality policies and external equality policies. Internal equality policies are understood as equality initiatives for the promotion of equality of the workers inside the organisation. Internal equality is hence related to human resource management. The aim of external equality policies, on the other hand, is to change the core activities and the services provided by the organisation. External equality policies are used in public sector organisations. (*ibid.*: 52) In this thesis I focus on external equality work in

Finnish ministries. However, I do not completely exclude the aspects of internal equality because they are also related to each other. It is important to note that I do not focus on human resource management issues but, instead, I focus on the core policies and strategies in the ministries.

I use the term *equality worker* when I refer to the officials I interviewed in different ministries. I also include myself in this category. The term is useful: this way I can group different officials whose tasks include the promotion of equality. However, the category is also problematic because the categorisation may imply that these different officials would be in very similar positions in their ministries, which is not necessarily the case. Also, the power of categorisation can be problematic in creating certain stories and ways of seeing things but also silencing other ways of seeing. I discuss about the power of categorisations in more detail in the methodologies section of this thesis.

My thesis deals with organisations. An *organisation* can be understood broadly to mean a social unit of people that is structured in some ways. For example, a family could be seen as an organisation. However, when I discuss organisations in this thesis I refer to a more narrow understanding of an organisation. An organisation is a formal institution which has certain common goals and which employs people to work on these common goals. My thesis also specifically focuses on public organisations, namely ministries. Next, I provide an introduction to ministries as organisations.

## Ministries and Their Organisational Goals and Tasks

Ministries are part of the government and responsible for governmental public administration. Each of them is specialized on certain sector or sectors of public administration. The mandates and organisational goals of different ministries are based on their responsibility areas. For example, in Finland the Ministry for Foreign Affairs deals with Finland's relations with foreign states. For another example, the Ministry of Justice handles issues concerning the judicial system, legislation and prison administration. Altogether there are twelve ministries in Finland. (*Finnish Government* n.d. -d)

Regardless of their responsibility areas, most of the ministries are responsible for planning the budget of the ministry, preparation of legislative proposals, conducting other projects and programmes, and supervising public agencies under the supervision of the ministry. In this thesis, the interviewees refer to these tasks also as key functions. The key functions are, of course, also related to the responsibility areas. For example, the Ministry of Employment and Economics is responsible for preparing the legislative proposals regarding

industries, business and employment. Some legislations are also prepared in cooperation with different ministries.

Finland is a democratic republic, and the organisation of the Finnish government follows the principles of parliamentarism. In Finnish parliamentarism, the Government is the preparatory and executive body which produces material for the Parliament to consider, approve or reject (Laine 2015). The Parliament of Finland has the legislative power and it also takes the most important decisions related to State finances. One of the ministries, the Prime Minister's Office, has the executive power in the government. For example, although different ministries are responsible for writing legislative proposals, the Parliament takes the decisions. In Finland, the legislative acts adopted by Parliament are also submitted to the President of Finland for confirmation. (*Finnish Government* n.d. -e) Normally there are no conflicts in between the President and the Government, or between the President and Parliament (Laine 2015).

The government programme is a strategic programme, which sets out the main tasks for the incoming administration for the next parliamentary term. The programme of the current Government of Finland was submitted to the Parliament on May 2015. (*Finnish Government* n.d. -c) The government programme and its action plan assign many tasks and strategic focuses for different ministries. Usually, the Finnish government has also drawn up an action plan for the promotion of gender equality.

In addition to the government programme, each ministry has its own strategy. For example, the strategic priorities of the Ministry of Education and Culture are to maintain the attraction of education and culture, enhance the competitiveness of Finnish society, sustain the vigour of the regions and environments, and to promote inclusion and communality. In addition to the strategy of the ministry, there are also more detailed sector-specific strategies and development programmes. (*The Ministry of Education and Culture* n.d.) These strategies and policies are usually valid for a certain period of time but do not necessarily change in the beginning of every new parliamentary term.

Each ministry is led by one or several ministers. Ministers are chosen in the beginning of the new parliamentary term. The Prime Minister is elected by the Parliament and also formally appointed by the President. The President appoints the other ministers in accordance with a proposal made by the Prime Minister. (*Finnish Government* n.d. -a)

Finland is a member of the European Union. The main responsibilities for the preparation, monitoring and determination of EU affairs in the Finnish government rest with the relevant ministries. (*Finnish Government* n.d. -b) In an EU country, for example, many

legislative amendments are based on the decisions made together in the European Parliament. Mostly, ministries are funded by national tax money. In addition, European Union provides some funding for public organisations. The national annual government budget is drafted by the Ministry of Finance.

To summarize, ministries are public organisations, which are responsible for different tasks of governmental public administration. In Finland the organisational strategies, goals and tasks of each ministry depend on their mandates for different responsibility areas, on the current government programme, on their own strategies, and on the minister or ministers leading them. The decisions made in the European Parliament also impact the governmental strategies and new national legislative proposals.

## Equality Legislation in Finland

Equality legislation plays a significant part in the promotion of equality in Finnish public and private sector organisations. Hence, it is meaningful to provide an introduction to the Finnish equality legislation in this thesis. The current legislation sets also boundaries for political choices: the current parliament cannot choose to not to apply the laws, although it can change laws in the long run.

The promotion of equality has been one of the aims of the Finnish public sector for many decades. The *Act on Equality in Between Women and Men (Finlex 1986)* has required public sector authorities to promote gender equality since 1987. Since the beginning of 2015 the act also prohibits explicitly discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression. Promoting equality on other grounds than gender has been required by the *Act on Equality* since 2004 (*Finlex 2004, 2014*). These other personal characteristics mentioned in the act are: age, origin, citizenship, language, religion, belief, opinion, political actions, trade union actions, family relations, health, disabilities, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. The *Act on Equality* has also been translated as *Non-Discrimination Act* but I refer to it with a more direct translation. Also the Constitutional Law (*Finlex 1999*) states that no one should be discriminated, children should be treated equally and as individuals, and gender equality should be promoted. The constitutional law was re-written in 1999 but also the earlier constitutional laws included principles about equality. Next I will describe the content of the two equality acts.

Both equality acts consist of the following elements: they prohibit discrimination based on certain personal characteristics, require organisations to promote equality, regulate the monitoring of the law, and regulate the compensations, which can be assigned based on the

law. The regulations regarding the promotion of equality are the most relevant to this thesis because the thesis focuses on equality work and equality policies which aim is to promote equality. Hence, I focus on the regulations regarding the promotion of equality in more detail.

The requirements to promote equality in Finnish public organisations are summarized in table 1. The table does not include the exact citations from the acts but summarizes the main requirements.

	Act on Equality in Between Women and Men (609/1986)	Act on Equality (1325/2014)
Requirements to promote <i>internal equality</i> by organisations, which employ personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An employer must promote equality between women and men within working life in a purposeful and systematic manner. (6 §)</li> <li>- A <i>gender equality policy</i> is required if an employer regularly has a personnel of at least 30 employees. (6 a §)</li> <li>- A gender equality policy has to include measures to promote gender equality, an assessment of the equality of the work place, an assessment and measures of the equal pay in between men and women, and to prevent gender discrimination, including the discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An employer has to assess the equality of the work place and develop the working conditions and procedures of employing personnel and making decisions that influence on the personnel, based on the needs of the working place. (7 §)</li> <li>- An <i>equality policy (diversity policy)</i> is required if an employer regularly has a personnel of at least 30 employees. (7 §)</li> <li>- Equality plan has to include measures to promote equality regardless of age, origin, citizenship, language, religion, belief, opinion, political actions, trade union actions, family relations, health, disabilities, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.</li> </ul>
Requirements to promote <i>external equality</i> by public organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In all their activities, authorities must promote equality between women and men purposefully and systematically. Similarly, the promotion of equality has to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The authority has to assess the equality of its functions and develop measures for promoting equality. (5 §)</li> <li>- An <i>equality policy (diversity policy)</i> is</li> </ul>

<p>and educational institutions</p>	<p>taken into account in public services. (4 §)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In particular, circumstances which prevent the attainment of gender equality must be changed.</li> <li>– The composition of public administration bodies and bodies exercising public authority: the proportion of both women and men must be at least 40 per cent, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. (4 a §)</li> <li>– <i>Educational institutions are required to have a gender equality policy from the perspective of the students (5 a §)</i></li> </ul>	<p>required if an employer regularly has a personnel of at least 30 employees. (5 §)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Educational institutions are required to have an equality policy (diversity policy) from the perspective of the students (i.e. not only from the perspective of the personnel employed by the educational institute) (6 §)</i></li> </ul>
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Table 1 Requirements to promote external and internal equality in Finnish public sector organisations

Both equality acts include regulations about drawing up certain equality policies. In the table 1 the required policies are in italic. The requirements are very similar in case of promoting internal equality: both equality acts require all organisations, which employ regularly at least 30 people, to draw up internal equality policies, i.e. policies to promote equality among their own personnel. This requirement for internal equality policies has been in the *Act on Equality in Between Women and Men* since 1995 and in the *Equality Act* since 2004 for public organisations and since the beginning of 2015 for private and public sector organisations. According to the laws, these two policies can also be combined into one, or included in other documents, but they have to include measures to promote equality of the personnel.

In addition to internal equality policies, public organisations and all educational institutions which organise statutory education are required to promote external equality. In the promotion of external equality the requirements of the two acts differ. The *Act on Equality in Between Women and Men* does not require public organisations to draw up policies for promoting equality externally. However, the act states that public authorities are required to promote equality in between women and men “purposefully and systematically” in all their

functions and in the services they provide. The act also states that “in particular, circumstances which prevent the attainment of gender equality, must be changed.” The *Equality Act* does require public organisations to draw up a policy to promote external equality. The requirement to write a policy has been in the act since 2004 but it changed significantly in the beginning of 2015. From 2004 to 2015, the policy had to promote at least ethnic equality. Since the beginning of the year 2015 the policy has to promote equality of all the personal characteristics mentioned in the act. The similarity in between the acts is that both of them require public organisations to promote equality in some ways. Also, both acts require educational institutions to draw up an equality policy both from the perspective of the personnel and the students.

The means to promote equality can include both soft and hard law elements. In current legislation there is one example of a hard law element and it is the requirement for gender quotas in public administrative bodies. The required outcome of quotas is very clear: there should be at least 40 % of men and women in every public administration body (*Act on Equality in between Women and Men*, 4 a §). Otherwise the regulations about the promotion of equality consist on soft law elements. The soft law regulations do not state clearly what the outcome of the promotion of equality should be. For example, the requirement to draw up an equality policy can be considered a soft law element because authorities can mainly control the existence of the policies. The authorities do not have good tools for controlling the actual results of the policies. The aim of requiring organisations to do equality policies is to encourage, rather than force, them to promote equality.

By looking at table 1, I can conclude that Finnish ministries are required to have at least three equality policies: an internal gender equality policy, an internal diversity policy, and an external diversity policy. In addition, the ministries are required to promote external gender equality and, despite the fact that the law does not require ministries to draw up external gender equality policies, this requirement has been written in the government gender equality programme for the years 2012 – 2015.

## International Commitments for Promoting Equality

The development of the Finnish equality legislation has been influenced by the European and international commitments. For this reason, I will briefly refer to some of the most significant international commitments for the promotion of equality.

According to the European Commission, the EU acts on behalf of its citizens to prevent them being discriminated against on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief,

disability, age or sexual orientation and sex (*European Commission* 2015). The commitments are based on different directives. Currently, the main European Union's laws regulating employer's responsibilities to promote gender equality and diversity are: directive 2006/54/EC on equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (*EUR-Lex* 2006), the employment equality directive 2000/78/EC (*EUR-Lex* 2000b), and the racial equality directive 2000/43/EC (*EUR-Lex* 2000a). The directive regulates also gender equality in supply of goods and services: there is a directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (*EUR-Lex* 2004). There is also a proposal for a directive against discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief beyond the workplace (*EUR-Lex* 2008).

The European Union supports also the promotion of gender equality and diversity through strategies. The current European strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 focuses on equal economic independence, equal pay, equality in decision-making, and ending gender-based violence (*European Commission* 2010). Gender equality and anti-racism are also supported by different institutions. The European Institute for Gender Equality EIGE is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality (*EIGE* 2015a). European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance ECRI, on the other hand, is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts who monitor problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as "race", national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination) and prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States (*ECRI* 2014). These two organisations are not comparable but both are worth mentioning.

One of the goals of the United Nations is to support human rights. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR brought human rights into the realm of international law. (*United Nations* n.d.) Also, there are several conventions about gender equality and non-discrimination. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination CERD, which entered into force in 1969, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW, which entered into force in 1981.

International basis for the promotion of gender equality through gender mainstreaming is based on signing the Beijing Platform for Action (*Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* 1995). In the European Union gender mainstreaming was adopted as a principle in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 and is now included in the Lisbon Treaties.

To conclude, Finnish equality legislation and governmental strategies are influenced by the European Union and other international commitments. There are many similarities in the equality legislation in Finland and in the European Union. Different focuses and the development of the Finnish equality legislation in dialogue with the international legislation have been studied by different authors, for example, Kevät Nousiainen and Anu Pylkkänen (Nousiainen and Pylkkänen 2001), and Karoliina Ahtela, Niklas Bruun, Pirkko Koskinen, Anja Nummijärvi, and Jorma Saloheimo (Ahtela et al. 2006).

## Chapter III: Theoretical Framework

### Introduction to Theories

Shortly, a theory is a set of concepts used to define or explain a phenomenon. Behind the theory there is an overall framework for looking at reality. An overall framework includes the ontological questions, such as what can be said to exist. (Silverman 2013: 112) Many feminist theories, concepts and theoretical frameworks have had an influence on my thinking and on the thesis. As I described in the introductory section, I have been working for changing organisations for almost ten years, and in Linköping university I have studied in gender studies programme called intersectionality and change. During this time of working and studying I have also questioned the meaningfulness of change work. Feminist theories have provided useful concepts and frameworks for analysing my own work and the organisations and work places I have been consulting. For this reason I believe that theories can be useful for practical equality workers. Also, the equality workers I interviewed for this thesis refer to both theoretical and practical knowledge and personal experiences.

Feminist theories include a wide variety of different kind of theories. The reason for this variety is that feminist studies is a multidisciplinary, or postdisciplinary as Nina Lykke argues (Lykke 2010: 14-30), subject. Shortly, feminist studies have focused on theories about gender/sex. Intersectional gender studies focus on the intersections between gender/sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class and so on. Feminist studies and theories have also developed in dialogue with and as a part of feminist movements and political activism (Lykke 2010: 14-30). I could continue saying that feminist studies have also developed in dialogue with

practical equality workers, although I think that we would need even more forums for this dialogue between researchers and practical equality workers.

In this chapter I focus on those feminist theories, which I use for analysing equality work in this thesis. I chose to use mainly theories of three authors. The decision was based on wanting to use the knowledge I had gained in Linköping University: all these authors were introduced to all of us during the official program. Also, the ideas of these three authors relate very well to my interview material. Thirdly, especially the writings by a Swedish author Anne-Charlott Callerstig describe the context of equality work very similarly to the context I have experienced in Finland. I believe that the usage of their theory adds to the Nordic discussion in a meaningful way.

## Theories about Equality Work

Next, I introduce theories about equality work and gender mainstreaming. Debra Meyerson has created a concept of a tempered radical. As I already shortly mentioned in the introductory chapter, a tempered radical is someone, who works inside an organisation and supports the overall objectives of the organisation but also acknowledges the unequal practices in the organisation and wants to change them (Meyerson and Scully 1995). Tempered radicals are often people who partly fit in their organisations but also fit in other communities which shares different kinds of values. This position of partly belonging into different communities with different values creates the ambivalence. In order to survive in an ambivalent situation, tempered radicals find people who affirm those part of themselves which do not get conformed in their work places. This is necessary because work life is often full of relationships which affirm identities of the majority culture, but tempered radicals need to find also people with other kinds of identities and experiences. The same ambivalence also creates a desire to change the organisation and its practices to, for example, being more inclusive, less misogynist or less racist. (Meyerson 2001: 13-15)

The concept of a tempered radical focuses on the identities of tempered radicals. Debra Meyerson focuses especially on identities based on gender, sexuality and ethnic background. However, at the same time the category of a different identity is kept open. Meyerson has found the tempered radicals from different American companies by arranging interviews with senior-level employees who had an “identity of difference” or who described themselves as change agents or progressive in comparison to their organisations. (Meyerson 2001: 177) Some examples of tempered radicals include a woman executive who identifies as a feminist in a non-feminist “traditional male-dominated” organisation, a male business school professor

who embraces values directly in contrast to capitalist corporations, and an African-American architect who can identify with their ethnic community and be committed to creating a more equitable and healthy urban environment (Meyerson and Scully 1995).

Tempered radicals use different strategies in changing their organisations. These change strategies are: resisting quietly and staying true to one's self, turning personal threats into opportunities, broadening the impact through negotiation, leveraging small wins, and organising collective action. (Meyerson 2001: 8) The actions for change can be very subtle. For example, the action can be a very polite but questioning comment on homophobic speech at work place. They can also be more organised and collective. They can include asking assistance from third parties and organising collective action. In organising collective actions Meyerson emphasises that also the differences within a collective need to be dealt with. This helps to deal with differences among the members of a collective and also enabling commitment to a common purpose. (ibid.: 37-138)

Although the tempered radicals Debra Meyerson focuses on have not been employed to do change work in their organisations, many equality workers find themselves from the definition. For example, similar feelings of ambivalence can be found from the expressions of the diversity workers Sara Ahmed interviewed in Australia and the United Kingdom. They express, for example, that they experience their institutions “as resistance” and their job as banging-your-head-on-the-brick-wall-job (Ahmed 2012: 26). Similarities can also be found in who they are: in their identities and even in their bodies. Also, there are similarities in the change strategies equality workers, or diversity workers as Ahmed describes them, are using. I introduce Ahmed's theories by beginning from the change strategies.

Sara Ahmed (2012) argues that words in diversity work are used in a strategic way. For example, diversity workers choose their words based on their experience of which words can “get through” and make assumptions about what different audiences can hear. Diversity workers switch in between different languages. In addition, the usage of data plays a role here. Data can be used by diversity workers for gaining more validity and acceptance for their work. According to Ahmed, data can become a technology for exposing the gap between official descriptions of diversity and what the organisation is doing. Ahmed argues that one of the interesting things in diversity work is that diversity can be used as a tool to get the message through and change institutions. (Ahmed 2012: 55-78) As described above, also tempered radicals choose their words carefully and negotiate in different ways in different situations. I conclude that equality workers who are employed in an organisation for making

change have to use partly the same strategies in change work as those tempered radicals who are not employed for making the change.

In addition to noting that the word “diversity” can be a useful tool for change, Sara Ahmed also criticises the usage of the word. Diversity might become an empty container. The positive aspect is that different kind of institutional actions can be included under diversity work. However, sometimes the usage of the term diversity means that diversity work becomes detached from histories of struggle over inequalities. Ahmed suggests that in that case the histories and different inequalities should be reattached to diversity work. (Ahmed 2012: 80) The notion that diversity can be an empty container comes close to the arguments some authors have made about gender equality and gender mainstreaming. As described earlier, gender equality can also become an empty container. (Verloo 2005) Similarly, the solution would be to discuss the histories and different inequalities and attach meaning to this empty container. However, this is not a simple solution because detachment is a negotiation tactic which has been chosen for a reason, and it implies that there is resistance towards discussing about inequalities. The theories by Ahmed seem to be understanding towards these difficulties.

