

**A FAILURE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING –
RENEGOTIATING GENDER EQUALITY NORMS IN HORIZON 2020**

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Abstract

In the thesis, I provide the first policy frame analysis of gender equality norms in the work programmes of the latest EU's Framework Programme for Research and Development, Horizon 2020, led by the European Commission (EC) from 2014 until 2016. I investigate the policy documents in a pioneering way by looking at the framing processes of gender equality norms in its dynamic and ongoing (re)negotiations at the three intersection of the local advisory experts' constellations, the EU's normative power and the EU gender equality policy agenda.

By developing my own broad discursive methodology, I offer new insights on both institutional and individual *resistance* which is understudied in the scholarship since the 2000s (see Schimmelfenning 2000). Moreover, I provide creative research directions on the present policy analysis literature and methods. I employ a bottom-up approach to map the political agency of the local actors instead of solely focusing on high-ranking bureaucrats in the norm diffusion processes of gender equality in Horizon 2020 (see Mergaet and Lombardo 2014).

Opposed to the EC's excessive *rhetorical commitment* to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research, I demonstrate that the work programmes of Horizon 2020 controversially represent as an example of a failure of accepting and fulfilling gender equality norms and particularly *gender mainstreaming*. That way on the one hand, I call into question Manners's 'normative power of Europe' concept (2002) by challenging the EU's normative identity as a human rights promoter and exporter for the common good. Instead, I show that the EU and specifically the EC is driven by its economic self-interest since its establishment that hinders from introducing 'transformative' frames of *gender mainstreaming* in Horizon 2020. On the other hand, I also give novel insights on the present gender mainstreaming literature. I urge feminist academics to approach *gender mainstreaming* at the intersection of both theory and policy practice so that *gender mainstreaming* can become as a policy tool for real social change in practice (see Brouwers 2013). Based on the above, I question the feminist economic policy scholarship arguing that the human rights-based notion of gender equality in the EU is subsumed to its neoliberal agenda (see Rönnblom 2009 and True 2009). By going further, I make a radical statement and claim that Horizon 2020 has recently made a paradigm shift which is introducing a normative change at the same time. I assert that this new normative change of the EU gender regime is consciously built on economising and thus, depoliticising gender equality norms in the EC's neoliberal context.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND THE WORD COUNT

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

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Signed BIANKA VIDA

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List of abbreviations

AG	Advisory group
CEE	Central-Eastern Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
CFA	Critical frame analysis
DG	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
EC	European Commission
ENWISE	Enlarge Women In Science to East
EO	Equal opportunities
EP	European Parliament
EPWS	European Platform of Women Scientists
ERA	European Research Area
ERC	European Research Council
EU	European Union
EWL	European Women's Lobby
FET	Future and emerging technologies
HG	Helsinki Group
FP	Framework programme
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEIT	Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPE	Normative power of Europe
PA/PD	Positive action/discrimination
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UN	United Nations
WISE	Women's International Studies Europe
WP	Work programme

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the EU is officially committed to mainstream gender equality into policymaking in order to tackle gender-blindness and gender-bias and create policies accordingly. However, ‘the intended implementation of gender equality into all EU policies has not been implemented effectively so far’ (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 2).

Gender equality in science is seen as a constantly growing priority and concern for the EU due to non-utilising women scientists’ human capital in innovation and research. As per the official EU communication, ‘there is the risk that women’s underutilised skills will have a negative impact on science, which is something that European research cannot afford’ (EC, ENWISE Expert Group Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue 2004: 9). Hence, gender inequality in science seems to be important for the EU as the ‘waste’ of using women scientists’ workforce prevents the EU from being a global leader in the European and international capitalist market. Nonetheless, as I demonstrate in the thesis, this original neoliberal notion and framing of gender equality has been always prominent in the history of the EU science policy-making (Chapter 2).

In fact, in the EC’s Directorate-General (DG) for Research and Innovation as the main executor of the EU research policy, the understanding and suitable inclusion of gender equality into science has been always problematic. First, the little number of female senior officials was traditionally present in the EC’s DG for Research and Innovation as ‘Commission officials, advisory committee members, and recipients of EU research grants were dominantly male’ (Pollack Hafner-Burton 2000: 448). Second, ‘the limited access of EU-level organisations of women scientists, and national-level lobby groups to the EU decision-makers before the early 1990s’ also posed problems in the EU science policy-making (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 448). As a result, the institution of the DG has remained untouched about gender equality issues in terms of both the capacity of its actors and in terms of the stakeholders’ understanding of gender equality (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 448). This situation consequently further strengthened the production of gender-blind policy initiations as I introduce below in the EU research policy – at both the institutional-executive level of the EC’s DG and at the individual level of its officials in general.

Since the late 1990s, the EU and the EC's DG for Research and Innovation has launched a plenty of policy interventions with a dedicated attention to ensure gender equality in science and research through *gender mainstreaming* strategies. Nonetheless, the DG 'is (still) primarily oriented toward market or technical criteria, and have considerably less experience of dealing with gender issues' and therefore, it 'is less receptive to the gender mainstreaming frame' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 440). At any rate, a wide range of policy initiations and interventions and policy papers has been produced by the EC's DG to increase the number of female scientists in STEM-fields and to also integrate gender into the content of research. This means the systematic mainstreaming of gender equality at all levels of science and research.

In general, the framework programmes (FP) for research and innovation can be considered as the major policy responses to fund research activities and projects so as to secure the EU's leadership position in research in the European Research Area (ERA). The framework programmes – starting from FP1 (1984–1987) through FP7 (2007-2013) until the latest programme, Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) – are actually created by the EC's numerous policy actors and a variety of different lobby and advocacy groups and organisations (Chapter 2). Besides the institutional individual stakeholders participating in the work of developing policy responses in the FPs, a new form of European advocacy and lobby activity has been established by the EC. This is 'the activity of groups of female scientists moving on the EU institutional scene in order to promote and defend gendered equality in science (Antonucci 2013: 91). These actors all become prominent stakeholders in shaping the agenda of gender equality norms in the planning and negotiation stage of the framework programmes as I explore it in Chapter 2.

In the beginning of the 1990s, 'despite the EC's efforts to improve the collection of statistics on the participation of women scientists in EU research programmes, and to encourage women scientists to apply for EU funding, they did not have much impact on the policy formulation of FP4' (1994-1998) (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 448). FP4 'made no reference to gender issues, and failed even to collect any European-level statistics on the participation of women scientists in EU research programmes' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 448). Due to the pressure and critics of the EP on the absence of gender equality issues in the framework programmes, FP5 (1998-2002) explicitly addressed the issue of gender inequalities in the research community for the first time.

Thus, the EP's 'lobbying – together with that of NGOs like Women's International Studies Europe (WISE) and the European Women's Lobby (EWL) – created more pressure on the EC, and provided support for advocates of gender issues inside the EC' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 448). In the meantime, the EC also established 'networks with female scientists from Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) and the national cooperation between the EU member states in the implementation of the EU gender mainstreaming strategy' (EC, ENWISE Expert Group Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue 2004: 11). It founded its two main lobby organisations to assist an appropriate inclusion of gender equality in the FP. These are the female scientists' network in CEE, called ENWISE and the Helsinki Group (HG) that includes governmental and scientific stakeholders working at the national level in the EU countries. Nevertheless, as I highlight in the thesis, the fact that the EC itself creates these lobby groups and their participation in shaping the gender equality agenda in the FPs is very problematic. These stakeholders actually become the institutional actors of the EC's economic interests for the sake of the EU's global role in research and innovation. Therefore, this runs the possible risk that 'women's policy agencies, including those of the European institutions, are often too embedded in the ongoing neoliberal reforms in governance practices and policy priorities to take a critical stance' (Kantola and Squires 2012: 383). Despite the assistance of the EP and the EC's creation of its own pressure groups lobbying for gender equality in FP5, the programme failed to properly address gender equality themes in research through the EU gender mainstreaming strategy. It just merely focused on the issue of increasing female scientists' participation in research, as a *positive action/discrimination* (PA/PD) support instead of systematically integrating gender equality in all aspects of the framework programme. In FP6 (2002-2006), 'despite the adoption of gender mainstreaming, the DG for Research and Innovation did not produce significant progress in gender equality' (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 2). More worryingly, 'as *resistance* is likely to occur among the main actors involved in the implementation of mainstreaming' gender equality (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 5), FP7 (2007-2013) brought about a sharp decline in the inclusion of gender equality. This process finally resulted in removing all *horizontal issues*, including gender equality from its content (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 5).

Due to the failure of adopting and implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy of the EU in the framework programmes, in 2014, the EC initiated Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 is the largest and latest EU innovation and development framework programme ever that supports scientific research and market-related industrial projects and programmes. Its main purpose is based on economic reasons: ‘securing the global competitiveness of Europe’ (EC, Horizon 2020 – What is Horizon 2020? Retrieved on 24/04/2016 from <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-horizon-2020>). However, Horizon 2020 is the first development and innovation programme that includes gender as a *cross-cutting issue*: as an issue of research quality and also as an equality issue, part of *gender mainstreaming*. Accordingly, gender equality in terms of gender balance within the research participants and the gender aspects of research and innovative content are supposed to be systematically included within that. There are three objectives of Horizon 2020 which regulate the implementation of gender equality in the framework programme. These include ‘securing gender balance in Horizon 2020 research teams; ensuring gender balance in decision-making; and integrating gender/sex analysis in research and innovation (R&I) content, integrated at each stage of the Research and Innovation cycle’ (EC, Gender equality in Horizon 2020 2014: 2). This means that *gender mainstreaming* should be executed at each stage of the research cycle from programming, implementation, evaluation until monitoring.

In the complex framing processes of gender equality norms in Horizon 2020, I primarily focus on the outcomes of the planning and negotiation phases of Horizon 2020 (Appendix A). More precisely, I analyse the mutual intersection of how gender equality norms with a dedicated attention to *gender mainstreaming* as a specific gender equality norm and a transformative strategy are contextualised in the reviewed policy texts through the ‘voices’ of its actors at the local level. I explore how these norms are diffused, changed and renegotiated as a result of contestation and sabotage in the advisory groups (AGs), and as a consequence, how or whether they are represented and addressed in the various work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Horizon 2020. However, I do not apply the often used top-down approach that simply acknowledges the one-way norm diffusion and exportation of the EU that defines how these norms should spread at the different policy levels and through the different policy actors that is still relevant in the current normativity literature (van der Vleuten and van Eerdeijk 2014: 30).

Instead, by employing a bottom-up approach in a multidirectional way, I discover the dynamic mutual interaction of the local actors and their relation to the meso level of the DG and the EU level in the framing processes of gender equality norms in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. Thereby, my fresh research approach is a double contribution to both the normativity and the policy analysis scholarship. First, the normativity literature tends to assume a fixed one-way norm diffusion from the EU to democratically less developed countries and sub-policy levels and ‘leaves the EU’s normative power unquestioned’ (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 50-52). In contrast, through investigating the political agency of the advisory experts at the local level, I also draw conclusions on the AG members’ political role and agency compared to the EC’s DG and the EU’ supranational frames of gender equality norms (Chapter 3). Second, I provide new insights on the present literature on both institutional and individual *resistances* in general and particularly in the EU research policy that are still understudied (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 15). Nevertheless, by going further, I also point out the need for analysing the resistant and (re)formulated norm diffusion processes of the actors at the local level, e.g., advisory experts, rather just solely focusing on high-ranking EC officials at the meso level of the EC’s DG as Mergaet and Lombardo do (2014). Thus, I approach the normative framing processes of gender equality in the work programmes of Horizon 2020 in a pioneering way in order to discover the mutual construction of frames and norms through the political role and agency of the local actors. This innovative approach provides completely new highlights on studying norm diffusion and policy practices compared to the present and above-described scholarship.

The work programmes are basically the core policy documents which define the objectives of implementing Horizon 2020, executed by the DG through consultations with the experts of ‘the advisory groups and Programme Committees and European Technology Platform are other important channels to provide inputs’ (SDEO 2014: 11). The members of the advisory groups which is analysed in the thesis contain ‘independent expert groups which the Commission consults on the work programmes and they consist of scientific or industrial experts who attend the groups in their own capacity’ (SDEO Horizon 2020 Q&A 2014: 10). The mandate of the selected advisory group experts is problematic, though. Basically, anyone can be an advisory expert who registers the official database of experts on the EC’s website, called ‘Register of the Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities’.

The main selection criteria of the candidates is to meet the EC's requirements in terms of high level 'personal capacity' (EC, Register of the Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities. Retrieved on 10/02/2017 from <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/>). The database contains all public and private external experts advising for the EC in either a short or a long run. The selected candidates are supposed to participate in the 'preparation of legislative or policy initiatives and the implementation of EU legislation, programmes and policies, and/or the preparation of implementing acts in the Member States' (EC, Register of the Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities. Retrieved on 10/02/2017 from <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/>). The advisory experts in Horizon 2020 can be chosen through registering to the EC database or they can be invited by the EC due to their previous work in the FPs or in research in general the interviewed experts confirm (see the 'Interviews' section in Methodology). The general background of the advisory group experts contains various industrial, research and civil society expertise. Although the majority of the experts derive from the Member States and the Associated Countries of the EU, it is not an excluding factor if an expert comes from outside the EU countries (EC, Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Retrieved on 27/02/2016 from <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/experts>). From the above information it seems to clear that the appointment of the advisory group experts is political and due to their various sectoral and professional expertise – besides their involvement as either an independent or a government-appointed advisor – may represent different interests and political agendas (Appendix B). The only common characteristic of all AG members is that they are experienced senior professionals. In the thesis, I elaborate in detail the relation and (re)construction of the same political context where the economic and political interest of the EC and the self-interest and visions of the experts are negotiated and contested in the mirror of the gender equality frames in the work programmes of Horizon 2020 between 2014 and 2016. As I put the 'voices' of the experts in relation and in comparison to the framing processes present in the work programmes over the time period, I provide an original and comparative approach in the gender equality policy and normativity literature (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 57). I do not solely analyse the norm diffusion processes of the AG members itself, but by developing an innovative approach in a multidirectional way, I draw on conclusions the framing processes of gender equality norms at three policy levels.

These include the advisory experts' constellations at the micro level, and their relation to the frames and actions of gender equality norms in the EC's main executive institution, the DG's meso level and the possible interaction of these different stakeholders that all operate within the EU.

Given the importance of planning and executing of Horizon 2020, the programming documents are considered as the basic 'frames' of mainstreaming gender equality as a cross-cutting issue into the EU's research and development policy as it is officially promoted by the EC. Both main work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 comprise of a general introduction and they are divided into the three main priorities of Horizon 2020, Excellent science, Industrial Leadership and Societal challenges. Besides, they are also integrated into horizontal activities, including a particular work programme, called Science with and for Society which includes specific gender-flagged topics and calls for proposals which I analyse. Each of the various thematic sections is self-contained, and describes the overall objectives, calls for proposals, and the topics within each call (EC, Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework programme for research and innovation. What is a work programme? Retrieved on 27/02/2016 from <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-work-programme>). Notwithstanding, due to the wide range of the involvement of lobby organisations and the EU's different institutions and scientific experts and committees on gender equality and the advisory groups etc., I argue that the gender mainstreaming policy of the EU research policy is enriched with significant rhetorical actions. I define '*rhetoric enrichment*' as a both institutional and individual conscious and persuasive political framing that apparently increases the credibility of commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming. However, this serves to reach other goals than gender equality, e.g., economic ones. Based on Bacchi's notion, rhetoric is closely related to the use of *intentional framing* of issues (Bacchi 1999: 55-60). In this sense, I apply '*intentional framing*' of gender equality in a way that gender equality issues are 'deliberately framed to influence opinion and achieve certain political goals' that are economic ones rather than gender equality and the EU gender mainstreaming strategy (Bacchi 1999: 55-60). Hence, I focus on the persuasive rhetorical actions of the EC and its actors and investigate what is achieved from *gender mainstreaming* in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. In other words, I explore what is the essence and result of the negotiation processes and what is putting into practice from that.

In order to map these complex normative and power relations, I pay a dedicated attention to the ‘individual and institutional *resistances* that all contribute to an ineffective implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy’ in Horizon 2020 (Mergeat and Lombardo 2014: 2). With this I do suggest that gender mainstreaming would solve all social injustice in research and in the society alone. I imply that the possibility to implement the strategy itself, as a basic EU norm and transformative strategy is undermined by the self-interest and different political aims of the policy stakeholders who should pursue transformative action in the FPs (Chapter 2).

My research question is how the discourse of gender equality is established and formulated through the EC that acts as a ‘domestic’ normative actor being responsible to implement gender equality as a basic norm, defined by the EU – and through the various policy stakeholders of the EC at the local level who produce and give the direction of how to frame gender equality in the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Horizon 2020 and what kind of new narrative is created as a consequence of that? Through my research question I investigate the changing aspects of the conceptualisation of gender equality and the possible shortcomings and negative impacts which can be entailed due to the limited or inappropriate framework of gender equality in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. I assert that this undermines the implementation of gender equality by applying gender mainstreaming as a ‘*hard incentive*’ – in other words, as a compulsory standard that is supposed to be implemented by each EU member state – in the EU Treaties as it is also expected by the EC to do so (Chapter 1). As a new argument in the current EU research policy literature (see below), I illustrate that the work programmes of Horizon 2020 can be considered as a backward compared to the prior framework programmes in the history of the EU science policy-making. As such a comparative policy frame analysis of the work programmes of Horizon 2020 has not been carried out so far, I aim to fill this research gap with the thesis too. By applying a bottom up approach in the norm production of gender equality in Horizon 2020, I overall challenge and question Manners’ concept of Normative power of Europe (NPE) from its basis which is still dominant in the present normativity and policy analysis scholarship (van der Vleuten and van Eerdewijk 2014: 30). I call into question the universal, static and idealistic view of the EU’s *normative power* and role as a ‘teacher’ that prescribes gender equality as a basic norm and human right both internally and externally (see Manners 2002). I show that due to the neoliberal economic interest and priorities of both the EU and specifically, the EC, the EU fails to exercise its *normative power*.

