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From feminism to gender equality

– Exploring interpretations surrounding feminist energy policy in Sweden

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Abstract

There is a dominating image of Sweden as a gender-equal and environmentally friendly nation with progressive policies. Since the Swedish Government has claimed to be feminist and that all policies therefore must be feminist, including energy policy, in this thesis I have explored what interpretations exist in regards to feminist energy policy because feminism and energy are two areas that are rarely connected. The material for this study has been limited to three policy documents and interviews with eight people who work with energy issues in different ways. For my analysis I have used a Critical Discourse Analysis approach that is predominantly influenced by Carol Bacchi and Norman Fairclough and in combination with Feminist theory by Paulina de los Reyes, Sara Ahmed and bell hooks I have drawn the conclusion that feminism and feminist energy policy have been reduced to gender equality and the quantitative representation of women within the valued male-dominated energy sector. Furthermore, feminist energy policy can be used as a tool to produce a sense of nation-pride and to confirm the progressiveness of the Swedish welfare state. In a larger context, the interpretations of feminism and feminist energy policy that I have identified operate within the dominating discourse of neoliberalism and its agendas of marketization and labour exploitation, which favour technological innovation as a means for international competitiveness and economic (and “green”) growth. Thus, women are represented as being the problem, as choosing wrong and as needing a push to choose “right” for both Sweden’s (economic) development and the greater good of our natural environment. The identified simplistic views of feminist energy policy and gender equality accept the premise, although not explicitly, that the group “women” is a large homogenous group of white and middle-class women. This not only obscures the struggles of those who fall outside of this description but also reproduces the notion that inequality only exists between women and men. This study suggests that there is a lack of intersectional perspectives to understand the complexity of inequality and marginalisation in regards to energy policy in Sweden and that future research could take this into consideration.

Key words: energy policy, Sweden, Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminist theory, gender, race, diversity, intersectionality

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Abbreviations

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

RQ Research question

SEA Swedish Energy Agency

1 Introduction

The Swedish Government is the first in the world to claim the label feminist. The world's image of Sweden as a progressive, green and gender equal welfare state has been backed up continuously by top rankings on various lists. For example, Sweden is considered to be one of the world's most environmentally friendly nations, regardless if indicators have focused on carbon emission levels and public health (Yale University 2016; Burck, Marten and Bals 2016) or progressive environmental policy and technological innovations for climate mitigation (OECD 2014). In addition, The World Economic Forum (2016) has placed Sweden number four on the list of the world's most gender equal countries. At present, the feminist government of Sweden intends to incorporate feminist policies in all areas of state governance, which is defined as "all decisions must increase gender equality" (Swedish Government 2015a). According to the Swedish Government (2015b) the ambition to achieve a gender equal society is "a good investment for Sweden and the world". In *Challenging the gender equality myth in Sweden*, Martinsson et al. (2016) appraise the Swedish gender equality "mantra" and argue that it reinforces heterocentric, white, middle-class norms and that the Swedish exceptionalism (of being at the top) obscures the struggles of those who fall outside these norms. Who is gender equality for?

Research suggests that gender equality is essential for development in all areas of society (United Nations 2016), whether it concerns peaceful communities (Caprioli 2000; Melander 2005; Pillay 2006) or economic growth (World Bank 2012). On September 15th 2015, the United Nations and 193 member states reached an agreement on 17 Global Goals for sustainable development, with three overarching objectives: ending extreme poverty, attaining gender equality and fighting climate change. During the 2015 climate conference in Paris, at an event on *Women and Sustainable Energy*, Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation – who is also appointed Deputy Prime Minister – held a speech about women, renewable energy and climate (Swedish Government 2015b). It was this press release about the speech that caught my attention as it was titled *Feminist energy policy for the climate* (see Appendix 1). The full speech can be found on the government's official website and is also attached in this thesis as Appendix 2. The main message of the speech was to keep women in mind (paraphrasing) and I have used the following excerpt (from the press release) as a start-off point for my research. After all, this is what caught my attention in the first place as I wondered what is a feminist energy policy for the climate?

"In many low income countries, women must devote many hours each day to carrying wood and fetching water. We must therefore invest more in small-scale production of renewable energy such as sun and wind, which can easily be installed even in small villages far out in the countryside. This will contribute to reduced emissions and simplify everyday life for these women."

1.1 Problem formulation

A number of questions emerge when I read the statement (above) on a feminist energy policy for the climate. First of all, what is a feminist energy policy for the climate and who is it for? How is a feminist perspective affecting the energy or/and climate mitigation discourse? Does a feminist agenda equal a focus on women or/and gender equality? Why does this statement only mention the situation in low-income countries? What about energy policy *for Sweden*? It is problematic to look “over there” (low income countries) *without* looking “over here” (high income countries) in the discourse of (sustainable) development as this could reproduce limiting stereotypes and ideas of certain countries, cultures and people as "not developed" (de Los Reyes 2011). We live in a connected, global, and capitalist world where some have profited from the oppression of others and still do. Therefore I find an importance in maintaining a postcolonial or/and critical perspective to stay aware of existing power relations. Who has a voice and who gets to define "problems" and thus "solutions"?

Research shows that in low-income countries poverty affects women more widely than men. This includes energy poverty and therefore it can be easier to imagine energy and gender as connected in this context (Oparaocha & Dutta 2011; The Swedish Government 2015c). Meanwhile in the context of Sweden, or other high-income countries, there are less obvious connections between gender and energy policy (Oparaocha & Dutta 2011; Swedish Energy Agency 2015; Fraune 2016) as opposed to other areas such as education, childcare or intimate partner violence. For example, women in Sweden rarely have to carry wood or fetch water in daily life and this is one reason, among others, that the connections between energy policy and gender seem to be non-existent. However, that does not mean that these connections do not exist or that there are limited issues that are relevant to feminism in this area. Therefore I want to explore the meanings and possibilities of a feminist energy policy for the climate as it is not clear what we can expect from these Swedish policies and how they will be implemented depending on how they are understood and interpreted. This study builds upon the existing assumptions and ideas about feminist policy and how people – who work with energy issues in different ways – view feminism.

1.2 Research questions

The aim of this research is to explore what a feminist energy policy for the climate means or could mean for the Swedish Government and for people who work in areas related to energy issues. I find this interesting because Sweden is a pioneer in feminist governance of state. I started off with a broad question, which remains my central overarching question, and is what I refer to as my main question as this is the question I pose to interview participants and policy documents - what does a feminist energy policy for the climate mean for Sweden? In the research process, my main question developed into two specific research questions and I refer to these as RQ1 and RQ2. I present all three questions below.

What does a feminist energy policy for the climate mean for Sweden?