Sara Ahmed also provides theories which explain the reasons why change might not happen. One of them is the concept of non-performative. As an opposite to performative, non-performative describes the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse does not produce the effects that it names (Ahmed 2012: 117). According to Ahmed equality work can sometimes be non-performative. Ahmed provides many examples of non-performative equality work. For example, one of the diversity practitioners Ahmed interviewed argued that “you end up doing the document rather than doing the doing” (ibid.: 86). Also, Ahmed explains that it can happen that the existence of the equality document is taken as evidence that the institution is equal. Instead of creating more equality the writing of the document might actually conceal the inequalities. (ibid.: 100) These examples of the non-performative equality work provide an interesting framework for looking at equality work. Although they might sound depressing, they also help practitioners in their frustration. They describe the ambivalent environment in which equality workers work: they are part of an organisation and they use the language to support the organisation but they also have a task of questioning the current practices and they use the language of questioning the organisation in such a way that they can enable the change within.

In addition to the concept of non-performative, I introduce Ahmed’s theory about diversity work as “a feel good politics”. This theory explains why diversity work might not

change much. In this Ahmed builds on some other authors, such as bell hooks (hooks 1992). Diversity becomes something that can be celebrated and consumed and the fact that the organisation is racist and unjust in many ways is forgotten. (Ahmed 2012: 69-72) Although the focus on diversity rather than equality makes a difference, I can argue that in some ways similar feel good politics is familiar to equality workers who use the term equality. In Nordic countries in particular, gender equality is often proudly presented as something that has been achieved and ought to be celebrated but not questioned.

Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014) has studied the implementation of equality policies in public sector organisations. Their dissertation is based on the case studies about gender mainstreaming initiatives in Swedish municipalities and in one governmental agency. One of the theories Callerstig uses in analysing the implementation processes is a theoretical model for the analysis of the implementation equality policies (Callerstig 2014: 82-91). In this model the political nature of policy implementation is taken into account by analysing the level of conflict and ambiguity of the initiative. Callerstig builds on the theory by Matland (1995) and argues that many equality initiatives tend to have a high degree of both conflict and ambiguity. However, there are differences between different equality initiatives and equality strategies. For example, Callerstig argues that gender mainstreaming initiatives often have a high degree of ambiguity but low degree of conflict. Callerstig also adds that ambiguity can reduce resistance towards the initiative. (Callerstig 2014: 82-91) In this notion the model comes close to the theories about the strategies used in equality work by Sara Ahmed. The description of diversity or equality as an empty container illustrates high levels of ambiguity. The theoretical model Callerstig provides helps in analysing the choice of different strategies. The levels of conflict and ambiguity also impact the implementation.

Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014) provides a framework for analysing the dilemmas of equality work in public sector organisations. According to Callerstig, many dilemmas in equality work are based on the concepts of gender, change and equality. The dilemmas can be analysed by dividing these three concepts under the negotiations in theoretical and practical questions. A theoretical question regarding gender is how gender should be understood in different contexts. A practical question regarding gender is what the impact of gender is in relation to the service provided. Similarly, a theoretical question regarding equality is how equality should be understood in relation to mainstream policy areas, and a practical question is, what the goal of the equality initiative should be. For example, whether the goal of equality is inclusive, reversal or displacement. A theoretical question regarding change is how gender relations, processes and practices change. A practical question regarding change is how a

strategy for change should be designed and what measures could be used. (Callerstig 2014: 131) Callerstig also argues that equality workers use the dilemmas actively in strategies for change (ibid.: 143).

## Theories about Discourses in Feminist Politics

Next, I introduce two theories about discourses in feminist politics. These theories have greatly influenced on the understanding of different kind of change strategies in feminist politics and also in analysing change strategies and language used in equality work. Although I am not primarily using them as theories in analysing my interviews, they influence the background of my thinking and, for example, Anne-Charlott Callerstig refers to their work, too.

Judith Squires (2007) describes different change strategies with the concepts of inclusion, reversal and displacement. Shortly, the meanings of these concepts could be explained by saying that in inclusion women are included and present, in reversal women's perspective is taken into account, and in displacement the whole system or organisation is transformed through a process. Squires also uses the concepts of presence, voice and process to describe these three strategies. (Squires 2007) Although Squires refers to the politics of gender equality, and the different strategies can also be seen as a historical development of gender equality politics, their theory and its concepts have also been used in analysing equality work in a wider context. Especially, different authors have tried to create strategies for transformative equality politics.

Emanuela Lombardo, Petra Meier and Mieke Verloo (2009) provide a theoretical framework for analysing the processes which shape the political discourses regarding gender equality. Although the framework focuses on political discourses in a broader context, I find that this framework is useful also for analysing the discourses used in equality work. Their concepts can also help in creating transformative equality strategies. According to Lombardo, Meier and Verloo, the processes through which the meanings of gender equality change can be analysed by using the concepts of fixing, stretching, shrinking and bending. Fixing means freezing the meaning of gender equality. The legislation regarding gender equality is a good example of fixing the meaning. This fixing is a result of discursive struggle and the law is an achievement of the struggle. Although fixing is a useful tactic in feminism, gender equality can also lose part of its dynamics when it is fixed this way to one particular understanding. Stretching means that the meaning of gender equality is stretched to include also other goals, such as diversity. The meanings can also shrink into just certain goals. The concept of

bending means that the meaning of gender equality is bent towards some other goal, such as economic growth. (Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo 2009) Also, the discourses regarding equality work inside organisations can be analysed through these concepts.

## Chapter IV: Research Process, Methodologies, Methods and Ethics

In this chapter, I will first discuss the aims of feminist knowledge production and the epistemologies that influence this study. Secondly, I will explain my choice of methods and methodologies, describe the research process of writing this thesis, and discuss on ethics.

### Epistemologies and Methodologies

Methodology in social research focuses on procedures for making knowledge valid and authoritative (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 9). There is no such thing as a feminist methodology but feminism has a long history in questioning and continuing the discussions on epistemological questions, i.e. the questions regarding the criteria of the production of scientific knowledge. In addition, because epistemologies, methodologies, methods and ethics are interrelated, these discussions are not just philosophical epistemological discussions but influence also on the choices at the practical level of conducting research. (Lykke 2010: 125 - 144) I begin by shortly reflecting on the epistemological questions and then continue by explaining the methodological choices for my study.

The idea that science and knowledge producing practices do not simply follow their own internal development and logic but are part of society is shared by many feminists and other critical epistemologists (Lykke 2010: 128). This kind of perspective on science means that scientific ideals and practices are questioned perhaps more than traditionally. However, at the same time feminist academics have not just thrown away science and its ideals. Instead, feminists have questioned and developed epistemological thinking and the practices of knowledge production in many different ways.

Nina Lykke categorises different epistemologies feminists have developed into four categories. I introduce these different epistemologies shortly, and then discuss a few of them in relation to this thesis. Building on Sandra Harding, Lykke presents the first three feminist epistemologies: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemology and postmodern feminist anti-epistemology. The aim of feminist empiricism is to make women visible in science, for example, to study also women. The aim of feminist standpoint epistemology is

that women, or specific groups of marginalized and oppressed women, have a better access to potentially transformative insight into the existing hegemonic gender orders. Hence, both the standpoint of the researcher and researched are acknowledged as meaningful. The aim of postmodern feminist anti-epistemology is to question and deconstruct the foundations of scientific knowledge productions. Postmodern feminist anti-epistemology questions simple categorisations, norms, and the way of treating experiences as authentic and unmediated encounter. Also, the idea of intersectionality is significant for postmodern feminist anti-epistemology: intersectionality provides a way to link together the idea of multiple standpoints and critique the grand master narratives, as is important for postmodernism. In addition to these three categories Lykke adds a fourth category, postconstructionist feminist epistemology, and discusses the traps of relativism under this category. (Lykke 2010: 125 - 143) I continue discussing the different epistemologies in relation to this thesis.

My thesis has been influenced by feminist standpoint epistemology. I have chosen a topic which is very close to my own experiences. I have been working as an equality worker, and I examine equality work in my thesis through interviewing equality workers. It could be argued that I am doing homework rather than fieldwork (Visweswaran 2003). I am, however, not focusing on marginalized and oppressed groups: I am interviewing public servants who are familiar with topics related to marginalization and oppression, but whose work is to change their organisations and to do gender and diversity mainstreaming inside their organisations. It is significant to understand this standpoint, too.

The questions of postmodern feminist anti-epistemology are also relevant to my thesis. My aim is to avoid simple categorisations, such as viewing men and women as simply opposite and excluding categories, and theories based on this kind of categorisations. One of the strongest categorisation and identity, which I create in my thesis, is a category of an equality worker. While I need this category in order to tell about my experiences and the experiences of my interviewees, the category is also in many ways problematic. For example, I group different kind of people with different kind of work tasks into this category. However, none of them got their position by replying to a job announcement for an equality worker. Instead, I chose them based on their memberships in some of the equality working groups. For some of the interviewees, equality work is only a small part of their tasks. Some of the interviewees are specialised in equality work, but either on gender equality or diversity. By naming them as equality workers their positions might appear too similar. Also, although they willingly use the categories equality work and equality worker in the interviews, this is also influenced by me and my questions. I needed the terms in order to explain my study, and in

order to ask questions. At the same time, the terms and categorisations shape our discussions. Postmodern feminist anti-epistemology also problematises the idea that experiences collected in research are spontaneous, authentic and discursively unmediated. Similarly, the experiences my interviewees discuss can be problematised. They are telling their stories in a particular situation, for a particular reason, and I am writing my thesis in a particular situation, aiming to tell a comprehensive story a reader can follow. I believe this story needs to be told because the hidden everyday knowledge of equality workers is not discussed enough. However, at the same time I might hide other ways of seeing. I encourage also other ways of seeing and analysing the results of this study.

The discussions regarding the traps of relativism and totalitarianism are also relevant here. I have experienced that the question of breaking categorisations and avoiding both relativization and totalization are also significant in practical equality work. An equality worker has to be able to convince others that there are differences, for example, between the experiences of women and men. They have to convince others that there are oppressed groups and that systematic oppression exists. At the same time, an equality worker has to avoid stereotyping or silencing other oppressed experiences. Both traps of falling into relativization (everybody is in a unique position and oppressed groups disappear from the view) and falling into totalization (universalizing one kind of perspective, such as viewing all women as oppressed) are familiar for equality workers. Epistemologically, totalization and relativization both share the basic shortcomings, which are, as Nina Lykke describes them, a lack of bodily concrete and critically contextualized reflexive localizing of the epistemic position of the knower (Lykke 2010: 136). Both equality workers and feminist researchers need to find ways to overcome these shortcomings of relativization and totalization.

Feminist authors have developed different methodologies in order to overcome the problems of positivism, totalization and relativization. For example, Donna Haraway has stressed acknowledging situated knowledges and partial objectivity. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have created a concept of rhizomatic knowledge production which refers to the movement of the underground plant stems. Rosi Braidotti argues that the research process should be seen as a nomadic and rhizomatic course of events where all concepts are in motion. (Lykke 2010: 136-150) The concepts of rhizomatic and nomadic describe how research and writing can allow multiple, non-hierarchical and non-dichotomous data analysis and interpretations (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). My aim is to situate myself and my research as well as I can and keep my categorisations and knowledge production in motion.

This study is influenced by ethnographic methodology. Ethnographies usually imply the usage of various methods of collecting data, such as observation, interviews and document analysis (Brewer 2004). Since I had to limit the scope of my thesis, I chose to rely mainly on the interviewees. While feminist authors have conducted ethnographies, they have also criticised them. As Kamala Visweswaran puts it, there are two epistemological shifts which mark decolonization as an ongoing process in feminist ethnographical studies. According to Visweswaran, the first one is that the category of gender is no more the centre of feminist theory, and the other one is that the field is no more the centre of anthropology. (Visweswaran 2003) I have chosen my field, the topic and the organisations I study, close to my home. Yet, as I have pondered above, these epistemological questions are also meaningful for this thesis.

## Research Questions

My main research question is:

- Which issues influence the content of equality work?

In addition, I ask the following questions which are based on the themes repeated in the interviews, and also support the main question:

- How is equality work organised?
- What kind of strategies are used in equality work?
- What kind of equality negotiations are there?
- Where does equality work get stuck?
- How do politics influence the content of equality work?
- How do equality workers learn about equality?

## Methods of Collecting and Analysing Empirical Material

For a method of gathering empirical material, I chose to conduct in-depth interviews of equality workers in Finnish ministries. In addition, I have used some written materials, such as equality policies. Next I will describe the research process and the methods I used.

For this thesis I interviewed six equality workers who talked about their experiences of doing equality work in three different Finnish ministries. I chose people who are or have been secretaries or chairmen in some of the equality groups in their ministries. Five of them are or have been secretaries of their equality working groups, and one is a chairman of the equality

working group. I would also like to note here that the position of a secretary is a position for a senior advisor, not a technical secretary. All of the interviewees have been involved in drawing up equality policies. Based on my observation, three of the interviewees are women and three of them are men. I did not ask their own views of their gender identity, so I cannot analyse their genders in more detail. Also, I refer to my interviews with the pronoun they because this helps me to provide anonymity for them. However, I also think that it is significant to note that the interviewees include both men and women.

I wanted to interview both those equality workers who had been involved in gender equality issues and those who had been involved in diversity issues. All of the interviewees discussed both gender equality and diversity but in their work they had mainly been specialised in either one or the other. Because of this specialisation I ended up interviewing several persons from the same ministries. Hence, my six interviews cover equality work made in three ministries. While this requirement of interviewing both gender and diversity specialists limited the number of ministries my research could cover, I find it extremely important that I can discuss both gender equality and diversity work in this thesis. Diversity and gender equality work have many similarities and some differences, and I believe it is very fruitful to study them together in order to see the similarities in particular. Also, studying both gender equality and diversity provides more possibilities for focusing on intersectionality.

The choice of the ministries and people I interviewed comes close to purposeful sampling, although there are also elements of convenience sampling. The main goal of purposive sampling is to choose sample based on particular characteristics in such a way that the sample will best enable to answer to the research questions. (Lund Research Ltd 2012) Convenience sampling means that the sample is chosen based on availability and accessibility. (Bryman and Bell 2003) As I have described above, I had many requirements regarding the people I wanted to interview: they had to be from several ministries and I wanted to interview both equality workers specialised in gender equality and diversity issues. Also, I thought it would be good to find both men and women to interview. Hence, my sampling was purposeful. I found my interviewees through first contacting the secretaries or chairmen of the ministries' equality groups and asking who would be the right person to interview. However, at this point I contacted five ministries. The two were left out because I already got enough people to interview from the first three ministries. Also, in the two ministries I contacted but did not find interviewees, the persons responsible for equality and diversity issues had recently changed and it seemed difficult to find the right people to talk to. Leaving out those two ministries from which I could not find an active member of the equality

working group willing to do the interview, could be called convenience sampling. I think this was a good choice because I wanted to conduct in-depth interviews in a relaxed atmosphere. Trying to force a busy official to do this kind of an interview is not possible. Especially in ethnographic studies, convenience sampling is used for this kind of reasons (Bryman and Bell 2003).

The mixture of purposeful sampling and convenience sampling has an impact on my empirical material. The impact is that this thesis does not describe an average ministry. I estimate that there are also several other Finnish ministries in which equality work is organised similarly to the ministries I chose for my study. Then, there are some ministries in which equality work is not as organised as in the ministries I describe in my study. In other words, I have chosen to interview people from those ministries which have done more equality work than some of the ministries that I did not include in my study.

I grouped the interview questions under five topics. The complete questionnaire is attached to the end of the thesis. The interviews were semi-structured. I asked many clarifications, examples and new questions, when something interesting came up. This method of asking new questions about interesting incidents and issues that came up is influenced by critical incident technique. In critical incident technique the interviewer aims to find certain incidents, which have meaning for the interviewee, and then focus on those incidents by asking detailed questions (Chell 2004). However, I am not fully using the critical incident technique: in comparison to critical incident technique I focused more on my list of questions and asked only certain new questions and clarifications. Also, in my analysis I am not describing the whole narratives and the context around the important incidents. Instead, in my analysis I focus on the occurring common themes that came up in different interviews, and break different stories in pieces and present them under the themes. I chose to work this way with semi-structured interviews mainly because I felt that it was ethically a safer choice than telling detailed narratives from each interviewee.

All the interviews covered the five topics, which are:

- the functioning of the equality groups
- the process of drawing up equality policies
- perspectives and views about equality and gender
- the skills required in equality work
- the measurement of equality

I had planned that each interview would take from one hour to one hour and half. Five of the interviews took approximately this amount of time. In these interviews, I felt that the atmosphere was very relaxed and that there was time to ask clarifications and examples. One of the interviews took only half an hour because there was no more time for the interview. This interview was also different from the other interviews because the interviewee was the chairman of the equality working group. It was interesting to interview the chairman in addition to interviewing the secretaries. After this interview I, however, chose to interview secretaries in other ministries because it seemed easier for them to find time to talk with me in a relaxed way which was important in order to get detailed answers and deeper thoughts. The interview meetings were face-to-face meetings and I conducted one of them at my workplace and five of them at interviewees' work places, i.e. in different ministries in the centre of Helsinki. In this way I literally did not go far away from home in order to conduct the interviews. Or, more specifically, I did not go away from my usual working environment.

I conducted the interviews in Finnish and recorded them. After the interviews I transcribed them. In transcribing the speaking I wrote down the sentences as they were: I did not shorten them or change the tone or dialect. However, I also did not accurately transcribe non-verbal sounds or breaks. I added some non-verbal sounds such as laughing into some situations in which it felt especially important. This kind of transcribing serves mainly my needs in getting the verbal information from the interviews. Altogether the transcribed interviews produced 65 pages of transcriptions in Finnish. I translated those quotes which I use in the thesis to English. I tried not to change the tone of my interviewees' voices in translation. The original Finnish quotes are attached to the end of the thesis.

I analysed the interviews by doing thematic analysis. In order to do this I used the guidance of the seven steps in which the transcribed interviews are processed through following phases: raw text, relevant text, repeating ideas, themes, theoretical constructs, theoretical narratives, research concerns. According to Auerbach and Silverstein, these are the steps for grounded theory coding. (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003: 35-76) I found the detailed instructions to work with repeating ideas and themes useful and created the data files accordingly. This way I could not only look at what different interviewees had answered to a certain question but also see similar themes and repeating ideas that came up during all the interviews in response to all questions. However, since my aim was not to do grounded theory, I do not follow the guidance provided by Auerbach and Silverstein in developing theoretical constructs, narratives and research concerns. For example, the written outcome of

my analysis differs from the guidance provided by Auerbach and Silverstein: I provide longer citations and do not change them into third person. The aim of this is to transfer the tone of the interviews in more un-touched way and provide more space for a reader to do their own conclusions, too.

In addition to the interviews, I have also used other empirical material. The main additional sources of empirical material are the written equality policy documents I collected from all the Finnish ministries. However, I am not analysing or comparing them in detail: they provide background material for me in order to understand the interviews. Also, my own experiences as an equality consultant influence the thesis but I do not systematically use these experiences as empirical material. I could also have used other empirical material, such as meeting memos of the ministries equality working groups. It would have been very interesting not to limit my study to Finnish ministries but do comparisons with other countries. However, I had to limit the empirical material and the scope of my study to fit into the limitations set for the Master's thesis and my time schedule.

## Ethical Concerns

One of the main ethical concerns in research involving interviews is to get the consent of the interviewees. In studying certain feminist topics, such as homophobia or the usage of power, providing detailed information about the study might impact the interviewees too much. (Ramazanoglu, Caroline 2002: 57) In case of this thesis, it was not very problematic to get the interviewees' consent to participate in the study. Also, I was able to talk about my interests in ministries' equality policies and equality work directly, since it is not a sensitive topic in a similar way as some other feminist topics. In order to be able to change my focus in the analysis phase I also told them that I am not yet sure which questions I will focus on in my thesis when I was conducting my interviews. I offered my interviewees a possibility to read and comment the citations I finally used from their interviews. Four of them used this possibility and made minor corrections to their quotes and minor other comments regarding the issues they talk in their quotes. In addition, two interviewees answered that their quotes were correct as such. I also asked whether they want me to identify the quotes I use in the thesis with individual interviewee numbers. One person answered no to this question and I am not identifying from which interviewee each quote is coming from. Instead, I have numbered all the quotes so that they can be connected to the original Finnish quotes which are attached to the end of the thesis.