Therefore, I make a radical argument in contrast with the above scholarship. I demonstrate that the EU cannot be considered as a global leader and human rights-committed pioneer in promoting and exporting gender equality norms – instead, its power is limited when it should exercise it (Chapter 1). Apart from the EU's global and supranational *normative power* which I challenge, I also represent how the political agency of the local actors may influence the norm diffusion and the exportation in the work programmes of Horizon 2020 from 2014 until 2016. My creative approach proves the local normative dynamisms can indeed influence and even further renegotiate the expected neoliberal implementation of gender equality norms at the DG and the EU level that is not discussed in the normativity literature (van der Vleuten and Eerdewijk 2014: 37).

Methodology

As a contribution to the current policy analysis methodologies, I develop a new and combined methodology in the thesis. It is a broad discursive approach which includes a combination of Bacchi's 'what is the problem?' policy approach (Bacchi 2009) and critical frame analysis (CFA) (Verloo 2005) and semi-structured individual online interviews conducted with the advisory group experts of Horizon 2020.

Policy frame analysis

As Horizon 2020 is supposed to mainstream gender equality into its work programmes and considers gender inequality as a social problem in order to find solutions for that, first, I employ a combination of 'what is the problem?' approach and a critical frame analysis (CFA) so as to investigate policy frames of gender equality in the work programmes. That way I explore how gender equality norms – with a dedicated attention to the 'transformative' frames of *gender mainstreaming* – are framed in both the diagnosis of the problem (what is the problem?) and the prognosis of the work programmes (what are the solutions?) (Bacchi 2009; Verloo 2005). I consider a gender equality frame 'transformative' if gender equality is a goal for itself and accordingly, it is well articulated in both the diagnosis and the prognosis of the documents by developing a gender mainstreaming strategy.

Besides, I use the following sensitising questions for the diagnosis and prognosis of gender inequality during the analysis: ‘whose problem gender inequality is seen, who caused it, how gender is related to intersectionality and where the diagnosis and the prognosis is located’ (Bustelo and Verloo 2009: 162). As part of my feminist contribution to critical policy frame analysis, my objective with this is to highlight and investigate the ways how gender equality is conceptualised and ‘framed’ as a discourse. Indeed, policy frame analysis is based on the recognition that ‘*policy frames* are not descriptions of reality, but specific constructions that give meaning to reality, and shape the understanding of reality’ (Verloo 2005: 20). Also, ‘a frame is always related to basic elements (labelled idea elements or positions on dimensions, such as roles in the diagnosis, location, norms’ (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 11). This is relevant due to the fact that likewise the EU gender mainstreaming strategy, the EU frames gender equality as a basic democratic EU norm that should be universally applied, in the EU science policy-making too.

Interviews

In order to further strengthen the findings of the applied critical policy frame analysis, I pay a particular attention to the role of the advisory group experts who are ‘all engaged in norm production, negotiation and change use frames to negotiate meaning’ of gender equality during framing the work programmes (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 59). I conducted semi-structured individual online interviews with 16 advisory group experts between November 5 2015 and January 15 2016 who had been involved in designing the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Horizon 2020 (Appendix C). The interviewed actors are members of Excellent science, Industrial leadership and Societal challenges advisory groups (Appendix B). Most of them got into the advisory expert position by registering on the EC’s expertise database, ‘Register of the Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities’ (Introduction). Therefore, they were accepted based on their scientific expertise. On the other side, the rest of the interviewees argued that they were specifically requested by the EC to advice on Horizon 2020 due to their prior work experiences in research and in particular, in the previous FPs (Introduction).

Confidentiality and anonymity were discussed with the interviewees, ensuring that the thesis would not reveal anything of a personal or compromising nature and there would be also total confidentiality of all names. Before filling in the online interviews questions, the candidates were contacted by e-mail that contained an introduction of myself and my interest in the inclusion of gender equality into the EU research policy. The individual interview questionnaire was designed in a semi-structured way. Thus, it consisted of a mixture of close and open-ended questions. On the one hand, close-ended questions were asked about the professional background of the experts and their role in the policy framing processes in the work programmes as a rule. On the other hand, the open-ended interview questions encouraged them to discuss how they interpret their own objectives and priorities in the field of gender equality in the work programmes and to discover *gender mainstreaming* instruments. Additional open-ended questions aimed to explore the experts' possible recommendations on how to incorporate the gender equality into the policy texts more effectively (Appendix C). The reason why I interviewed the advisory experts as specific stakeholders is that the officials of the EC's DG as the main executor of the work programmes and the whole FP of Horizon 2020 were not willing to give interviews. In this sense the methodology shows a limitation, at the same time, this also provides me a new opportunity. It allows me to analyse the frame production and renegotiation in the documents and the stakeholders at micro level. Using the interview responses of the experts allows me to assign particular voices of the actors to particular 'frames' of the work programmes of Horizon 2020 and it also helps me to fill voids of *gender mainstreaming* frames in the policy documents (Chapter 3). Finally, my original approach with the use of interview analysis assists me to 'identify of who has the voice in defining problems and solutions in official policy documents and which actors are included or excluded from the possibility of framing' gender equality norms (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 10).

Chapter 1: Institutionalising gender equality as a norm in the EU

In the chapter, first and foremost, I map how the formal norms of gender equality are institutionalised in the EU and the EC through discussing the EU Treaties. Secondly, I discuss the historical evolvement of the three models of gender equality in the EU, from *equal treatment* through *positive action/discrimination* (PA/PD) until *gender mainstreaming*.

Thirdly, I look at how specifically *gender mainstreaming* is framed and exported in both the EU and the EC, also discussing the possible tensions between theorising and executing *gender mainstreaming* as a specific gender equality norm and as an EU transformative strategy.

1.1. The EU Treaties – defining gender equality as a formal norm

Over the years, the EU has identified its foundational democratic norms through the ‘*hard laws*’ of its Treaties and its ‘*soft measures*’, part of its ‘*normative power*’ in internationally exporting these norms through policy-making initiatives (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 70). The EU – through its Treaties that are the laws and the main institutive regulations of the EU – basically described and framed gender equality as a *formal norm* that should be complied with the EU member states. In other words, the Treaties export ‘*hard norms*’ that are ‘formal standards and fundamental means of consolidating EU’s ideas on gender equality in Europe and globally’ (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 70). When gender equality norms are not present as a ‘hard incentive’ by the EU – e.g., EU Treaties and declarations –, but ‘are weakened by the fact that it is not a compulsory obligation that is supposed to be implemented by each Member State, they become “*soft norms*”’ (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 61).

Equality between women and men is one of the EU’s basic values. As Manners shows, ‘the five core norms which have been developed over the past 50 years through series of declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions by the EU are peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights’ (Manners 2002: 242). Besides these five major norms, four minor norms can be also differentiated, including social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance which all together constitutes the normative identity of the EU due to ‘its commitment to universal rights and principles’ (Manners 2002: 241-242). These norms basically ‘articulate ideas about what is good and what is bad about what is in the light of what we ought to do’ (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 44-45). In this sense, the EU regards itself as a ‘global player with roots in the rule of law and defender of humanitarian values’ (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 68). The EU also considers itself as ‘an exporter of gender equality norms through aligning legalisation and practice ensuring equality between men and women and in its external relations through securing women’s empowerment worldwide’ (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 77).

Despite the above human rights-based notion of gender equality, feminist scholarship point out the fact that ‘the gender equality policy of the EU has been always embedded in the logic of the market’ (Elomäki 2015: 290). Indeed, the EU ‘has developed and disseminated economised gender equality discourses compatible with the goals of economic growth and competitiveness’ (Elomäki 2015: 290). That is why the EU is often referred as a ‘neoliberal project’ by feminist economists, saying the EU ‘does not protect from precarisation, so that its proclaimed value-based agenda such as human rights is made co-responsible’ (Kóczé 2016: 44). During reviewing the Treaties and the EU gender equality policies, I explore that the human rights-based and the neoliberal notion of gender equality are mutually constitutive facts, based on the result of the contradictory and complex policy processes in the EU.

Even if at first glance it seems that the EU represents itself as a human rights champion for the sake of disseminating universal democratic norms, it is important to look beyond where this identity of the EU comes from. The institution of the whole EU is based on the idea of making a strong economic alliance and collaboration between France and Germany after World War II in order to avoid a third war (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 68). Hence, ‘the aims to preserve peace and respect human rights have been connected to the market integration from the very beginning’ (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 68). In the Treaty of Rome (1957), gender equality is framed by the EU as a foundational norm that ‘should be applied in a universal way, not only within the EU member states, but also internationally’ with the principle of equal work between men and women (Manners 2008: 66). Not surprisingly, the main goal of the Treaty was to create the framework for a common European market and constitute its central principles, thus, the most important objectives of the Treaty were economic. In the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), the advancement of equality between men and women are considered a vital issue and task that should be solved throughout the EU Member States. As Laffan points out, ‘references to human and non-discrimination in the Treaty of Amsterdam are part of process designed to enhance the systematic values and norms in the system’ (Laffan 2001: 724). The Treaty of Lisbon (2007/2009) further strengthened the rights of EU-citizens in the name of equality, by setting up the Charter of Fundamental Rights that contains explicit references to the equality between men and women.

Since then plenty of different directives – including equal pay, social and security schemes for equality, parental leave and pregnant workers’ equality – have been adopted to ensure gender equality as a norm legally in the EU (EC, EU Gender Equality Law update 2014, EC). Nonetheless, academics stress that ‘the close connection to employment priorities has changed the goals of gender equality policy, making it mainly preoccupied with women’s employment rates’ in the ‘neoliberal project’ of the EU (Elomäki 2015: 293). Hence, the meanings of the initially feminist concepts based on a human rights notion of gender equality have been contested and renegotiated by the economic goals of the EU. As Stratigaki notes, reconciliation of women’s work and family responsibilities to less the ‘double burden’ on women was incorporated into the EU’s employment agenda and sharing domestic tasks between women and men in the family became a synonym of securing female workers’ flexible work conditions (Stratigaki 2004: 50). In the words of Lombardo, Meier and Verloo (2009), the meaning of gender equality has been contested due to ‘bending’ gender equality towards economic growth and ‘shrinking’ it towards ‘women’ who are depicted as useful persons in the labour market whose human capital should be used to contribute to economic growth (Chapter 3).

In the beginning of the 2000s, during the external policies of the EU, a rich normativity literature on the EU foreign policy emerged focusing on the EU’s international role. In this scholarship, Manners argues that the EU constitutes a ‘normative power of Europe’ (NPE) (Manners 2002). He means by this that the EU establishes a normative power through ‘its ability to shape conceptions of “normal” in international relations’ which is ‘the greatest power of all’ (Manners 2002: 238-239; 253). Manners distinguishes two main aspects of the ‘normative power of Europe’: the EU’s ‘normative difference’ and ‘normative power’. As far as the concept of ‘normative difference’ is concerned, Manners argues that the ‘EU is constituted by a commitment to certain constitutional norms that determine its international identity’ through its treaties and declarations (Manners 2002: 241). I consider this process of ‘*norm diffusion*’ which determines and spreads norms in the EU Treaties ‘as constantly changing and subjects to renegotiation and redefinition by various actors at different levels’ (van der Vleuten, van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 3). Second, Manners regards *normative power* which ‘changes the norms, standards and prescriptions of world politics away from bounded expectations of state-centricity’ (Manners 2008: 45-46).

Nevertheless, in my view, when gender equality should be promoted and implemented through *gender mainstreaming*, the EU can be considered as a limited *normative power* as I discuss below that as a new insight in the above EU normativity literature. Manners also differentiates three different types of ‘normative power’, including normative theory, normative form of power and a type of actor. I apply the latter and assert that the EC can be also seen as ‘a normative type of actor’ which frames gender equality and its economic actors as objectives for the global governance of the EU in the neoliberal area (Manners 2011: 228-231). Overall, I aim to move beyond Manners’s universalist, idealistic and static perception about the EU’s normative role which is taken for granted, seeing the EU as an international role model, driven by pure normative rules for the global common good. In the thesis, I show that the neoliberal notion of gender equality of the EC aiming to replace the human rights frames of gender equality with economic framing, part of The EU’s ‘*structural power*’ paradoxically undermines the authenticity of Manners’s ‘*normative power of Europe*’ concept in exporting gender equality norms. In this case, I mean by the EU’s ‘*structural power*’ the EU’s economic power. Namely that the EU recognised the fact that ‘gender inequality results in an unequal division of women’s and men’s labour market participation that is disadvantageous to the economic aims and market purposes of the EU’ (True 2009: 133). Instead, as an additional new argument in the above normativity literature, I argue that the EC is acting as both an economic-oriented and normative actor in renegotiating the meanings of the norm of gender equality and *gender mainstreaming* as a specific gender equality norm, which I show in Chapter 3 in detail.

Interestingly, in the broader context of the EU, gender equality is mainly based on a human rights framework as the CoE and EP are ‘driven more by women’s rights considerations than economic ones’ (True 2009: 126). In contrast, in the EC’s policy documents, ‘gender equality is primarily framed in relation to economic growth that could lead to social cohesion’ (True 2009: 126; 131). As gender equality is manifested in ‘outside’ documents of the EU, prepared and implemented by primarily the CoE and EP, I intend to analyse the ‘domestic’ mechanisms of the power and influencing political agency of the EC. That way I investigate how the EC adapts, resist or even alter the EU’s normative framework of gender equality and *gender mainstreaming* in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. However, as these norms are not transmitted in a neutral context, but through individual policy actors within the institutional framework of the EU, I regard policy stakeholders’ political role crucial in the implementation of gender equality.

I question Schimmelfenning's argument that policy actors manipulate only to that certain extent until they do not lose their credibility due to the 'inconsistent and cynical use of norms' (Schimmelfenning 2000: 119). I demonstrate that visible *resistance* can occur through the 'domestic' role of the EC and its advisory group experts who are actively engaged in shaping the framing production of gender equality norms in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. I also claim that the actors can still keep the *rhetorical action* of the EU to promote gender equality visible in Horizon 2020. Overall, I also contribute to both the EU normativity scholarship and the analysis of *resistance* against *gender mainstreaming* as such studies have not been really produced since the 2000s (see Manners 2002; Schimmelfenning 2000 and Mergaert-Lombardo 2014).

Besides the formal institutionalisation of gender equality norms in the Treaties, the EU also produced a wide range of different declarations and statements within its institutions. These contain the EC's annual reports, various action plans, roadmaps and other non-Treaty documents that also export gender equality norms – however, as I show below – in accordance with the EC's economic interests. This is not surprising as the EC traditionally constituted gender inequality as an economic problem separated from the earlier formal frames of gender equality and democracy in the Treaties (Elomäki 2015: 11). For instance, 'the 1997 Annual Report of the EC on equal opportunities between men and women defines 'gender as a key issue for economic growth, social development and respect for human rights' (True 2009: 126). Moreover, in the latest EC's documents, for example, in the 2006 Roadmap for Gender Equality, gender equality is identified as a human right which contributes to reducing poverty' that shows that the neoliberal frame becomes more dominant than the human rights approach (EC 2006a). Thus, it seems that the legitimacy of gender equality is considered and accepted only in those cases when it contributes to economic growth. Owing to the EU's main concern about ensuring 'equal pay for women and men in the labour market resulted in the fact that gender equality has been historically linked as much to the pursuit of market-making as to social justice' (Lewis 2006: 5).

Although the neoliberal notion of gender equality norms have been always part of the EU gender equality policies, 'the explicit development of a market-oriented gender equality frame emerged in 2008 due to the global economic crisis that further intensified the original economic framing of gender equality' (Elomäki 2015: 288).

In 2009, the EC confirmed in its annual report on equality between women and men that the ‘increased participation by women in the labour market should be supported and strengthened in order to stimulate growth’ (EC 2009b: 4, 8). Thereby, there is no attention to gender equality as a human right that should be abolished as gender equality is entirely good for itself – the issue of gender inequality is only framed as an unequal employment division between women and men. More worryingly, while other aspects of gender inequality are fully ignored, this resulted in the fact that ‘economic reasons justify the presence of gender equality’ in the EC (Elomäki 2015: 294). Various human rights and feminist organisations ‘criticised “the inhuman” Eurozone austerity measures and more generally this neoliberal approach of the EU to socio-economic issues’ (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 68). I question that gender equality as a political goal is merely subsumed to the neoliberal agenda of the EC as the present feminist economic policy literature asserts (see True 2009 and Rönnblom 2009). Instead, I assert that gender equality has been recently replaced by the economic goals of the EC. Moreover, I claim that gender equality as a foundational EU norm and human right is not addressed and represented as a political goal. Instead, economic growth becomes the political goal of the EC that eventually brings about a new normative gender regime change in the whole EU. I discuss this recent and complex normative paradigm shift in more detail in the policy frame analysis of the work programmes of Horizon 2020 in Chapter 3. I also support my new research findings in the above feminist economic and gender policy literature with concrete examples of what neoliberal norms of gender equality are ‘doing’ and how they ‘renegotiate’ the human rights-based notion of gender equality through its local actors in the work programmes (Chapter 3).

All in all, gender equality seems to be considered important when it can be renegotiated with the economic interests of the EC since the beginning of the EU, and not as an important equality issue for itself – as a good norm that is worthy for itself. As I have exemplified, the economic framing of gender equality norms has been further intensified lately, especially due to the new financial and economic challenges that the 2008 global economic crisis means. Obviously, this neoliberal notion of the gender equality is ‘detrimental to introducing transformative aims of norms on gender equality’ (van Eerdewijk and van der Vleuten 2014: 231). I prove – by critically engaging the concept of ‘Normative Power of Europe’ (NPE) as mentioned above – that the EU sets a double standard in its research policy that has further implications for the EU’s general gender equality policies too.

The EU pushes its economic priorities and strategic interests – through its ‘*structural power*’ – over properly executing its ‘*soft power*’, namely to promote and implement human rights and specifically, gender equality. Based on this, as a new insight in the present normativity and feminist economic policy scholarship (e.g., Manners 2002, True 2009 and Rönnblom 2009), I argue that EU and particularly the EC as a normative agenda setting and executive institution fails to fulfil its *normative power* in this sense.