RQ1: How does the Swedish Government define a feminist energy policy for the climate?

RQ2: What views surrounding feminist energy policy exist among people who work with energy issues?

2 Research Design

In this chapter I present my research design, which includes my ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods for data collection. How research is designed – how it is planned and conducted – impacts the outcome of the research (Silverman 2010). According to Creswell (2014:35) the research design rests upon on the worldview (the ontology and epistemology) of the researcher. Through what kind of lens does the researcher see the world? Ontology asks questions about one's worldview such as *What is knowledge?* or *What is a phenomena?* Epistemology asks questions about the validity of how to conduct research in order to "acquire" knowledge, for example *How can we properly study a phenomena?* A worldview can be constructivist, which entails a view on meaning making as subjective, socially negotiated and historically conditioned (Creswell 2014). Thus a constructivist researcher relies on participants' views of the research and looks for "complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories" (ibid.:37). A worldview can be transformative (for example a feminist perspective) and is defined as one that finds the constructivist stance as "not enough" and that research must to go hand in hand with a political change agenda to decrease inequities in society or/and highlight power imbalances (Creswell 2014).

2.1 A feminist perspective

In short I describe my worldview as feminist as I look at the world through a feminist lens. According to feminist researcher and professor Haraway (2003:7) "feminist inquiry is about understanding how things work, who is in the action, what might be possible, and how worldly actors might somehow be accountable". Feminist research can be carried out in different ways, as there are different feminist theories and also different feminist researchers. According to Fairclough (2003:14) "in any analysis, we choose to ask certain questions about social events and texts, and not other possible questions". Thus research is inevitably selective and biased as I have selected people of interest for my study and made the decision to interview them. I have asked certain (follow-up) questions depending on what I pick up as relevant for my research, both consciously unconsciously. Consciously when I take time to think of how to best formulate a follow-up question and unconsciously when one leaves me as an almost instant reaction to a participant's words. Despite aiming to allow categories and themes to emerge during the process, the ones that I do identify still depend on the lens through which I see the world and thus on some level I allow and restrict what is visible and possible to identify.

Haraway (1988) argues that the doctrine of objectivity favours some and exclude others; *some* as not only in some people or some researchers but also as in some disciplines and some methods. She uses the term *situated knowledges* to explain that we can only acquire partial knowledge because of our specific situations - where we are located or positioned in society. She argues that some of us are already marked as having specific positions while others pass as unmarked and as possessing "objectivity" when objectivity is a practice that should privilege contestation, deconstruction and "hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing" (ibid.:585). Thus it is especially important for researchers with favourable positions in society to *mark* their positions and privileges. Lykke (2010) asserts that the third person

narrative or the passive voice is a norm in scientific reports and therefore readers rarely "meet" the researcher in the text. In Feminist Studies that focuses on situated knowledges the researcher subject often takes the form of *we* (in classic standpoint feminism) or the form of *I* (in postmodern feminism). Lykke argues that by using the first person narrative the scientific researcher "does not make claims to speak for others" (ibid.:165) and reminds the reader of the subjectivity and the location of the researcher. For this purpose I use the first person narrative as often as possible in this thesis. My specific location will be further explained in section 3.3.

2.2 Qualitative methodology

According to Harding (1987:3) "*methodology* is a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (emphasis in original) and she claims that *methodology* is often wrongly used interchangeably with *method*. Silverman (2010:122) claims that it is not research methods that are either qualitative or quantitative because most can be used in either methodology but, rather, the same method will be used differently depending on the methodology. "In social research, methodologies may be defined very broadly (e.g. qualitative or quantitative) or more narrowly" (Silverman 2010:110) and I define my methodology broadly as qualitative. According to Creswell (2014) a qualitative methodology allows space for participants to form the direction of the research. I find this approach more practical for my research questions and more suitable for me as a researcher because I want to allow other potential questions to emerge during the process. I started off with one broad question that aimed to explore the meanings of individuals and state in a Swedish context. Thus the major part of my research depends on the participants' contributions although it is my interpretation of their responses that will conclude the results.

2.3 Methods for data collection

Harding (1987) describes a research method as a technique for gathering data or evidence. In this section I briefly present what kind of data has been collected for the analysis thus I explain my research methods. I have chosen to conduct interviews with people who work with energy issues in different ways. I started off with reaching out to people in government including the Minister of International Development Cooperation (and Deputy Prime Minister) Isabella Lövin, Minister of Energy Ibrahim Baylan, Minister of Gender Equality Åsa Rignér and Minister of Environment Karolina Skog. I was redirected, by the secretary of the Energy Minister, to a government politician working with energy policy who agreed to see me. I had also contacted the Swedish Energy Agency, which suggested two candidates from their staff for me to talk to. These three initial interviews then gave me further directions on other persons that could be of interest for my research. I explain this further in section 2.3.2. All interviews were recorded with the software Apowersoft Audio Recorder on my computer. Apart from interviews I have also selected different documents for analysis and these include policy documents, press releases and other texts that relate to energy issues in different ways. These are presented in the next section.

2.3.1 Documents

I have looked at three formal documents that relate to energy policy that I present briefly in this section. Further information is available in section 4.1. These documents include the Swedish Energy Agency's (SEA) yearly report *Energy Indicators* from 2015 (ER 2015:15), the Swedish government's *Energy Research Proposition* (Prop. 2016/17:66) and the government appointed Energy Commission's report on *The Future of Energy* (SOU 2017:2) that was released at the beginning of this year. Energy Indicators is a yearly report on the status of Sweden's efforts in regards to the set energy goals. In general, every second year the SEA chooses a theme for this yearly report and in 2015 the theme was gender equality. The Energy Research Proposition is a government bill on what focus Swedish research in the energy area shall have in order to

achieve Sweden's energy- and climate goals and thus how funds should be allocated. Apart from these three formal documents I have used information from three state websites. The Swedish government's website has been used to find press releases that relate to energy issues and feminist policy. Sweden.se provides information about Swedish society and here I have looked for texts of interest by searching for the following terms: feminism, energy and climate. I have also used the website of the SEA in search of anything related to feminist energy policy.