One of the ethical concerns in getting the consent of the interviewees is related to their awareness of the nature of research activity in general and the specific instance that the researcher represents (Ramazanoglu, Caroline 2002: 57). This was not very problematic in my research: I was able to explain my topic to the interviewees well because equality work is part of their professional skills as well as mine. I felt that we talk the same language when I was conducting my interviews. People employed in these positions in the ministries also generally have an academic education and, hence, awareness of the nature of research activities and Master's thesis writing. However, during the process of contacting my interviewees and conducting interviews I realized that I had to explain my double position as a consultant and a student carefully. Some of my interviewees knew that I work as a consultant and study in Master's programme at the same time. For some of the interviewees, I had to explain this situation more because they might have felt that I was dishonest if I presented myself only as a student. I believe I got my message across and interviewees are aware of my position.

Although getting interviewees' consent to participate in research was not very problematic in this thesis, I believe that providing anonymity for the interviewees was important. I do not include the names of the interviewees in the research and I do not name the ministries either. By not naming the ministries I provide some level of anonymity for my interviewees. I think this helped them talk more freely with me. However, I cannot promise complete anonymity for my interviewees because quotes might reveal the ministries anyway. By not naming the ministries I am, however, shifting the focus to general issues in the ministries equality work. I am not building my research around three different ministry cases but, instead, connecting the experiences of equality workers in different ministries. The choice to work this way is highly influenced by my ethical concerns in providing my interviewees with the possibility to talk more freely in the interviews.

Sometimes interviewees do not want to stay anonymous. Instead, they want to get their names published and get credit from their participation (Silverman 2013: 172). None of the people I interviewed mentioned that they want to get their names published. I did not specifically ask them whether they want to get their names in the thesis, though. I think the question would have been confusing since I had already told them that I do not include their names.

In addition to getting the consent of the interviewees, there are other ethical concerns. I already took a step in discussing these in the beginning of the chapter when I discussed feminist epistemologies. When feminist epistemologies have, for example, problematised the positivist ideal of value-neutral research, they have also questioned the values, morals and

ethics of doing research (Lykke 2010: 156). I have described that I am aiming for ethical knowledge production through situating myself and my research as well as I can, and by letting my categorisations and knowledge production to keep their motion. In the concluding chapter I estimate how well I managed to do this.

However, even despite the careful epistemological and methodological choices, researcher can never be completely sure that their research is ethical. Nina Lykke describes that scientific research produces realities and worlds, and is never without real effects (Lykke 2010: 159). Also, I aim at creating stories, realities and worlds. I write because I believe that my stories are needed and that they can improve the way we see things. Ethical considerations are hence my reason for writing this thesis. At the same time I am also aware that I might crush some other stories and interpretations of reality and I cannot guarantee that my way of seeing things is better than these other ways of seeing.

While creating stories and realities, I also strengthen certain discourses and ways of seeing things. Jussi Valtonen describes in their fictional novel how different scientific and activist discourses create their own realities and truths. If you follow one path for long enough it looks so convincing that it seems like it has to be the only truth. However, if you follow another path, you find another truth. It seems to me that Valtonen encourages looking for other truths than those which are usually put in the centre in one's own field of research. They also encourage creating dialogue. (Valtonen 2014) I agree with these aims. I strengthen those discourses and ways of seeing I currently believe in, but I also encourage reading multiple stories at the same time. In addition, I hope that, for example, also those people who are not familiar with gender studies can and will read this thesis.

## Chapter V: Results

In this chapter I provide the results of the interviews and in the next chapter I focus on analysing them in more detail. In addition to the interviews I use some written materials, such as the equality policies of the ministries. First, I describe the organisation of equality work through equality working groups and equality policies. Secondly, I discuss about the strategies used in equality work. Specifically, I focus on equality negotiations in the ministries. Thirdly, I examine the places where equality work gets stuck or does not happen despite the statements for promoting equality. I also examine how politics and organisational history influences on equality work. Finally, I discuss about equality workers various perspectives on equality.

## Organisation of Equality Work in the Ministries

Next I describe how ministries have organised their equality work. I describe the functioning of their equality working groups and the content and process of the making of equality policies. The interviews in this study provide examples of gender equality work from three ministries and examples of diversity work from two ministries.

### Equality Working Groups

Based on the interviews and written government materials, there are many similarities in organising equality work in different Finnish ministries. The promotion of external gender equality is organised similarly in many ministries, and also in the three ministries my interviewees talk about. For example, the gender equality working groups seem to function similarly. Considering the organisation of the work for promoting diversity, there seems to be more variation in between different ministries.

Next three examples describe the tasks and functioning of the external gender equality (and in the last example gender equality and diversity) working groups in a similar way in three different ministries:

We have an external gender equality working group whose task is to coordinate and develop gender mainstreaming in the ministry. [...] [We meet] every second month, six times a year. The secretary prepares the issues on the agenda. We have a work plan. The aim of the work plan is to schedule what should be done when annually. The equality policy is our guiding background paper, which we follow. Different departments are represented in this equality working group but not necessarily all the processes. We also invite many specialists to discuss on certain issue, phenomena, process, project or training. 1

We have an external gender equality working group. [...] We have a meeting once in two months. There is a representative from every department in the group, and also from those few units that do not belong to any departments, there is a representative there. The chairman is a department manager of one of the departments. The chairman is also a director general in the departments' executive committee, and also in the minister's executive committee. We work with different kind of topics in the group... [...] Also, the working group drew up a gender equality policy. Somewhat we have also followed how it has been implemented. But we have also decided that the implementation of the policy is followed in the performance agreements [with different agencies]. 2

We have a gender equality and diversity working group in our ministry. We follow the government programme, and we follow equality and diversity issues in human resource management. And, in addition, we promote external gender equality. There is a representative from each department in the working group, and also single units are represented rather well. [...] Last year the group met four times. This year we made this kind of an agreement that we made a schedule for the group, and we are going to have six meetings this year. And when the new government programme is ready, we will assess what kind of actions it requires from the group. 3

All three examples above describe that there is a working group, which meets about six times a year and is responsible for external gender equality issues, and in which different departments are represented. In the third example the same working group is also responsible for coordinating the promotion of internal gender equality and diversity in the ministry. There are also small differences in how the interviewees describe the role of the equality policies. In the first example the gender equality policy is a background paper the group follows. In the second example the gender equality policy is mentioned but instead of focusing on the policy, the interviewee stresses the importance of the performance agreements with different agencies. In the third example, gender equality policy is not discussed at this point but, instead, the government programme is discussed as the guiding policy. I can conclude that although there are differences in the content of gender equality work and the guiding policies and principles, the main structure of organising external gender equality work through working groups is very similar in these three ministries.

Based on the interviews, it seems that although ministries cooperate also in diversity issues, diversity work is less organised in the government level than gender equality work. Hence, the existence and functioning of diversity working groups seems to vary more than the existence and functioning of gender equality working groups. I provide two examples from two different ministries. In the first one there is a diversity working group in addition to the above described gender equality working group. The interviewee describes the functioning of this diversity working group in a following way:

The name of the working group is migration, minority and human rights policy cooperation group. The group deals with the issues which require cooperation across the whole ministry. The majority of the issues dealt within the group focus on migration policies. [...] These public servants who are members of the group, they are also usually the same people whose responsibility it is to take care of the minority, migration and human rights issues in their departments and units. The group seldom meets. Usually we can deal with the issues online. [...] We ask each other to send comments via e-mail. 4

In the example above the functioning of the diversity working group seems different in comparison to the gender equality groups. First, the diversity working group functions mainly via e-mail and does not rely strictly on an annual schedule. Secondly, the diversity group consists of those people who are responsible for minority, migration and human right issues in their departments. This means that the consistence of the group is different in comparison to the gender equality working groups: in the examples interviewees provide about gender equality working groups, only a few people, such as the secretary and a few other people, specialise in equality issues in gender equality working groups. In contrast, this diversity

working group consists of people who are also in some ways specialised in diversity issues among their other work tasks.

The next example of the organisation of gender equality and diversity work is exceptional in comparison to the other examples provided in the interviews. In this example, the promotion of equality is organised through the functioning of four different working groups:

When we began to draw up our gender equality and diversity policies around 2009 or 2010, we had these kind of temporary groups. We had gender equality and diversity planning group. Then we had a group which drew up the general principles. Then, there was a group which focused on the methods of gathering information about gender equality and diversity. And then there was an accessibility survey group. [...] We had four groups. Later on we established the coordination group for gender equality and diversity issues and the work conducted in different groups was in a way combined to this coordination group, after first beginning the work in different groups in an intense way. 5

As described in the quote above, one of the ministries used to have several separate equality groups but today has one coordination group for internal and external gender equality and diversity issues. Another one has separate external gender equality and diversity groups. In the third ministry included in my study, there is an external gender equality group but the interviewee told me that there is no diversity working group in the ministry. Also, another person from the same ministry confirmed via e-mail that there is no diversity policy in the ministry. It might be that this ministry has organized diversity work in some way but it does not include having a diversity working group nor a written diversity policy. I can conclude that the functioning of the equality working groups is rather similar in the three ministries but the organisation of diversity work varies.

### **Ministries' Equality Policies**

Here I describe how many Finnish ministries have external gender equality and diversity policies. I also define their structure and content briefly. Ministries equality policies can play a role in organising equality work in ministries. There are also requirements for having the policies. The requirements to promote external and internal equality in Finnish public sector organisations were summarized in table 1 in the second chapter of the thesis. Shortly, national legislation requires Finnish ministries to have internal gender equality and diversity policies, and an external diversity policy. In addition, the legislation requires ministries to systematically work for improving external gender equality and the governmental programme 2012 – 2015 even requires Finnish ministries to draw up also external gender equality

policies. Next, I examine how many ministries have the required external gender equality and diversity policies.

Equality policies are public documents but only some of them are available online. However, they should be available upon request. In the autumn 2014 I requested Finnish ministries external gender equality policies. At the time I needed the gender equality policies because I was conducting research ordered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health helped me by providing those external gender equality policies which were downloadable from the extranet, to which all ministries have an access. I got seven policies this way. After contacting those ministries, which did not have their policies in the extranet, I got one more policy. The research concludes that in the autumn 2014 eight out of twelve Finnish ministries had external gender equality policies (Tanhua, Mustakallio, and Niemistö 2015). I estimate that the situation a year later is more or less the same, although some ministries are in the process of drawing up their external gender equality policies. I included the policies of the following eight ministries: Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Employment and Economics, Ministry of Finance, Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

In the spring 2015, when I was writing this thesis, I wanted to find out what was the situation with external diversity policies. I sent a request to the registries of all the Finnish ministries to e-mail me their diversity policies required by the *Equality Act*. I got several answers but only four external diversity policies. Some of the ministries sent their internal diversity policies, which did not state anything about external diversity. The lack of having external diversity policies came up also in the interviews. I conclude that all ministries do not have diversity policies, although the Equality Act has required all public organisations to have policies promoting at least ethnic equality since 2004. The four external diversity policies I got hold of, are from the following ministries: Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Employment and Economics, and Ministry of Interior.

The content of seven external gender equality policies follows more or less the same structure based on the key functions and actions categorised under these functions. The key functions usually include: making legislative proposals, planning the budget of the ministry, other projects and programmes, and the administration of the public agencies, which are under the supervision of the ministry. In addition to the key functions, the functions of communication and education are mostly included in the policies. One of the external equality policies, the policy of the Foreign Ministry, has a different kind of structure in comparison to

other policies. The policy does, however, relate to the main functions of this specific ministry. Three of the external gender equality policies are so similar that the main structure seems to be copied. Even the content of the actions is very similar in many policies because some of the actions are written on a very general level. For example, the action might simply state that the gender impact assessment needs to be conducted in all legislative proposals in which it is a meaningful to do. Some of the actions are, of course, more concrete. Some of the policies do not define gender equality in any way but some policies do. Only one policy defines the term gender.

The content of the four external diversity policies varies. The policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture is organised around the key functions and it focuses on the ethnic equality. The policy of the Ministry of Interior defines the challenges they have in functioning in equal and non-discriminatory ways. Also the actions are categorised under the challenges and the policy focuses on equality regardless of ethnic background, language, religion or belief, disabilities, age, sexual identity, gender identity and multiple discrimination. In addition, some of the key functions of the ministry are covered separately. The policy of the Ministry of Employment and Economics covers ethnic equality, language, age and disabilities and the actions are also categorised under the different equalities covered. The policy of the Ministry of Defence mainly states that also the equality regardless of the other personal characteristics mentioned in the Equality Act is promoted in the ministry and that the equality working group is responsible of both gender equality and diversity issues.

### **The Process of Choosing the Structure of Equality Policies**

All of the people I interviewed had been involved in drawing up some of the equality policies in their ministries. I provide their descriptions on how the equality policies were drawn up and how they made decisions regarding the content and structure of the policies.

Here is one example of the process of drawing up an external gender equality policy in the gender equality working group:

It has been the kind of process that the secretary [the interviewee] has worked a lot on. And then it has been developed forward in the working group for many times. That is, the draft has been brought in there. And the starting point has been our general idea of gender mainstreaming, and then there are these key functions. 6

According to the example above, the secretary had a significant role in drawing up the draft of the policy, but also the working group processed the policy consistently. Also, the example above mentions that the external gender equality policy was planned around the key functions.

Another interviewee describes why they decided to write their external diversity policy around the key functions:

We began to draw up [the diversity policy], and at first we thought that its structure will follow our organisation chart, so that there are [...] [our different substance areas there]. But then we realized that the tasks that we do in the ministry in all our different substance areas are very similar: there are similar functions of awarding grants, making legislative proposals, providing guidance by giving information, and so on. So we categorized the tasks according to what we actually do. We made an inventory or how public servants spend their working hours. And after that we drew up [the diversity policy] according to different tasks. It was a good solution. But it meant also that the special issues in each substance area are not covered very well in the policy. The policy is pretty much on the general level. However, there is no such thing as a general legislative proposal or a general grant awarding – all of them are special cases. So this way of writing [the policy] is inevitably a little bit theoretic. 7

I think that this description of how the working group decided upon the structure the equality policy around the key functions is very detailed and interesting. Other ministries might have gone through similar processes before deciding on the structure of their policies. In addition, some have simply taken the example from other ministries' equality policies. The usage of the benchmarking is also mentioned in the interviews.

As mentioned in the quote above, there are pros and cons in structuring the policies around the key functions. According to the interviewees the positive aspects include that this way the policies can be shorter and easier to read. The negative aspects include that the policies might become too general and they might not include examples.

One of the principles in choosing the structure of the policies is that equality policies need to promote equality not only in the ministry but also on the governmental agencies, which are supervised by the ministry. This is illustrated in the following quote: “We also have to take into account the whole spectrum of the administration. This means that we have to take the agencies perspective on our external equality policy.” 8

One of my main interests in conducting the interviews was to find out which issues influence the content of equality work. To summarise, I have now discussed the formal organisation of the equality working groups, such as the principle of including the representation from all the departments in the working groups, and the process of the making of equality policies and choosing the structure of the policy. This information is mainly based on the direct questions about the organisation of equality work and it provides one part of the answer: the organisation of equality work can support the processes of deciding the content of equality work. Also other interview questions brought interesting information about the issues which influence the content of equality work. Some of them are more hidden than the formal organisation of equality work. Next, I focus on the strategies used in equality work.

## Strategies Used in Equality Work

### **Negotiating and Lobbying Equality**

Certain questions in the interviews brought up the negotiative nature of equality work very clearly. One of these questions was, what kind of skills equality work requires. All of the interviewees told that equality work requires strong negotiation skills, such as being able to convince other people. Some also agreed that their work includes tasks, which could be defined as lobbying.

Here are quotes describing the required negotiation and persuasion skills. I have selected one quote from each interviewee:

Team working skills and skills for being able to get others to commit. Being able to make other people to see the benefits of the subject, and being able to communicate with the managers, too. 9

[One needs the skills of] getting others to one's side. 10

I use quite a lot of my speech and presentation skills because I take the topic up quite often. 11

[One needs the skills in] explaining difficult subjects in such a manner that it becomes understandable. Because, if you think about the knowledge gender studies are producing, no knowledge from there can simply be brought here [and used in practical equality work]. 12

Patience, so that one is able to explain the same issues many times. [...] Awareness, persistence, courage and patience. 13

[The skills in] blackmailing, bribing and persuasion. [a sneering sound] [...] One has to have writing skills and, above all, one has to understand how this society works and how the governmental decisions are prepared.[...] One has to be able to convince people, and one has to be charismatic, too. 14

As becomes evident in the quotations above, all the interviewees describe the negotiative nature of equality work in some ways. Also other required skills are mentioned but, in most interviews, the negotiation and persuasion skills are the first ones mentioned.

After asking about the required skills I also asked a clarifying question about whether equality work sometimes feels like lobbying. Some of the equality workers agreed and described some of their tasks as lobbying. Others, on the other hand, were more hesitant with the term lobbying, or answered that they understand that equality work could be lobbying, but they do not lobby it that much. Here is one quote of an interviewee who sees their work as lobbying:

It means that you have to have your antennas all the time like four meters out there. [...] And then you have to have the understanding that when something happens somewhere, you have to take that chance right away. That is exactly lobbying. You have to be in the right place, at the right time, and you can do miracles through relatively small actions. Or you can make a meal of something for a long time, and it makes no difference. You should know the right people, know the right processes. And you have to have the kind of relations to these people that you can call or send a message and ask them that, now that you are doing this and that there, have you thought about this. 15

Another interviewee explains that they do not do so much lobbying although they can see that it could be possible to spend more time in lobbying. They also explain how an equality worker who has also other tasks and aspirations regarding their career has to be careful in lobbying equality:

It could easily be like that [lobbying]. I don't think I've begun to do it like that. Maybe I should. It is so that, if you want certain things to proceed you would need to spend quite a lot of time in lobbying kind of actions. [...] Sometimes we use the kind of lobbying skills that we say to a colleague that could you bring this issue up in the following meeting of the department chairmen. [...] This is kind of lobbying with a twist, so that the issues do not come always from the mouth of the same person. 16

It can be concluded that the interviews confirm that equality work requires negotiations. Equality workers need to lobby or negotiate with, for example, the departments, management, executive committees, colleagues and politicians. Sometimes the dialogue with different parties is described as lobbying and sometimes it comes closer to educating or mutual learning.

### **Measuring Equality**

All of the interviewees had a positive attitude towards measuring equality. Hence, it can be concluded that interviewees argue that measuring equality is a useful strategy in equality work. Some provided ideas about improving the ways of measuring equality but nobody argued that there would be too much measuring.

Following quote illustrates the positive role of measuring equality in the ministries:

I think that being able to measure equality tells that we have gone forward. Of course, all issues are not so easy to measure. And the idea that everything could be measured in one way, for example through monetary measures, or even with some excel tables, is not possible to accomplish. But I believe that these questions can be measured once we get to the concrete level. For example, we can measure the attitudes, experiences or the feelings of belonging or being able to be oneself. [...] I think that asking about these questions can already have a symbolic meaning. For example, just mentioning certain groups, such as gender minorities, or having a third category when we ask about gender, can be very meaningful. 17

Some of the measures focus on the promotion of equality inside the ministry. The next quote describes the effects of measuring how many percentages of new legislative proposals include gender impact assessment: “The percentages [of the legislative proposals, which include gender impact assessment], they always surprise people. And every time those statistics are brought for the Council of State, I think that ministers are shocked when they see that it is so few.” 18

Here is also another example of measuring the promotion of equality inside the ministry: “We do measure equality regarding the functioning of the governmental agencies, for example, [...] we measure how many applications for grants come from women and men, and how many are granted to women and men.” 19

Some of the measures are indicators, which measure the citizens. For example, there are educational indicators, which measure the educational level of the citizens, and there are statistics about the usage of the parental leaves by women and men in Finland.