1.2. The development of the three models of gender equality in the EU – equal treatment, positive action and gender mainstreaming

In accordance with the evolving process of defining gender equality as a basic norm of the EU, I review the three different approaches to equal opportunities (EO), including equal treatment, positive action and politics of difference which the EU has adopted in its equal opportunities policies (Rees 1998).

As The Treaty of Rome defines the obligation of the EU Member States to ensure equal pay for women and men, it uses the concept of *equal treatment*, however, equal treatment alone is not sufficient in the EU (Rees 1998: 33-34). Although the legal framework of equality is important, it can be considered as a passive approach: the emphasis here is placed on creating rights and procedures that ensure all people, men and women equal rights rather than on outcomes (Rees 1998: 29-30). Not surprisingly, since the Treaty, significant advancement in terms of abolishing gender pay gap has not happened.

As ‘the shortcomings of the law on equal treatment in combating sex discrimination and ensuring equal pay were recognized in the EU member states in the 1980s, a series of *positive action* measures were co-funded by the EC to address the disadvantages experienced by women’ (Rees 2001: 245). In fact, ‘these programmes were to use *positive action* to implement change in systems of gender inequality and were based on the definition of women as equal, however, the term ‘equality’ still really meant difference based on biological difference, similar to the first phase’ (Pető-Manners 2006: 99). Also, securing initiations for women, such as providing trainings to improve their skills and employability were primarily based in the context of the labour market.

Positive action/discrimination (PA/PD) on the one hand, recognises equal treatment and shows a shift to outcomes (women-only, with the application of ‘unequal treatment’, e.g., quota) and contributes to visibility, diversity and representation of the targeted group members. On the other side, however, ‘through gendering the value due to the women-only approach, it fails to question issues of institutional organisation and decision-making power relations’ (Rees 1998: 39-40). As a consequence, the EU’s legalisation processes to secure equality between men and women at workplace have been criticised by feminists due to the lack of considering gender differences or addressing sources of inequality that lie beyond the workplace (Lewis 2006).

Due to the insufficiency of equal treatment and PA/PD in the EU, after signing the Treaty of Amsterdam, ‘in the past decades a new form of achieving gender equality has been prominent, through *gender mainstreaming*’ (Mazey 2002: 227). Contrary to equal treatment and positive action, mainstreaming is based on politics of difference (Rees 1998: 40). Although mainstreaming has been prominent in gender equality, it has moreover been established to promote gender equality, mainstreaming as such can be applied on any basis of inequality, at any organisation. In effect, there is not an internationally accepted definition of gender mainstreaming. Discussions of *gender mainstreaming* have been informed by feminist theory, theories of organisational practice and social movement theory (Booth and Bennett 2002: 432). As Rees defines, ‘*gender mainstreaming* can be regarded as the systematic integration of equal opportunities for women and men into the organisation and its culture, into policies, programmes and projects, into ways of seeing and doing’ (Rees 2001: 246). As *gender mainstreaming* has a strong transformative characteristic, it can bring about structural changes, for instance, in the culture of the organisation which is definitely an important step in abolishing gender inequality. Otherwise, it does not matter if the management may be interested in removing sex-binaries if the culture of the organisation itself works against it – this is what can be challenged and transformed by *gender mainstreaming*. As Walby says, ‘*gender mainstreaming* goes beyond the disadvantaged position of women with the privileged position of men with the ambition of subjecting all policy areas to gender equality practices, by broadening the areas in which gender equality can be relevant’ (Walby 2005: 456). In this sense, the transformative features of *gender mainstreaming* can be seen as a policy tool for social change. Below I explore how the institutionalised framing processes of gender mainstreaming as a mandatory EU strategy were formulated in the EU.

1.3. Instrumentalising gender mainstreaming in the EU

The principle of *gender mainstreaming* as a transformative strategy and a specific gender equality norm was developed by feminists in the 1970s, and it was presented, approved and started in the UN-conference on women in Beijing in 1995. Although before the conference there were ambitions to mainstream gender equality as a *horizontal issue* in the EU, '*gender mainstreaming* became as a formal EU strategy only after Beijing' (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 78). Hence, the gender mainstreaming strategy 'as a formal norm for work inside the EU is historically embedded and imported from international governance' (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 79). Ironically, this also means the EU is not a real pioneer in initiating and exporting the gender mainstreaming strategy. Instead, 'the EU polished its image as a good international citizen and normative purveyor' (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 78). As *gender mainstreaming* was initially a UN policy action, thus, it should be seen as a global norm, this affected the different and inconsistent patterns of the norm production of *gender mainstreaming* that has taken numerous forms in the past decades of the EU's history as I analyse it below.

One year later after the UN-conference, in 1996, the EC adopted a communication on *gender mainstreaming*. It stated that mainstreaming is about 'mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women' (EC 2000: 5). Since the UN conference, '*gender mainstreaming* has been adopted by the European Union as the basis of its gender policy, which has been deepening and become more wide-ranging since the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997)' (Walby 2005: 454). This leads to the fact that 'the previous definition and practice of equal opportunity as equal treatment handled public policy as gender neutral which is challenged by the concept of gender mainstreaming (Pető-Manners 2006: 100). Furthermore, 'no longer as a recommendation, but as a principle, mainstreaming was integrated in all EC policy developments' (Pető-Manners 2006: 100). Even if *gender mainstreaming* as a formal EU strategy is presented as a mandatory '*hard incentive*' in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), supposed to be executed by all Member States, there is no economic sanction on the Member States if the action is not implemented (Woodward and van der Vleuten 2014: 72).

Accordingly, based on this failure in exporting gender mainstreaming through the EU's 'normative power', 'the EC, more than a decade after the introduction of its mainstreaming mandate, has fallen well short of its goal, like other EU institutions and member states' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2009: 129). Additionally, 'the Commission's effort to frame its gender-mainstreaming proposals strategically, to appeal to officials and political representatives concerned with economic efficiency rather than, or in addition to, social justice and gender equality' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 441-442). These facts controversially undermine the existence of the EU's *soft power* in exporting gender equality norms and implement *gender mainstreaming* as a specific and transformative gender equality norm. The different 'versions of gender mainstreaming also appeared in western democracies (e.g., US and Western Europe etc.) and the EC itself', however, after all, the dominant forms of *gender mainstreaming* are formed to fit neoliberal agendas' (Bacchi and Eveline 2010: 41). The reason of this neoliberal interpretation of gender equality norms is actually rooted in the participation changes in implementing *gender mainstreaming*. Originally, 'feminist movements took part in formulating the rights-based gender equality discourse developed in the context of the UN World Conferences on Women in the 1980s and 1990s' (Elomäki 2015: 297). However, as the strategy has been disseminated all around the world, 'new market-oriented discourses have been developed by international institutions known for their neoliberal policies, without proper participation of the feminist movement (e.g., World Bank and International Labour Organisation (ILO))' (Elomäki 2015: 290). As a result, the EU basically has introduced an unclear and ambiguous agenda on gender mainstreaming which can be bent towards other policy goals than gender equality itself in its institutions – the economic interests of the EU, e.g., economic growth and sustainability. This led to the fact that 'advocates of *gender mainstreaming* have been sophisticated and strategic in their efforts to frame gender mainstreaming as an efficient means whereby officials in a broad range of issue-areas could achieve their goals' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 450).

In 2008, gender mainstreaming has been defined in a more inclusive and concrete way in the EU as 'the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking' (CoE 1998: 15).

In 2010, The Women's Charter was adopted by the EC so as to reinforce gender equality, through not only *equal treatment* legalisation and *positive action*, but also to mainstream gender to all policy areas. In particular, its aim was to ensure the inclusion of gender equality in Europe's 2020 Strategy. The new equality strategy, 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015' aimed to secure a coordinated action framework throughout all EU policy areas. Nonetheless, it instrumentally framed gender equality as an effective contributing factor in achieving economic growth and sustainable development. In addition, 'unlike the Lisbon Strategy, the Europe 2020 Strategy had no gender-specific targets, and gender mainstreaming was only superficially addressed' (Smith and Villa 2010: 531).

To sum up, the strategy of the EU to implement gender equality is double characterised. On the one hand, gender equality as a *cross-cutting issue* is promoted through and in specifically gender equality policies; on the other hand, it also facilitates in all policy areas (Lombardo and Meier 2008: 2-3). Notwithstanding, despite the fact that 'the EU has broadened its approach to gender equality, such as gender mainstreaming, the widening of the EU-political discourse on gender equality has not led to a deeper framing of the issues in terms of gender equality' (Lombardo and Meier 2008: 1). As Lombardo and Meier note, the reason for the simplified framings of gender equality in the EU comes from 'the lack of EU competence and differences in the actors having a voice and being referred to in the EU's policy documents' (Lombardo and Meier 2008: 1). What is more, due to 'bending' of gender equality towards the economic goals of the EU and particularly the EC also contributed a narrowed and simplified frame of gender equality norms as I have indicated earlier. As a consequence, 'the EU has generally adopted an integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming, integrating women and gender issues into specific policies rather than rethinking the fundamental aims of the EU from a gender perspective' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 452-453). Indeed, 'the Commission's integrationist approach is the outcome of the strategic choices of mainstreaming advocates, who have consistently framed, and 'sold', gender mainstreaming as an effective means to the ends pursued by policy-makers, rather than an overt challenge to those ends' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 452-453). Due to the main emphasis and concept of the EU's '*normative power*' as an idealistic norm protector (see Manners 2002), I challenge this interpretation of the EU's global role and soft power in an original way compared to the normativity literature (see Manners 2002).

I claim that the EC as both a normative and economic-oriented actor is actually able to transform and renegotiate the discourses on gender equality norms through its various individual actors – even opposed to the expected EU’s gender equality norms and gender mainstreaming strategy. Moreover, I show that in the (re)negotiation framing processes of the stakeholders, gender equality norms are not only transmitted through high-ranking bureaucrats at the DG meso level who has the political power to engage with, as a limited number of literature on stakeholders’ *resistance* focuses on (see Lombardo and Mergeat 2014). In contrast, I explore how the frames of gender equality norms are exported at the domestic level, among and through the local actors in the policy frame analysis of Horizon 2020 work programmes that offers new and more complex insights to the above gender equality policies and resistance analysis scholarship.

1.4. Conceptualisation problems in theory and practice – what and how to mainstream in the EU?

Despite the EC’s *rhetorical commitment* and promotion of the EU’s gender mainstreaming strategy, the scholarship theorising mainstreaming in the EU is still at an embryonic stage (Booth and Bennett 2002: 432). As Booth and Bennett argues, ‘the gender perspective has been closely associated with strategies for mainstreaming gender equality, but that this association is misleading’ (Booth and Bennett 2002: 430). As far as I see – in both the literature and in practice – the concept of mainstreaming has become synonymous with only gender mainstreaming. More worryingly, ‘the rhetoric of justice and rights, which was prominent after Beijing in 1995, has been replaced by references to economic efficiency and growth’ in the EU gender equality policy (Elomäki 2015: 290).

Indeed, ‘while the EU has played a vital role in the promotion of mainstreaming in member states, the specific cultural context of the European Commission with its economic focus, has constrained the policy development of mainstreaming which poses the problem of states implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy’ (Booth and Bennett 2002: 438). In practice, ‘*gender mainstreaming* is at present weakly institutionalised’ and it is not comprehensive enough as ‘other EU institutions, notably the Council and the Court of Justice have far been untouched by mainstreaming’ (Mazey 2002: 228).

Also, due to the dominant technocratic characteristic of the EU – as the real political participation of NGOs tends to be limited –, actors’ participation in policies aiming to execute gender mainstreaming is often problematic. In these cases, ‘the blindness of gender mainstreaming to “policy as a site for *resistance* and contestation” can easily undermine the realisation of fundamental transformation’ (van Eerdewijk and Davids 2014: 313). Thirdly, the main criticism about gender mainstreaming is centred on the utopian view of the concept. Namely that ‘it is ideal but impractical’ which implies the often stretching inconsistency between how to theorise gender mainstreaming and how to apply it in policy practices effectively to bring about real social change (Brouwers 2013: 29-30). At the same time, this recognition is the outcome of the lack of studies on the evaluation of gender mainstreaming practices which tends to rely on discussing theoretical issues that controversially prevents from sufficiently employing gender mainstreaming in policy-making (Bustelo and Verloo 2009: 153). I argue that the EU’s institutional political context along with the EU officials’ political role in policy-making should be further analysed by feminist academics instead of debating about pure conceptualisation concerns of *gender mainstreaming* that is still common in the feminist scholarship. Especially that the social change and transformation of the strategy itself is supposed to be implemented within the EU’s policy framework. I assert that *gender mainstreaming* can become a social and political change that can change real social changes in the society only in that case if theory and practice of gender mainstreaming are intersected and deeply understood by academics and policy practitioners. Fourthly, another problem that may raise concerning mainstreaming is the relation between *gender mainstreaming* and equality mainstreaming. The latter includes other categories besides gender, such as race/ethnicity, age, and disability etc, while in practice, gender mainstreaming runs the risk to regard as less important or ignore, other inequality issues due to promoting gender equality. It is shown that ‘the relationship of gender mainstreaming with other complex inequalities is one of the major issues in current gender mainstreaming analysis’ (Verloo 2007: 212). Policy studies show that intersecting inequalities are articulated poorly and they are framed as separate categories in the EU policy documents due to the lack of a deep understanding of the intersections of various structural inequalities in the EU (Lombardo and Agustín 2011: 491). The explanation of this is that the EU and its institutions ‘assume an unquestioned similarity of inequalities, to fail to address the structural level and to fuel the political competition between inequalities’ (Verloo 2007: 211).

On the top of all, ‘the EU moves from a predominant focus on gender inequality, towards policies that address multiple inequalities’ (Verloo 2007: 214). It is also shown in the scholarship that ‘gender mainstreaming is the most successful in those cases when the EC provides ‘*hard*’ incentives for officials to implement a reform, rather than only ‘*soft*’ incentives, like persuasion and socialisation’ (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 114). Also, as Mergaet and Lombardo explore, ‘*individual and institutional resistances* of policy stakeholders contributed not to implement the EU gender mainstreaming strategy’ in the EU science policy-making (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 2). *Resistance* in this sense means the clear opposition to the implementation of gender mainstreaming. I consider this *resistance* which is against accepting and executing a normative change which *gender mainstreaming* as a transformative strategy attempts to bring, to alter decision-making processes and rules, by introducing new norms and principles. This is what I review in the discussion of the EU science policy actions in the next chapter. In Chapter 3, I provide concrete examples for the institutional and individual *resistance* through the interviews conducted with the advisory experts of Horizon 2020 in line with the framing processes of gender equality norms in the work programmes.

Chapter 2: The (re)formulation of implementing gender equality in the EU science policy-making

In the chapter, I investigate the links between the EU science policy-making processes and gender mainstreaming through reviewing the benchmarking documents of the EC on women in science and research. That way I present how *gender mainstreaming* in the EU science-policy making is articulated and also explore the shifting discourses on gender equality norms in the previous framework programmes (FP) prior to Horizon 2020.

2.1. Benchmarking EU science policy actions on gender equality

In 1999, the EC issued the communication ‘Women and Science: mobilising women to enrich European research’ to promote equal opportunities in research in the EU. This can be regarded the first step towards gender equality policy in the field of science.

The document warned that even though women are represented in a growing number in social, economic and political life, women are still underrepresented in STEM and this can harm Europe's interests (EC, Women and Science: mobilising women to enrich European research 1999: 7). Similarly, even though women make up 60% of university graduates in Europe, only 20% of them work as full professors, compared to the proportion of men (GenderSTE Science, Technology, Environment – Why structural change of research institutions? Retrieved on 18/04/2016 from http://www.genderste.eu/i_change01.html). As a response to women's absence in STEM-areas, the EC argued that it is committed to 'take action as effectively as possible at all levels of power and to develop a coherent approach towards promoting women in research' (EC, Women and Science: mobilising women to enrich European research 1999: 4). This included to ensure at least 40% representation of women in science research and technology (EC, Women and Science: mobilising women to enrich European research 1999: 4). Given female scientists' underrepresentation in research, the EC report claimed that 'the aim is not to compromise excellence in the pursuit of social justice, but rather to enhance the excellence of European science by removing barriers to participation by qualified women scientists' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 449). Therefore, instead of seeing gender inequality in research as a political problem due to the fact that it was important to be eradicated to achieve social justice, the EC report saw it as an efficiency issue that has relevance only in terms of market-economic perspectives and wanted to eliminate gender inequality for the sake of European science.

In 1999, in order to make adequate policy responses to the situation, the EC established two lobby organisations to define actions and put them into practice (Introduction). One of these organisations was The Women and Science Unit that launches conferences, writes numerous reports, ensures calls and supports women scientists' networks. It also had a significant role in the establishment of the European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS), the largest umbrella organisation on women's issues in science in the EU. The EPWS defines itself as 'an international non-profit organisation that represent the needs, concerns, interests and aspirations for more than 12.000 women scientists in Europe and beyond' (EPWS – Who we are. Retrieved on 10/02/2017 from <http://epws.org/>). With the establishment of the EPWS, the EC 'aimed to create and develop an institutional dialogue, a more frequent consultation involvement with a single umbrella organisation of national and European networks on women and science' (Antonucci 2013: 92).

Nonetheless, it is important to see that the NGO of the EPWS controversially was founded by the EC. With this, the goal of the EC was to ‘promote the condition of women scientist in the European research system and encourage the recognition of women's presence in research, and aim to increase it in numerical terms’ (Antonucci 2013: 92). Even today the ‘the main function of EPWS remained to expand at the most the number of women scientists’ that fits into the EC’s neoliberal notion of gender equality (Antonucci 2013: 92). The other major lobby organisation that the EC founded was the Helsinki Group (HG), an assessment group for the EC that includes representatives of both the government and scientific institutions responsible for the promotion of women in science at national level in all Member States. The main purpose of HG is ensuring ‘an exchange of experience and mutual learning as regards implementation of policies and actions to advance gender equality in research’ (Gender & Science – Homepage, News. Retrieved on 10/02/2017 from on <http://www.genderaveda.cz/en/news/marcela-linkova-elected-the-chair-of-the-helsinki-group-on-gender-in-research-and-innovation>). However, it seems that – as in the case of EPWS – the Helsinki Group also primarily focuses on promoting female scientists’ integration as a PA/PD initiative in research. As the chair of the HG says, nowadays ‘our priorities include gender balance in decision-making positions... we are now in process of data collection to map how EU countries address this issue’ (Gender & Science – Homepage, News. Retrieved on 10/02/2017 from on <http://www.genderaveda.cz/en/news/marcela-linkova-elected-the-chair-of-the-helsinki-group-on-gender-in-research-and-innovation>). I argue that as both the EPWS and the HG were installed by the EC as its lobby organisations on gender equality in research, the main activity of them is also necessarily related to the EC’s neoliberal efficiency. Indeed, this neoliberal frame of gender equality that is constituted in the name of ‘efficiency’ to increase female scientists’ employment rates in research might be detrimental to implement gender mainstreaming.