2.3.2 Interviews

In total I conducted seven interviews with eight people. The first six interviews were carried out during six weeks, 10 February – 23 March 2017. Due to unavailability I ended up with my 7th and last interview on 25 April. All interviews except for the last one were transcribed and coded according to three topics, as derived from my research questions, and will be explained further in chapter 4. Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes and five of these were face-to-face while two were through telephone. The interviews were unstructured and apart from asking the participants to present themselves shortly I brought, and posed, only my main question to start off the conversations – what does a feminist energy policy for the climate mean? My first interview was with one of the two suggested staff members from the Swedish Energy Agency. After 20 minutes another staff member from the SEA joined us, which turned it into a group interview. My second interview was with the politician in parliament who works with energy policy. My third interview was with the second suggested participant from the SEA. These initial interviews led me to contact the rest of the participants and these include a researcher who is investigating the relation between gender and climate impact of energy related decisions made in boardrooms. I interviewed a public official from Uppsala Municipality who works with public transport because the previous participants had all brought up public transport when discussing feminist energy policy. I also interviewed a person who heads a unit at a major energy company in Sweden and a public official from the government's department of environment and energy. In total I interviewed eight Swedish people who work with energy issues in different ways and on different levels.

2.4 Ethical considerations

In this thesis I do not disclose information that could give away the identities of the people who took the time to speak with me. This is not upon request rather I have assessed that quotes could be considered sensitive because they can be misunderstood when and if taken out of context. Furthermore, the analysis of data depends on my subjective interpretation of what has been said (or not said). My purpose with this research is not to put anybody in a bad light or to hold a specific person accountable for something that is structural. On the contrary, I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in our conversations, because as a researcher, student and learner, in the end, the not-so-explicit but overarching goal of this thesis is my learning process.

3 Theory

Babb et al. (2012:351) argue that language is discourse and therefore "all qualitative approaches use discourse analysis to some extent". There are many approaches to discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1997; Babb et al. 2012) but the overall characteristic is that it is based on a constructivist epistemology as our understanding of the world relies on the language that we use. Foucault (1972:49) defines discourse as "practices which form the objects of which they speak" (cited from Burr 2015:74). In addition, Bacchi (2005) argues that there is a difference between discourse analysis and analysis of discourse(s) although there are no sharp boundaries.

Discourse analysis is mainly focused on conversation, patterns of speech and is very close to language with the material coming from interviews. Analysis of discourse(s) has a "political theoretical focus on the ways in which issues are given a particular meaning within a specific social setting" (ibid.:199) and looks for discourses – in the plural – with the material coming from texts. Here, texts can be an interview, a speech, a policy document, a lecture, a rally, a demonstration, anything that is part of a social event; some texts are highly textual while other texts are not at all (Bacchi 1999; Fairclough 2003).

Following this, discourse includes the consequences that language has on our social world and its orders. Fairclough (2003:2) who takes a post-structuralist and deconstructionist stance argues that "language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language". Thus, discourse is not reduced to language rather it focuses on strategy and impact. According to Wodak (2005) by analysing discourses it is possible to identify assumptions based on values and where these are rooted, in order to understand how they both dominate our social practices while obscuring this domination. I find analysis of discourses useful for my research, as I am interested in the assumptions behind the ways feminism, feminist perspectives and feminist energy policy are both discussed *and* forming the ways we discuss, without one being prior to the other. What are the dominant discourses and how might these be reproduced? What is not said or not possible to say? As Barad (2008:821) explains, "discourse is not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said" (cited from Bacchi 2010). I think analysis of discourses will be useful and aid me in identifying dominating discourses in this study.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that aims to uncover power relations and how they oppress, control and reproduce inequalities through discourses. Thus CDA builds on the foundation of a transformative worldview and a critique against CDA is that if you look for oppression then oppression is what you will find. I do not find CDA to be a flawless approach but I will counter this critique from two sides. On the one hand, the critique makes the assumption that when you name a problem you also create it, as if the problem was non-existent prior to this. What then, or who, can decide whether a problem is existent or not? On the other hand, if we do create problems when we name or define them, the case is that certain problems earn legitimacy and become non-created and "real" problems while other problems are deemed as "made up". Bacchi (1999) and Rönnblom (2005) argue that how a problem is framed or represented to be will affect how solutions are formed and proposed and therefore problem

representations regulate the boundaries of the solutions and possibilities for change. According to Ahmed ([1989] 2015:) problems need to be given names in order to be addressed but who has the right, or power, to name or define an "existing" problem and who is portrayed as "creating" a problem when defining one? In *Language and Power* Fairclough ([1989] 2015:252) emphasises that "committing oneself to an emancipatory knowledge interest does mean taking sides!" and argues that neutrality in academic research is an illusion and that we, whether as researchers or as people, are unable to be objective. I agree that the more relevant question is: are we aware of our biases and how transparent are we about them?

For this thesis I use a Critical Discourse Analysis approach influenced mostly by professor and feminist political theorist Carol Bacchi and critical linguistics professor Norman Fairclough. Fairclough (2003:129) identifies discourses by asking two questions: 1) Which main parts of the world (including areas of social life) are represented – what are the main "themes"? and 2) What is the particular perspective, angle or point of view, from which the themes are represented? Bacchi's *What's the problem represented to be?* approach starts off from a position that questions the idea that problems are pre-existing and are waiting to be addressed. Bacchi does not reject that problems do exist but, rather, she argues that problems are defined by those with power (for example policy makers) and because the "solution" depends on the problem representation we need to evaluate problem representations. Thus Bacchi places a focus on problematisations rather than problems. For my analysis of identifying dominating discourses and representations I will make use of these questions and perspectives. I think CDA will be useful for my research in the sense that it can help me identify different representations of feminist energy policy; which ones dominate and how do dominating representations and discourses relate to marginalisation and what is made invisible? According to Lazar (2005:2) "CDA is known for its overtly political stance and is concerned with all forms of social inequality and injustice". Like Fairclough and Bacchi who are dedicated to emancipatory knowledge and contesting power asymmetries, Lazar means that this approach does not claim to be neutral or/and non-political. Thus, CDA is also helpful for my research in the sense that it allows a level of political-ness.

3.2 Feminist theory

There is a large body of feminist theory and I am predominantly influenced by theorists such as hooks, Ahmed and de los Reyes whose feminism is intersectional. Intersectionality, coined by Crenshaw (1989), is a theory about the plurality and multiple axes of marginalisation, domination and oppression and, more importantly, how these systems are intertwined and cannot be separated when discussing, analysing or trying to understand oppression because the combination of them is distinctive to the summation of the different parts. Crenshaw argues (1989; 1993) that when gender is of concern the dominant image of women that people – whether policy makers or potential employers – have in mind is white women and when "race" is of concern people predominantly imagine racialised men. Intersectionality then, as a concept, can be used to highlight how "race" and gender interact to reproduce multiple systems of oppression that reinforce each other and makes some marginalised groups invisible – in this case racialised women. Like Crenshaw and other intersectional feminists I agree that it is important to remember that gender and "race" are not the only grounds on which people face marginalisation; class, sexuality, gender expression, functionality/abled-bodiedness and age (among others) are dimensions that can matter too. The branch of feminist theory that I present in this chapter will guide my analysis and below is a definition of feminism, as by hooks ([1984] 2000) and Ahmed (2017), which is what I refer to when I refer to feminism.