When I asked a clarifying question about whether there is too much measuring, the interviewees denied this. Instead, they argue that the problem is that sometimes it is assumed that statistics just emerge without any effort. Also, they argue that measuring too much is not a problem because they promote equality even in those situations when it is not possible to measure the outcome. One interviewee argues that sometimes it is good to trust also on everyday knowledge and observation. The argument was brought up when we discussed measuring diversity: “Sometimes we can achieve almost as good results when we rely on everyday knowledge. But it is difficult to rely on this kind of everyday observation as a mean of knowledge production, and the statistics are required.” 20

One interviewee argued that they should look for knowledge also from a broader amount of materials and documents: “We would need to look out for knowledge also from a broader amount of materials, and not to look at just numbers but also, for example, from different kinds of documents.” 21

### **Organising Equality Work through Equality Policies and other Policies**

As described earlier, many ministries have external equality policies, and my interviewees have experiences in drawing up these policies in their ministries. Equality workers provide some examples of the positive role of equality policies. However, they are rather critical towards the usefulness of equality policies. Instead, including equality perspective and actions in other policies and strategies is emphasized.

In one ministry the equality policy seems to be an important in coordinating the work of the equality working group: “The equality policy is our guiding background paper, which we follow.” 22

An interviewee from another ministry describes that their work for promoting external gender equality consists of four issues, of which one is having an external gender equality policy:

One thing is this external gender equality policy. [...] Training sessions are one thing. [...] We have opened a web-site, into which we have collected materials about the promotion of gender equality. [...] In addition, we take it into account in the performance agreements with different governmental agencies under the supervision of the ministry. 23

In some interviews the meaningfulness of other policies and strategies was emphasized. Interviewees argue that it would be the most important thing to get equality issues inside these other policies and strategies. It is also argued that an equality policy can be a supportive policy in achieving this.

In external equality this kind of programs [the interviewee notes towards the document on the table] are much more meaningful. [...] They are much more meaningful because the monetary resources are attached to them. And to them are attached to what we actually do in the ministry. [...] But this diversity policy might have promoted the way of thinking that we have to get it [equality] inside these [policies and strategies] which include the hard core of what we do. 24

The interviewees argue also that the role of the equality policy and its measures could be more significant if there was more commitment in the ministry. It is also argued that one of the functions of the equality policies is awareness raising.

### **Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming**

Based on the interviews, gender and diversity mainstreaming is an important strategy in organising equality work in the ministries. The interviewees brought up the term themselves and also described the mainstreaming principle in other words even though I did not have any specific questions about mainstreaming, and I did not use the word in my questions. Here I provide examples of how interviewees define mainstreaming.

Here is one example of defining the mainstreaming principle: “We do those issues which we do anyway, and we try to include the gender perspective and equality perspective into them.” 25

The aim of having representatives from each department in the equality working groups is to mainstream equality issues to all departments in the ministry. This becomes evident in the following quotation: “And we have made the kind of solution that this group is not the main actor but the different tasks for promoting external equality are on the responsibility of those public servants who are responsible of those tasks in the organisation in also in general.”  
26

Mainstreaming is also seen as an ideal way of organizing the promotion of gender equality and diversity in the ministry. Here are three quotations describing mainstreaming as an ideal. The quotations come from interviewees from three different ministries:

I would see that, ideally, gender equality and diversity perspectives would be a natural part of the general strategy work, and of course human resource management and recruitment, too. That it would be mainstreamed in such a way that it would be an essential part of the well-being at work. And in relation to external equality, when every ministry carries out their basic duties, they would also ponder how equal people actually are, for example, from the perspective of having the basic rights which the ministry is supposed to guarantee. 27

Well, in that case [in an ideal case] all the public servants would truly and genuinely take into account the gender and diversity perspective and [...] they would go through our check-lists. [...] And I think that the way of defining the concept of family is important in our ministry. 28

[The ministry, which would be ideal] would be the kind of ministry in which every public servant would naturally know how to take it [equality perspective] into account. Nowadays we know pretty well, for example, that you cannot accept bribes and that you cannot decide to give grants to your own family members and you cannot draw up legislative proposals, which are against the Constitutional Law. Similarly, the promotion of gender equality and diversity should be self evident. We are not yet there. 29

As becomes evident in the quotations above, the ideal of mainstreaming can only be achieved if all the public servants are able to learn the principles regarding gender equality and diversity. This is further supported in the following idea:

I think that if every public servant would take a turn in taking care of gender equality and diversity issues, that would do it! Then we would have public servants who would be sensitive towards these issues and could naturally include them as a part of every task they take care of. 30

Achieving mainstreaming can also be supported by using different kind of strategies. In addition to negotiating and lobbying actively, mainstreaming can also be supported by delegating the responsibility through not acting. Here is an example of this:

We [our ministry] have to update the diversity policy. And it is, above all, on the responsibility of our administrative unit. I have thought about leaving that for them, I am not going to intervene in any way.

We [our equality working group] draw up the first policy because they would not have had the expertise for it. But now they can think of how to update it and what is the purpose of the policy. And read the new Equality Act thoroughly. 31

### **Communicating with the Departments**

Communicating with the departments is an important issue in gender and diversity mainstreaming, as described above. Ministries use different methods for communicating with the departments. One of the methods is having representatives from every department in equality working groups. Another one is to agree upon the measures for promoting equality in each department and include the measures in the equality policy. The negotiations regarding the measures have also included department rounds. This is illustrated in the following quote:

They [the secretary] went through all the departments and discussed about the most essential equality issues, which should be included in the policy. [...] That revealed the most important processes on the departments, and how equality issues could be present in them. 32

As described above, identifying how equality should be promoted in different departments, requires having an understanding of the processes on the departments, and being able to identify equality issues which are relevant in these processes. This understanding is created in dialogue. Also, interviewees stress in many occasions that it is crucial to get the departments to commit in the promotion of equality. In another ministry the need for a similar department round has been under discussion:

Then we have had this idea that the secretary of the external gender equality working group would visit in different department managers committees and tell about these issues. But this is something we have planned, and it never happens. [...] And then I would somehow think that it should be the department manager who would take the message to their department. 33

### **Empowering Equality Working Groups**

As described earlier, the equality working groups are important in organizing equality work in the ministries. Many interviewees describe the discussions and the atmosphere in the working groups in a positive way. For some, the good atmosphere and discussions in the working group seem to be a positive force that keeps equality workers going. Hence, I have taken equality working groups as an example of the forum for empowerment. Of course, this does not mean that working groups would always be only empowering. Here is an example of how one interviewee describes the good atmosphere in their working group:

I love our equality working group! It has always functioned very well. There are people in there who do very different kind of tasks, and most of them have a long experience of working in the ministry. It seems to me that the discussions that we have there always bring up something new. 34

When I asked a clarifying question about what makes the equality working group good, they continued:

I think that it has something to do with the fact that those people have such strong skills in their own areas. And they are familiar with the ministry. [...] And they also use that knowledge in a brave way. And also the atmosphere there. The secretaries have from the beginning aimed for a tolerant and good atmosphere. [...] And on the other hand also those who do not necessarily have much experience with equality issues or are new in the group, also those people take part in the discussions. Even though, from my point of view, these people sometimes ask also silly questions their contribution is still very valuable. 35

Another interviewee describes the discussions in the working group in a following way:

Mostly we discuss pretty much in between the chairman, the vice chairman and me because we have such a deep knowledge on the substances. And the people who represent the different departments have sometimes difficulties in getting into the discussion. [...] But it depends quite a lot on how close the discussions are to the concrete tasks in the departments. We have, for example, thought about how to make the equality working group and its work more well-known inside the house, and to that they have very good ideas. 36

The chairman brings up that the work of the secretaries is very important for the working group. They also mention enthusiasm as a positive characteristic for a secretary: “We have been very lucky to have really good secretaries. [Name of the person] has been very enthusiastic, and also [Name of the person] is excellent. The work of the secretaries is substantial, it keeps the process going.” 37

Also the secretaries I interviewed described their work in a detailed way. They explained, for example, that they prepare the agendas and issues for the equality working groups, and invite and provide instructions for the specialists, who visit the working groups. Formally speaking, the secretaries in equality working groups are employed as senior advisors.

Interviews provided also some ideas about improving the functioning of the working groups. These ideas include that all members in the working group would have enough time allocated for equality work. Also challenges in making a difference influence the motivation of the members in the working group.

## **Having a Dialogue with NGOs**

Having a dialogue with non-governmental organisations is also mentioned in some of the interviews. The importance of the dialogue with NGOs is mentioned especially in relation to diversity issues. Here is an example of one interview. The interviewee explains that the dialogue is important in identifying those equality issues which are relevant for improving equality in the ministry: “For identifying the equality issues in our functions we have to consult the NGOs and look for the type of dialogue with them that we can identify the questions.” 38

The interviewee also stresses that in having a dialogue with different NGOs it is also important that the equality workers are able to encourage trust between different communities.

## **Places Where Equality Work Gets Stuck**

I have begin by describing how equality work is formally organized. Then, I have identified the strategies used in equality work. Next, I am going to focus on those situations where equality work seems to get stuck.

## **Communicating with the Departments**

As described earlier, communicating with different departments is seen as an important aspect of equality work in the ministries. However, it is also one of the situations equality workers find challenging. Here is an example of an argument explaining the challenge in communicating with the departments:

I think that the problem in the working group is that it cannot... Somehow it is our Achilles heel that, [we do not know] how to bring the good ideas [from our working group] to the departments. And to get the departments to commit to them. We have planned that this is accomplished through having the representatives from each department [in the working group]. But something does not work in the communication in between the working group and the departments. [...] The meaning would be that the people in the group would bring significant issues from their departments to the working group and, on the other hand, would bring issues from the working group to their departments. [For example], that this or that should be done now. But this does not work, not very well anyway. 39

Also another interviewee argues that getting the departments to commit to equality work is one of the most challenging issues in equality work: “We engage the departments to this. That is maybe the most difficult task. That not only those people, who are in our group from different departments, would be responsible of doing it [equality work].” 40

Getting the departments to commit in the promotion of equality seems to be one of the most crucial but also challenging tasks, according to the interviews. In this situation they can also use negotiation and lobbying tactics which were described earlier.

### **Nothing Happens Despite the Written Commitments**

Sometimes even the written commitments to equality in the equality policy do not actually happen. In the first example the interviewee describes the situation in which the equality policy includes goals and the goals are also measured by using certain kind of statistics but the active measures for promoting the goals are missing: “It might be that we have the goals and that we can measure them but really we do not do anything in between [of stating the goals and measuring them]. Or the activities we write down are the kind of activities that we would do anyway, even if we did not have that goal.” 41

The interviewee provides also an example of the kind of situation in which there is no real commitment for the measures written in the equality policy. The example describes the lack of commitment towards an internal gender equality policy.

There is no commitment in them [the active measures]. If we want, for example, that women would do better in their careers we could promote that by providing mentoring and education, if I think about this just quickly. It is not enough that we write it [the goal] down but we probably need to do some active measures, such as providing education and mentoring especially for women. And that would require the commitment from the management. But they do not want to commit because it would mark them. 42

The interviewee continues by providing also an example of the kind of situation that internal gender equality policy might not be followed even if it includes active measures on the paper.

For example, if we think about this kind of situation: we do not allow inappropriate behaviour. And we have some guidance about what to do if inappropriate behaviour occurs. And then it happens that some employee has experienced inappropriate behaviour. Then it is going to be argued that but this person did not go to talk to their supervisor. Or they did not do this or that and in this case it does not apply. 43

To conclude, the written equality policy does not guarantee the active promotion of equality in the ministry. I think that it was especially interesting to hear about this kind of situations because one cannot guess this by just reading the policies. Sometimes equality work gets stuck but the policies can still look great.

### **Backlash Despite the Good Intentions**

One interviewee describes a situation in which the minister changed the good practice developed in the ministry. The interviewee assumes that the minister had good intentions in doing this but that they did not have enough understanding about the situation.

We had the kind of practice in the ministry that the executive committee points out those new legislative proposals in which gender impact assessment is especially significant. But according to the current minister this could not be done anymore because it [gender impact assessment] is relevant in all proposals. So their understanding of the level of the work was very different than the reality. [...] So the minister ruined the good practice during that parliamentary term. And I suppose they had a good intention but no understanding that when you have to do it in all of them, then it will not be done in any of them. 44

### **Lack of Time and Other Resources**

The lack of resources is mentioned as one of the challenges in equality work. One interviewee describes the meaning of the resources in a following way: “The resources the current government has more influence than the politics. The enemy of promoting equality and diversity is that we have tight schedules at work and we have to be more efficient all the time.” 45

According to the quote above, the general resources the current government has influences equality work even more than the current politics. In addition, the lack of time for equality work is mentioned in all the interviews. It seems that often equality work and specifically the promotion of external equality in the own ministry seems to be the last thing on the list of equality workers. The following quote provides one example: “This [writing the external equality policy] was also the kind of thing that I always got time to do only after all the other work.” 46

The lack of time and resources is also a problem in the governmental agencies ministries supervise. The next quote describes this: “If I think about the promotion of external equality the main problem is that everybody is too busy. When we set certain goals for them in performance agreements we might load them with so impossible expectations that the field cannot fulfil them.” 47

### **Equality Work Requires Repeating**

One of the examples illustrating how equality work gets stuck is that interviewees describe how equality work requires patience to repeat the same things over and over again. The negotiation and persuasion tactics used in equality work were already described among the

strategies used in equality work. Here I provide two quotes which explain how equality workers feel when they have to keep repeating the same things:

[Equality work requires] patience to prove the same issues for many times. When you are yourself already aware of certain things you easily start to think that those people who are not aware of those things are simple. And that is not good either. One has to try to explain the things in a rather simple way. 48

We have been talking about these baby steps for years. And that has been our way of trying to, not to just understand, but to cope with the situation. We go over the same discussions with [the different] people year after year. And what one has to avoid in this work is that one becomes tired of that, and that is the danger when one has been doing this for over ten years. 49

## Organisational and Political Influences on Equality Work

My aim is to find out which issues influence the content of equality work in the ministries. The strategies used in equality work provided information which hints that there is resistance towards equality and that many issues influencing equality work are indirect. Otherwise negotiation and lobbying strategies would not be required. Hence, it is often not so much a question about deciding on the content of equality work but, rather, equality work is shaped by different indirect organisational and political influences. Here I will discuss on those.

### Organisational Traditions

Here is one quote, which describes in a very illustrative way how the organisational traditions can limit equality work in the ministry:

But this [being in the service of the government] soon makes you to forget them [your visions] and you learn the limitations. [...] We also think about how much we can have visions [about equality]. [...] There is a certain organisational historical burden which determines that we cannot do like whatever. 50

One interviewee describes the dialogue between two different traditions. The quote reminds that traditions can also change but this might take time:

The jurists in the administrative department at the time said that we cannot write that in the recruitment we favour [certain groups]. [The jurists argued that] the Administrative Law and Civil Service Law binds us. And that is true, of course. And then we had a long dialogue in which two traditions, a human resource management tradition and a tradition to improve the position of the minorities, if not collide, at least talk a little bit different languages. 51

Also the hierarchical organisation of work in the ministries is mentioned among the traditions which influence: “Ministries have traditionally been quite management lead organisations. It

brings certain kind of structure. But on the other hand the managers have a lot of work and it does not encourage independent working, and we are busy.” 52

### **Political Influence**

Ministries are public organisations and they are also led by the politicians, the current ministers. Politics obviously have, and are suppose to have, some influence on the ministries. Political influence can, however, happen in many different ways and also be indirect. Most tasks in the ministries do not change much because of the current politics because for example legislation regulates them. Here I present the examples in which the interviewees describe how the current politics influence or do not influence equality work.

Here are two quotes, which provide examples of how the current can have a positive influence on equality work. The quotes are from two different ministries.

We had four equality working groups. [...] We had them because the minister and the department manager at the time prioritised that a lot and wanted to do it properly. Especially in the beginning of the parliamentary term there was a good atmosphere of doing stuff. 53

During the last parliamentary term the priority to promote equality became from the minister and the current parliament. Sometimes there is a kind of parliament that it wants to promote equality in an active way, and sometimes the kind, that it wants to promote equality in a little bit less active way. 54

Here is a quote, which explains the indirect nature the political influence can sometimes have:

And in the ministry also the purely political actions influence. [...] Although, according to a law, it goes the way that regardless of the opinions of the current minister the things required in the law should be done. But everything above that is open to multiple interpretations, although it is work done by the public servants. [...]

Interviewer: Have there been any prepared [texts] that have been too much?

No. I think it is something that is sensed from the atmosphere. So it is known. [...] So I believe that the limitations come through knowing what cannot be tried. 55

The quote above describes in a very illustrative way how the public servants sense what can be done in the ministry under a certain minister even though they are not provided formal orders describing this.

One form of political influence is also the influence of the administrative decisions regarding organising different issues for the responsibility of the different ministers and ministries. Here is one quote describing this:

We have pretty often been in the situation that the tasks of the minister leading our ministry include also equality issues. And although they are taken care by public servants in another ministry they [the

public servants from this other ministry] have become somehow more familiar to us because they visit our ministry to meet our minister. 56

Some interviewees argue also that the current politics do not influence much on equality work:

[The current politics] do not influence much. The political parties and who is in the parliament and who in the opposition and who is the minister, I mean. Maybe there are some differences in the focuses but they have been quite small this far. Though we do not yet have experience on this new parliament, which includes the Finns Party. [...] The reason for it [that the current politics do not influence] are two things. First, diversity issues have been a little bit like issues in the back row. [...] And on the other hand there is now understanding that we cannot decide to do whatever in Finland, like close the borders. Because the international commitments bind us and we have quotas for taking refugees and processing asylum applications. 57

Public servants can also see that the ministry is obliged to promote certain values despite the current politics:

On the other hand we can also promote certain values from above, from the government. That it cannot be so that if we get... This is now expressed in a quite harsh way but... If the citizens would suddenly be very much like the Finns Party... Or that the citizens would for example support the death penalty, in an ideal case we would need to be able to say that that does not belong to Finnish society. 58

I think that that kind of governmental administration in which the meaning of equality has not been understood does not have an identity. 59

Interviewees argue that instead of the current politics the lack of resources in the ministries in general has a big impact on equality work. This was already discussed under the heading *Places Where Equality Work Gets Stuck*.

### **Government Programme Has an Impacts on Equality Work**

The influence of the government programme is also one form of political influence but I discuss about it under its own heading to point it out more clearly. The government programme is written in the beginning of the new government term. In addition, new governments have usually drawn up also a separate document called government's gender equality program. These two documents also influence on equality work. For example, the issues included in the current programs are prioritised in equality work in different ministries. Here are few quotes illustrating the importance of the government programme in equality work:

We are going to outline, based on the government program, which themes we are going to focus on in our external gender equality and diversity policies. 60

We read carefully the equality issues mentioned in the government programme and analyse them in the equality working group. 61

The issues mentioned in the government programme are usually pretty high on the list of priorities. When there are a lot of things to do, if these issues are only based on the requirements in the legislation, it can be difficult to find time for doing them. 62

### **The Amendments of the Equality Acts**

The legislation is often mentioned as one of the reasons for doing equality work in the ministries. Also, the amendments in equality acts are mentioned as having an influence on equality work. For example, the interviewees tell that their diversity policies are going to be updated because the *Equality Act* has been re-written.