Due to the lack of available statistics about the number of female scientists’ employment participation, in 1999, the EC started urging the issue of creating comprehensive and clear statistics in the Member States as a vital requirement for setting up suitable policy interventions later. To progress that, ‘in 2001, the EC issued the ETAN Report ‘Promoting Excellence through mainstreaming gender equality’ that, for the first time, provided a global view of the position of women in science in Europe’ (Pető 2013: 132).

The report described the current situation of female scientists in the academy, at universities and research institutes, and revealed concerns about the lack of information for women in industry. As the 'Women in industrial research: A wake up call for European industry' (2003: vi) report showed, 'the situation of women in industrial research in Europe has never been analysed before and points out that 'the results are alarming'. The ETAN report discusses the possible reasons for the phenomenon of the 'leaky pipeline', mentioning different forms of discrimination and gender biases against women that has a negative impact on recruitment and employment. Furthermore, it defined other widespread and general problems women have to face in their scientific careers, like the gender pay gap between men and women and the hardships of going back to work in science after a career break. It also investigated the processes of the peer review system in the allocation of fellowships and research funding as those resources are limited for female scientists, compared to their male colleagues.

Since the publication of the ETAN report, the EC has funded a variety of studies that provide more information on gender equality, about its causes and prerequisites and the different action plans for that, supported examples from all Member States. In 2001, as the next step for a more extensive creation of the ERA, the Commission adopted its Action Plan on Science and Society (ENWISE Expert Group Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue Women and Science in the Enwise countries 2004: 14). In order to also discover nuance differences in the less-developed Central-Eastern-European countries from the aspect of gender and science, the EC established a group of independent experts in 2002. This is called the ENWISE group (Enlarge Women In Science to East). Its members come from Central-Eastern European and the Baltic States, and they are scientists from different disciplines at higher levels, representing academies of sciences, universities, research institutes, administration and business. Due to the endeavour of the Helsinki Group to make international and comparable statistics on men and women in science, 'it has stimulated the mainstreaming of the sex variable into the European R&D surveys', and resulted in 'the widest collection of European data on women and science ever produced' (EC, Commission Staff Working Document: Women and Science: Excellence and Innovation – Gender Equality in Science, 2005: 6). This is 'She Figures 2003'. Since then in each third year, 'She Figures' is published by the EC and offers more data on the theme.

In 2003, the ‘Women in industrial research: Analysis of statistical data and good practices of companies’ project provided a comprehensive official and gender-disaggregated data on researchers in the business and industry sector for the first time. In 2004, the EC published the ENWISE Expert Group’s document on the issue, ‘Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue Women and Science in the Enwise countries’. The paper highlighted the danger of waisting women scientists’ research potential and declares that eliminating gender bias and prejudice against female researchers should be everyone’s responsibility to solve. It argued that ‘in order to build a more effective and efficient European Research Area, we need all available, female as well as male, brainpower to be involved in and committed to reaching these objectives’ (EC, Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue Women and Science in the Enwise countries 2004: 10). With this ‘the natural difference of women and men were neutralised and essentialised’ – they are merely seen as useful, economic actors to contribute to the main role of the EU to be a global leader in the ERA (Jalusic 2009: 59). I further elaborate and introduce in Chapter 3 that ‘*degendering*’ – as women and men are neutralised as useful economic subjects – and *individualisation* – as they are seen as individuals – are common things what neoliberalism is ‘doing’ with gender equality norms. The first major international expert workshop initiated by the EC on gender and excellence was held in Florence in 2003, followed by the publication of ‘Gender and Excellence in the Making’ in 2004. A key concern for gender-sensitive science and research policy was how to combine the promotion of scientific excellence with the promotion of gender equality which has been also addressed by its prerequisite, the ETAN report Promoting excellence through mainstreaming gender equality (2000). Indeed, gender was increasingly seen as a mark of excellence that could tackle gender-bias and -discrimination against female scientists. In 2004, the ‘Gender and Excellence in the Making’ report aimed to facilitate further discussion on the problems of defining and measuring scientific excellence. Likewise, the EC’s Staff Working Document on ‘Women and Science Excellence and Innovation Gender Equality in Science’ (2005: 4) also discussed the mechanisms of scientific excellence, saying that ‘scientific excellence is not as gender neutral as it seems to be’. At the same time, the document did not discuss a clear and coherent definition on ‘excellence’ and its relation with gender equality, but it conceptualised excellence in a general and unclear way. The ‘Mapping the maze Getting more Women to the top in Research’ (2008) report provided data on women’s underrepresentation in decision-making.

Unfortunately, even though numerous actions and initiations have been carried out by the EC, ‘She figures 2006’ firmly illustrated that gender imbalances still persist among European researchers. The next ‘She figures 2009’ confirmed that ‘women remain a minority in scientific research, accounting for 30% of researchers in the EU in 2006’ (She figures 2009: 5). Similarly, She Figures 2012 illustrated that even though women’s participation in higher education has growth in general, ‘women in scientific research still remain a minority (33 % of researchers in the EU in 2009)’ (She Figures 2012: 5). The latest She Figures also admitted that ‘despite progress, a range of gender differences and inequalities persist in research & innovation’ (She Figures 2015: 1). It particularly mentioned that ‘in 2011, women in the EU accounted for only 33 % of researchers – a figure unchanged since 2009 which means that ‘amongst researchers, the representation of women and men also remains uneven’ (She Figures 2015: 1). The EC report of ‘Initiating and sustaining structural change – Reflection on the outcomes of the workshop on structural change in order to improve Gender Equality in Research Organisations in Europe’ (2011: 16) claimed that ‘gender dimensions of research content, methods and priorities need to be assessed when allocating resources for research projects’.

Due to the failure of setting up appropriate policy responses, the production of more and more reports on the issue of gender equality continued. The ‘PRAGES-Practicing Gender Equality in Science’ (2009) contained databases of good practices, and ‘The gender challenge in research funding’ (2009) included recommendations for improving transparency in assessment processes and in research funding in general. The 2010 ‘Meta-Analysis of Gender and Science Research’ offered the most complete view of current research on women and science in Europe. Finally, in order to have a comparable statistical and information about the ‘history’ of EU science policy-making and gender mainstreaming, the EC published two reports, the ‘Benchmarking policy measure for gender equality in science’ (2008) and the ‘Stocktaking 10 years of Women in Science’ (2010), including all activities and policy interventions conducted by the EC in over the past ten years.

To conclude, even if the EC has produced a wide range of international statistics on the issue of gender equality in research, I find these findings limited and problematic. Due to the main focus on the statistics of women’s (academic) career and gender-disaggregated data collection, this neoliberal notion of gender equality resulted in the fact that gender equality is narrowed down to the economic goals of the EC.

Hence, the EC documents tend to be technical focusing on a massive data collection instead of developing transformative actions to analyse the power relations between women and men and offer solutions for institutional change in research. In this sense, I argue that the EU research policy's gender equality frames fit into the EU's integrationist and technical gender mainstreaming approaches (Chapter 1). During reviewing the FPs through the EC's frames of gender equality norms, I explore how this basic neoliberal notion of gender equality in science also fits to the prior FPs before Horizon 2020. In order to explore the dynamic normative frames of gender equality, I look at the policy actors' role in the FPs to discover the possible reasons for contestation and *resistance* against introducing transformative gender equality frames through implementing the EU gender mainstreaming strategy.

2.2. Shifting discourses on gender equality in the science framework programmes – from the 5th Framework programme to Horizon 2020

Based on the prerequisites and benchmarks of policy formulations of EU science policy, improving the underrepresentation of women in science has been part of a strategic approach to promote equal opportunities in the field of scientific research. Nonetheless, as I have shown above, in the EC's communication on gender equality in science, gender equality was traditionally reduced to increase female scientists' number in the labour market through using PA/PD initiatives. Hence, I argue that it was merely regarded as an efficient tool for strengthening the EU's competitiveness, and capitalising female scientists' innovation potential in the 'neoliberal project' of the EU (Chapter 1). This is especially contradictory as the EC still promotes gender equality as both an equality and efficiency issue in its *rhetoric*.

Since the 1990s, the main strategies to promote gender equality in science are equal treatment, advancement of women through positive action and gender mainstreaming. The 5th Research Framework Programme (1998-2002) can be regarded the first step towards taking into account gender equality in science. The particular attention to gender equality comes from the fact 'the EC stimulated European-level discussion and exchanges of experience among the member states regarding equal opportunities for women in science' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 449). These comprised of 'consultations with European women scientists, national civil servants participating in research policy, and establishing a transnational lobbying collaboration among female researchers, like the EPWS and the HG' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 449).

FP5 contributed to make the ERA wider through the projects which it supports, and to a certain extent structurally through the thousands of research networks set up for the projects, not only in the EU but also in other countries. Unlike the previous programmes (FP1 to FP4), FP5 focused on the main socio-economic issues, such as health and environment, the aging population, and renewable energies that pose problems for the EU. Therefore, for the first time, the impact of science and technology on society was addressed, also using the networks of experts groups, setting up by the EC and considering the positive effects that SMEs can bring in industry (EC, Gender in research – Synthesis Report 2001: 6-7; 37). As the Communication of the European Commission on ‘Women and Science – Mobilising Women to Enrich European Research’ 1999 said, ‘with starting FP5, the EC decided to include the equal opportunities dimension by promoting the participation of female scientists in European research’ (COM (1999) 76): 5). Indeed, a significant innovation of the programme were the so-called key actions that were executed under the specific programmes target to combat the societal challenges in Europe in the fields of living resources, city and transportation, clean and efficient energy resources, and sustainable mobility. In addition, gender equality has been introduced in the working programmes in particular in the socio-economic key action. However, it was a long way to mainstreaming gender into the programme properly. The ‘Women and Science’ action plan has made it possible to bring about improvement in the representation of women in the proposal evaluation, monitoring panels and the expert advisory groups, although the 40% target has not been fully reached (Braithwaite 2001: 7).

The EC Communication ‘Women and science: mobilising women to enrich European research’ laid the foundation of gender mainstreaming into science, and in particular, in FP5. It defined that mainstreaming gender equality in science policy aiming at reaching a gender balance includes three perspectives: research carried out by women, research for women and research about women (EC 1999: 10). ‘Research by women’ meant ‘increasing women’ participation in science; ‘research for women’ focused on conducting research on problems that women face, and ‘research about women’ referred to supporting gender-relevant research and their impacts on European society’ (EC, Women and science: mobilising women to enrich European research 1999: 10-14). Nonetheless, FP5 focused on mostly research by women – primarily on the issue of increasing the number of women in scientific research as a PA/PD initiative.

Hence, the two other actions have not been fulfilled, especially the integration of gender equality into the research content was neglected (EC, Gender in research – Synthesis Report 2001: 20). As a result, the complex inclusion of gender – by, for and about women – at all stages of the policy process (e.g., from proposals through evaluation until the contract, and the research) has not been achieved in practice (EC, Gender in research – Synthesis Report 2001: 20-22). Lastly, ‘the gender perspective targets and successful monitoring of these issues aimed at the framework programme have not been successfully implemented’ either (EC, Gender in research – Synthesis Report 2001: 47).

After the lessons learnt from FP5, ‘Europe needs more scientists’ claimed that in the 6th Framework Programme (2002-2006), with the ‘Science and Society’ programme, the EU supports numerous activities and prizes aimed at bringing research closer to society’ (EC Europe needs more scientists 2004: 20). FP6 was a major achievement from the angle of gender equality, compared to the previous FP. It defined the following dual action: $GE = GD + WP$ (Gender dimension of the research content + encouraging women’s participation is equal to Gender Equality) (EC 2003: 3). For the first time, FP6 declared to achieve gender equality through helping women to participate in research and integrate gender into the research content. It said that ‘integrating the gender dimension in research means questioning systematically whether, and in what sense, sex and gender are relevant in projects’ objectives and methodology (EC, Gender Action Plan in Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence – A Compendium of Best Practices 2004: 4-5). FP6 also included examples in which gender may be relevant, however, it mainly focused on research topics with human subjects. It contained specifically Gender Action Plans in seven areas – from Life sciences through sustainability until Citizens and Governance – and gender budgeting (EC Gender Action Plan in Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence – A Compendium of Best Practices 2004). Thus, it developed gender mainstreaming strategies. The EC’s ‘Gender Action Plans in Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence – A compendium for good practices’ (2004) provided guidance to the applicants on how to design a Gender Action Plan for Integrated Project or Network of Excellence research proposals. It highlighted case studies submitted under the seven thematic priorities of FP6. This meant that the applicants should prepare a ‘Gender Action Plan’ in their proposals in order to create gender balance in their research teams and also address gender equality in the content of research.

However, as per the ‘Monitoring progress towards Gender Equality in the Sixth Framework Programme’ report (2009: 21), the Gender Action Plans were ‘useful but had variable quality’. It means that due to the lack of knowledge of the researchers about the inclusion of gender dimension into research and gender issues – that came from the EC’s institutional failure of disseminating knowledge on the topic –, only a few of the proposals were considered ‘as very good or excellent’ (EC, Monitoring progress towards Gender Equality in the Sixth Framework Programme 2009: 21). Also, its monitoring did not work effectively (EC, Monitoring progress towards Gender Equality in the Sixth Framework Programme 2009: 22). The lack of awareness on gender equality that ended in mostly unsuccessful applications can be one of the reasons why gender completely disappeared from the content of the next, FP7 (2007-2013).

Actually, during the formulation of the EU science policy-making processes, it can be observed that gender equality becomes everybody’s responsibility in the EU with the ‘obligation’ of applying *gender mainstreaming* into science that is conventionally male-dominated and gender-biased. As Mergaet and Lombardo indicate, for the research community, the inclusion of gender into the FPs was ‘too burdensome’ for some officials the EC and other institutions within the EU was ‘too much gender’ (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 11, 12). For instance, during the preparation of proposals for the ‘Gender Action Plans’ in FP6, gender experts were not consulted and afterwards gender equality was dropped from the next FP7 without any clarification, in the name of simplification. All these examples basically illustrate ‘the inefficiency in the internal work of the EC’ (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 13). In FP7, ‘all horizontal issues (including gender) were removed from the proposal and evaluation stages – *cross-cutting issues* were no longer subjects to evaluation, and appeared as merely a condition at the planning phase’ (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 13). Furthermore, within the EC’s DG, the self-interests of the bureaucrats is crucial who can easily sabotage the implementation of gender mainstreaming which I elaborate in in Chapter 3. Due to the significant backlash in the inclusion of gender equality and implementing the EU gender mainstreaming strategy in FP6 and FP7 that are the direct prerequisites of Horizon 2020, the (gender-resistant) political role and agency of the policy stakeholders in the EC seems to be really important. I distinguish two main types of *resistance* against *gender mainstreaming* in the EU research policy: the institutional resistance of the EC and the individual resistance of the policy actors (Mergaet and Lombardo 2014: 7).

Analysing the phenomenon of these *resistances* seems to be inevitable. Especially that it is known that ‘the Commission’s integrationist approach is the direct result of the strategic choices of mainstreaming advocates, who have consistently framed gender mainstreaming as an effective mean rather than an overt challenge’ (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 453). Indeed, this occurs when ‘individual and institutional *resistances* are interconnected and that actors have multiple reasons for resisting gender initiatives’ (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014: 15). In the EU research policy, the ‘institutional *resistance*’ of the EC’s DG against executing gender mainstreaming in the FPs comes from ‘the opposition to the goal of gender equality and a lack of – or insufficient – capacity (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014: 15). On the one hand, a lack of expertise, resources and tools that the EC’s DG should provide for the individual policy-makers to be aware of what gender equality means and how it should be addressed in the FPs can together constitute a both institutional and individual *resistance* against the EU gender mainstreaming strategy. As Mergaert and Lombardo show, ‘gender experts were not allowed by the EC to have any impacts on the policy processes on gender equality in FP7: criticism from the Helsinki Group of Women and Science against the EC’s plans to shrink gender relevance in FP7 was ignored’ (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014: 16). This form of the EC’s institutional *resistance* means that the EC did not prioritise gender equality in the research policy at all and it also failed to offer the policy actors assistance and guidelines of how to approach and implement gender mainstreaming in science. On the other hand, as individual actors did not have the opportunity to have a deep structural understanding on gender equality in research – whether they should have been interested in it or not –, it was not surprising that they also resisted against implementing the strategy that became ‘too burdensome’ for them as a result (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014: 11). Regarding individual *resistance* that is comprised of the actors’ non-interest and lack of knowledge in gender equality in research policy, I look at these processes in detail in Chapter 3. I show in the policy frame analysis of the work programmes of Horizon 2020 and the interviews with the advisory experts, the EC’s institutional and the actors’ individual *resistances* at the local level are present.