Feminism is necessary because of what has not ended: sexism, sexual exploitation, and sexual oppression. And for hooks, 'sexism, sexual exploitation and sexual oppression' cannot be separated from racism, from how the present is shaped by colonial histories including slavery, as central to the exploitation of labor under capitalism. Intersectionality is a starting point, the point from which we must proceed if we are to offer an account of how power works. (Ahmed 2017:5)

3.2.1 *Gendering rather than gender*

In this thesis I use the word gender without agreeing with the idea of a clear distinction between (what some would call) the "biological" or "natural" (sex) and the "social" or "cultural" (gender). This so called "sex/gender system" reproduces a dichotomy that is limiting and furthermore it strengthens the mindset of a binary gender system. How necessary or useful is this dualism? Butler (1999) who criticizes "women" as the subject of feminism also rejects the sex/gender distinction because it "suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders" (1999:10). It also assumes that there is "a natural or biological female who is subsequently transformed into a socially subordinate 'woman'" (ibid.:47). Her quote below is call to question how we are assigned sex or/and gender. Bacchi (2010) uses the term *gendering* rather than gender to highlight that gender is, first of all, not fixed but is reproduced and renegotiated through *gendering processes*. I will also use the term gender as a non-fixed product of the gendering processes that exist and are maintained, or resisted, through social practices. Social practices include both the organisation of our language and the organisation of our institutions in society. Thus my use of the word gender in this thesis is aimed to be inclusive of the non-binary, transgender, agender and genders that are generally not included by the binary gender system and the dichotomy of the sex/gender distinction.

Can we refer to a 'given' sex or a 'given' gender without first inquiring into how sex and/or gender is given, through what means? And what is 'sex' anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal, and how is a feminist critic to assess the scientific discourses which purport to establish such 'facts' for us?
(Butler 1999:10)

In the Swedish language, both the terms sex and gender are replaced with one word: *kön*. For readers who are interested in more details surrounding the differences I briefly present it in this paragraph. For example, *gender roles* is translated into *könsroller* and *gender based violence* is translated into *könsbaserat våld*. In Swedish the word *kön* is used not only for the "biological" (whether genital, chromosomal, hormonal etc.) and the "social" but also for the legal sex. Legal sex (*juridiskt kön* in Swedish) is what medical institutions and states assign each person at birth by assessing the appearance of one's genital body parts. Nonetheless, there is a Swedish word for gender: *genus* although it is not used in the same way as in English. Generally the word *genus* is used specifically when referring to either 1) the scientific discipline that investigates the concept of gender such as gender science (*genusvetenskap*), gender theory (*genusteori*), gender studies (*genusstudier*), gender research (*genusforskning*) and so on, or 2) tools and methods of how to apply gender mainstreaming, for example: gender perspective (*genusperspektiv*), gender spectacles (*genusglasögon*) and gender proofing (*genussäkra*). I think this difference in language use could be necessary to keep in mind as my collected material is mostly in Swedish while my thesis is written in English.

3.2.2 *Racialisation rather than "race"*

Since overt racist practices such as slavery and eugenics (or "race" biology) have been discredited we are assumed to live in a post-race world when in fact we live in a world that is still affected by colonial histories (de los Reyes 2017; Ahmed 2017). Racialisation is a process that marks certain bodies and frame these as "other" by the socially constructed concept of "race". Whiteness is put in the centre, as "default", around which the rest of us are "orientated around" (Ahmed 2006:116). A dichotomy of white/non-white is produced where those who are non-white (or do not pass as white) are deviating, different, less than and sometimes "exotic" or "special". These ideations about "race" and the structures that maintain them is the foundation on which racism operates. Like gender, "race" is a relevant concept in discussions that relate to domination and marginalisation because today's institutions and dominating discourses are practices that are based on a history of colonisation and exploitation of groups of people and their cultures, lands and bodies (Ahmed 2006; 2011). We cannot separate the present from the past and assume that it is a matter of choice whether to be *over* "race" or not. "Race" will stay a relevant concept for a study like this one – a study about what feminist energy policy is – as feminist struggle includes antiracist struggle (Ahmed 2017; hooks [1984] 2000).

Sociologist Paulina de los Reyes is critical towards the term "ethnicity" (2006) as she argues it is used as a euphemism which obscures the injustices and struggles of racism. Especially in the Swedish context as Sweden, after the Second World War, decided to separate itself from the pseudoscience of eugenics. To mark this separation the word "race" was eliminated from the vocabulary, including policy documents, and in Sweden today there is a reluctance to discuss "race" and racism (de los Reyes 2017). I agree that, to many people, Sweden is considered to be a country without racism, or at least a country where there is "very little" racism, because there are specific ideas of what racism is and what falls outside becomes something else – an individual experience that is separate from systemic racism and marginalisation. Ahmed (2015) explains that the avoidance of discussing "race" and racial marginalisation creates a belief that it does not exist anymore, that it is something of the past, something that we are "over". de los Reyes (2006:296) argues, "we must accept the fact that non-biological races exist, because racism exists". In this thesis I will use the word "race" as a non-biological and socially constructed concept and I also use it for the political reason of rejecting euphemisms.

3.3 Ethical considerations

In this thesis both Feminist Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis are used to identify the interpretations of feminist energy policy and the potential relations of domination and oppression relating to this. However, I must acknowledge one question; whose oppression am I able to identify? As a cis-gendered and heterosexual middle-class person without visible disabilities there are things I do not register as effortlessly as I do not personally experience marginalisation on these grounds. As a non-white woman from a migrant and working class family there are certain things I do pick up as I have experienced discrimination on these grounds, no matter how subtle. Finally, as a university student with a background in disciplines ranging from engineering studies to gender theory, and now environmental communication, I carry a specific experience within academia. The combination of the experiences of each person, whether a researcher or not, places them in a unique location. From the location that I have presented here is from where I carry out my research while looking through my feminist lens. With a feminist lens I mean an intersectional feminist lens and like Ahmed (2017) I quote Flavia Dzodan: "feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit" (2011).