The *Act on Equality in between Women and Men* was also amended in the beginning of 2015. One of the main amendments in the act is that it now prohibits also discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression. The interviewees agreed that this amendment will impact on their gender equality work, when I asked about it. However, at this point all the interviewees did not yet seem to have a very detailed understanding about how the amendment is going to impact in their ministry. They told, for example, that this was on their list of issues to discuss about. Here is one argument from an interviewee, who had an idea how the amendment will influence on equality work in their ministry: “It [the amendment of the act] will bring more visibility for the questions faced by gender minorities. We have had that perspective [the perspective of gender minorities] in diversity work, and now it is good that it will be included also in gender equality work.” 63

### **Perspectives on Equality**

Here I discuss about the various perspectives on equality that were brought up in the interviews. The idea of these discussions is to illustrate how the interviewed equality workers understand equality and what kind of inequalities they can identify. Their views are their own and do not necessarily describe the official views of their ministries. These discussions about inequalities different groups are facing are not the main focus of the study. However, I feel that it is valuable to present some examples of the ideas of inequalities which were brought during the interviews.

## **Homogenous Personnel and the Abilities to Identify Inequalities**

Several interviewees brought up the issue that the personnel working for the ministry is rather homogenous. This also influences the abilities the personnel has in identifying inequalities. The following quotations illustrate this:

It seems like we have quite homogenous Northern European personnel here. [...] [It influences in such a way that] they do not problematise much the kind of questions that maybe more diverse work community would perhaps do better politics and help us to see the inequalities in society better. But luckily we have, in addition to Finnish speakers, also Swedish speakers well presented in the ministry which makes the situation a little bit better. 64

For the personnel it seems to be very difficult to answer to the question whether our ministry is equal in diversity issues. They feel that we are all similar here. Which is not completely true. [...] I think it influences so that it is not possible to identify the questions in which we have problems with equality. 65

And our personnel is pretty heterogenous [they mean homogenous]. So that there are not many... There are some people who look a little bit different. But then some of us have children who look different. 66

One interviewee continues by explaining that although the personnel is rather homogenous in the ministry their attitudes towards equality are rather positive. They provide also reason for this when they describe the position most of the public servants have in the society:

At least based on my experience the attitudes towards gender equality and diversity are pretty positive in our ministry. Of course, it has a lot to do with the fact that our personnel is mostly highly educated and they are well-included in the society and politics. The public servants are in the kind of position that it is easy for them to be pro equality because no minorities can threat their socio-economical position. 67

## **Men and Equality as an Important Topic**

Some interviewees argue that especially gender equality work is often left on women's responsibility in the ministries. They see that it would be beneficial to include also more men in doing equality work. This would strengthen the commitment on the promotion of equality. Hence, one reason for stressing the importance of including men in equality work is that it could be a useful tactic for gaining more importance for equality work. On the other hand, interviewees also genuinely stress equality issues, which would benefit men and boys.

Here are few quotes describing how including examples about men's equality issues is used as a tactic in negotiations: "When I keep some speech or present the issues to some department or unit in more detail I try to use that strategy, too, that this is not only women's issue. That men face inequalities, too." 68

Interviewees also provided some examples of the inequalities men are facing. These include that an interviewee argues that in the sector of social politics and health men's perspective is often missing. Another interviewee explains that the educational system could take some boys better into account because a bigger percentage of girls manages to graduate from high school and to continue their studies on secondary level.

Interviewees mention also examples of the inequalities women are facing. These include the pay cap in the society and the recruitment policies and career development differences inside the ministries and in the society.

Mostly in the speech about gender equality the more vulnerable genders or groups are not specified. For example, the goal of monitoring the amount of grants women and men are receiving is not specified more.

### **Including Gender Minorities**

As mentioned earlier, I asked in the interviews how the amendment of the *Act on Equality in between Women and Men*, which changed the act so that it now explicitly prohibits also discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression, will influence on equality work in the ministries. All the interviewees agreed that the amendment needs to be taken into account in their equality work. Some also discussed more about the ways the concepts of gender, gender identity and gender expression, and gender minorities are used in their equality work.

One interviewee describes that they aim to formulate their texts so that they would not exclude any gender minorities: "We try to speak for all genders. We try to take into account that there might be more genders than just a woman and a man." 69

Another interviewee explains that in their equality working group they have not yet discussed on gender minorities:

Well the idea [of gender] is very traditional and heteronormative and... I feel that way anyway. That the issues are not brought up... I began to think about if there have been some discussions in which it would have been but I cannot memorize that now. There have, of course, been discussions about the gender roles and that all women are not similar and all men are not similar. And there have been discussions about the role of boys, that boys should be allowed to... That all the boys do not have to fit into one box. But it has not gone further than that. And I do not know whether gender identity or gender expression has been discussed in that group. 70

A third interviewee argues that those kind of gender minorities whose appearance seems to confront the current gender norms make the norms visible. The interviewee also argues that it is important to cooperate with minorities especially if the issue is not familiar.

Gender minorities kind of make visible the gender norms. [...] It is a good example in revealing the dynamics of social discrimination. And it [discrimination] is best won by meeting and associating with people [who seem to confront the gender norms]. [...] And my experience is that, when I have cooperated with people belonging to gender minorities, my own experience is that these meetings with people have to be focused on. 71

### **Attitudes Towards Migration and Who Is Accepted to Work**

Here are some more examples of the inequalities interviewees identified. One interviewee argues that they are worried about the attitudes towards migrants:

[It is problematic] that people want to see the price tag in everything, that how much it costs when somebody moves in here. And so much discrimination, racism and, for example, school bullying happens. But for some reason it is still not possible [for many people] to understand that that also influences on the position of the migrants. 72

Another interviewee discusses the disabilities and the limits of accepting people in the working life:

What is the limit of accepting a person into working life? If we think about equality, does person need to be able to work five days a week? I think an ideal ministry could think about that as an employer. Maybe a person can only work half a day but they have a lot to provide. 73

### **Dreaming of Change**

When I asked about the ideal society and ideal ministry, the interviewees provided different kind of answers. I include some of them here for illustrating their perspective on change and equality.

One interviewee wished that antagonism would diminish although they does not see that it would be happening at the moment: “I wish I would see the kind of change that people could live next to each other here. For example, now different religions are being put opposite each other and there is this atmosphere of being afraid of radicalism in the Western countries, I wish that we could get rid of it.” 74

Another interviewee wishes, for example, that people would react on discrimination more: “[I hope that] the limit to react when discrimination happens would not be that high. And then I hope that the mystifying of minorities would diminish.” 75

One interviewee discusses the common understandings regarding equality:

I wish that, in addition to this kind of juridical perspective, there would be more practical knowledge from social and psychological fields. And that there would be an understanding that the issue of discrimination is linked in social dynamics which also change and can be influenced on. 76

One interviewee wishes that the masculine culture would change:

My biggest wish is that the masculine culture would change. [...] That would influence on the pay gap, it would influence on the violence women are facing, it would influence on violence in between men, to gender segregation, and so on. [...] And fatherhood should be encouraged. 77

### **Positive Change Has Happened in the Ministries**

The interviewees also argue that positive change has happened in the ministries when they think about the past decades. Here are some quotes illustrating this:

We have managed to mainstream this pretty well with our ways of working. Nowadays this is not thought of as a rocket science anymore, like fifteen years ago. 78

Some kind of a turning point has been reached. Some time ago people would not perhaps quite understand the meaningfulness of external gender equality work but nowadays it is part of our work here. When I started as a chairman in the external gender equality working group there were some problems also on the level of the managers, to understand the meaning of the work. But not anymore. 79

### **How one Becomes an Equality Worker**

When I asked from the interviewees where they had learned their equality views they explained that both personal experiences and learning from books has been important for them. Also learning at work has been important. Here are some quotations illustrating this:

From personal history and psychology. And also from reading a lot. My formal education did not provide almost any skills for this. But through NGO work, by reading, and then through knowing my colleagues in the ministry who work with similar issues and discussing with them and by discussing in the equality working groups. 80

From books and life. [laughter] Well, when I have had the opportunity to educate people and to discuss with people, and when I have been a lot with people who represent different groups, I have learned a lot from them. And then, personally, I see that going through political history and moral philosophy has been a very eye opening experience. These same questions have been there for quite a while in different agendas, as differently formulated. And the strategies to influence on these issues have been different during different times. Maybe it is the kind of combination of practice and theory, and then meeting people. 81

I have studied gender studies. [...] And then I have volunteered in promoting equality [in our municipality]. [...] And then I have ended up working in here. I think that most of my knowledge I have learned here when I have played this game of being a specialist. In here in the governmental

administration one pretty soon becomes like the most famous specialist of something in the country, which is quite scary, too. 82

Equality workers also describe that equality work requires skills for making decisions and planning actions quite independently because often there are no clear definitions about how the work should be done. An equality worker needs own opinions and perspective on how to get the work done. They also feel that they have to work with their persona, and they report that sometimes they have been confronted or accepted based on the image of their persona.

I also asked about how doing equality work has influenced on the careers of the equality workers I interviewed. The answers varied a lot. For some it is the content of the work and they are simply grateful of having such interesting jobs. Some are more concerned about the possible negative influences on their careers, if they choose to focus on equality work, although they find the subject meaningful and interesting.

## Chapter VI: Analysis

The aim of my analysis is to make visible the issues influencing the content of equality work in public organisations. The analysis chapter is structured based on my additional research questions. The additional research questions support the main research question and are based on the themes which were repeated in the interviews. Through the additional questions I discuss organising equality work, strategies used in equality work, equality negotiations, places where equality gets stuck, political influences on equality work, and equality workers work and learning. I ponder each of these questions under their own headings. Then I present one possible interpretation of summarizing my analysis and answering to my main research question.

### Organisation of Equality Work in the Ministries

Here I will discuss the question of how equality work is organised. I also examine whether and how the organisation of equality work influences the content of equality work.

There are many similarities in the organisation of external gender equality work in Finnish ministries. For example, many ministries, including the three ministries my interviewees discuss about, have external gender equality working groups which are organised in rather similar ways. Also, currently eight ministries have external gender equality policies. I can conclude that there are good models and practices for organising external gender equality work. This conclusion is supported also by other studies. For example, Anna Elomäki

(2014) concludes that the structure of gender mainstreaming practices is a strength of the Finnish gender mainstreaming model.

Because of the similarities in the organisation of external gender equality work, I present a general example of the structure of organising external gender equality work in a ministry: A ministry has a gender equality working group, which is responsible of at least external gender equality work in the ministry. The working group consists of a chairman, secretary and representatives from different departments. The chairman of the working group is also a department manager in their department and a member of the executive committee of the ministry. The working group meets about six times a year and follows an annual schedule. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has even published an example of an annual schedule for ministries' equality groups (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health* n.d.). According to this annual schedule example, gender equality working group focuses on gender mainstreaming in legislative projects, other projects, budgeting and in the management of the governmental agencies supervised by the ministry. Also, following the government programme has its place in the schedule. All the three ministries my interviewees discuss are rather consistent with this general example of the structure of organising external gender equality work in a ministry.

In the organisation of diversity work the practices in different ministries seem to vary more. I also have less information about the organisation of diversity work in the ministries, because I have information about diversity work only from two ministries. Also, I could only get hold of four external diversity policies. I conclude that, although there are also good models for organising diversity work, they are not used consistently in the ministries at the moment.

I also analysed the structure and content of ministries external gender equality and diversity policies. I can conclude that ministries external gender equality policies follow more or less the same structure based on the key functions and actions categorised under these functions. In addition, they might discuss more on their current focuses and provide examples. External gender equality policies are generally supposed to cover all the departments in the ministry and, in addition, also the governmental agencies and organisations supervised by the ministry. The structure of the external diversity policies can be similar to gender equality policies. Another model is that the actions in diversity policies are categorised under the headings of different equalities, such as ethnic equality and age equality. One of the downsides of the current equality policies seems to be that many of them are written on general level and left vague.

I have now described how equality work is organised in Finnish ministries. Another question is, how does the organisation of equality work influence on the content of equality work. I argue that the formal organisation of equality work provides the structure to do equality work. Without the structures there probably is no equality work, or at least it will not be consistent. However, the organisation of equality work through policies and working groups does not necessarily influence the content of equality work. For example, the formal structures can leave equality goals and visions very vague. Interviews provide examples of the cases in which ministries have not committed even to those measures they have written to their policies.

The interviewed equality workers seem to be positive towards organising equality work through working groups but some are less positive towards organising equality work through equality policies. For example, the process of choosing active measurements for promoting equality is described as a challenging process by several interviewees. Specifically, interviewees describe that getting all the departments to commit to equality work is challenging. However, there are also differences in between the three ministries. It seems to be easier to get some policy areas to commit in equality work than others. Hence, simply copying the same structure of doing equality work cannot guarantee the content of equality work. The structure can leave the content of equality work empty or ambiguous.

When I use the same model which Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014: 82-91) has used for analysing the ambiguity and conflict levels in the implementation of different equality policies I can place most of the Finnish ministries' external equality policies in the category of having low levels of conflict and high levels of ambiguity. Most of the ministries' equality policies can be considered ambiguous regarding the goals and visions for promoting equality. Equality workers also seem to imply that the current way of organising external equality work causes only low levels of conflict in the three ministries my interviewees describe.

The category of having low levels of conflict and high levels of ambiguity is the same category where Callerstig places most of the gender mainstreaming initiatives. According to Callerstig (2014), ambiguity can be both positive and negative for the implementation of the policies. Ambiguity can be a strategy for reducing resistance. Callerstig also argues that ambiguity can provide space for experimental learning. The problem of the ambiguous policies is that the ambiguity can lower the sense of legitimacy and urgency, which causes the low prioritising of the policies. (Callerstig 2014: 82-91) It is also possible to find similar positive and negative examples from the interviews. For example, the equality workers I

interviewed provide positive examples of experimental equality work and negative examples of the low priority of equality policies and equality work.

I have now concluded that despite the formal organisation of equality work, the content of equality work may be empty or ambiguous. Before continuing to examine the strategies used in equality work I still have to explain better my earlier notion that without the structures there probably is no equality work.

Although there are good models for organising gender equality and diversity work in the ministries all the ministries are not using them. For this reason I also argue that even the current way of organising equality work might cause higher levels of conflict in some ministries. The fact that I was able to get hold of only four external diversity policies and eight external gender equality policies, even though there are twelve ministries, is also not a very good sign regarding the priority of equality work in the ministries.

One of the reasons for the lack of required policies is probably timing. When I conducted my interviews in the spring 2015 most of the ministries were planning to update their equality policies. This is due to two reasons. First, many equality policies, especially external gender equality policies, are scheduled to be valid for the parliamentary term, and the parliamentary term was just changing. The elections had been organised in the spring 2015. Secondly, the new re-written *Equality Act* had come to force in the beginning of 2015. Many ministries were still planning how to meet the new requirements. For example, public organisations have been given two years to update their diversity policies regarding ethnic equality to cover also other grounds of equality. In the interviews one interviewee told also that the process of updating the diversity policy had been postponed for several years because of waiting to get the new *Equality Act*. However, the bad timing of asking for equality policies is probably not the only reason for the lack of having updated policies. The lack of policies tells also about the lack of resources, lack of commitment and the low priority of equality work. Also these topics were discussed in the interviews.

To conclude, I argue that the formal organisation of equality work provides the structure to do equality work. However, the formal organisation cannot guarantee the content of equality work: despite the good structures the content of equality might be missing or left ambiguous. Ambiguity might be a sign that the content is left ambiguous in order to reduce resistance towards equality work. In other words, ambiguity is one of the negotiation strategies used in equality work. Next, I continue examining the strategies used in equality work.

## Strategies Used in Equality Work

In the theory chapter of this thesis I provided examples of the change strategies which have been used in equality work according to different authors. Debra Meyerson (2001) has identified the following change strategies: resisting quietly and staying true to one's self, turning personal threats into opportunities, broadening the impact through negotiation, leveraging small wins, and organising collective action (Meyerson 2001: 8). From these, specifically the negotiation strategies were brought up by the equality workers I interviewed. Also the small wins strategy was mentioned by one interviewee and many other examples illustrate the usage of this strategy. For example, many interviewees stress that equality work requires patience. I can conclude that the strategies used by equality workers in Finnish ministries include similar strategies than the strategies used by tempered radicals in American companies.

One of the crucial differences in between the position of the equality workers I interviewed and the tempered radicals Meyerson interviewed, is that equality workers are hired to do also equality work in the ministries and the tempered radicals are not hired to do change work in their organisations. Taking into account this difference the similarities in the usage of the change strategies could be rather surprising. However, this is not a new surprise. Other authors studying equality work done by equality workers who are hired to do equality work, have described the strategies used in equality work in similar ways. For example, Sara Ahmed (2012) has described how diversity workers who are hired to do diversity work in universities use different kind of negotiation strategies in their work. For example, they choose the language they use according to each audience and use data for gaining more validity and acceptance for their work (Ahmed 2012: 73-78). Also my interviewees provide examples of adjusting their language according to each audience and all of the interviewees also find statistics useful in their work.

Different ways of measuring equality are used as one negotiation strategy. The equality workers I interviewed are all very positive towards measuring equality. They clearly see it as a useful strategy to do meaningful equality work. In this respect there is a similarity to Sara Ahmed's notion that data can become a technology for exposing the gap between official descriptions of diversity and what the organisation is doing (Ahmed 2012: 55). Some authors have critiqued technocratic equality work. The focus on the measurement of equality could be seen as a sign of technocratic equality work. However, the equality workers I interviewed do not see the measurement of equality work as a problem. It seems to me that they use

techniques for measuring equality work as a strategy they have chosen for the reason that it brings results.

In addition to the strategies discussed by Meyerson, equality workers name mainstreaming as one of the main strategies they use in equality work. For example, the idea about including equality in all policies and strategies can be considered mainstreaming. Also, the aim of having the representatives from all departments in the equality working groups is to mainstream equality issues to all departments in the ministry. The interviews explain that the principle of mainstreaming can be supported through different strategies. In addition to negotiating and lobbying mainstreaming can be supported by delegating responsibilities of doing equality work also to other people.

I also noticed that in the speech of equality workers mainstreaming is not only a strategy to do equality work but also an ideal. When I asked about the ideal ministry interviewees often argued that in an ideal ministry equality work would be perfectly mainstreamed and on everybody's responsibility. The similar view of seeing mainstreaming as an ideal can also be found from the thesis written by Meija Tuominen. In the end of their thesis Tuominen provides a framework for analyzing the level of gender mainstreaming in a municipality. In the fifth column the framework describes how equality work is done in the "mainstreamed municipality", which also becomes an ideal (Tuominen 2015: 77). However, at the same time Tuominen describes that the level of mainstreaming in Finnish municipalities is in the beginning. I conclude that it seems to be important to describe the possibilities of doing equality mainstreaming in a realistic way. Otherwise it can happen that in the speech and documents an ideal has been achieved but the reality is far away from an ideal.

The interviewed equality workers identify also some other strategies they use in equality work. One of them is having an empowering equality working groups. The equality working groups and discussions in them were described in a positive way by many interviewees. I believe that equality working groups can provide a forum for fruitful discussions about equality. Also Sara Ahmed stresses the importance of conversation in adding meaning to equality work (Ahmed 2012: 80-81). Another forum for discussions is to engage in dialogue with NGOs. This was also brought up in some interviews. Having a dialogue with NGOs is also argued to be important in gender mainstreaming (Verloo 2005).

To conclude, I identified the following strategies used in equality work in ministries: negotiating and lobbying equality, measuring equality, organising equality work through equality policies and other policies, doing gender and diversity mainstreaming, communicating with the departments, having empowering equality working groups, and

having a dialogue with NGOs. Many of these strategies are also brought up in theories by different authors, such as Debra Meyerson and Sara Ahmed.

The strategies used in equality work influence the content of equality work. For example, creating places for discussing inequalities and possibilities to improve ministries' is important. Also, having a dialogue with NGOs and different parties can help in identifying problems and solutions for them. However, the question should also be asked another way round: What do the strategies used in equality work tell about the possibilities of choosing the content of equality work? I think that the used strategies tell about the context in which equality work is done. Hence, the usage of a certain strategy is not a problem for equality workers. Rather, the problem might be the resistance they encounter in the ministry and the resistance is also the cause of choosing to use certain strategies.