Due to the failure of a proper inclusion of gender equality in the FPs, in 2010, the Competitiveness Council adopted an agreement on gender and science. In 2011, the EU Heads of State and Government asked for the EC to bring together all previous FPs into one single framework (EC, Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. History of Horizon 2020. Retrieved on 26/02/2017 from <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/history-horizon-2020>). In order to establish the single framework of Horizon 2020, the EC launched numerous consultation processes involving all key stakeholders. These included research institutions, lobby organisations and CSOs etc. The EC's two main lobby groups, the EPWS and the Helsinki Group were also consulted by the EC for the sake of a better integration of gender equality in Horizon 2020. The EPWS continued to produce position and recommendation papers on the EU and make public consultations and launch international conferences for female scientists on gender equality in research. HG also played an important role in promoting gender equality in Horizon 2020 – like in FP6 – so as to ensure the implementation of gender equality in the FPs in the EU member states. In order to implement a better inclusion of gender equality into the content of Horizon 2020 research applications, in 2011, the EC established the Expert Group 'Innovation through Gender' to promote gender analysis in research. The Expert Group installed Gendered Innovations Project (2011-2013) that provided and still provides guidelines for researchers in all fields of Horizon 2020 research proposals about how to integrate gender equality into their research. Another new initiation was the specific establishment of the Advisory Group (AG) on Gender in 2014 to provide advice on integrating gender equality into the future Horizon 2020 research applications. This meant that 'each Advisory Group of Horizon 2020 has, at least one person who is a gender expert and they are forming their own AG and they are having their own strategic meeting separately' (EC, Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Experts. Retrieved on 27/02/2016 from <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/experts>). However, the Group was composed of gender experts from all sections of the previous FPs that fully lacked in knowledge and/or interest in gender equality as I have introduced earlier. In Chapter 3, I explore in detail who can be a gender expert and I also investigate the possible problems of the EC's selection procedure of gender experts and its links with the AG experts' *resistance* against implementing *gender mainstreaming* in the work programmes of Horizon 2020.

As a result of these complex consultation processes with various pressure groups, women's lobby institutions and governmental and non-governmental organisations etc., initiated by the EC, a clear intention comes up in Horizon 2020 (2014-2020). It makes gender equality as a *horizontal issue* in terms of ensuring gender balance among researchers and the content of Horizon 2020 research applications for the first time in the history of the EU science policy. Notwithstanding, in the next chapter, I demonstrate that despite all the above lobby and advocacy reconciliation processes, Horizon 2020 ironically further *depoliticised* gender equality through its neoliberal agenda.

Chapter 3: A critical policy frame analysis of Horizon 2020 work programmes

In the chapter, I provide a critical gendered policy frame analysis of the adopted work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Horizon 2020 and their thematic programme sections. I also support the document analysis with the findings of the interviews with the expert members of the advisory groups who are involved in the process of preparing and implementing these policy documents.

In the analysis, I look into the policy processes of how gender inequality as a social problem and gender equality as a possible tool to combat societal challenges is problematised, how it is created by the advisory group experts of the EC and what is the result of these framing processes of gender equality norms in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. As 'in critical frame analysis, a frame on gender equality is a configuration of positions on dimensions of diagnosis and prognosis which includes positions on roles, on locations, on norms, on causality and mechanisms, and on gender and intersectionality', I review the work programmes accordingly (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 11). As variety of actors are actively involved in creating the work programmes who all bring their own priorities and agenda and a specific gender agenda, I illustrate that the work documents create contradictory sets of gender equality norms (Chapter 1). I also prove that the EC as a both economic and normative 'domestic' actor gradually reconstitutes the EU's gender equality norms through its actors (Chapter 1) in the final outcomes of the planning and implementation processes of Horizon 2020 – in the work programmes.

In theory, ‘the DG for Research and Innovation is responsible for preparing the work programmes which are the result of a number of formal and informal consultations with various stakeholders’ (SDEO 2014: 10). The drafting processes of the work programmes is launched in the 19 established advisory groups that are assigned for all various areas of the three main pillars and cross-cutting activities of Horizon 2020. Besides, there are additional consultation procedures with other EC’s institutions and stakeholders. These include ‘the Programme Committees, Enterprise Policy Group, European Innovation Partnerships and European Technology Platforms and influence of conferences, workshops and public consultations’ as an extension of participation (SDEO 2014: 10). Afterwards the draft is presented to the DG that provides comments on that which is forwarded to the expert groups for another round of consultations. What is more, the DG already defines the norms which are related to gender equality. The DG determinates gender equality norms in its own general background documents and practical guidance about the expected interaction of gender equality into the work programmes which are sent to the advisory groups before starting planning the policy documents. Once redrafted by the experts, the programme documents are resent to the EC for a final adaptation. As a result, it can be seen that the drafting processes of the work programmes ‘do not allow for ‘democratic ownership’ (Debusscher 2014: 97). Apparently, it seems that the role of the advisory groups is limited and subsumed to the main interest of the DG on how gender equality is framed and should be implemented into the final version of the work programmes. Nevertheless, I show in the policy analysis that despite this hierarchical order, the loyal experts have opportunity to renegotiate the DG’s gender equality norms (Chapter 3).

3.1. Framework themes and priorities in the analysed work programmes

The materials I analyse include the general introduction of the two main work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 which provides the basis of how gender equality is supposed to be implemented in the additionally reviewed work programmes of Excellent science, Industrial leadership, Societal challenges and Science with and for society. More information about the detailed structure of the work programmes can be found at <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/h2020-sections>.

The four main objectives of Excellence science are defined in the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of the Future and emerging technologies (FET), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), Research infrastructures (including e-infrastructures) and European Research Council (ERC). In addition, as the work programmes of Spreading excellence and widening participation – which is one of the horizontal activities besides Science with and for society – are associated with scientific excellence and gender equality, I review them as well.

The Industrial leadership work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 consist of three main sections. These contain Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies (LEIT) – focusing on information and communication technologies (ICT), Nanotechnology and space –, Access to risk finance and Innovation in SMEs.

The work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Societal challenges contain a wide range of different thematic sections. These are Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies; Health, demographic change and wellbeing; Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research, and the Bioeconomy; Secure, clean and efficient energy; Smart, green and integrated transport; Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials, and Secure societies – protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens.

Among the different work programmes of Horizon 2020, the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Science with and for society which ‘addresses the European societal challenges’ (EC 2014: 4) is the only one which specifically comprises of gender-flagged calls and prizes, part of gender budgeting of Horizon 2020. Consequently, I prioritise to analyse them too.

As far as the document choice of the thesis is concerned, the work programmes as core policy documents include the main dynamisms of how gender quality norms work in those as in practice, the Horizon 2020 researches are supposed to be implemented. Notwithstanding, as a possible limitation of the thesis, due to a wide range of participation of lobby organisations and scientific institutions (Introduction), the thesis could be extended to analyse other important policy documents on Horizon 2020. These could contain the legal framework documents, the EC’s guidelines on gender equality and civil-society and lobby organisations’ recommendations on gender equality in Horizon 2020. That way the study could provide a broader sense of understanding how gender equality is used and conceptualised by the EU and particularly, by the EC.

The thesis can be also further elaborated as a PhD dissertation so as to discover how gender equality norms ‘travel’ at institutional and non-institutional stakeholders at the different policy levels – including local, regional, national and global levels – in the multi-level governance of the EU.

3.2. Norm diffusion puzzles: common frames, diagnoses and prognoses

In this part of the analysis, I intend to introduce the ‘*norm diffusion*’ of the distinguished main four frames of gender equality norms – e.g., ‘fixing, stretching, shrinking and bending of gender equality’ – and their presence and voids in the diagnoses and prognoses of gender (in)equality and gender mainstreaming in the work programmes in general.

Based on the analysis of Lombardo, Meier and Verloo (2009: 3-7), I differentiate the complex and intertwined norm dynamism of ‘fixing, stretching, shrinking and bending of gender equality’ at the mutual intersection of the normative framing process of the work programmes and the advisory group experts’s frames in the interviews. As I compare the various documents both horizontally and vertically, in their dynamic and changing articulation of gender equality norms in the time period of 2014 and 2016, this comparative perspective is a significant contribution to the Lombardo-Meier-Verloo’s (2009) linear time frame investigation of gender equality norms.

I endure ‘fixing’ of gender equality which ‘freezing its temporality’ in terms of gender balance through PA/PD initiatives or listing gender equality as an example for social dimension of research (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 3-4). ‘Shrinking’ also reduces the concept of gender equality and provides a simplified and partial understanding of gender inequality in both the diagnosis and prognosis (e.g., women and equal opportunities between men and women as a norm) (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 4). ‘Stretching’ of gender equality means ‘broadening the concept’ and ‘incorporating more meanings of it’, e.g., multiple inequalities (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 5). Even if ‘in the policy processes of fixing, shrinking and stretching, the goal of gender equality is present, bending occurs when the concept of gender equality is adjusted to make it fit some other goals’, such as the EC’s economic goals (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 5). Although I apply the distinguished frames of gender equality norms based on the Lombardo-Meier-Verloo analysis (2009), I do not intend to solely rely on their analysis.

In my view, the authors' analysis tends to put the main emphasis on exploring the content and concepts of gender equality discourses in the EU policy documents where gender equality is often economised through using the 'bending' processes of economic framing in the EU (Chapter 1 and 3). In contrast, I demonstrate that gender equality norms are closely interacted and mutually constituted through the economic frames *within* the neoliberal environment of the EU.

I assert that the general introduction of the main work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 already introduces a normative shift on seeing gender inequality as a particular social problem which should be abolished with the tool of *gender mainstreaming* to overcome societal challenges of the EU towards integrating it into the diversity of inequalities. I claim that this normative shift is associated with the various framing types of what gender equality means and how it should be included in the prior FPs in the EU research policy history (Chapter 2). In other words, the policy actors actually use contradictory and complex normative framing implications of gender equality norms in order to adjust, renegotiate and contest gender equality norms and specifically *gender mainstreaming*. Moreover, as I explore below, this normative shift have significant impacts on the various thematic sections of the analysed work programmes as gender equality norms are translated into the rest of the work programmes in line with these frames.

The demand for incorporating gender equality as a *horizontal priority* – in terms of integrating gender equality in gender balance and the content of research – is explicitly stated in both the diagnosis and prognosis of the general introduction of the main work programme 2014-15. It explicitly addresses gender inequality as a social problem in science and research and as a possible tool to 'build smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' while overcoming the economic crisis in the EU (EC 2014: 5). However, it can be also seen that despite the visibility of targeting gender inequality, gender inequality is framed within the dominant discourse and current policy practices of the neoliberal EC, depicted as an efficient tool to contribute to the economic growth of the EU (Chapter 1). The text reveals that 'in Horizon 2020, gender will be addressed as a *cross-cutting issue* in order to rectify imbalances between women and men, and to integrate a gender dimension in research and innovation programming and content' (EC 2014: 17). Hence, in the diagnosis, women's inequality compared to that of men is represented as the social problem which creates inequalities between men and women.

At the same time, the document shows that gender equality is seen ‘as a balanced participation of women and men at all levels in research and innovation teams and in management structures’ (EC 2014: 7). In effect, the presence of this frame is rooted in the EU’s tradition of securing ‘a balanced participation of men and women in decision-making’ that threatens that ‘gender equality has become recognised as a no longer contested goal’ (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 3). In the 2014-15 text, gender equality is also inconsistently primarily shrunken to ‘equal opportunities between women and men’ as an EU norm (EC 2014: 17) who are described as economic subjects of homogenous normative groups (Chapter 1). Hence, through fixing and shrinking, the concept of gender equality is reduced to the pure labour market perspectives of the EC, while other aspects of gender inequality are ignored (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 4). In fact, the presence of introducing PA/PD support to encourage women to participate in the labour market is a result of the EC’s main attention to enhance their productivity at workplace. On the other side, these economic priorities also imply the market interests of the EC through bending gender equality towards economic growth (Chapter 1). As a solution for combating gender inequality, the introduction of the main work programme 2014-15 argues that gender equality has to be mainstreamed in terms of both gender balance and the content of the research – through gender mainstreaming. Nevertheless, this basic instruction on implementing gender mainstreaming are not sufficiently integrated into the thematic sections of the work programmes 2014-15. Moreover, addressing gender equality is mostly diminished from the work programmes 2016-17. Opposed to the introduction of the main work programme 2014-15, the introduction of the main work programme 2016-17 already reduces the priority of gender equality. It only classifies gender equality as one of the cross-cutting priorities among economic-driven approaches, such as financial instruments, industrial applications and sustainability etc. As gender equality is seen as merely an additional element among other *horizontal issues*, it is left out from both the diagnosis and the prognosis of seeing gender inequality as a social problem which should be eradicated. What is more, as ‘providing new insights for policy-making towards reversing inequalities and promoting fairness’ (EC 2015: 6) is indicated in the text, gender equality is ‘stretched’ towards to ‘inequalities’ as such.

As a result of the simplified framing of gender (in)equality in the introduction of the current main work programmes, this is also integrated into the numerous work programmes of Excellent science, Industrial leadership, Societal challenges and Science with and for society.

For instance, both work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of the MSCA actions (Excellent science) targeting ‘supporting female researchers’ (EC 2014: 3; EC 2015: 5) represent gender inequality as a social problem in the diagnosis. They emphasise that ‘all Marie Skłodowska-Curie proposals are encouraged to take appropriate measures to facilitate mobility and counter-act gender-related barriers to it’ (EC 2014: 3). Nonetheless, in the prognosis, the documents do not discuss how both the individual and institutional gender-related obstacles should be abolished, part of creating specific actions for *gender mainstreaming*. Similarly, the work programme 2014-15 of Nanotechnologies (Industrial leadership) introduces some aspects of seeing gender inequality as a *cross-cutting issue* in the diagnosis and prognosis, the latest document simplifies gender equality as a possible dimension of the research which can be incorporated if relevant. The simplification of regarding gender inequality as a social problem and the lack of proposing solutions for it in the documents can be captured in the experts’ visions during framing the work programmes. A male expert of Europe in a changing world argues that ‘*gender is not my first perspective when planning and executing H2020.*’¹ This fact is also confirmed by a male expert of Food security. He says that ‘*there was no gender perspective from my side in the planning process of the work programme.*’² Another male expert of Europe in a changing world says that ‘*I did not have any gender specific objectives when I wanted to be a member of Advisory Group. Main objective was to provide senseful advice to EC by using my long term professional experience as researcher, administrator from the EU New Member States.*’³ A male expert of Research infrastructures also confirms that *his ‘objectives are simply to advance the objectives of the initiative for the benefit of research.’*⁴ These examples show that in most cases, gender equality is not part of the visions of the experts based on their scientific and professional self-interest which have been all pushed into the work programmes to be represented as the interviewees also confirmed. I regard this as such an individual *resistance* against implementing gender equality as a *horizontal priority* in Horizon 2020 when gender equality is not a goal and a priority for the individual stakeholders (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014: 8).

¹ Interviewee 1, for information on his background, see Appendix B

² Interviewee 2, for information on his background, see Appendix B

³ Interviewee 3, for information on his background, see Appendix B

⁴ Interviewee 14, for information on his background, see Appendix B

Due to this general lack of interest of the advisory group experts on gender inequality as a social and policy problem, gender (in)equality is rarely even mentioned in the prognosis. This shows an inconsistency between the diagnosis and prognosis in the work programmes (Lombardo and Meier 2009: 145). I claim that this often results in the fact that gender equality is perceived in terms of the equal representation of men and women and increasing women's participation in research in the documents (see above). Therefore, some policy actions which are indicated are also seen as PA/PD support in the texts. As I detail below, the experts usually also regard gender inequality in terms of women's absence in numerical terms. Due to the scarce of articulating gender (in)equality in the prognosis, solutions are not offered to combat it. Considering some, but limited *gender mainstreaming* mechanisms can be only found in the work programme 2016-17 of Science with and for society. However, the document merely lists the possible policy tools (e.g., sex/gender analysis of gender differences and bias, implementing gender equality plans and developing indicators for monitoring etc.) without an obvious indication of the priorities between the measures. Thus, 'the means put forward to solve the problem of gender inequalities do not appear to be solving the problem as such' (Lombardo and Meier 2009: 147). At any rate, some approaches to develop gender mainstreaming tools can be seen in the evaluation criteria of the proposals in the work programmes of MSCA and FET (Excellent science). Nevertheless, the documents indicate only a possibility to evaluate gender 'where appropriate', as a mark of the 'excellence', in one of the criteria points (EC 2015: 60-63). As a result, gender is not integrated into the rest of the evaluation points, the quality of research and the impacts of research. In short, a systematic usage of gender mainstreaming instruments are generally lacking (e.g., gender-sensitive evaluation criteria and gender expertise for monitoring of gender equality etc.) in all reviewed work programmes. As I have indicated before, this fact is associated with that the EC usually selects gender experts from their database of independent experts, similarly to the general recruitment of the AG experts (Introduction). This also means that 'in the expert data base there are many researchers and potential evaluators who have not indicated their gender expertise' (EC, Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Experts. Retrieved on 27/02/2016 from <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/experts>). This is problematic as since the beginning of Horizon 2020, gender experts were recruited based on their participation in the prior FPs – and as I have summarised, all FPs failed to apply and successfully implement *gender mainstreaming* (Chapter 2).

Moreover, as I have shown above, specific gender mainstreaming instruments are not developed in the work programmes. Fortunately, the 16 interviewees fill in the voids of *gender mainstreaming* tools in the documents. They either confirm that gender equality is not evaluated and monitored or they do not have information on the matter. Two female experts assert that within the advisory groups, monitoring purposes of gender equality are ignored. A female expert of Secure, clean and efficient energy claims that *‘the gender perspective has not been discussed extensively in the AGE’* and the fact that *‘gender experts are rarely taken into account’*.⁵ A female expert of Gender and Europe in a changing world states that her transformative visions on implementing gender equality as it is supposed to be executed in the work programmes were ignored in the planning processes of the work programmes. She says that *‘none of my suggestions – including mainstreaming gender into in all calls and having a call for institutionalising gender studies in the EU – were taken into consideration’* in the advisory group.⁶ A male expert of Research infrastructures says that *‘gender aspects are duly and correctly taken into consideration on behalf of policy makers at the EC’*, however, he does not have any concrete idea about how gender equality is monitored.⁷ A male expert of Europe in a changing world asserts that gender equality is part of the discussions in the advisory group, however, he has *‘no idea whether policy makers at DG levels then take into account advises of gender ‘experts’*.⁸ Also, a male expert of the advisory group of Smart, green and integrated transport states that *‘the European Commission does seriously consider gender issues and acts on specific guidelines and norms’*.⁹ At the same time, he has no information on monitoring of gender equality. As a male expert of Food security says that *‘I have at least not met any ‘gender experts’ during our meetings’*, which also undermines the successful monitoring of gender equality in the work programmes.¹⁰ Thus, the authenticity of the proper integration of gender equality in the EC’s work can be questioned. These responses reveal that on the one hand, there is no attention to mainstream gender equality into all aspects of the work programmes despite the EC’s and the experts’ general *rhetorical commitment* to *gender mainstreaming* (Chapter 2).