4 Analysis and Results

My analysis is carried out in two parts; the first analysis focuses on the chosen policy documents, press releases and other written texts provided by the government websites and here I mainly use Bacchi's question: *What's the problem represented to be?* and thus, I also ask *What are the potential consequences of the problem representations?* The second analysis focuses on the interviews about what a feminist energy policy for the climate entails. For this I predominantly use the questions provided by Fairclough (2003); *What social events/parts of the world/"themes" are represented?* and *From what particular perspective, or point of view, are these themes represented?* The first part of the analysis (4.1) will be used to answer my first research question (RQ1) while the second part of the analysis (4.2) will answer my second research question (RQ2). I have conducted my analysis according to three main topics derived from my two research questions: a) feminist policy and feminism b) energy policy and the energy sector and c) Sweden and Swedish policy. Starting off from my two research questions and the related topics (a, b, c) I have identified themes and the points of views (as by Fairclough) from which these themes are represented; 1) feminist energy policy is represented as focusing on women or/and assimilation of women, 2) feminist energy policy is represented from the perspective of international competitiveness, and, 3) feminist energy policy is represented as a modern Swedish value. I will present my results as I present my material and analysis, which is based on a Critical Discourse Analysis. Upon posing the presented questions (of Bacchi and Fairclough), I also apply feminist theory primarily influenced by, but not limited to, hooks, Ahmed and de los Reyes as outlined in chapter 3.

4.1 Documents

The Swedish Government (2015d) defines gender equality as women and men having "the same opportunities to shape society and their own lives". Thus, gender equality is considered to be something to be achieved between women and men. According to the Swedish Government (2015a) a feminist government is defined as one that makes sure "a gender equality perspective is brought into policy making on a broad front, both nationally and internationally" and therefore feminist policy is equal to "all decisions must increase gender equality" (ibid.). With a government of 12 female and 13 male ministers Sweden takes pride in taking a stand for gender equality. In terms of equal power to shape society, Sweden wants energy policy to "contribute to a more gender equal society" (ER 2015:15). Sweden has set up energy goals for electricity production of 50% renewable energy for the year 2020 and 100% for the year 2040. In preparation for a major energy transition Sweden has expressed that gender equality is an important dimension to pay attention to in order to succeed (Prop. 2016/17:66) and that men and women therefore must be represented in the energy sector's different areas. In Table 1 the three major documents that I have analysed are presented to give the reader a better overview of what they consist of. Table 2 briefly covers the three state websites that I have used to collect texts that relate to feminist energy policy.

Table 1. Documents and summaries of their content

Document	Content
ER 2015:15	<p>The Swedish Energy Agency issues a yearly <i>Energy Indicators</i> report (since 2002) on the status of Sweden's efforts to achieve set energy goals. The report presents indicators as means to evaluate the progress and makes an assessment on Sweden's progress in the energy area. In the 2015 report of 119 pages the theme was <i>gender equality</i>. The report includes a chapter (on pages 13-35) on this topic to give an overview of the status on this area. It also includes a proposal to develop indicators for gender equality in the energy area. Gender equality is divided into four dimensions to be addressed: power and influence, education and research, attitudes, and energy use. My analysis focuses on this chapter in the report.</p>
Prop. 2016/17:66	<p>The <i>Energy Research Proposition</i> is a government bill of 86 pages that covers the area of research and innovation in regards to the energy sector. It provides the Swedish Energy Agency guidance in their decision making for research granting. It gives guidelines on what areas of research to focus on, for the coming period of 2017-2020. This means it gives guidelines on what type of research should be funded and what aspects must be evaluated when considering project applications in the energy area. There is a section (9.5) on pages 80-81 about gender equality as an aspect to consider. This is new and has not existed in this type of document previously.</p>
SOU 2017:2	<p><i>Kraftsamling för framtidens energi</i> is a government bill that resulted from the work of the appointed Energy Commission, a parliamentary committee, with the Energy Minister as chairperson. SOU 2017:2 maps out Sweden's energy policy and lays the foundation for the final <i>energy framework agreement</i>, which is included in the document. The agreement in turn is the foundation to the Energy Commission's proposals in the bill. The agreement is made between five political parties: Social Democrats, The Moderate Party, Green Party, Center Party and Christian Democrats. The present government consists of the Social Democrats and the Green Party. The energy framework agreement on pages 270-276 is where I place my focus in this government bill (of 355 pages).</p>

Table 2. State websites and their content

Website	Content
www.government.se	This is the Swedish Government's official website with information about the Swedish parliamentary system, public policies and also press releases on what is going on in Swedish (and international) politics.
www.sweden.se	This is an official website about Sweden and Swedish society. Information ranging from Swedish history and the development of Sweden to Swedish attractions and Swedish values.
www.energimyndigheten.se	The website of the Swedish Energy Agency provides information about the agency's work and progress within the energy area; what technological innovations are in development, what financial funding exist for application and general information about energy for the public.

4.1.1 Feminist energy policy as focusing on women's representation

The Swedish government has declared itself a feminist government, devoted to a feminist foreign policy. Even if the idea has been met with both praise and criticism – domestic and international – the word feminism is not as charged in Sweden as in many other countries. The government uses the 'F word' to stress that gender equality is vital to society and that more needs to be done to achieve it. (Swedish Institute 2017)

I perceive it as rare that words such as feminist policy or feminism are used explicitly in the texts I have analysed. They cannot be found in the government bills, documents and reports. The word feminist is used scarcely on the selected webpages (see Table 2) and when they are used it is not in terms of energy policy but, rather, in regards to policy about equal division of unpaid housework and ending men's violence against women (Swedish Government 2016). When the word feminist policy or feminism is used, I find a focus placed on feminist *foreign* policy. For example, the quote presented above can be found on the "official website about Sweden" Sweden.se which is administered by the Swedish Institute. This piece of written text is placed on the gender equality page of the website. It starts off with the title *Reclaiming the F word* and consists of an explanation of what it means to have a feminist government. The text gives a description of what feminism means to the Swedish government. Using Fairclough (2003), my interpretation of the emphasis on *foreign* in this context, and so early in the text, represents feminism from the point of view that it is needed (more) elsewhere, in foreign lands, while here we are *quite good*, as Ahmed (2017) would argue. Feminism and feminist policy are linked to, and replaced with gender equality, which is coherent in all texts and is not particular for this quote. Here, the "F word" is claimed to not be *as charged* among Swedish people which implies that Sweden is *more* accepting of feminism and thus gender equality. This reproduces

the image of Sweden to be better, at gender equality, than other countries and strengthens the Swedish gender equality “mantra” (Martinsson et al. 2016). Nonetheless, there is an acknowledgement that the word feminism is still somewhat *charged*, or loaded, with assumptions, feelings and opinions - even in Sweden - and that gender equality has not been achieved.