I argue that equality workers are aware of their decisions when they choose to use these different strategies. Hence, in order to improve equality work we cannot simply look at the strategies and try to change them. Instead, we have to consider the context in which the strategies are used and for what reason they are used. Next I will continue examining the negotiation strategies a little bit more.

## Negotiative Nature of Equality Work

The negotiative nature of equality work became evident when I discussed about the strategies equality workers use. Equality workers need to negotiate in order to continue equality work in the ministries. Many strategies of doing equality work reflect this situation. The next question, which arises after this notion is: With whom do equality workers negotiate with and who do they need to lobby? Interviews provide several different answers to this question. The answers include that equality workers need to lobby or negotiate with the departments, management, executive committees, colleagues and politicians. However, it seems that there are differences in between different ministries and also different situations. Sometimes the dialogue with different parties is described as lobbying and sometimes it comes closer to educating or mutual learning. However, all interviewees agree that they use some form of negotiation tactics.

Another similarity in different interviews is that the discussions inside equality working groups are described as being empowering and the hard work for lobbying equality has to be done elsewhere. Even though I asked how the functioning of the working groups could be improved, the interviewees mainly discuss about the challenges of communicating with people outside their working groups. It seems that, according to the interviewed equality

workers, the challenges of communication and commitment are not experienced inside equality working groups but in other situations, such as in bringing their decisions to the departments. Another option might be that this way of interviewing equality workers does not bring up the tensions experienced inside the working groups.

Interviews provide both negative and positive examples of the success of equality negotiations. Positive examples include that attitudes towards equality have positively changed in some of the ministries during the last decade, perhaps due to equality work. Interviewees provide also examples of how equality work has been done together in an enthusiastic and creative environment. Negative examples include examples of hard negotiations and low prioritising of equality work in the ministries.

The interviewees discussed the organisational and historical burdens which shape equality work. These issues influence equality work and all work done by public servants. People learn to adapt to both formal and informal cultures in their organisations. Applying the informal organisation cultures can be hidden knowledge. Sometimes this hidden knowledge is useful for the organisation but it can also limit the possibilities and change. Interviews provide an example of the negotiation process in which different traditions inside ministry were brought together through a slow negotiation process.

The next question is: How do these equality negotiations influence the content of equality work? There are several answers to this question, because the negotiations are always shaped in the context. However, I would argue that one of the consequences of hard negotiations and resistance seems to be that the content of equality work is often left ambiguous. The ambiguity is caused by the negotiations in which equality workers choose their words carefully based on their expectations of what can be argued in each ministry.

Now it seems that we are walking in circles: ambiguity is used as a strategy in equality negotiations but, on the other hand, as Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014: 82-91) argues, ambiguous equality work also causes low prioritising of equality work. However, both Sara Ahmed and Anne-Charlott Callerstig have emphasised in their studies that ambiguity can have also a positive influence on equality work. According to Ahmed, ambiguous concepts can enable various actions. According to Callerstig, ambiguous equality initiatives can provide space for experimental learning. Hence, there might be a possibility to get forward with equality negotiations.

I believe that it is very important to make the negotiations regarding the content of equality work visible. Otherwise, these discussions can be hidden behind the official documents and equality policies and it is hard to understand why these policies are left

ambiguous. Ambiguity is no coincidence but a negotiation tactic. It also has its positive and negative influences on equality work.

## Places Where Equality Work Gets Stuck

The information about the places where equality work gets stuck can help us in understanding the challenges of equality work. In addition, identifying the places where equality work gets stuck can reveal why certain strategies of doing equality work have been chosen, or why certain issues are focused on.

The situations in which the interviewed equality workers experience that equality work gets stuck include that departments do not commit on promoting equality, nothing happens despite the written commitments in policies, backlashes are experienced despite the good intentions, there is lack of time and other resources, and the same arguments need to be repeated many times. Some situations in which equality work does not go forward are visible. For example, the difficulty of getting departments to commit to equality work might show in such a way that departments cannot name their measures for promoting equality. In this analysis I focus especially on the hidden situations in which equality work gets stuck.

Sara Ahmed (2012: 117) has created a concept of non-performative, which describes the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse does not produce the effects that it names. I think that some of the examples from the interviews I conducted could also be named as examples of non-performative equality work. Interviewees describe that the ministries do not always really commit in doing equality work despite their written and spoken commitments. For example, equality policies do not include new measures for promoting equality or the written measures are not actualised. I can conclude that sometimes the formal requirements to do equality work, together with the resistance of promoting equality, cause non-performative practices. I argue that it is extremely important to see beyond these practices and estimate the actual practices done for promoting equality.

Some of the places where equality work gets stuck or ends are exceptional. One of the examples provided in the interviews describes how the good practice of choosing those new legislative proposals in which gender impact assessment is especially significant, was ended by a minister who argued that gender impact assessment has to be done in all proposals. It can be concluded that also politicians require more information about the actual state of equality work. Otherwise they cannot distinguish non-performative actions from actual commitment and also their suggestions for improving equality might even have the opposite consequences.

Before continuing to examine in more detail how politics influence on equality work, I have to mention the discussion on resources and time. The equality workers I interviewed describe that doing external equality work in their ministries is often the last prioritised issue among their tasks. Also, when there is lack of time and resources, the last prioritised issues will be the first neglected issues. One interviewee argues also that the general amount of resources that government has influence on equality work more than politics. Lack of resources together with low priority of equality work influence on the content and quality of equality work, and create a situation in which equality work gets stuck.

## Politics and Equality Work

I have concluded that often the process of choosing the content of equality work is not so much about deciding on the content as such but, rather, equality work is shaped through different indirect organisational and political influences. Here I will focus on how the politics influence on equality work, and how equality workers might try to influence on politics.

Interviews provide examples of why politics do not influence much equality work. First, the resources influence more than other political decisions. Secondly, legislation and international commitments do not change even though the current politics might. Hence, current politics do not usually cause that much change in equality work or in other tasks public servants have.

Some equality workers argue that ministry and public servants need to have their own identity and views which are not directly connected to current politics. This kind of view of the role of public administration might be contradictory with the ideal of neutral public servants. However, especially feminist studies do not encourage in believing objective and neutral way of doing things. Instead, for example Anne-Charlott Callerstig (2014: 15) argues that to a large degree politics is shaped and given content in public administration. For this reason, also the role of equality workers and working groups is an interesting matter to study.

At the same time interviews provide also examples of how current politics influence equality work. One of the direct political influences on equality work is the government programme. According to the interviewees, the issues mentioned in the government programme are prioritised in equality work. Politicians can also influence the prioritisation of equality work despite the equality legislation stays in force. Ministers and management, which supports equality openly, can have a positive influence on equality work, and the other way round. Also, the way ministers' opinions influence equality work can be indirect. Public servants estimate the desired way of doing things under a current minister and parliament

even though they do not necessarily get official orders. For example, ministers' views are known through media.

Also the organisation of different tasks in different ministries has an influence on equality work. If the ministry, or the minister leading the ministry, have some responsibilities related to equality issues, this can support also equality work in the ministry.

To conclude, politics influence equality work in direct and indirect ways. On the other hand, the current politics are not the only force which directs the content of equality work. I argue that making the process of choosing the content of equality work visible would also help politicians. Also Callerstig (2014: 26) argues that the linkage between public servants and decision makers seems to be of particular importance in equality work. In addition, it would make equality work more transparent for citizens.

## Learning about Equality

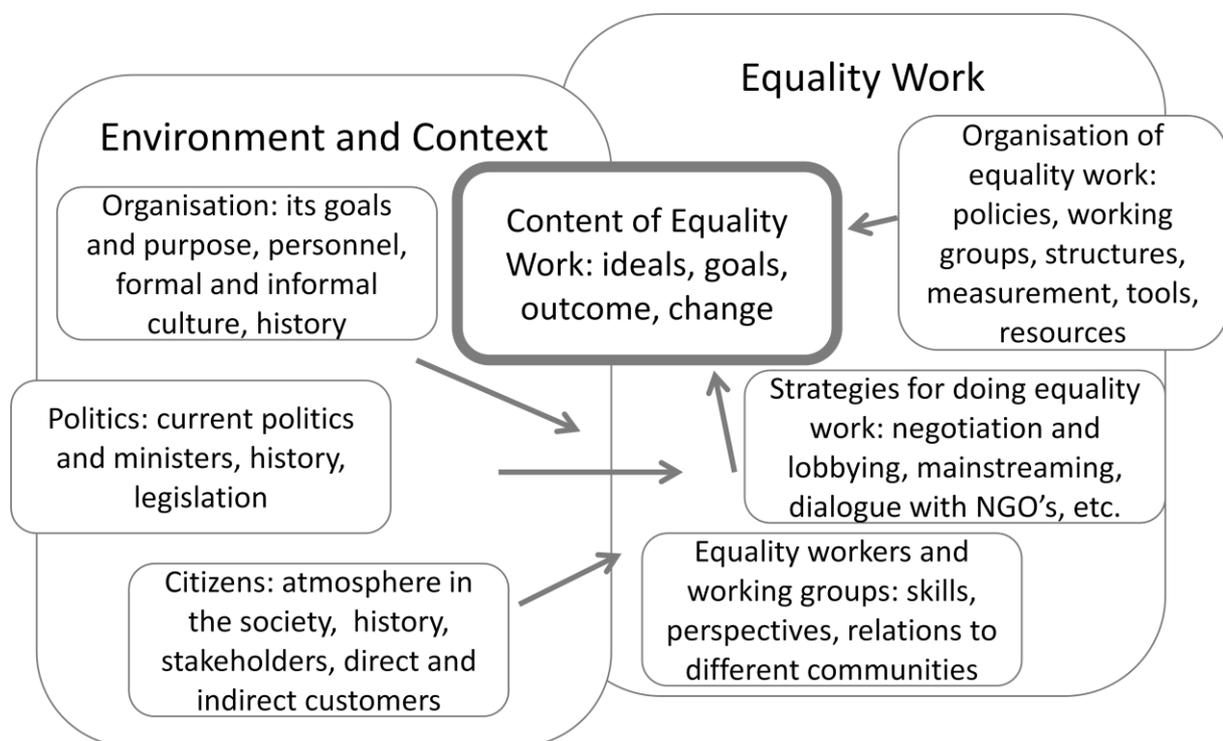
Also equality workers own perspectives on equality can influence equality work. For this reason I also asked about their own perspectives and ideals. However, I am not going to analyse their different perspectives here. Instead, I focus on how equality workers learn about equality. I think this provides a broader picture of the perspectives on equality.

When I asked about how equality workers have gained their perspectives on equality, they described that both personal experiences and learning from theories and books have been important. Personal experiences include both examples of learning at work and elsewhere in life. This way of learning seems to have similarities with the learning process of tempered radicals. Tempered radicals are often people who partly fit in their organisations but also fit in other communities which share different kinds of values. This position of partly belonging into different communities with different values creates the ambivalence but also creates a desire to change the organisation and its practices (Meyerson 2001: 13-15). I argue that formal equality work creates possibilities for tempered radicals to work for change. In this way organisations can also support tempered radicalism and learn from it.

While equality workers argue that these personal experiences matter they also believe in the possibility of mainstreaming equality work so that it could be done by everybody in the ministry. To me, this seems somewhat contradictory. Perhaps anyone can become a tempered radical if they are placed in the positions of doing equality work. This would require that it is possible for everybody to find identities of difference from themselves.

## Summary of the Analysis

I have now presented my analysis under the additional research questions, which are based on the themes repeated in the interviews. Here I present one possible interpretation of how the analysis could be summarized, and one way of looking at which issues influence the content of equality work. In picture 1 the issues influencing the content of equality work are categorised in two boxes. The box in the left presents the context in which equality work is done. The box in the right presents equality work. Both the context and the way equality work is done influence the content of equality work. The aim of the arrows in the picture is to show that the context influences greatly the strategies equality workers choose.



Picture 1: Issues influencing the content of equality work

I argue that equality workers choose their strategies based on the knowledge they have on the context they do equality work. The strategies needed in equality work demonstrate the equality negotiations inside organisations. Hence, the usage of a certain strategy or certain way of organising equality work cannot be the main problem if equality work gets stuck. Rather, the problem is the resistance equality work encounters in the organisation. Following this logic, equality work cannot be improved by simply changing the strategies and organisation of equality work. The usage of new strategies can be useful, too, but they need to be chosen carefully and the context in which the strategies are used has to be considered. I

also argue that equality workers have unique information about their organisation and strategies. It is wise to use this knowledge in improving equality work.

I also believe that it is very important to make the negotiations regarding the content of equality work visible. Otherwise, these discussions can be hidden behind the official documents and it is hard to understand why certain definitions are left out or why actions are left ambiguous.

## Chapter VII: Concluding Remarks

The aim of this thesis is to make visible, which issues influence equality work in public sector organisations. For accomplishing this aim, I have identified issues influencing equality work and provided examples of them. Specifically, I have examined the organisation of equality work and the strategies used in equality work, and concluded that the negotiative strategies of doing equality work inside organisations are carefully chosen by equality workers. My hope is that the knowledge equality workers have on their organisations could be understood better and valued more.

Throughout the research process I have been trying to let my knowledge production grow rhizomatically. I also did not aim for categorising the issues influencing on equality work the way I have done above. However, a couple of days before I had to hand in my thesis, I suddenly had a strong feeling that I had solved the problem, and that the solution included these categorisations. It was a relatively warm night in August and I was reading the draft of my thesis in the bed. I thought I would not read for too long because I had the window open and I was afraid of luring all the insects in because I had the lights on. But just like I could not prevent the insects flying towards the light, I could not prevent the boxes and categorisations emerging in my head. Finally, I turned off the light and dreamed of having a supervisor who told me to look at my thesis through a Japanese anime film. But the solved problems and theories in boxes did not disappear. So I added them to my thesis. However, I do not want to imply that categorisations and the simplified answer to my main research question would be the most important outcome of the research process. It is just one way of looking at the rhizomatically growing stories.

I think that the aim of trying to let the knowledge production keep its motion and the aim of fitting my text into the form of Master's thesis, are in some ways contradictory aims. I could even argue that both the whole programme and the experience of writing this thesis have created an ambivalence of making me to want to resist some academic knowledge

production practices and yet also apply them. However, I feel that this place in between somewhat contradictory aims is a good place to be. It encourages to question, learn and create. At least I have a feeling that I have learned new things on equality work through writing this thesis. I hope also readers feel that they have learned something, and it does not have to be the same thing that I have learned and felt like solving.

While keeping in mind that it is just one possible way of categorising things, I would like to use the categorisations presented in the picture 1 in analysing the focuses of previous research and this thesis. Different authors have focused on different issues influencing on equality work. Most of the studies about equality work have focused on the formal organisation of equality work and the strategies used in equality work. Some have studied equality workers and their identities. The studies focusing on the resistance towards equality work have focused on the context in which equality work has been done. Some have also studied resistance and tensions among people who do equality work. My aim was to analyse all the issues, which influence on equality work. However, it seems that through these methods and the topics covered in the interviews I was able to focus mostly on the strategies used in equality work, and on the formal structures of organising equality work. I also touched the issues of equality workers identities, and organisational and political contexts influencing on the content of equality work.

Although my findings are similar to findings of some other authors, my thesis provides more information about the issues influencing on equality work. For example, the information my study provides on the structures and strategies used in equality work can be helpful in organising equality work in other ministries in Finland or even in other countries. The thesis also encourages Nordic dialogue. In addition, I believe that it is important that also people outside ministries have an access to knowledge regarding ministries' equality work. For example, politicians and citizens can use this information in their efforts to support and do equality work.

My personal interest in further knowledge include learning more about rhizomatic and nomadic knowledge production. I also want to read more feminist literature from different countries. I have added some more Finnish authors to my reading list, too. In addition, I would like to connect the knowledge I have learned in studying different fields better. I am also curious to see how I manage to use my thesis in practical equality work.

If I continued this research I could use multiple sources of information. For example, in addition to interviews I could study the memos of equality working groups and other written materials produced in equality work. I could also use my own experiences more directly as a

material, perhaps even in the form of an autoethnography. However, this would require careful ethical considerations.

In addition to structures and strategies of doing equality work, future research could focus more on other issues influencing on equality work. This could mean focusing on the politics and the dialogue in between politicians and public servants, or on the organisations. Resistance and the situations and reasons of why equality work gets stuck could be analysed in more detail. Research could also focus more on equality workers and working groups, and the pedagogies of learning equality issues. One of the issues, which needs more attention, is to examine the differences and similarities in between gender equality work and diversity work. To conclude, I believe that we still need more information about the practical level equality work. Especially, we need information which is not described in the form of vague official statements, and is able to show equality workers realities.

I argue that making visible the issues influencing on the content of equality work is crucial in understanding and improving equality work, and also in the making of equality policies. Equality policies and equality work are required in Finland by the national legislation. This knowledge on equality work inside organisations is very valuable in fulfilling the requirements of equality legislation in a meaningful way. The need for equality work and equality negotiations does not end after the new laws have come to force or after the formal statements have been written on some policies.