⁵ Interviewee 4, for information on her background, see Appendix B

⁶ Interviewee 5, for information on her background, see Appendix B

⁷ Interviewee 6, for information on his background, see Appendix B

⁸ Interviewee 3, for information on his background, see Appendix B

⁹ Interviewee 7, for information on his background, see Appendix B

¹⁰ Interviewee 8, for information on his background, see Appendix B

On the other hand, this also illustrates how the experts' role and political agency in framing the programmes works within the DG's bureaucracy (Chapter 1). Finally, the lack of gender mainstreaming instruments in both the texts and the advisory groups point out that gender mainstreaming in the EU research policy is weakly institutionalised (Chapter 2). I consider this as a sign for the EC's institutional incapacity as an implicit institutional *resistance* to prioritise gender equality and the EU gender mainstreaming strategy (Chapter 2).

3.2.1. *Fixing of gender equality*

'I have focused on achieving gender balance'¹¹

(A female expert of MSCA AG, Excellent science)

In this section of the analysis, I demonstrate that in the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17, gender equality is dominantly 'fixed' in terms of gender balance as it can be seen in the opening quote and it is also merely listed as a social dimension. Moreover, I illustrate that from the first work programmes, the current texts 2016-17 further simplify the concept of gender equality. Based on my findings, the *intentional framing* process of the advisory members by 'fixing' gender equality results in shrinking gender equality towards women and stretching it towards other inequality grounds than gender equality goals which I analyse in the chapter later.

While the 2014-15 version of the work programmes often reduce gender equality to the unitary category of 'women', part of PA/PD measures, in the latest work programmes, gender equality is usually indicated among other horizontal activities of Horizon 2020 and/or other inequalities (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, and migrant background etc.). The work programme 2016-17 of FET (Excellent science) only puts gender equality into a separate paragraph which describes the responsibility of the researchers to mainstream gender equality as a *horizontal issue*. Also, in both documents of FET, gender equality as a social dimension is only mentioned in terms of 'along the same line' and 'as well as' besides other *horizontal issues* (EC 2014: 5; EC 2015: 17-18).

¹¹ Interviewee 9, for information on her background, see Appendix B

Similarly, in another Excellent science document, the work programme 2014-15 of Research infrastructures, gender is solely included in terms of ‘as well as’ (to gender dimension) (EC 2014: 49). However, its latest document introduces a shift from mentioning gender equality as a social dimension towards particularly targeting women to establish PA/PD support. In both work programmes of Climate action (Societal challenges), gender equality is mentioned so as to ‘understand the socio-economically and gender nuanced patterns of resource use and consumption’ (EC 2014: 16). In the work programmes of Food security (Societal challenges), ‘gender issues’ and ‘the gender dimension’ are also generally included as a possible dimension which can be incorporated into the calls (EC 2014: 23, 26, 4; EC 2015: 71, 73, 74). In the name of further simplification, gender equality is placed into a separate paragraph in the latest text of Food security, similarly to the work program 2016-17 of Nanotechnologies (Industrial leadership). Moreover, both documents only refer to the EC’s guidance on ‘Gendered Innovations: For guidance on methods of sex/gender analysis’ on how to integrate sex/gender issues into research (EC 2015: 12; EC 2015: 7). Also, the texts merely mention some methods and tools warns that instead of solving the problem of gender inequality, gender is articulated in administrative terms. Controversially, the work programmes of Science with and for society contain gender among other horizontal issues, such as ethics and science education which are integrated into the calls (EC 2014: 4; EC 2015: 4). Likewise, the latest documents only describes the three main ways which are offered to combat gender inequality without elaborating them. These include ‘removing barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers; addressing gender imbalances in decision making processes, and strengthening the gender dimension in research programmes’ through the gender-flagged calls for proposals (EC 2015: 19-20). Nevertheless, in the calls, it is not clear that exactly how these obstacles should be vanished as these measurements are simply enumerated as possible tools through the document. What is more, this implies that gender equality becomes important in administrative terms – e.g., guidance and tools – ‘as a technical issue’ and not as a political issue by developing transformative frames of gender equality – through *gender mainstreaming* for social change (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 201). In the AGs, two experts also merely mention gender equality in a list of other priorities while talking about their objectives in the documents. A female expert of Secure, clean and efficient energy puts gender equality as one of the priorities during framing the work programmes.

She says that *'the objectives of my studies as efficiency, innovations, sustainability, civil society, gender equality, etc. are quite close to those of the Horizon 2020 work programmes'*¹². Likewise, a female expert of the Nanotechnologies AG admits that *'my objectives are and were to consider the horizontal issues in all technology planning topics and to adapt foresight as a tool for cycles of knowledge generation. Gender is embedded in this'*¹³. These replies actually imply – in accordance with the normative shift on gender equality in the texts (see above) – that gender equality is seen as one of the *horizontal priorities* of Horizon 2020 and not as a main *cross-cutting priority* as it is promoted in the EC's *rhetoric* (Chapter 2).

Aside from generally mentioning and listing gender equality, as gender equality also becomes equivalent with women through 'shrinking' processes, the possible policy interventions are also centred on setting their number as a PA/PD initiative. As I illustrate below, this is especially dominant in the case of the work programmes of Excellent science and the horizontal activity of Spreading excellence. In the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of the MSCA actions, gender equality in numerical terms is dominant, while the possible integration of gender is only stressed in such calls for proposals 'where human beings are involved as subjects or end-users' (EC 2014: 3). This leads to the fact that gender presents as only a possible example for social dimension. Indeed, rather investigating the gendered structures and relations, solely PA/PD measurements are mentioned, including trainings on gender issues which 'may be included in the proposals' (EC 2014: 19). In the work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 of Spreading excellence and widening participation, when gender equality is mentioned in the work programmes, it is simplified in terms of gender balance, in both research teams and decision making bodies as an EU norm (see above). In line with the dominance of creating PA/PD support, a female expert of the Future and emerging technologies AG argues, *'FET AG included a short paragraph on gender aspects in the WP'* and *'the AG was almost perfectly gender balanced'*¹⁴. A female expert of Spreading excellence also supports the idea that widening participation and spreading excellence is important in numerical terms. She confirms that during framing the work programmes, *'participation of other woman was very important'*¹⁵. As far as the constant promotion of gender balance is concerned, the work documents of Excellent Science do not discuss gender and its relation to excellence.

¹² Interviewee 10, for information on her background, see Appendix B

¹³ Interviewee 11, for information on her background, see Appendix B

¹⁴ Interviewee 12, for information on her background, see Appendix B

¹⁵ Interviewee 13, for information on her background, see Appendix B

Excellence is rather framed in terms of capitalising the potential of ‘*excellent males and females*’¹⁶ in the interviews, as a PA/PD measure, mentioned by the male expert of Research infrastructures. As women and men are depicted as neutral and merit-based economic subjects whose human capital should be maximalised (Chapter 2), this warns that gender equality is only seen as an efficient tool that can contribute to economic growth which neoliberal notion in return *depoliticises* gender equality. Indeed, ‘by promoting a “*de-gendering*” of issues, depicting individuals as neutral subjects, and by prioritising the focus on the labour market, the underlying EU discourse proves resistant to the articulation of gender equality as a policy issue’ (Lombardo and Meier 2008: 19).

In the advisory groups, gender inequality as a social problem is also perceived in terms of gender balance, part of the PA/PD initiatives. Thus, gender equality remains as a tool to support women’s increased participation in research and not as a tool to implement gender equality through mainstreaming strategies. Individual recommendations for the sake of a better gender equality incorporation into the documents are also seen in terms of developing PA/PD initiatives so as to further enhance female scientists’ research productivity in the labour market that perfectly fits the institutional neoliberal framework of the EU and specifically the EC (Chapter 1 and 2). Furthermore, from the interview excerpts, it can be seen that the experts’ communication on scientific excellence and gender equality is conceptualised in terms of only gender balance. I assert that this is also a result of the dominant policy practices of the EU research policy, in which there is no evidence-based and clear communication of why and how scientific excellence is gendered (Chapter 2). The dominant frames of ‘achieving gender balance’ as it can be seen in the opening motto and listing gender equality as one of the socio-economic dimensions along with administrative tools and guidelines on *gender mainstreaming* point out an additional concern. The focus is placed on accomplishing figures rather than applying *gender mainstreaming* as a policy tool for social change as I have exemplified in the EC’s benchmarking documents and the prior FPs before Horizon 2020 (Chapter 2). I assert that this notion fits into the EU’s integrationist approach on gender mainstreaming as well (Chapter 1).

¹⁶ Interviewee 14, for information on his background, see Appendix B

3.2.2. *Shrinking and bending of gender equality*

‘Only business potential and growth potential counts’¹⁷

(A male expert of Innovation in SMEs AG LEIT Industrial leadership)

In this section, I show that as a complement process to fixing gender balance as a PA/PD initiative, gender equality is also shrunken to mean only ‘women’, ‘diversity’ and ‘equal opportunities’ between males and females in the various work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17. Moreover, I illustrate that all these three frames are placed in the neoliberal notion of gender equality in which gender equality is bent towards economic growth. Indeed, as it can be seen from the above motto, the main priority is boosting productivity which leads to see gender equality not as a basic human right which is necessary to democracy and social justice (Chapter 1 and 2), but as an inevitable element so that the ‘growth potential’ will be maximised. I claim that gender equality norms are framed within this specific and dominant neoliberal framework of the EC that further develop the analysis of Lombardo, Meier and Verloo (2009) in a sense that gender equality norms cannot be transmitted in a neutral space in the EU – there is no way to get out the neoliberal context of the EU and especially of the EC. I distinguish four main subdivisions which this neoliberal notion of the EC entail. These contain on the one side, the systematic usage of *degendering* gender equality and *depoliticising* gender equality by using a gender-neutral language (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 190). Both *degendering* and *depoliticising* of gender equality norms – that all serve to neutralise or abolish gender issues (Jalusic 2009: 60) – eventually makes gender equality to fit into the economic interests of the EC and its advisory experts in general. In addition to the *degendering* and *depoliticising* framing processes, as a complement to the analysis of Lombardo, Meier and Verloo (2009), I select two additional issues which neoliberalism is actually ‘doing’ in Horizon 2020 documents through its actors. These include *individualisation* and *objectification* of women – and in many other cases, youngsters – who are particularly targeted by the work programmes. For instance, the reviewed texts usually ‘shrink’ gender equality to mean women, and women are mainly seen as ‘useful workers’ and ‘mothers’ as economic subjects and individuals in the economic machinery of the EU.

¹⁷ Interviewee 15, for information on his background, see Appendix B

The work programmes 2014-15 and 2016-17 generally use a gender-neutral language that brings its *degendering* effects. I mean by gender-neutral language which uses ‘usual actors that reinforces the implicit male norm’ and neutralises the gendered structure of institutions (Rönblom 2009: 114). For example, the reviewed documents tend to shift between neutral individuals, such as citizens and young people. They are described as static categories who are addressed in order to increase education and employment opportunities, hence, the industrial growth and competitiveness of the EU. The work programmes of Research infrastructures and Innovation in SMEs use neutral subjects (e.g., researchers, engineers, technicians and citizens) and neutral infrastructures and institutions (e.g., institutions, research centres and SMEs). Moreover, in both work programmes of Innovation in SMEs, due to focusing on ‘the human capital of the research infrastructures’ and developing ‘user-driven design’ together lead to conceptualising both scientific research and economic growth as gender-neutral (EC 2014: 10; EC 2015: 10). What is more, in the latest work programme of SMEs, gender equality is stretched towards ‘diversity’, like ageing as a relevant factor in health researches, while gender differences and specifically women’s diseases are excluded. Also, instead of creating particular gender-sensitive methods and tools, establishing ‘safe, reliable and cost-effective products to the market and to the patient’ are generally indicated (EC 2015: 9). In the work programmes of Science with and for society, gender is also shrunk to mean only ‘women’. The texts regard women as workers and essentialise their natural difference, while the power relations of gender inequalities between men and women are not investigated. As one of the main focuses of the work program 2016-17 is to achieve equal access to research funding of specifically women, gender equality is only seen as a useful tool to ‘improve the overall research productivity’ (EC 2015: 12). This ‘bending’ process leads to *depoliticising* gender equality (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 190) through the inconsistent frame production of the concept in the same work programmes due to the dominance of PA/PD initiative in the calls. Women are seen who are in need of support in contrast with the other focus on non-discriminatory approach, including eradicating structural obstacles, like ‘gender-barriers and discriminations which would indicate the importance of putting gender equality on the political agenda’ (Rönblom 2009: 114). This typical *depoliticising* effect can be also followed in the work programmes 2016-17 of Food security (Societal challenges) and FET (Excellent science).

In the work programme 2016-17 of Food security, gender equality seems to be reduced to the unitary category of ‘women’ who are regarded as useful workers, like ‘farmers’ and not as really persons. Instead, women are depicted as objects whose potential should be used in economic progress through *objectification*. In order to ‘renew the basis for European competitiveness and growth’ (EC 2014: 3; 2015: 4), the work programme 2014-15 of FET specifically addresses women as ‘new high-potential actors’ and also shifts towards ‘young researchers’ and ‘small and medium-sized enterprises’ (EC 2014: 6). Its current version ‘encourages wide non-discriminatory participation and outreach and calls for its participants to pay attention to diversity issues such as gender, age and culture’ (EC 2015: 4). This could open an opportunity to *politicise* gender equality, however, particular transformative mainstreaming initiations to challenge the gendered power relations between men and women are not developed. In the latest version of both FET and Science with and for society, gender equality is further stretched to age, to ‘young researchers’ who will be the future generation of next innovators to boost economic growth and increase employment. The work programme 2014-15 of ICT in LEIT (Industrial leadership) also regards women as future entrepreneurs who are in need of assistance – through ‘fostering equal access of women and men to all the activities’ (EC 2014: 74). Opposed to the latest work programme, gender equality is shrunk to be part of the ‘diversity’ of ‘age, sex, and socio-economic class’ (EC 2015: 47). Also, the work programmes of Europe in a changing world (Societal challenges) particularly mentions the importance of helping women and disadvantaged people to have access to financial services (e.g., having entrepreneurship). Interestingly, the work programmes of Access to financial risk (Industrial leadership) do not consider this fact. Only equal access to various financial schemes seem to be important, not mention the role of the gender differences and dimensions in financial risk analysis. Finally, the work programme of 2014-15 Secure societies discusses that in the proposals, ‘a special attention should be given to gender, ethical, religious and privacy aspects, for instance for pregnant women, disabled individuals, etc.’ who are regarded as the main target groups of security issues (EC 2014: 11). Gender equality is shrunk to mean ‘women with children’ which implies seeing women as mothers who are at the risk of exclusion and depicted as vulnerable. However, the work program does not discuss the exact policy tools which should be implemented, part of *gender mainstreaming*. In line with the simplification of gender equality and the more dominant market perspectives, the interviewees serve with further information about these framing processes in the documents.

A female expert of Gender AG points out the scarce of familiarity of the advisory groups with gender issues, arguing, the members of the ICT advisory group ‘*are very willing to include gender, but they do not get what exactly that is, and what it implies*’.¹⁸ The male expert of the advisory group of Smart, green and integrated transport states that ‘*the gender issue is a non-issue: all colleagues with whom I collaborate (male or female) are ranked and judged by me in my attitude and behaviour towards them, on merit and merit alone*’.¹⁹ The lack of understanding of gender equality on the one side reveals the presence of the scientific and technical criteria the EC’s DG and it may also refer to its incapacity to provide guidance for its experts on the theme (Chapter 2). As it was present in the previous FPs, ‘the research community did not want to deal with gender issues, which would be perceived as distracting from the “real research” that resulted in a gender-biased and purely merit-based preference in the policy texts (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014: 12). At the individual level, this institutional incapacity can be also associated with the non-interest in gender equality that is not a goal or a priority for the actors – as a form of individual *resistance* as ‘gender is a non-issue, only merit matters’ (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014). The male expert of Innovation in SMEs simply states that ‘*we only have “business perspective” in mind when advising on H2020 SME matters*’.²⁰ He also adds that ‘*from a pure business perspective gender issues do not play any role, only business potential and growth potential counts*’.²¹ As I have demonstrated earlier, fixing and shrinking of gender equality can be seen as an outcome of the lack of interest of the policy stakeholders. What is more, the potential phenomenon which is caused by ‘these powerful discourses and powerful actors’, more dominantly shrinking and bending gender equality towards their self-interest (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 191) is the visible *resistance* that come up within the AGs. In spite of this fact, the experts are likely to *rhetorically* promote the successful consideration and incorporation of gender equality into the work programmes (Chapter 2). The female expert of Gender and Europe in a changing world supports the *resistance* of the advisory group members as a consequence of their lack of interest in mainstreaming gender equality as a *cross-cutting issue* into the work programmes with concrete examples.