In the Swedish Energy Agency's (SEA) report Energy Indicators from 2015 (ER 2015:15) words such as feminist policy or feminism are not mentioned but gender equality can be found. As the SEA is a government body, the definition of gender equality in this document is no different from the one defined by the Swedish Government (stated in 4.1). In ER 2015:15, gender equality is divided into quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitative gender equality is described as a balance in the representation of the two legal sexes. This means that no group should take up more than 60%, or less than 40%, in all areas of society. Qualitative gender equality is described as allowing the knowledge, experiences and values of both groups to form and enrich Sweden's societal development. This report only covers the quantitative part, due to different limitations, but acknowledges that qualitative gender equality does not exist simply because quantitative equality exists and emphasises that gender equality exists "when the actual influence is equally distributed" (14). What's the problem represented to be here? I perceive that thinking qualitative gender equality will follow quantitative gender equality is presented as a problem as it is lacking. Wodak (2005) argues that there is a general belief that when more women are allowed *in* it means the work is done, when in reality a lot could be lacking. Thus, the SEA highlighting this problem in regards to gender equality efforts reveals a possible point of view of wanting to do more because they find that representation in terms of numbers is problematic because it is too superficial.

Following this, I interpret the SEA's take on gender equality and its quantitative and qualitative dimensions to be that once we have quantitative gender equality, then, we can work on the rest (the qualitative), as if one builds upon the other. Wodak (2005) argues that people do not act within structures but reproduce existing structures and systems through their actions. The systems that our actions reproduce then affect the conditions of action and thus we have a dialectical relationship where one is not prior to the other. Thus, the two dimensions of qualitative and quantitative gender equality affect each other and its processes. "Both would need to change each other and would have to be changed themselves" (ibid.:108) because if only one changes, for example women's representation or gender roles, there might be no significant changes in the structures that gender roles or representation operate within. However, answering Fairclough's question *From which point of view is this represented?* I identify the SEA's point of view to be different from the mainstream, because they point out what else is necessary other than adding women. Here, Bacchi would ask *What could this problem representation lead to?* In the SEA's latest *Energy Indicators* report of 95 pages from 2016 there is a chapter on gender equality on pages 85-90. In short, this chapter conveys that there are not enough women in the energy sector and that most leader positions are still occupied by men. There is no follow-up on qualitative gender equality although the SEA addressed the lack of it in the previous year's report. Ahmed (2017) argues that oftentimes when institutions address a problem – whether through a policy, a program, or a public statement – they can also consider it solving the problem and consequently a problem can be obscured by naming it. "The tools you introduce to address a problem can be used as indicators that a problem has been addressed!" (ibid.:110) and thus the answer to Bacchi's question could potentially be: nothing.

I have interpreted the collected material to show that feminism is equated with women and women's representation and that feminist policy is equated with gender equality (Swedish Government 2015a). Following, feminist energy policy means could mean gender equality policy within the energy sector, which in turn entails equal representation of women in this sector. Yet, in the Energy Framework Agreement gender equality and/or women's representation is not mentioned. The government bill *The future of energy* (SOU 2017:2), in which the Energy Framework Agreement is included, refers instead to the budget proposition in regards to gender equality within the energy sector. In the section *Other consequences* (8.6) it is mentioned that the bill will not have any direct effects on gender equality (among other areas) although the Swedish Government has stated that feminist policy means "all decisions must increase gender equality" (Swedish Government 2015a). Using Fairclough to identify from what point of view feminist energy policy is represented, in this bill of 355 pages on the future of energy, I find that *not* addressing how energy policy is feminist, positions the government from a point of view that sees feminist policy as something separate, something for other areas and issues. Furthermore, Rönnblom (2005:171) who studies gender and public policy claims that it is not rare that gender equality becomes something to "add on" at the end of policy documents in Sweden. She argues that this also marks "a shift from politics to administration" (ibid.:173). If feminist policy equals gender equality, for the Swedish Government, it could be possible that the Swedish Government *adds* gender equality on top of existing policies in order to call them feminist, thus feminist energy policy could be about adding women to the energy sector.

4.1.2 *Feminist energy policy as international competitiveness*

In the Swedish government's Energy Research Proposition (Prop. 2016/17:66) of 86 pages there is a section (9.5) on *Gender equality aspects of research and innovation within the energy area* on pages 80-81. The document includes a call for "more knowledge about the energy system and its connection to the development towards gender equality" and new business models to understand individual consumers' needs. Using Bacchi, I interpret the problem here to be represented as, partly, a lack of knowledge about the relation between energy and gender equality, and, partly a lack of knowledge about energy consumption patterns. The document brings up differences between the energy use of women and men with an insinuation on needing to know more about how to affect them (differently). Using Fairclough, a possible point of view here is of energy as something to be consumed and that it is necessary to understand how people consume energy in daily life. Energy becomes a product to be sold as I interpret the Swedish Government to be interested in making certain (energy) products more attractive than others (for example renewable energy) for the consumer. The larger dominating discourse here is that energy is a business and Sweden needs to be competitive on this market. This can also be identified on the Swedish Government's website where discourses about (green) growth and international competitiveness are dominating. According to Rönnblom (2005) these discourses are informed by neoliberal thinking and free-market agendas, which reproduces a normalisation of accumulating capital and privatising public services. One interpretation could be that the dominating neoliberal discourse frames energy as a consumer product, rather than a public service, to reinforce the agenda of international competitiveness.

Prop. 2016/17:66 states that Sweden has raised the ambition level of efforts for gender equality within the energy sector and asserts the demand on the Swedish Energy Agency to take gender equality into consideration on all levels of their work. Gender equality is again defined as the equal power to form society and your own life and women are expressed to be underrepresented in the energy sector and women's entrepreneurship and innovation are described as in need of more attention from the SEA. Is it that women are not good enough to make it to the energy

sector? Or, is it that women are not good at claiming space and calling the attention of the SEA? In ER 2015:15 the SEA has identified, as presented in Table 1, four dimensions of gender equality; within *education and research* there is a focus on the engineering discipline. The report explains that the number of women in these disciplines is still low. This representation of the problem suggests that the solution would be for more women to enter the energy sector *and* for more girls to study engineering. Bacchi (1999:116) argues, "Without underestimating the integrating of girls into nontraditional study areas, it is useful to identify the presumptions underlying this project". One potential presumption here, and point of view, is that some areas of study are more valuable for societal development, such as areas that relate to technological innovation.