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# Appendices

## Quotes from Interviews in Original Language, Finnish

Meillä on toiminnallinen tasa-arvotyöryhmä, jonka tehtävänä on valtavirtaistamisen koordinointi ja kehittäminen ministeriössä. [...] [Tapaamme] joka toinen kuukausi, 6 kertaa vuodessa. Sihteeri valmistelee asiat. Meillä on työsuunnitelma. Työsuunnitelmassa on koitettu kellottaa, vuosikelloon laitettu mitä missäkin kohtaa kannattaa käsitellä. Tasa-arvosuunnitelma on meidän pohjapaperi, jonka mukaan mennään. Työtapa on sellainen, että siinä ovat edustettuina osastot, mutta ei välttämättä kaikkia prosesseja. Me kutsumme paljon asiantuntijoita kertomaan jostakin asiasta, ilmiöstä, prosessista, hankkeesta tai koulutuksesta. 1

Meillä on toiminnallinen tasa-arvotyöryhmä. [...] Meillä on kokouksia parin kuukauden välein. Meillä on jokaiselta osastolta ja niistä muutamasta yksiköstä, jolla ei ole osastoa, niin edustaja. Ja tasa-arvotyöryhmän puheenjohtaja on sitten yhden osaston ylijohdaja. Hän istuu myös ylijohdajana kansliapäällikön johtoryhmässä sekä ministerin johtoryhmässä. Me käsitellään aiheita... [...] Ja tasa-arvosuunnitelmaa tehtiin työryhmässä. Jonkin verran ollaan myös käyty läpi sen toteuttamista. Mutta päätettiin sen toteuttamisesta, että tarkastellaan sitä ministeriön tulossopimusten kanssa, [jotka on tehty yhteistyössä hallinnonalan virastojen kanssa]. 2

Meillä on meidän ministeriön tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuustyöryhmä. Se seuraa hallitusohjelmaa, ja se seuraa henkilöstöpoliittista tasa-arvoa ja yhdenvertaisuutta. Ja sen lisäksi me myös sitä toiminnallista tasa-arvoa edistämme sitä kautta. Siellä on kaikkien osastojen edustajat ja erillisyyksiköistäkin melko kattava edustus. [...] Viime vuonna se kokoontui neljä kertaa. Tämä vuonna me tehtiin tällainen, [...] teimme tällaisen suunnitelman ryhmälle. Ja tälle vuodelle on aikataulutettu kuusi tapaamista. Ja kun tulee uusi hallitusohjelma, niin arvioimme mitä toimenpiteitä se edellyttää ryhmältä. 3

Työryhmän nimi on maahanmuutto, vähemmistö ja ihmisoikeuspoliittinen yhteistyöryhmä. Se käsittelee ne asiat, jotka vaativat koko ministeriön panosta näissä asioissa. Suurin osa asioista, joita yhdessä käsitellään, koskee maahanmuuttopolitiikkaa. [...] Nämä virkamiehet, jotka ovat tässä ryhmässä, niin ne ovat yleensä sitten niitä, joiden pöydille ne näissä toimintayksikköjen työnjaossa ajautuvat nämä vähemmistö, maahanmuutto ja ihmisoikeusasiat. Erittäin harvoin kokoontuu. Yleensä pystytään hoitamaan asiat sähköisesti. [...] Me pyydetään yleensä sähköpostilla toisiltamme kommentteja. 4

Silloin, 2009 tai 2010, kun aloimme tehdä ministeriön tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelmaa, niin silloin oli sellaisia vähän niin kuin väliaikaisia ryhmiä. Oli tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnittelun työryhmä. Sitten oli ryhmä, joka teki yleiset linjaukset. Sitten oli tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuustiedon välineiden keräämisen työryhmä. Ja sitten oli esteettömyyskartoitus työryhmä. [...] Meillä oli neljä ryhmää. Myöhemmin sinne tuli tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuusasioiden koordinaatiotyöryhmä. Eri ryhmissä tehty työ tavallaan paketoitiin tähän yhteen ryhmään, kun oli ensin intensiivisesti tehty eri ryhmissä. 5

Se on ollut semmoinen prosessi, että sihteeri on ährännyt. Ja sit sitä on käsitelty siellä työryhmässä useaan otteeseen. Eli sinne on tuotu luonnos. Ja se on siis lähtenyt tästä meidän yleisestä valtavirtaistamisen käsityksestä, eli siinä on nämä avaintoiminnot. 6

Alettiin sitä [yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelmaa] tekemään, ja ensin ajateltiin, että tehdään sitä meidän organisaatiodiagrammin mukaisesti, että sinne tulee [...] [meidän eri toimialat]. Mutta sitten todettiin, että asiat ovat hirveän samantyyppisiä kaikilla näillä meidän toimialoilla: siellä kertautuu nämä avustukset, säädösvalmistelu ja informaatio-ohjaus ja näin. Niin sitten luokittelimme ne niin, että mitä

me oikeasti tehdään. Tehtiin inventaario siitä, että mihin päivät kuluvat virkamiehillä. Ja sitten tehtiin se tuollaiseksi tehtävätyypittäiseksi. Se oli ihan hyvä ratkaisu. Mutta siitä seurasi myös se, että toimialoittaiset erityisjutut, niitä on kauhean vähän siellä. Se on aika yleinen. Sellaista yleistä säädöstä tai yleistä valtionavun myöntämistä ei kuitenkaan ole, vaan ne ovat aina yksittäistapauksia. Se jää väistämättä tämä kirjoitustapa vähän teoreettiseksi. 7

Vaikka meillä osastoilla on aika pitkälle lainsäädännön näkökulma [tärkeä], meidän tulee kuitenkin miettiä koko hallinnonalan ohjaamista. Mikä tarkoittaa, että meidän tulee ottaa virastojen näkökulmia siihen meidän omaan toiminnalliseen suunnitelmaan. 8

Yhteistyötaitoja ja sitouttamisen taitoja. Että saa ihmiset näkemään ne hyödyt siitä asiasta, ja kyky kommunikoida johdonkin kanssa. 9

Tarvitsee taitoa siinä, että saa muut puolelleen. 10

Mä käytän varmaan aika paljon esiintymistaitoja, koska otan sitä esille usein. 11

Vaikealta kuulostavien asioiden selittämistä niin et ihmiset ymmärtäis sen. Kun jos miettii niin kuin sukupuolen tutkimusta niin eihän sieltä voi mitään tuoda tänne suoraan [käytännön tasa-arvotyöhön]. 12

Malttia, että jaksaa perustella moneen kertaan asioita. [...] Tiedostavuutta, sitkeyttä, rohkeutta, malttia. 13

Kiristystä, lahjontaa, suostuttelua. [hymähdys] [...] Pitää osata kirjoittaa ja, pitää ennen kaikkea ymmärtää miten yhteiskunta toimii ja miten hallinnon päätökset valmistellaan. [...] pitää osata vakuuttaa ihmiset, lavakarismaa täytyy olla. 14

Se on sitä et pitää koko ajan olla antennit silleen neljä metriä pitkät. [...] Ja sitten pitäisi olla se ymmärrys, että kun jossain tapahtuu jotakin, niin siihen on iskettävä niin kuin nyt. Joka on nimenomaan sitä lobbaamista. Et sun pitää olla oikeassa paikassa oikeaan aikaan, ja sä voit saada ihmeitä aikaan niin kuin pienellä teolla aikaiseks. Sit sä voit nysvätä niin kuin jotakin hyvinkin pitkään, eikä sillä ole mitään merkitystä. Pitäisi tuntea oikeat ihmiset, tietää oikeat prosessit, ja sit pitää olla niihin ihmisiin sellainen suhde, että sä voit soittaa tai laittaa viestiä et kun te teette siel nyt tätä niin ootteko miettinyt tota. 15

No se voisi helposti olla sitä [lobbaamista]. En ole ehkä lähtenyt siihen. Ehkä pitäisi. Kyllä se on sillä tavalla, että jos haluaisi että oikeasti asiat menisi eteenpäin, niin pitäisi käyttää aika paljon lobbaamisen tapaista toimintaa. [...] [Joskus käytetään] niin kuin sellaisia lobbaamiskeinoja, että sanoo työkaverille, että sanotko seuraavassa kansliapäällikkökokouksessa [tietystä asiasta]. Se on vähän myös sellaista, että niin kuin mutkan kautta vaikuttamista tarvitaan, ettei se asia tule aina sen yhden ja saman suusta. 16

Ja sitten mielestäni se mittaaminen kertoo siitä, että ollaan päästy pidemmälle. Tosin kaikkia asioita ei ole yhtä helppo mitata. Ajatus sellaisesta yhteismitallisuudesta, että voidaan kaikki mitata, vaikka rahalla, niin se ei kaikissa tapauksissa, tai ylipäätään vaikka joillain excel-tilukoilla toimenpidelistauksilla, niin se ei välttämättä ole edes niin kuin mahdollista. Mutta kyllä luulen, että näitä kysymyksiä voidaan kyllä mitata, kun päästään riittävän konkreettiselle tasolle asioissa. Ja kyllähän me voidaan esimerkiksi asenteita tai kokemuksia tai osallisuuden kokemusta tai kokemusta siitä että voi olla oma itsensä. [...] Se, että näitä ylipäätään kysytään, niin sillä jo voi olla symbolinen merkitys. Tiettyjen ryhmien kohdalla jo se, että mainitaan on tärkeää, vaikka sukupuolivähemmistöjen kohdalla. Tai se, että kun kysytään sukupuolta, meillä on ollut sukupuolen lisäksi kolmas kategoria, niin pelkästään sen olemassa olo on merkittävää. 17

Prosenttimäärät [suvatuista hallituksen esityksistä], kyl ne aiheuttaa aina yllätyksiä ihmisissä. Ja se et se viedään aina valtioneuvostolle käsiteltäväksi, niin mun mielestä ministerit aina järkyttyy, et näinkö vähän. 18

Mehän mitataan alaisten virastojen osalta, esimerkiksi [...] että kuinka paljon apurahojen hakijoissa ja saajissa on naisia ja miehiä. 19

Joskus pääsemme näillä arkihavainnoilla lähes yhtä hyvään tulokseen. Mutta ei haluta luottaa sellaiseen arkihavainnointiin tiedon hankkimisen keinona, vaan aina tilastoidaan. 20

Saataisiin ehkä vähän laajemmastakin tietoaaineistosta, eli ei vain lukuja ja numeroita, vaan esimerkiksi erilaisista asiakirjoista. 21

Tasa-arvosuunnitelma on meidän pohjapaperi, jonka mukaan mennään. 22

Se on yksi osa tämä toiminnallinen tasa-arvosuunnitelma. [...] Koulutustilaisuudet on yksi asia. [...] Meillä on avattu sivut, johon on koottu sukupuolten tasa-arvon edistämiseen liittyvää aineistoa. [...] Lisäksi otamme sen huomioon tulosohjauksessa. 23

Toiminnallisessa yhdenvertaisuudessa tällaiset ohjelmat [viittaa pöydällä olevaan ohjelmaan] ovat paljon merkityksellisempiä. [...] Ne ovat oikeastaan paljon tärkeämpiä, koska niihin liittyvät määrärahat. Ja niihin liittyy se, miten me oikeasti tehdään. [...] Mutta tämä on voinut osaltaan tämä yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelma, niin se on voinut osaltaan promotoida sitä ajattelua, että se [yhdenvertaisuus] täytyy tunkea sisään näihin [ohjelmiin ja strategioihin], joissa on se kova ydin, mitä me tehdään. 24

Me tehdään ne asiat, joita muutenkin tehdään, niin niihin yritetään saada sukupuolinäkökulma tai tasa-arvonäkökulma mukaan. 25

Ja me ollaan tehty siinä sellainen ratkaisu, että tämä ryhmä ei ole se varsinainen toimija, vaan nämä eri osa-alueet tämän toiminnallisen tasa-arvon edistämiseksi on vastuutettu niille virkamiehille jotka muutoinkin hoitaa niitä tehtäviä tässä organisaatiossa. 26

Näkisin, että tasa-arvon ja yhdenvertaisuuden näkökulma olisi aika luonteva osa sellaista yleistä strategiatyötä, ja tietysti henkilöstö- ja rekrytointipuolta. Että se olisi valtavirtaistettu niin, että se olisi keskeinen osa paremman työelämän näkökulmaa. Ja toiminnallisesta näkökulmasta, kun jokainen ministeriö toteuttaa tiettyjä perustehtäviä, niin pohdittaisiin, miten yhdenvertaisia eri ihmiset ovat esimerkiksi ministeriön edistämien perusoikeuksien näkökulmasta. 27

No silloin [ideaalitapauksessa] kaikki valmistelijat ottais siinä työssään ihan oikeasti ja aidosti sen sukupuoli- ja yhdenvertaisuusnäkökulman huomioon ja [...] kävis läpi ne meidän kysymyslistat. Ja mä luulen että perhekäsityksellä on iso merkitys ministeriössämme. 28

[Ihanteellisesti toimiva ministeriö olisi] just sellainen jossa jokainen virkamies osaisi ottaa sen luontevana osana huomioon [tasa-arvonäkökulman]. Nykyään meillä on esimerkiksi aika hyvin tiedossa, että sä et saa ottaa esimerkiksi lahjuksia, et saa perheenjäsenellesi myöntää avustusta, ja et saa valmistella perustuslain vastaisia säädöksiä. Niin samalla tavalla tämä tasa-arvon ja yhdenvertaisuuden edistäminen olisi sisäistetty itsestään selvyudeksi. Siihen on vielä vähän matkaa. 29

Jos jokainen virkamies hoitaisi vuoden tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuusasioita, tietysti vuorollaan, niin siinä se on! Sitten meillä on virkakunta, joka on herkistynyt näille asioille ja ottaa ne luontevana osana kaikkea työtä. 30

Pitää päivittää [ministeriön] yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelma. Ja se on ennen kaikkea tuon meidän hallintoyksikön aloitteesta kiinni. Sen voisi oikeastaan jättääkin... ajattelin, että jätän sen täysin niiden

heräämisen varaan, en puutu siihen millään tavalla. Et me tehtiin se eka, koska ei niillä olisi ollut asiantuntemusta siihen. Mutta ne saavat nyt miettiä miten se tehdään ja mitä sillä tavoitellaan, ja lukea sen yhdenvertaisuuslain kunnolla. 31

Hän [sihteeri] kävi kaikki osastot läpi ja keskusteli keskeisistä tasa-arvoasioista, joita pitäisi kirjata suunnitelmaan. [...] Siinä kyllä kävi ilmi, että mitkä ovat tärkeimmät prosessit osastoilla. Ja miten tasa-arvoasiat voisivat niissä näkyä. 32

Sit meillä on ollut ideoita siitä, että toiminnallisen tasa-arvotyöryhmän sihteeri voisi kiertää osastojen johtoryhmiä ja kertoa näistä asioista. Mutta sitä aina suunnitellaan ja ikinä se ei toteudu. [...] Mutta sitten jotenkin ajattelis, että se olis niin että se osaston johtaja voisi viedä sen viestin sinne osastolle. 33

Mä rakastan sitä meidän toiminnallista työryhmää! Se on aina toiminut hirveän hyvin. Siellä on ihmisiä, jotka tekevät ihan erilaisia töitä mutta joilla on useilla aika pitkä ministeriö kokemus. Tuntuu, että se keskustelu mikä siellä käydään tuo aina jotain uutta. [...] 34

Haastattelija: [...] Mikä sen saa aikaan, että keskustelu toimii hyvin siinä ryhmässä? Haastateltava: Luulisin, että se liittyy siihen, että niillä ihmisillä on vahvat osaamiset alueillaan. Ja ministeriön tuntemus. [...] Ja ne tuovat sen rohkeasti siihen. Myös se ilmapiiri siellä. Sihteeristö on alusta asti pyrkinyt siihen, että ilmapiiri on salliva ja hyvä. [...] Ja toisaalta siellä uskaltavat nekin ihmiset jotka eivät välttämättä ole tasa-arvosta pitkää kokemusta tai ole kauaa olleet työryhmässä, niin nekin osallistuvat keskusteluun. Vaikka ne minun näkökulmastani kysyvät joskus tyhmiäkin, niin sekin on arvokasta. 35

Useimmiten keskustelu menee aika pitkälle puheenjohtajan, varapuheenjohtajan ja minun välillä, koska olemme eniten syvällä siinä substanssissa. Ja osastojen edustajilla on joskus vaikea päästä siihen mukaan. [...] Mutta se riippuu aika paljon siitä, kuinka lähellä keskustelu on osastojen konkretiaa. Olemme esimerkiksi miettineet, miten tehtäisiin tämän ryhmän työtä tutuksi talon sisällä, ja siihen osastojen edustajilla onkin hyviä näkökulmia. 36

Meillä on ollut onni, että meillä on ollut erittäin hyvät sihteerit. Innostunut tuo [henkilön nimi] ja [henkilön nimi] on myös erinomainen. Se sihteerityö on aika merkittävää, se pitää prosessia käynnissä. 37

Jotta tunnistetaan niitä toiminnan yhdenvertaisuuskysymyksiä niin pitää konsultoida kansalaisjärjestöjä ja hakea sen tyyppistä dialogia, että tunnistaa niitä kysymyksiä. 38

Mielestäni se ongelma työryhmässä on se, että se ei saa... Jotenkin se, se on meidän Akilleen kantapää, että [emme tiedä] miten sitten saadaan sieltä [tasa-arvotyöryhmästä] ne hyvät ideat osastoille. Ja saadaan osastot sitoutumaan niihin. On ajateltu, että se tehdään niin, että siellä on osastoilta ne edustajat. Mutta joku siinä mättää siinä kommunikaatiossa sen työryhmän ja osastojen kommunikaation välillä. [...] Tarkoitus olisi, että ne ihmiset toisivat sieltä osastoilta merkittäviä asioita työryhmään, ja sitten taas toisaalta voisivat työryhmästä osastolle. [Esimerkiksi], että nyt tämä ja tämä pitäisi tehdä. Niin se jotenkin ei toimi, hyvin ainakaan. 39

Mehän sitoutetaan osastot tähän. Se on ehkä se hankalin homma. Että se [tasa-arvotyö] ei jää vain niiden henkilöiden tehtäväksi, jotka on meidän ryhmässä edustettuina osastoilta. 40

Että voi olla että meillä on ne tavoitteet, ja että pystytään mittaamaan niitä, mutta ei välttämättä tehdä siinä välissä yhtään mitään. Tai toimenpiteet on sellaisia, että ne tehtäisiin joka tapauksessa, vaikka meillä ei olisi sitä tavoitetta. 41

Sitten niihin [toimenpiteisiin] ei haluta sitoutua. Jos halutaan vaikka, että naiset edistyisivät enemmän urallaan, niin voitaisiin tarjota vaikka mentorointia ja koulutusta, jos nyt pikaisesti ajatellaan. Se ei

riitä että ne kirjoitetaan sinne paperille [tavoite], vaan meidän pitää todennäköisesti tehdä joku aktiivinen toimenpide, jossa me kerrotaan että me tarjotaan erityisesti naisille koulutusta ja mentorointia. Ja siihen tarvittaisiin se johdon sitoutuminen. Mutta johto taas ei välttämättä halua sitoutua, koska se taas leimaisi heidät. 42

Et vaikka, jos ajatellaan että meillä ei saa olla epäasiallista käytöstä. Ja on ohje, että jos joku siitä ilmoittaa, niin tehdään näin ja näin. Ja sitten käy ilmi että nyt on tullut, että joku työntekijä on kokenut epäasiallista käytöstä. Niin sitten todetaan, että no mutta se ei ole mennyt kertomaan esimiehelleen. Tai se ei ole tehnyt näin tai näin, ja eihän meidän nyt tässä tapauksessa tarvi. 43

Meillä on ollut sellainen tapa ministeriössä, et johtokunta ruksaa ne lakihankkeet, joissa pitää erityisesti katsoa sukupuolivaikutuksia. Mutta hänen [sen aikaisen ministerin] mielestä ei voitu tehdä, koska kaikissa niissä pitää katsoa [sukupuolivaikutuksia]. Eli se hänen ymmärryksensä siitä työn tasosta oli ihan eri kuin se realismi. [...] Niin sitten ministeri niin kuin pilas tämän silloin yhdellä kaudella. Ja hänellä oli varmaan niin kuin hyvä tarkoitus, että kun tämä pitää kaikessa tehdä, mutta ei ymmärrystä siitä, et silloinhan sitä ei tehdä missään. 44

Enemmän kuin puoluepolitiikka, vaikuttaa se, minkälaiset resurssit valtionhallinnolla ylipäätään on toimia. Yhdenvertaisuuden edistämisen suurin vihollinen on se, että meillä on tiukat aikataulut ja pitää saada yhä enemmän tulosta aikaiseksi. 45

Tämä [suunnitelman kirjoittaminen] oli kans just sellainen, mihin mä pääsin aina viimeiseksi muiden töiden takaa käsiksi. 46

Jos ajattelee toiminnallista tasa-arvoa niin siellä suurin ongelma on se kiire. Kun asetetaan tulossopimuksissa erilaisia tulostavoitteita tuolle kentälle sille ja tälle asialle, niin ne on ladattu niin kohtuuttomilla ajatuksilla, että niihin ei pysty kenttä vastaamaan. 47

[Tasa-arvotyö vaatii] malttia, että jaksaa perustella moneen kertaan asioita. Kun on itse tiedostanut asioita, niin alkaa helposti pitää sellaisia ihmisiä tyhminä, jotka eivät ole tiedostaneet. Ja sekään ei ole hyvä. Pitää yrittää suht yksinkertaisesti avata niitä asioita. 48

Me ollaan jo vuosia puhuttu näistä baby stepeistä ja se on ollu se meidän yritys ei ymmärtää vaan kestää se tilanne. Ja mehän käydään myöskin näitä samoja keskusteluja vuodesta toiseen [eri] ihmisten kanssa. Et se mitä tässä pitää itse välttää niin on se leipiintyminen, mikä on vaarana tällaisella ihmisellä joka on tehnyt tätä yli 10 vuotta. 49

Mutta tämä [valtionhallinnossa työskentely] kyllä tehokkaasti tyrmää [ne visiot], ja oppii ne rajat täällä. [...] Mietitään, kuinka paljon uskalletaan visioida [tasa-arvotyössä]. [...] Tietty organisaation historiallinen taakka määrää, että ei voida tehdä niin kuin mitä tahansa. Vaikka halutaan olla edelläkävijöitä, niin silti tietty organisaation historiallinen taakka määrää, että ei voida tehdä niin kuin mitä tahansa. 50

Silloisen hallinto-osaston juristit sanoivat, että ei me voida näin kirjoittaa, että rekrytoinnissa suositaan [tiettyjä ryhmiä]. [Juristit sanoivat, että] meitä velvoittaa hallintolaki ja virkamieslaki. Ja niinhän se toki on. Ja sitten siitä käytiin pitkä vuoropuhelu, että mitä voi ja mitä ei voi kirjoittaa. Ja se [kirjaus] on kompromissien tulos, jossa aika pitkän tradition omaava hallintosäädöksistä lähtevä henkilöstöhallinnollinen näkökulma ja vähemmistöjen asemaa parantava traditio, jollei nyt törmää, niin ainakin puhuu vähän eri kieltä. 51

Ministeriöt ovat perinteisesti olleet aika päällikköorganisaatio. Se tuo tietynlaista ryhtiä. Mutta toisaalta se kasaa johtajille hirveästi töitä ja se ei kannusta oma-alotteisuuteen, ja on kiireistä. 52

Meillä oli neljä ryhmää. [...] Siihen päädyttiin, koska sen aikainen kansliapäällikkö ja ministeri priorisoivat kovasti sitä hommaa ja halusivat tehdä kunnolla. Varsinkin hallituskauden alussa oli hyvä meininki. 53

Viime hallituskaudella tämä tasa-arvon edistämisen asia tuli kyllä päättävältä ministeriltä ja hallitukselta. Välillä on sellainen hallitus, joka haluaa edistää tasa-arvoa aktiivisesti, välillä taas sellainen, joka vähän vähemmän aktiivisesti. 54

Itse taas ministeriössä puhtaasti poliittinen toiminta vaikuttaa myös. [...] Vaikka lain mukaan menee toki niin, että oli ministerin poliittinen mielipide mikä tahansa, niin jos laissa lukee että nämä asiat on tehtävä näin, niin sittenhän me toimitaan niin. Mutta kaikki sen yli on tulkinnallista, vaikka tehdään meillä virkamiesvalmisteluna.