¹⁸ Interviewee 16, for information on her background, see Appendix B

¹⁹ Interviewee 7, for information on his background, see Appendix B

²⁰ Interviewee 15, for information on his background, see Appendix B

²¹ Interviewee 15, for information on his background, see Appendix B

She argues, *‘when I mentioned 2 times that maybe we should also include gender to the European challenges’*, she was told that *‘it is very counterproductive that you are constantly mentioning gender. We know what gender is’*.²² She also recalls that *‘a polish delegate said: we all love women but gender is not always important’*.²³ In another situation, she says that *‘in the meeting room, the sitting order was already set when the expert went into the room. My place was behind the chair so he could not see me raising my hand. So I had to get up go one meters towards the centre, try to catch his eyes and raise my hand. It was humiliating but it gave me visibility’*.²⁴ As a control point of her ‘voice’, a male expert of the same advisory group claims that *‘from time to time there were some discussions between some male and some female members of SC6 Advisory Group over how much priority should be given to some issues of gender equality. But none of them were too important that would make me to remember them’*.²⁵ The female expert of Secure, clean and efficient energy tells that *‘when I was elected chairperson of the AGE, I was approached by a male expert in a very rude and insulting way, telling me that a female person is not able to fulfil such a job followed by other remarks’*.²⁶ Another female expert of the same AG states the opposite. She asserts that *‘the Members of Advisory Groups have a real opportunity to present their visions on the meetings, which visions after that are summarized and presented as outcomes of the respective work program’*.²⁷ She further stresses that gender expertise is *‘almost to a maximum extent’*²⁸ is taken into consideration during preparing the work programmes. Moreover, despite the *resistance* against executing *gender mainstreaming* in the AGs, she also controversially reproduces the official *rhetoric* of the EC. She says that *‘I don’t have specific recommendations, because the gender perspective is well integrated theme in the EC Seventh Framework Programme (in which ex-post evaluation I participated as a Member of the High Level Expert Group with evaluation target) as well as the gender equality policy is a major subject into the Horizon 2020 work documents’*.²⁹

²² Interviewee 5, for information on her background, see Appendix B

²³ Interviewee 5, for information on her background, see Appendix B

²⁴ Interviewee 5, for information on her background, see Appendix B

²⁵ Interviewee 3, for information on his background, see Appendix B

²⁶ Interviewee 4, for information on her background, see Appendix B

²⁷ Interviewee 10, for information on her background, see Appendix B

²⁸ Interviewee 10, for information on her background, see Appendix B

²⁹ Interviewee 10, for information on her background, see Appendix B

These information about the power circles of the advisory groups are vital, especially that as I have shown earlier, the official *rhetoric* of the EC about its commitment to gender quality and its incorporation into the work programmes are continually emphasised. I claim that this partial and ‘resistant’ adoption of gender equality norms have two main implications. First, it warns the dangers of ‘the hegemonisation of participation in the advisory group that marginalise or ignore the voices of other actors’, primarily women who are committed to sufficiently integrate gender equality into the documents (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009: 198). Second, despite the above official *rhetoric* of both the EC and its individual stakeholders, the presence of the visible *resistance* against *gender mainstreaming* is contradictory (Chapter 2). Especially that as I have illustrated in Chapter 2, in FP7, all *cross-cutting issues* – including gender equality – have been eradicated due to the same reason: the significant resistance of the EC and its individual actors against implementing *gender mainstreaming*. I argue that the *intentional frame* production of gender equality norms through *degendering* and *neutralising* of the concept and *individualising* women and men and *objectifying* of women and youngsters leads to *depoliticising* gender equality all serve the stakeholders’ main aim so that make gender equality correlate with the EC’s economic interest based on its neoliberal agenda. I claim that this is the consequence of the neoliberal notion of gender equality which is present in the EC’s policy-making in general and the EU research policy as well (Chapter 1). Instead of seeing gender equality and women’s rights as a human right – like in CoE and EP – in the EC’s neoliberal discourse, the neoliberal notion of gender equality rewrites gender equality in correlation with the EC’s economic interests (Chapter 1). The neoliberal notion of gender equality norms remains silent about gendered power relations: the documents consider gender equality if it can contribute to efficiency and productivity (Chapter 2). This perception of gender equality norms is especially similar to the first FP, FP5 which targeted gender inequality due to the uneven representation of women in science (Chapter 2). It also mostly focused on the issue of ‘research by women’ to achieve gender balance instead of applying *gender mainstreaming* as a transformative strategy as it was officially communicated by the EC (Chapter 2).

3.2.3. *Stretching of gender equality*

*'I did try to put emphasis on equality'*³⁰

(A male expert of Research infrastructures AG, Excellent science)

In this part of the analysis, I introduce that in accordance with the normative shift from gender equality as a goal in the documents 2014-15 – through the simplifying mechanisms of ‘fixing’ and ‘shrinking’ in the labour market – gender equality is consistently further stretched towards ‘inequalities’ in the latest work programmes. As it is stated in the above quotation, the main emphasis of the actors is placed on ‘equality’ – that opens the dimension to inequalities – instead of prioritising gender equality as it is supposed to be executed in the work programmes as Horizon 2020 makes gender equality as a *cross-cutting issue* (Chapter 2). I state that similarly to ‘fixing’ and ‘stretching’ of gender equality not only leads to widening the concept itself, but it results in competing inequalities and not as a basis of their intersection of various inequality grounds in the work programmes. I demonstrate that the most frequent ‘stretching’ processes of gender equality comprise of age, disability, ethnicity and migrant background. In both work programmes of the horizontal activity of Spreading excellence, there is a shift from gender balance and supporting women’s participation towards ‘involving outstanding younger researchers’ into science as the future generation in contributing to the economic growth in Europe (EC 2014: 18-19; EC 2015: 23). The work programmes of Health, demographic change and wellbeing (Societal challenges) also demonstrate that ‘age and gender aspects should be taken into account’ in ‘reducing health inequalities and inequities, including gender’ (EC 2014: 10; 73). However, this results in naming the various categories instead of exploring the gendered and power relations between these categories and accordingly, offering solutions to struggle them. In the work programme 2014-15 of Food security (Societal challenges), gender equality is stretched towards elderly people ‘as most vulnerable to malnutrition in crisis and disaster situations’ (EC 2014: 27). Nevertheless, it is problematic that elderly are depicted as members of a passive and homogenous normative group.

³⁰ Interviewee 1, for information on his background, see Appendix B

First, they are stigmatised due to their membership. Second, due to disregarding the relation of gender to other inequalities (e.g., the issues of young women, mothers, people of colour and poor women/people etc.), the text fails to establish a more nuanced perception of inequalities. In the latest document, the main target groups of Food security applications are widened by introducing more inequality grounds. These contain rural people, young workers, and young farmers, female farmers as innovators, migrated people, children and teenagers. However, as these groups are still framed as disadvantaged who are in need of support, and these categories are separately framed from gender, the text lacks of considering intersectional perspectives between the listed and prioritised inequality grounds. I explore below why this lack of understanding of multiple inequalities is significant. Both work programmes of Smart, green and integrated transport (Societal challenges) also deal with introducing more and more inequality grounds and almost completely disregard the relevance of gender equality. In the work programme 2014-15, establishing environmentally and user-friendly transport system are emphasized in relation to addressing the needs of ageing and disabled populations. The current work programme raises a more dominant attention to disability and health situations (e.g., obesity). Also, the document prioritises ‘facilitating accessibility, notably for persons with reduced mobility, fast boarding for commuters’ (EC 2014: 25). However, the target groups are depicted as vulnerable populations with special needs. Likewise, gender is not integrated as an intersection with these categories (e.g., commuting mothers, specifically single mothers, rural/poor women etc.). Similarly, in the work programme 2014-15 of ICT (Industrial leadership), various categories are mentioned (e.g., young people, elderly, ‘socially, physically or technologically disadvantaged groups’) (EC 2014: 46). However, the importance of gender is simplified only part of other inequalities. In the current work programme, gender is indicated only besides ‘age and socio-economic status to improve the education, professional training and career dynamics’ (EC 2015: 45; 49). In the case of Secure societies (Societal challenges), unlike the first work programme, the work programme 2016-17 further reduces the importance of gender equality. The document solely lists ‘the different factors constituting a violent radicalisation process, including familial, social, gender-based, socio-economical, psychological, religious, ideological, historical, cultural, political, propaganda-, social media- or internet-based’ (EC 2015: 22). In the work programmes of Europe in a changing world (Societal challenges), the widest variety of inequality grounds are introduced.

What is more, it can be seen that the importance of inequalities as such seems to be the most important goals which are reflected in the diagnosis and the prognosis. In the work program 2014-15, the ‘inequalities’ of young people are mentioned as a social problem in the diagnosis who should be financially supported that could lead to ‘an innovative, inclusive and sustainable Europe’ (EC 2014: 5). The text refers to addressing ‘young adults of different ages and sexes, and coming from different geographical, socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds’ (EC 2014: 27). Besides, it also refers to ‘young people with migration background and disabilities’ (EC 2014: 22; 62). The work programme 2016-17 also describes gender equality and various inequalities as static categories that undermines the reflectivity of intersectionality. In effect, using intersectional aspects seems to be important due to security needs and the economic interests of Europe in the text for the sake of strengthening the EU’s global power. Geographical location due to migration and their intersection with age, including young and elderly people, and class issues due to the high unemployment rates of young people are mentioned. Regarding threatens of radicalism to Europe, ethnic minorities, refugees, disabled people and youngsters are framed as ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘vulnerable’ due to their membership to these groups who are in need of assistance. However, as the text does not develop a deep structural understanding of the intersection of these inequalities, it fails to name the responsible actors and the exact policy tools which will be used to solve these problems. Unluckily, the absence of an adequate understanding of the structural construction of intersecting inequalities is a common issue in the work programmes. I assert that the reason of it is that the EU has not established a suitable institutionalised policy framework for intersectionality so far and as its policy actors face difficulties how to integrate gender equality into the EU policies, much less is known about intersectionality among them. Verloo notes, ‘there is little development of policy practice other than anti-discrimination legislation’ where intersectional issues are included (Verloo 2005: 25). Additionally, there are other problems linked with the proper understanding of various inequalities and intersectionality in the documents. For instance, both work programmes of Europe in a changing world show the same inconsistent framing of inequalities, including ‘vulnerable’/‘disadvantaged populations’ (of primarily youngsters) who should be supported, implying they have special rights. Nevertheless, as these different inequalities become part of the ‘diversity’ of ‘inequalities’ in the rest of the texts, this vanishes the importance of ‘vulnerable populations’ special rights and issues.

I argue that the diversity of considering numerous inequities comes from the ambiguous EU agenda that shifts from gender equality towards multiple inequities which therefore, opens the possibility to rearticulate these norms (Chapter 1). By merely listing that gender can be also taken into account in research, the texts lack in developing a structural understanding in the relations between the various inequalities and their relation to gender which are created in the area of only labour market and education. In effect, this is what Walby calls ‘segregationary reductionism’ (Ferree 2009: 91). She means by it that ‘placing gender, ethnicity/class, migration and age etc. each into just one key institutional ‘system’, namely into the economy, it leads to shaping their meanings in only the specific concept of the economy (Ferree 2009: 91). I state that due to the simplified articulation of gender equality that is ‘stretched’ towards inequalities in the work programmes, it makes possible to change the essence of the concept itself. The male expert of the advisory group of Research infrastructures points out that instead of dealing with particularly gender equality, *‘equal rights and equal opportunities should really mean ‘equal’ rather than preferential for either gender’*.³¹ He argues *‘frankly, gender perspective has not been an aspect requiring special treatment on my behalf (in contrast to the definite requests having been emphasized by the EC officers in some cases)’*, although he *‘accepted and followed the percentage requests of the EC’*.³² A female expert of the MSCA actions AG adds the importance of keeping in mind *‘the mission of respecting diversity and providing equal opportunities to women scientists’*³³ rather than dealing with particularly gender equality. This is what the female gender expert warns, namely that *‘gender will be out in 2018’*,³⁴ in the next Horizon 2020 programming period. Therefore, the two male interviews also use inconsistent but conscious framings of gender equality in which the intersection of ‘fixing’, ‘shrinking’, ‘stretching’ and ‘bending’ and their own self-interest – a resistant adoption of the EU norms – can be all found. I claim that as the experts give new meanings of gender equality on their own self-interest is also one of the individual and institutional interaction of the EC and its stakeholders as it can be seen in the history of the EU science policy-making (Chapter 2).

³¹ Interviewee 1, for information on his background, see Appendix B

³² Interviewee 1, for information on his background, see Appendix B

³³ Interviewee 9, for information on her background, see Appendix B

³⁴ Interviewee 5, for information on her background, see Appendix B

These new meanings are comprised of broadening the concept towards equal opportunities and other inequality grounds, like youngsters in correlation with economic reasons. More worryingly, as other inequalities become more important than gender equality itself in the work programmes – through inconsistent framing processes –, policy solutions are not offered at all. Specific instruments and mechanisms should be developed by also putting the responsibility on men to do something about gender equality and establishing a structural understanding between gender and other inequality grounds. Nevertheless, as it can be seen in Chapter 1, in practice, the EU fails to capitalise the new perspectives which intersectionality can bring about. Also, in the EC, implementing even gender mainstreaming is problematic owing to its integrationist and technocratic view which further limits the possibility of introducing transformative actions (Chapter 1 and 2).

3.3. Summary of the analysis – shaping the meanings of gender equality norms

In the analysis, I have discovered that the work programmes of Excellent Science, Industrial leadership, Societal challenges pillars and the horizontal activity of Science with and for society appear as complex discourses which are created by the intertwined and inconsistent framing processes of norm-fixing, stretching, shrinking and bending of gender equality (Lombardo-Meier-Verloo 2009). I assert that this complex and conflicting framing process overall undermines the quality and the successful execution of *gender mainstreaming* as a political tool for social change in Horizon 2020. Furthermore, as I have pointed out that the norm-diffusion and sabotage of and against gender equality and gender mainstreaming is built on an *intentional framing* process, created at the intersection of the official documents and the individual experts at the local level. As an additional complement in the analysis of Lombardo-Meier-Verloo, I have shown that in this dynamic norm-production process, gender equality is consciously ‘fixed’ which is meant to ‘shrink’ and ‘stretch’ of it in order to these frames can be renegotiated by the neoliberal self-interest of the EC and its individual actors. As a result, I argue that this neoliberal discourse eventually diminishes the possibility of any ‘transformative’ frames of *gender mainstreaming*. Instead, I argue that that way the work programmes also fit into the EU’s integrationist view on gender mainstreaming which imply that *gender mainstreaming* is an administrative issue and not a transformative strategy (Chapter 1).

Although stretching of gender equality may have a positive impact on addressing multiple inequalities and their relation to gender, neither of the analysed documents capitalises this opportunity (Lombardo-Meier-Verloo 2009: 5). Despite consciously and gradually ‘stretching’ of gender equality norms from the work programmes 2014-15 until the latest ones, I have highlighted the lack of a structural understanding of gender and its relation to the prioritised inequalities. I have shown that this framing process results in the scarce of mainstreaming not only gender, but its intersection with these categories as a solution. I assert this is actually part of the dominant EC’s ‘one size fits all’ approach (Lombardo and Verloo 2009: 80), in which gender becomes only part of the diversity of the numerous inequality grounds. Not surprisingly, this results in the fact that the EU in this sense ‘overlooks the political dimension of equality goals’ (Verloo 2007: 211) to politicise the various equality goals.

I have illustrated the presence of the partial and ‘resistant’ adoption of gender equality norms through the role of the advisory group experts at micro level who become important and active actors in the process of renegotiating and redefining of gender equality norms. I have explored that their individual *resistance* derives from the lack of interest and knowledge on gender equality among the experts that are after all, all related to the EC’s institutional incapacity and *resistance* in implementing the EU gender mainstreaming strategy (Chapter 2). Indeed, the negative impacts of the hegemonisation of the participation processes can be captured in the advisory groups of Societal challenges particularly. It shows that the stakeholders use their power to shape gender equality discourses for their own self-interest and that way ignore and marginalise other actors, primarily female experts who are interested in mainstreaming gender equality into the work programmes. Furthermore, as I have also indicated, the local actors can also reshape the gender equality agenda and instructions of the EC’s DG in accordance with their own ‘visions’ despite their limited political agency compared to the DG – but still keeping the EC’s *rhetorical* actions visible which is also a common issue in the history of the EU research policy (Chapter 2).

In sum, I have shown that the combined outcome of the discursive framing of gender equality which produces inconsistent and often conflicting meanings of gender equality norms results in reductively losing the focus on gender equality in all of the latest Horizon 2020 work programmes.

Moreover, as a new finding in the EU research policy that lacks in providing such a comparative policy frame analysis of Horizon 2020 work programmes I have conducted in the study, I assert that the reviewed policy texts basically demonstrate a normative shift from transforming gender equality as a *horizontal issue* to only a social dimension and as an ‘efficient tool’ to the economic and industrial goals of the EC. As arguments for combating gender inequality are exclusively based on gender-neutral economic factors, I argue that this leads to irrevocably *depoliticising* gender equality norms in all analysed work programmes of Horizon 2020.

Conclusion

In the thesis, I have aimed to analyse the normative discourses on how gender equality as a foundational EU norm and *gender mainstreaming* as a transformative strategy of the EU is shaping in the policy processes of Horizon 2020 work programmes and the EC’s institutional individual advisory experts from 2014 until 2016.

In answering my research question, on the one hand, I argue that the complexity of the work programmes can be not only considered as a failure of executing *gender mainstreaming*, but as a result, it can be also seen as a failure of the EC to execute the EU’s gender equality norms. On the other hand, I state that the new narrative which is created as an outcome of it is a paradigm shift rather than a transformative strategy as it supposed to be in Horizon 2020.

By developing a new and broad discursive methodology as a contribution to the current policy frame analysis methods, I have looked into the inner power mechanisms and the local actor role of the EC through the dynamisms of the norm diffusion of gender equality norms to call into question the current gender equality and feminist policy analysis scholarship. I have distinguished four main framing types of gender equality – ‘fixing’, ‘shrinking’, ‘bending’ and ‘stretching’ (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009) in the analysis of the work programmes. Even if I have employed the terms from Lombardo, Meier and Verloo, I have further elaborated their analysis in several ways. I have not only differentiated these frames which are equally treated in their analysis, but I have demonstrated how they are shifting and changing in relation to each other. As a further complement to the Lombardo-Meier-Verloo analysis (2009), I have compared all reviewed work programmes both horizontally and vertically over the time period of 2014-2016.

Opposed to the linear investigation of the authors, I have explored how the frames of gender equality norms are built on each other and opposed to each other over a long time frame. This comparative perspective is a creative approach in the current normativity and policy analysis literature that tend to ‘focus on the one-way norm and often lack of investigating the dynamic framing processes of gender equality norms in the policy texts’ production over time (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband 2014: 57). That way by further elaborating the framing types of gender equality norms, I have shown that fixing, stretching and shrinking are subsumed and play only a partial role in the main frame, the EU’s neoliberal bending process of gender equality in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. The various frames of gender equality norms are built on the conscious process and self-interest of the stakeholders in a particular way. First, gender equality is consciously ‘fixed’ which is meant to ‘shrink’ and ‘stretch’ of it in order to these frames can be renegotiated by the market-driven self-interest of the EC and its local actors to make it fit to the their neoliberal agenda. As I have demonstrated that all frames are constituted in the EU’s neoliberal context, I eventually challenged Lombardo, Meier and Verloo’s idealistic view on the possibility to create transformative frames of gender equality outside the EU’s neoliberal context (also see True 2009 and Rönnblom 2009).