4.1.3 *Feminist energy policy as a modern Swedish value*

On the website Sweden.se there are pages about the importance of the environment and climate for Sweden's progress and how Sweden addresses this through energy policy; "Climate is key for Sweden" (Swedish Institute 2015). Thus, asking Fairclough's question *From which point of view is this represented?* energy, environment and the climate are represented as important issues for Sweden. My perception is that it is also important for Sweden to be a role model, to be a pioneer and to lead other countries. This is prevalent in the documents and on the websites. The representation of Sweden wanting to be at the top of the class, or stay at the top of the class, is expressed in terms of values – what is important for Sweden? Gender equality is represented as a prerequisite for Sweden's development and thus Sweden's competitiveness in a global context, or more specifically on the global market. In Prop. 2016/17:66 the point of view from which Sweden is represented is that Sweden works hard and aims high, a lot higher than other countries, not only in energy and environmental policy but also in regards to gender equality and diversity (*mångfald* in Swedish). For the energy transition, gender equality, diversity and inclusion are represented as important values that will foster a positive development. However, only the concept of gender equality is defined. Therefore it could be possible that gender equality is at the core of feminist energy policy, or feminist policy in general. Using de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) who argue that gender equality is produced as a core characteristic for the Swedish state, here, I identify gender equality to be portrayed as a core (and modern) value for Sweden as a democratic (and modern) country.

The definition of gender equality remains coherent in the analysed texts but the concept of diversity is not defined although it is both exclaimed as important and claimed as a Swedish value. In Prop. 2016/17:66 the word diversity is paired with new thinking (*nytankande* in Swedish) and being competitive (*konkurrenskraftig* in Swedish). Both attributes are expressed as attractive and required for Sweden's energy transition and therefore upon asking *What's the problem represented to be?* one possible answer is: the lack of diversity is a problem for Swedish development. But what does the word diversity mean if it is not defined? Does it mean diversity in terms of education? Does it mean diversity in terms of "race"? Does it mean diversity in terms of functionality or abled-bodiedness? One interpretation that I make is that the Swedish Government takes for granted that there is a consensus in regards to what diversity means and therefore fails to define it although it is used in different contexts. Nonetheless, diversity is considered to be important for modern Swedish energy policy and Sweden's development. Thus, one interpretation that I make is that feminist energy policy is viewed as important for Sweden's development as a progressive and modern country.

4.2 Interviews

For simplicity, throughout the analysis I will refer to the participants through epithets that are based on their work positions. This is to avoid using long descriptions of what kind of energy related work they do every time participants are referred to in the text. Table 2 presents an overview of the respondents' epithets, work positions and sex. The last column indicates whether the interview was conducted face-to-face (F) or through telephone (T). The participants are sorted after the order in which they spoke with me. There are three participants who work at the Swedish Energy Agency who need to be distinguished from each other in their epithets. As a personal preference, instead of numbering or assigning randomly selected names, I have decided to assign participants from the SEA the initials¹ of feminist theorists who inspire me but whose work I have not used or cited for this thesis. It needs to be mentioned that it was the first interview, with L.I., that turned into a group interview after half the time when J.S. joined us.

Table 3. Participants' epithets and relevant information

Epithet	Work position	Sex	F/T
L.I. (SEA)	Head of a unit at the Swedish Energy Agency.	Woman	F
J.S. (SEA)	Staff from the energy systems department at the Swedish Energy Agency.	Woman	F
Politician	Parliament politician (of Social Democrats Party) who works with energy policy.	Woman	F
A.L. (SEA)	Staff from the analysis department at the Swedish Energy Agency.	Woman	F
Researcher	Researcher investigating the relation between gender and climate impact of energy related decisions made in boardrooms.	Woman	T
Municipality P.O.	Public Official at Uppsala Municipality who works with public transport and sustainability.	Woman	F
Manager	Head of a unit at a major energy company in Sweden.	Woman	F
Government P.O.	Public Official at the government department of Environment & Energy.	Man	T

4.2.1 Feminist energy policy as assimilation of women

When asking participants the question of what a feminist energy policy for the climate is or could be there was a sense of insecurity surrounding *how* to answer this question. I see that one potential explanation to this insecurity is the word feminism itself and how it is still loaded, which the Swedish Government did acknowledge on one of the websites (mentioned in 4.1.1). My perception is that this insecurity was prevalent among all the participants except the politician who offered a clear account on what it meant for her and she had no problem with the

word. Among the rest there was a mix of participants who did not acknowledge this insecurity, possibly due to an unawareness of it, and participants who explicitly announced a lack of knowledge about feminism and thus their hesitant approach to the word. For example, the manager said, *"To be honest I am not well-read about feminism"* and that she rather speaks in terms of diversity. The government P.O. disclosed that he had done research about feminism to prepare himself for our phone conversation. During interviews, the word feminism was replaced with other preferred words, such as gender equality and diversity. Especially the word diversity seemed to sit right with all of the participants. For example, the manager said that the first thing she thinks of – in regards to my question about what feminist energy policy is – is that she wants to exchange the word feminism with the word diversity; *"I rather talk about diversity, differences, and respect for each other. I believe in every person's equal value and choose to talk more from that perspective"*. A.L. from the SEA said, *"There are more things to keep in mind...not only a feminist perspective...there are others"*. Using Fairclough, I identify that feminism is not only represented from a point of view that it is an uncomfortable word but that it is also a "lacking" concept and perspective and that there are other, and better, perspectives for energy policy.

What is feminist energy policy? It might sound like a silly question but all politics in the government shall be feminist. That means we see that women do not...have the same power as men. And that we have to work consciously to change it if we want change. In the energy area this is very clear. It is a very male-dominated sector. Partly it is a matter of justice, because women must be able to do that...those who wish to. But it is also a matter of competence. Because obviously there are structures that make women not seeking to enter this business. It is hardly because it's an unattractive one. It's not a business where you earn little. Rather it's male-dominated due to some sort of tradition. And we do not want such structures.

Politician

As mentioned, the politician's account on what feminist energy policy is seems to be clear to her in the quote above. She uses concepts such as justice, power, structures but also competence. My interpretation of her view is that she, and other women, should have the right to work in the energy sector but due to structures that limit their power and access they are unable to. Her comment on competence implies a perspective that it is a loss for society to miss out on the competence of those (women) who are excluded. She uses the word "obviously" when bringing up structures although social structures are generally not obvious. My perception is that she sees a connection between feminism and energy policy, which is not usual (as mentioned in chapter 1) as energy is often separated from both feminism and gender equality, especially in high-income countries. Using Fairclough, I identify her point of view of the energy sector as "attractive" and thus women must be attracted to it and wish to be part of it because in this sector you can make good money. To me, her representation of feminist energy policy is in line with the dominating discourses of labour, labour market and education; what kind of labour is "attractive", appreciated or valued in our society and what educations should lead to "attractive" and well-paid jobs on the market? In a larger context, Bacchi (1999) argues that we rarely hear discussions about how to make boys and men interested in disciplines where girls and women are the majority. However, there is a constant debate on how to "include" girls and women or make them *more interested* in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This reproduces the discourse of women as lacking, needing to change and needing assistance with changing. I identify a possible point of view here, of the politician, that by becoming engineers and choosing this sector women will be empowered.