Haastattelija: Onko valmisteluja, joista on todettu, että tämä on liikaa?

Ei. Veikkaan, että se aistitaan enemmänkin siitä ilmapiiristä. Sitä tiedetään. [...] Että uskon, että rajat tulevat sitä kautta, että tiedetään, mitä ei voida yrittää. 55

Meillä on aika usein ollut sillain, että kulttuuriministerin salkkuun kuuluvat myös tasa-arvoasiat. Ja vaikka ne hoidetaan toisessa ministeriössä, niin kuitenkin ne tulevat jollakin tavalla tutummaksi kun he käyvät täällä meidän ministeriön tiloissa, ja meidän ministeriä tapaamassa. 56

[Nykyinen politiikka] ei kauheasti vaikuta. Siis sellainen puoluepolitiikka siinä mielessä, että ketkä on hallituksessa ja ketkä ei, ja kuka on ministeri. Ehkä pieniä painotuseroja on, mutta ne ovat aika vähäisiä olleet tähän asti. Nyt tästä uudesta hallituksesta, jossa perussuomalaiset on niin meillä ei ole vielä kokemusta. [...] Syynä siihen, ettei vaikuta on kaksi juttua. Nämä yhdenvertaisuusasiat ovat olleet vähän tällaisia takarivin asioita. [...] Ja toisaalta on tajuttu, että me ei voida ihan vapaasti päättää näistä, pistää rajoja kiinni tai näin. Meillä on esimerkiksi kansainvälisiä velvoitteita pakolaisten ottamisen suhteen, ja turvapaikkahakemusten käsittelyn suhteen. 57

Toisaalta voi olla sillä tavoin, että ylhäältä päin valtiovallan suunnastakin nostetaan tiettyjä arvoja. Että ei voi olla niin, että jos meille tulisi tosi... Tämä on nyt tylästi sanottu mutta... Jos meille tulisi vaikka tosi perussuomalainen kansa... Tai jos kansa ajattelisi, että kuolemantuomio pitää saada, niin kyllä meidän pitää ihanteellisesta ministeriöstä pystyä sanomaan, että se ei kuulu suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan. 58

Mielestäni hallinnolla, jossa ei ole sisäistetty yhdenvertaisuuden tarvetta, niin sellaisella hallinnolla ei ole identiteettiä. 59

Linjaamme hallitusohjelman kautta, että mitä teemoja meidän tulee erityisesti ottaa huomioon toiminnallisessa tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelmassa. 60

Hallitusohjelman tasa-arvokirjaukset luetaan tietenkin myös täällä ja analysoidaan toiminnallisen tasa-arvotyöryhmän piirissä. 61

Ne ovat yleensä siinä tekemisen prioriteettilistalla aika korkealla, ne hallitusohjelman kirjaukset. Kun on tosi paljon muuta tekemistä, ja nämä tulisi vain lainsäädännön velvoitteena, niin se voi olla vaikea löytää sitä tilaa. 62

Se [lakimuutos] tuo lisää näkyvyyttä sukupuolivähemmistökyseksille. Me tehtiin sitä [käsiteltiin sukupuolivähemmistöjä koskevia asioita] yhdenvertaisuustyön alla, ja on ihan hyvä, että tehdään nyt myös tasa-arvotyön alla. 63

Siltä näyttää, että on aika homogeenisesti pohjoiseurooppalaista tämä työntekijäkunta täällä. [...] [Se vaikuttaa niin, että] ei paljon problematisoida sitä semmoisia kysymyksiä, että tuottaisiko heterogeenisempi työyhteisö mahdollisesti parempaa politiikkaa tai auttaisiko se meitä näkemään

laajemmin yhteiskunnassa yhdenvertaisuusongelmia, niin sillä lailla. Tosin onneksi täällä on meidän suomenkielisten lisäksi ruotsinkieliset hyvin edustettuna niin se pikkasen parantaa tilannetta. 64

Henkilöstö kokee, että niitä ei ole. Henkilöstön on hirmuvaikea vastata, toteutuuko yhdenvertaisuus. He kokevat, että me ollaan kaikki täällä samanlaisia. Mikä ei ihan pidä paikkaansa. [...] Niin minusta se näyttäytyy niin, että ei pysty näkemään niitä oikeita kohtia, että missä sen yhdenvertaisuuden pitäisi toteutua. 65

Ja onhan meillä aika heterogeeninen [tarkoittaa homogeeninen] tää meidän virkamieskunta. Et ei täällä kauheen... Joitakin vähän erinäköisiä ihmisiä jos miettii henkilöstöä, on. Mutta onhan täällä sitten meitä joilla on erinäköisiä lapsia. 66

Ainakin mun kokemuksen mukaan niin, tasasa-arvoon ja yhdenvertaisuuteen liittyvät asenteen on meidän ministeriössä aika myönteiset. Se liittyy tietysti paljon siihen, että meillä on korkeasti koulutettuja ihmisiä, jotka on mukana yhteiskuntapolitiikassa. Se virkamiehistö on sellaista, niin niitten on helpompi olla pro-yhdenvertaisuus, koska mitkään vähemmistöt eivät uhkaa niiden sosioekonomista asemaa. 67

Jotain alustuksia tai esittelen sitä vaikka jollekin osastolle tai yksikölle laajemmin, niin yrittää silläkin kärjellä, että tämä ei ole pelkästään naisten asia. Että myös miehillä on tasa-arvo-ongelmia. 68

Me pyritään puhumaan että kaikille sukupuolille. Pyrimme huomioimaan, että niitä voi olla enemmän kuin tämä nainen ja mies. 69

No kyllä se [sukupuolikäsitys] on hyvin perinteinen ja heteronormatiivinen ja... Semmoinen olo mulla on. Et ei sieltä nouse niin kuin... Rupesin miettiin, et olisiko jotain keskustelua jossa olis, niin ei tule tässä mieleen. Toki siellä on jotenkin puhuttu siitä, että kaikki naiset eivät ole samanlaisia ja kaikki miehet eivät ole samanlaisia. Ja on puhuttu siitä, että poikien pitää saada olla... Tästä että ei saisi olla niin, että kaikkien poikien pitäisi mahtua siihen poikien boxiin. Mut ei ehkä sen pidemmälle ole menny. Ja en tiedä onko sukupuoli-identiteetistä tai sen ilmaisusta niin kuin keskusteltu siinä ryhmässä. 70

Sukupuolivähemmistöt tekevät näkyväksi ikään kuin sen sukupuolinormatiivisuuden. [...] Se on huippuesimerkki paljastamaan syrjinnän sosiaalisen dynamiikan taustan. Se [syrjintä] on parhaiten voitettavissa ihmisten kohtaamisen kautta [kohtaamalla ihmisiä jotka vaikuttavat siltä, että he rikkovat sukupuolinormeja]. [...] Ja oma kokemus, kun olen aika paljon tehnyt sukupuolivähemmistöjen kanssa yhteistyötä niin, mun oma kokemus on että siellä teeman keskiössä on ihmisten kohtaaminen. 71

[On ongelmallista] et halutaan kaikelle hintalappu, et mitä se maksaa et tänne tulee. Ja kuitenkin tapahtuu paljon syrjintää, rasismia ja koulukiusaamista. Mut sitten ei jotenkin pystytä tunnistamaan et sitä on ja et se myös vaikuttaa siihen maahanmuuttajien asemaan. 72

Mikä on se raja, että ajatellaan että ihminen voi tulla työelämään? Jos ajatellaan yhdenvertaisuuden kautta, niin tarvitseeko ihmisen käydä viitenä päivänä viikossa töissä? Ja mielestäni ihanteellinen ministeriö työnantajana pohtisi sitä. Että ihminen saattaa vaikka käydä puoli päivää töissä, ja hänellä on hirveästi annettavaa. 73

Toivoisin näkeväni sellaisen muutoksen, että ihmiset pystyisivät elämään rinta rinnan täällä. Kun esimerkiksi nythän on kova uskontojen vastakkainasettelu, niin kuin radikalisoitumisen pelko länsimaissa, että siitä päästäisiin eroon. 74

[Toivon että] syrjintään puuttumisen kynnyks madaltuisi, aika paljonkin. ja sitten sellainen vähemmistöjen mystifiointi vähenisi. 75

Haluaisin, että tällaisen oikeudellisen, tietynlaisen juridisen perspektiivin rinnalle tulisi enemmän sellaista sosiaalipsykologista käytännön osaamista. Ja että ymmärrettäisiin, miten syrjintäkysymykset liittyvät tietynlaisiin sosiaalisiin dynamiikkoihin, jotka ovat myös muuttuvia ja niihin voidaan vaikuttaa. 76

Mun suurin haaveeni olis se, että maskuliininen kulttuuri muuttuisi. [...] Vaikuttaisi sinne palkkaeroon, vaikuttaisi mielestäni naisiin kohdistuvaan väkivaltaan, vaikuttaisi miesten keskinäiseen väkivaltaan, segregaatioon, ja niin edelleen... Et must se kun me ratkaistaisiin, niin olisin ihan tyytyväinen. [...] Sit mun mielestä isyyttä pitäisi vahvistaa. 77

Me ollaan aika hyvin saatu valtavirtaistettua tämän toimintatavan avulla. Eli ei ajatella enää niin rakettitieteeksi kuin viisitoista vuotta sitten. 78

Siinä on kyllä sellainen murros tapahtunut. Sitä ei oikein ehkä aiemmin havaittu sitä toiminnallisen tasa-arvon edistämistyön merkitystä, mutta nyt se on osa tätä meidän työtä täällä. [...] Kun sitä toiminnallista tasa-arvotyöryhmää rupesin vetämään, oli jonkin verran myös johtoryhmätasolla ongelmia siinä, tuoda esiin sitä merkitystä. Mutta ei enää. 79

Henkilöhistoriasta ja yksilöpsykologiasta. Mutta myös lukemalla paljon. Opiskelu ei sinänsä antanut niihin juuri mitään valmiuksia. Mutta järjestötyössä, lukemisella, ja sitten tuntemalla ministeriöstä näitä samoja asioita hoitavia kollegoita, keskusteluissa heidän kanssaan, ja yhdenvertaisuustyöryhmissä keskustelemalla. 80

Kirjoista ja elämästä. (naurua) Kyllä se, että kun pääsee kouluttamaan ihmisiä ja on ihmisten kanssa keskustellut, kun on ollut tekemisissä eri ryhmiä edustavien ihmisten kanssa, niin niiltä on tietysti oppinut tosi paljon. Henkilökohtaisesti näen myös, että poliittisen historian ja moraalifilosofiankin läpikäyminen on ollut tosi silmiä avaavaa. Nämä samat kysymykset ovat kuitenkin pyörineet aika pitkään ihmisten agendoilla erilaisissa muodoissa. Ja sitten se, että millä tavoin näihin on pyritty vaikuttamaan, on eriaikoina ollut erilainen. Ehkä se on sellainen käytännön ja teorian yhdistelmä, ja sitten kohtaamiset ihmisten kanssa. 81

Mä olen opiskellut naistutkimusta. [...] Ja sit mä olen harrastanut tasa-arvoa [kunnassamme luottamusihmisenä]. [...] Ja sitten päätynyt tänne töihin. Et kyl mä nyt varmaan luulisin sen suurimman osan ymmärryksestä olen hankkinut tässä leikkiessäni asiantuntijaa. Ja täällä valtionhallinnossa tulee aika nopeasti sellaiseksi maan suurimmaksi asiantuntijaksi jossakin asiassa, mikä on vähän pelottavaakin. 82

## The Questionnaire in Finnish and English

The questions were not asked exactly similarly from all interviewees but the background questionnaire used in the interviews is attached here.

Kysymykset:

Tasa-arvo- ja/tai yhdenvertaisuustyöryhmien toiminta

- Kuinka tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuustyö on organisoitu ministeriössä? Mitä tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuustyön ryhmiä teillä on?
- Miten ryhmä toimii? Anna esimerkki (tapauksesta, jossa toimittiin hyvin. Anna esimerkki tapauksesta jossa toimittiin huonosti tai ei saatu jotain asiaa vietyä eteenpäin.)
- Mikä sen saa aikaan, että ryhmä toimii hyvin / huonosti?
- Miten haluaisit kehittää ryhmän toimintaa, jos voisit?
- Millaisia ihmisiä ryhmissä on? Ovatko he innostuneita ryhmän työskentelystä?

- Mikä on oma vastuualueesi ryhmässä? Mitä käytännössä teet?
- Miten ministeriöiden välinen toiminnallisten tasa-arvotyöryhmien verkosto mielestäsi toimii?

Tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelmien laatiminen

- Mitä suunnitelmia olet ollut laatimassa? Minkälainen prosessi oli tämän edellisen suunnitelman laatiminen?
- Millä perusteella toimenpiteet suunnitelmaan valikoituvat? Kerro esimerkki.
- Mitä mieltä olet suunnittelun toimivuudesta näin?
- Miten politiikka vaikuttaa tasa-arvotyöhön?

Tasa-arvon ja yhdenvertaisuuden näkökulmat

- Mistä olet mielestäsi oppinut tärkeimmät tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuuskäsitykseesi vaikuttavat asiat?
- Miten tasa-arvotyöhön ryhtyminen on vaikuttanut työtehtäviisi tai uraasi?
- Minkälaisia muutoksia toivoisit yhteiskunnassa näkeväsi elinaikanasi?
- Minkälainen olisi mielestäsi ihanteellinen tasa-arvoisesti ja yhdenvertaisesti toimiva ministeriö?
- Miten lakiuudistus (joka laajensi sukupuolisyrijinnän kiellon koskemaan myös syrjintää sukupuoli-identiteetin ja sukupuolen ilmaisun perusteella) vaikuttaa ryhmän toimintaan?
- Miten sukupuoli käsitetään ryhmässä?
- Muutamat tutkijat (Anna Elomäki ja me esimerkiksi) ovat kaivanneet enemmän visioita ja tasa-arvotavoitteita tasa-arvotyöhön. Miltä tämä analyysi tuntuu?

Tasa-arvotyössä tarvittavat taidot

- Minkälaisia taitoja tasa-arvotyöhön tarvitaan? Minkälaisia taitoja käytät tasa-arvotyön tekemisessä?
- Mistä olet oppinut näitä taitoja?
- Tuntuuko tasa-arvotyö joskus lobbaamiselta?
- Milloin käytätte työryhmässä konsultteja tai asiantuntijoita?
- Mitä eroa on ulkopuolelta ostetulla tasa-arvokonsultilla ja ministeriön sisällä tasa-arvotyötä tekevällä henkilöllä?

Tasa-arvon ja yhdenvertaisuuden mittareiden vaikutus toimintaan

- Miten tasa-arvon toteutumista mitataan ministeriössä?
- Miten tämä mittaus / mittaamattomuus vaikuttaa tasa-arvotyöhön?
- Minkälaiset mittaustavat mielestäsi tukisivat tasa-arvotyötä parhaiten?
- Mitataanko joskus liikaa?

Muuta?

Mille kysymykset tuntuivat?

The Questions:

The functioning of the equality groups

- How is equality work organised in the ministry? What equality groups do you have?
- How is the group functioning? Provide an example (of the situation in which the group has functioned well and of the situation in which it did not succeed well, or in which something did not proceed forward).
- What makes the group work well or badly?
- How would you like to improve the working group if you could?
- What kind of people there are in the group? Are they enthusiastic about their work in the group?
- What is your own area of responsibility in the group? What do you do in practice?
- How does the network for equality workers in all the ministries work?

The process of drawing up equality policies

- What equality policies have you been drawing up? What kind of a process was to draw up this last policy?
- For what reasons did you choose the measures and goals of equality into the policy? Provide an example.
- What do you think about doing equality planning this way, does it work?
- How do politics influence on equality work?

The perspectives and views about equality and gender

- Where do you think you have learned the issues, which influence on your perspectives on equality?
- How has doing equality work influenced on your career or tasks at work?
- What kind of change would you like to see in the society during your lifetime?
- What kind of a ministry would be an ideally equal ministry?
- How is the amendment of the Act on Equality in between Women and Men (which now explicitly prohibits also discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression) influence in the working group?
- How is gender understood in the group?
- Some researchers (including Anna Elomäki and us) have argued that equality work in Finnish government would require more visions and goals for equality. What do you think about this analysis?

The skills required in equality work

- What kind of skills are required for equality work? What kind of skills do you use for equality work?
- Where have you learned these skills?
- Does equality work sometimes feel like lobbying?
- When do you use consultants or external specialists?
- What is the difference between an external and internal specialist?

The measurement of equality and the influence of measuring

- How is equality measured in the ministry?
- How does this measurement / lack of measuring influence on equality work?
- What kind of methods of measuring would support equality work in the best way?
- Is there sometimes too much measuring?

Other issues?

How did you feel about the questions?

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Equality Work in Finnish Ministries

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**Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to knowledge about the equality work in public sector organisations. Especially, my aim is to bring light into everyday experiences of doing equality work. This is achieved through interviewing equality workers in Finnish ministries. The study draws also on my personal experiences as an equality consultant. The main question I ask is: Which issues influence the content of equality work? According to feminist research, promoting equality is always a political process, which includes conflicting interests. These conflicting interests are, however, not visible in official descriptions of equality work. For example, ministries' equality policies mostly hide the various interests under vague definitions and beautiful structures. Despite the invisibility of the tensions in written documents, equality workers describe the negotiative nature of equality work by providing examples of equality negotiations in their organisations. In my analysis I conclude that equality workers are aware of their organisations' capacities to change and, in their work, they adapt to these limitations by choosing their strategies to do equality work accordingly. The content of equality work reflects the strategies, which are carefully chosen based on the knowledge about the organisation. I argue that this process of choosing equality strategies by equality workers is one of the overlooked factors shaping equality work in organisations.

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**Keywords**

equality work, equality policies, equality, gender, diversity, gender mainstreaming, public sector, organisations