Based on my new findings of the framing processes of gender equality norms in the policy texts and the advisory group experts, I have looked into how the dynamic processes of this normative production are exported not only in the ‘domestic’ EC, but also in the ‘global’ context of the EU. That way I have placed the ‘frameworks’ of Horizon 2020 into a wider context. Considering the extensive official promotion of gender equality of the EC in Horizon 2020, I have mapped that these *rhetorical* norms are deeply rooted in EU’s tradition on gender equality policies. I have explored that the main scholarly debates on *gender mainstreaming* is also associated with the *rhetorical commitment* and implementation problems of the concept in the EU’s equal opportunities policies and research policy. That way I have challenged the major feminist critiques that regard *gender mainstreaming* idealistic or utopian (see Brouwers 2013). I have argued that this is the result of the main focus placed on theorising the concept itself that ironically limits the possibility to use it as a policy tool for social change (Chapter 1). Instead, I have suggested approaching *gender mainstreaming* at the intersection of both theory and practices of policy-making processes. In order to do so, I have asserted that studying the political agency of individual actors’ role should be vital as *gender mainstreaming* is implemented in the EC’s specific policy context.

Regarding the contradiction of theorising gender equality norms and implementing them in practice in the EU, I have also questioned the concept of ‘normative power Europe’ (NPE) (Manners 2002) and demonstrated that the EU also diffuses contradictory gender equality norms. What is more, by going further than Manners, I have stated that the EU is not able to spread gender equality as a basic human right and norm and it fails to comply with gender equality as a normative goal. I mean by this that gender equality as a human right and a foundational EU norm is not appreciated and promoted as they are inherently good – as the EU should practice it through its ‘*soft power*’ – but because they are good for achieving economic growth that contribute to the global leader role of the EU through its ‘*structural power*’. On the other hand, that way I have challenged how the EU is practicing its ‘*normative power*’ and rethought the political role of the EC as a both normative and an economic-driven actor (Chapter 1). I have also discovered that Horizon 2020 work programmes fit into the EU’s conflicting norm production (Chapter 1) – the frames of gender equality norms are inconsistently embedded in the analysed texts. These frames also match with those of the previous FPs before Horizon 2020 including a mixture of conflicting gender equality frames that through the EC and its policy makers who used this mess of contradictory frames of gender equality to move between the different types of these frames according to their economic and scientific self-interest (Chapter 2). In Horizon 2020, while in the first work programmes of 2014-15, the human rights and economic frames of gender equality norms co-existed alongside, in the latest documents, the legitimacy and importance of gender equality became justified with economic reasons. In the work programmes, the technical and integrationist approach towards gender mainstreaming (Chapter 2) have two further implications at the level of the individual actors. First, I have shown that the role of the advisory experts at micro level participating in the norm diffusion of gender equality within the EC’s DG is more important than what is discussed in the analysis of resistance in the literature (see Schimmelfenning 2000 and Mergaet and Lombardo 2014). I have proved that the individual experts are indeed able to resist against implementing *gender mainstreaming* in their advisory group meetings in a visible way and can redefine and renegotiate the EU’s and DG’s expectations about how to frame gender equality norms in the documents. In contrast with Schimmelfenning’s argument, I have illustrated that due to the hegemonisation of the participation process within the advisory groups, the experts eventually lose their credibility due to the ‘inconsistent and cynical use of norms’ (Schimmelfenning 2000: 119).

I have discovered that the lack of interest – e.g., gender equality is not prioritised as a goal – and knowledge of the EC’s DG and the actors together – e.g., increasing women’s employment by applying PA/PD initiatives – constitute their ‘individual *resistance*’ against implementing *gender mainstreaming* and they are both related to the EC’s institutional resistance (Chapter 2). The EC resists against the EU gender mainstreaming strategy in a way that it does not realise gender equality as a political goal, and thus, it also fails to educate its officials about an appropriate integration of gender equality into the policy documents (Chapter 3). In short, I argue that the adopted gender equality agenda of Horizon 2020 is dominantly integrationist, instrumentalist and barely participatory. Thus, I assert that Horizon 2020 is a backlash in the EU science policymaking in this sense which can easily lead to the fact that ‘the history repeats itself’. Namely gender equality norms will be diminished from the content of Horizon 2020 as it also occurred its direct prerequisite, FP7 and they remain only as *rhetorical* norms when the FP5, the first program dedicated to gender equality has been launched (Chapter 2). Finally, due to the conscious and consistent reduction of gender equality in the latest policy documents, the normative shift from gender equality towards inequalities also fits into the wider EU institutionalisation of gender equality showing a shift towards multiple inequalities which are exclusively rewritten in the neoliberal discourse of the EC. I state that the EC’s normative presence in Horizon 2020 also fits into the EU’s political agenda on the matter (Verloo 2007).

Based on the upon, I have demonstrated that there is a transparency problem of the EC’s *rhetoric* in which gender equality is theoretically seen as a *horizontal priority* part of *gender mainstreaming*. However, in practice, in the work programmes, gender equality is reduced as a social dimension of economic growth. Thus, gender equality becomes as an empty signifier, a ‘rhetorical norm’ that undermines the EC’s official communication on regarding it as both an equality and an efficiency issue (Chapter 2). In order to gender equality become a political goal for itself, as a basic human right in practice, in my view, new policy practices and norms are needed to be established in the EU. In order to do so changing the recruitment of all policy stakeholders working for the EC and for the EU in general should be inevitable. Especially that I have pointed out the fact that the selection of advisory experts and gender experts in the EU research policy is highly political that poses serious concerns against introducing transformative actions (Chapter 2 and 3).

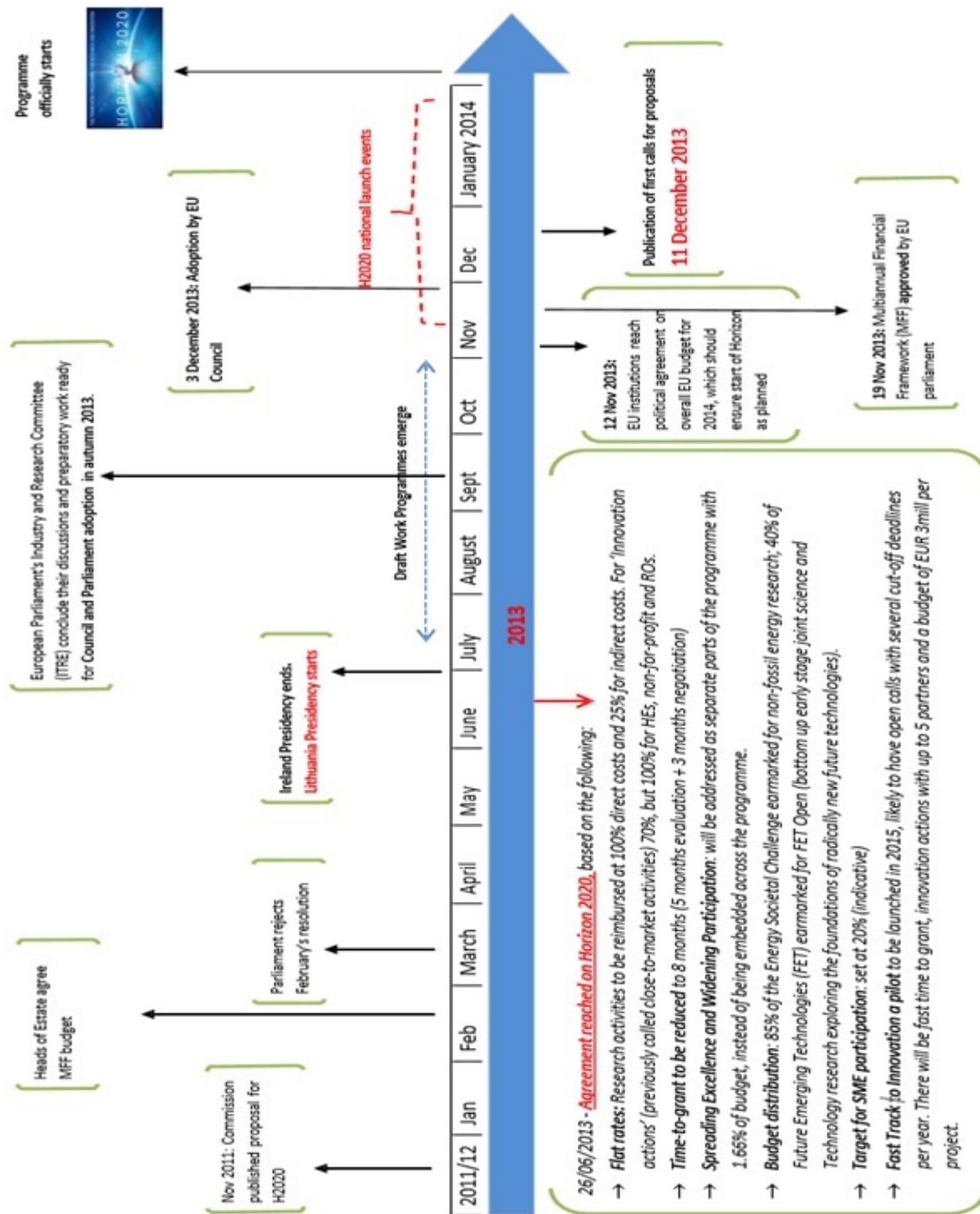
In addition, I have also shown that the the EC's lobby organisations on the issue of gender equality in the FPs (e.g., EPWS and HG) also seem to be economic-driven which is detrimental to apply and execute *gender mainstreaming* as a policy tool for social change. This warns that existing gender relations basically remain hidden under the economic goals of the EC. Instead, all policy actors in Horizon 2020 should be recruited in a transparent manner, free from conflicts of interest. Particularly the selection of gender experts should be rethought by the EU and the EC – these experts should have a specific gender advisory expertise, hence, a deep knowledge and professional expertise and qualifications on the topic. Besides democratising the policy actors' participation, I urge the EC to establish mixed panels of all stakeholders participating in the different work programmes for a better exchange of knowledge on gender equality of the advisory experts with a monitored participation of gender experts with specific gender advisory expertise (see above). Considering the institutional responsibility of the EU and the EC – e.g., institutional *resistance* against implementing *gender mainstreaming* (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014) –, there is a need to set up adequate resources and tools so that educate the bureaucrats at all levels in the EU. Launching consultations with specific and independent women NGOs and CSOs which generally have a better understanding of both gender equality and intersectionality than institutional bureaucrats should be also vital (Lombardo and Agustín 2011). This could assist to initiate more transparent and harmonised understanding and actions on the systematic inclusion of gender equality – both in terms of gender balance and in the content of research, in all calls – in the work programmes which could have a positive impact in its practical implementation, in Horizon 2020 researches.

In conclusion, I hope that my current work as an MA-thesis has accomplished its major targets. On the one hand, with the thesis, I have offered the first comparative gendered policy frame analysis of the work programmes of Horizon 2020 which has been ever carried out. On the other hand, I approached the topic in an innovative way, by using a bottom-up policy approach to analyse the normative framing processes in the work programmes through the political agency of its institutional actors at micro level in the 'domestic' bureaucracy of the EC's DG within the EU. Consequently, the study is able to fill the huge research gap of both the normativity and resistance analysis scholarship which is lacking since the early 2000s (see Manners 2002, Schimmelfenning 2000 and Mergaert and Lombardo 2014).

In a pioneering way, I have represented that the EC through its individual actors – even at the domestic level – is *intentionally* changing and redefining the discursive formulation of gender equality norms in the work programmes of Horizon 2020. Hence, I have illustrated that the local experts do not simply adopt the EU gender equality norms, but they become important and active actors in the framing processes of renegotiating and even resisting against accepting these norms. As a new statement in the above literature, I have claimed that the outcome of the experts’ conscious framing and sabotage of gender equality norms is a paradigm shift in Horizon 2020 that is introducing a normative change at the same time. I have called this a new normative change of the EU gender regime that is consciously built on economising and thus, *depoliticising* gender equality norms that is actually both the EC’s institutional and the local advisory experts’ individual *resistance* against introducing that normative change which *gender mainstreaming* aims to bring about. I have shown that the new gender regime of the EU is comprised of the pure economic justification for gender equality in the neoliberal agenda of the EU that devalues gender equality as a basic EU democratic norm, as a human right. Last but not least, I have also provided an original research direction with the thesis which can be a useful ‘case study’ in policy practices that could also break the ‘myth’ of *gender mainstreaming* (Chapter 1). Indeed, the new insights of my study shows that this notion goes beyond Horizon 2020 that questions the current traditional research paths in the fields of EU gender equality and research policy for the following reason. The EC is a limited power when implementing *gender mainstreaming* comes into the picture, which should make the scholars to rethink the ‘domestic’ power dynamics on gender equality in the EC’s specific context of and its policy-makers in not only the EU science policy-making, but also in the EU (gender) equality policies.

Appendices

Appendix A: Horizon 2020 timeline



Available: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=timeline.pdf&site=377>

Appendix B: Interviewee list

Interviewee	Advisory group	Professional background	Date of interview
Interviewee 1	Research infrastructures (Excellent science)	Public sector innovation and e-government	11/20/2015
Interviewee 2	Food security (Societal challenges)	Biology and fishery sciences	11/05/2015
Interviewee 3	Europe in a changing world (Societal challenges)	Economic and social geography	11/10/2015
Interviewee 4	Secure, clean and efficient energy (Societal challenges)	Technical physics and energy systems	11/25/2015
Interviewee 5	Gender and Europe in a changing world (Societal challenges)	History, sociology and gender studies	01/15/2016
Interviewee 6	Europe in a changing world (Societal challenges)	Engineering sciences	11/30/2015
Interviewee 7	Smart, green and integrated transport (Societal challenges)	Transportation planning/engineering	11/07/2015
Interviewee 8	Food security (Societal challenges)	Clinical sciences	11/05/2015

Interviewee 9	MSCA (Excellent science)	Architecture	11/29/2015
Interviewee 10	Secure, clean and efficient energy (Societal challenges)	Energy efficiency and economy	11/16/2015
Interviewee 11	Nanotechnologies LEIT (Industrial leadership)	Chemical science and materials technology	11/30/2015
Interviewee 12	Future and emerging technologies (Excellent science)	Physics	11/25/2015
Interviewee 13	Spreading excellence and widening participation	Management engineering	11/06/2015
Interviewee 14	Research infrastructures (Excellent science)	Electrical engineering	11/05/2015
Interviewee 15	Innovation in SMEs LEIT (Industrial leadership)	Economics and operations research	11/05/2015
Interviewee 16	Gender	Economics and European politics	11/25/2015

Appendix C: Interview questions

1. How did you get into your current decision-making position in Horizon 2020?
2. How do your own objectives come into play during the planning process of the work programmes of Horizon 2020 in general and if appropriate, specifically from a gender perspective?
3. What was your vision, how did you represented it and how it was represented in the outcomes of the work programmes of Horizon 2020?
4. To what extent do you feel that those actors (e.g., policy makers etc.) whom you have met and worked with take gender experts into account in their design decisions?
5. Have you ever had any incidents or received remarks on the incorporation of gender equality while setting up the work programmes of Horizon 2020? Would you describe the incidents/remarks and tell what impression those left you with?
6. Do you have any specific recommendations for improving policy creation and implementation in order to integrate a gender/feminist perspective into the work documents of Horizon 2020?

Glossary

TERM

DEFINITION

Cross-cutting/horizontal issue

Gender equality in terms of both gender balance and in the content of research, part of gender mainstreaming strategy

Degendering

Neutralising or abolishing gender issues (Jalusic)

Depoliticising gender equality

Not making gender equality as a political goal, instead, making it fit to other goals, e.g., economic ones (Jalusic)

Equal treatment

Securing women's and men's equal rights legally

Gender mainstreaming

'The systematic integration of equal opportunities for women and men into the organisation and its culture, into policies, programmes and projects' (Rees)

Policy frame

'Policy frames are specific constructions that give meaning to reality, and shape the understanding of reality' (Verloo)

Intentional framing

'The deliberate use of particular frames to influence opinion and achieve certain political goals' (Bacchi)

Hard norms

‘Formal standards and fundamental means of consolidating EU’s ideas on gender equality in Europe and globally’ (e.g., EU Treaties) (Woodward and van der Vleuten)

Norms

Norms ‘articulate ideas about what is good and what is bad about what is in the light of what we ought to do’ (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband)

Norm diffusion

Norm diffusion is the process in which norms are articulated 'as constantly changing subjects to renegotiation and redefinition by various actors at different levels' (van der Vleuten, van Eerdewijk and Roggeband)

Normative power

The EU's basic democratic norms all together constitutes the normative identity of the EU due to 'its commitment to universal rights and principles' (Manners)

Politicising gender equality

*‘Acknowledging existing power structures in society to create opportunities for change’
(Rönblom)*

Positive action/discrimination (PA/PD)

Developing specific policy initiatives to support particular marginalised groups in society (e.g., increasing women's employment rates)

Resistance

A clear individual and institutional opposition against accepting and executing a normative change which gender mainstreaming as a transformative strategy attempts to bring, to alter decision-making processes and rules, by introducing new norms and principles

Rhetorical enrichment

Institutions' and individual policy actors' deliberate and persuasive political framing that serves to achieve certain political goals than gender equality (Bacchi)

Soft norms

Soft norms are not mandatory norms that are supposed to be implemented by the EU member states compared to 'hard norms' – they are exported in policy-making initiatives (van Eerdewijk and Roggeband)

Structural power

The EU uses its structural power to increase female employment rates as 'the unequal division between women and men in the labour market is disadvantageous to the economic aims and market purposes of the EU' (True)

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