We need to be able to build on more on girls who are interested technology and natural science, early, so they choose the education that enables them to be recruited to this industry.

Manager

According to Bacchi (1999:116), "There is a privileging in this agenda of study and work areas where men dominate". I see this as part of the dominating neoliberal discourse of how women should choose education in order to become financially independent or/and successful. Using Bacchi, I identify women and women's choices to be represented as the problem. To question the problem representation and its implications, I find that this problem representation obscures the discourse's rationalisation of the different values placed on different types of work. It becomes "natural" that work in the care sector and domestic work is valued less because of the dominating market discourses. Dominating discourses normalises what otherwise could be, or should be, contested. How come women are set up to make choices that can be detrimental to their financial stability? The neoliberal discourse places a focus on women's responsibility to make a choice when the choice has already been made by the discourse's marketisation agenda – if you do not follow then you make the wrong choice! This dominating discourse, which the manager operates within (see quote above), also makes it invisible that "choices" depend on your preconditions whether it is the quality of the primary education in your neighbourhood or your family background and what support systems are available to you. Thus, I identify the point of view (of the manager) that feminist energy policy is about making girls choose STEM and that all girls *can* choose it, which implies an assumption of girls (and women) as a homogenous group with similar preconditions.

Politics do not dictate in detail. We are given goals and are expected to build our organisation in a way that we include a feminist...or...a gender equality perspective without having to be exactly what to do in every instance.

L.I. (SEA)

I am absolutely a feminist. I hope my three children are too. Of course one should think that women shall have the same opportunities as men.

Researcher

I have mentioned that the word feminist (or feminism) was often replaced by gender equality or diversity, with diversity being the preferred word among the three because it was viewed as including a wider perspective. In addition, feminism and gender equality were used interchangeably, as if they meant the same thing, and between these two, gender equality was the preferred word. In the quote above an SEA staff changed her speech from (what I suppose would be) *feminist perspective* to *gender equality perspective*. When I asked the researcher about her thoughts on feminism as an ideology she claimed the label feminist (as seen in the quote above) and shared a definition that is in line with the Swedish Government's definition of gender equality. As mentioned, the two words were used interchangeably although, to me, they have very different meanings. As I defined in section 3.2, feminism is the struggle to end sexism, sexual exploitation and sexual oppression and "cannot be separated from racism, from how the present is shaped by colonial histories including slavery, as central to the exploitation of labor under capitalism" (Ahmed 2017:5). Furthermore, for feminism, "intersectionality is a starting point, the point from which we must proceed if we are to offer an account of how power works" (ibid.) thus feminism is about contesting power asymmetries on every level. Using Fairclough, the perspective of the researcher, here, could be that feminism is about women's progress and inclusion ("same opportunities as men") and in terms of feminist energy policy this would mean the inclusion of women in the energy sector.

In relation to the inclusion of women and the quantitative dimension of gender equality, representation was mentioned as representing different perspectives and ideas. J.S. from the SEA said, "*It is not about any form of essential womanhood, it's about the importance of representing different perspectives, perspectives that might otherwise not be visible*". I identify a point of view that rejects gender essentialism. Gender essentialism is the notion that a person's sex/gender (*kön* in Swedish) makes them inherently different and that they possess a certain kind of knowledge that is essential to their sex. For this reason, according to gender essentialists, people should also be treated differently and therefore are also considered "more suitable" for specific types of activities. Both J.S. from the SEA and the politician rejected gender essentialism and that *being* a woman, or being categorised as one, makes you different but, rather, you have a different experience in society because society treats you differently in terms of what activities it considers that you should engage in. Using Fairclough's questions, in relation to what feminist energy policy is, I identify (again) a point of view of equal representation within the energy sector to be central to feminist energy policy, so that both the perspectives of women and men will be taken into account when making decisions related to energy issues. The politician said, "*I think that if you work with feminism there will be more things done for the environment, children's rights and so on. Because women have different experiences than men, not because we are different*". Hence, feminist energy policy is about representing different perspectives rather than different sexes.

Regardless if you're a man or a woman or any other type of diversity criteria I believe it is good to have a conviction of wanting to improve things and help push for change.

Manager

In terms of climate and environment it is important that all aspects are included. Then you can have an opinion that diversity ... now we talk about men/women but at large it is diversity that is really important.

A.L. (SEA)

It is not necessarily only a gender perspective but a diversity perspective that could be relevant. Some areas are societal and for everybody in society. It's important to include different perspectives and such projects demand a wider perspective.

L.I. (SEA)

In terms of feminist energy policy I have mentioned that the word diversity often was used to replace the word feminist. Although there was no clear definition of what diversity meant to the participants (and I failed to ask) one point of view could be that diversity means *more than just* focusing on women (or the man/woman ratio). According to Ahmed (2017:101) "*diversity* replaces other more unacceptable terms that can make people feel threatened" (emphasis in original). Ahmed means that the word diversity is an easy word, a word that travels further, and my perception is also that the participants used the word with ease. Connected to this, feminism – which was equated with gender equality and a focus on women – is therefore viewed as lacking by the participants. Thus feminist energy policy is viewed as lacking because it is assumed to not take into account "other types of diversity criteria". The three quotes above all give an account on how a diversity perspective is *more than* a feminist perspective because, as mentioned, a feminist perspective is viewed as lacking. Using Fairclough, I identify the point of view here to be that a feminist energy policy leaves behind relevant aspects if these are not related to sex and thus feminist energy policy lacks a wider perspective.

Following this, it was expressed that feminist energy policy is not always relevant; sometimes it is a relevant perspective and sometimes it is not and to push it in these cases simply does not make sense. L.I. from the SEA takes this point of view and my interpretation is that it is rooted in the idea that feminism, and feminist energy policy, focuses only on women thus there are cases where it is not needed. For example, she mentioned that if a project is about installing solar electricity, or biogas, then "*it does not make sense*" to bring in a feminist perspective because it will not have any direct effects on the results of these types of projects. She also brought up how Stockholm City implemented feminist snow ploughing, laughed about it and called it "*too much*". Again, the point of view here is that feminist energy policy is needed in certain cases and in others not because it is too narrow of a perspective (if it's only about women) and thus feminist energy policy is not only lacking (of a wider perspective) but feminism is also specific and is needed for specific cases and areas, rather than being general and applicable to all areas and permeating in all policies.

4.2.2 Feminist energy policy as improving business prospects

Asking *From which perspective is feminist energy policy represented?* as suggested by Fairclough, during the interviews energy policy was predominantly discussed in terms of the energy industry as a business, and, in relation, the need for more female engineers because women and men have different perspectives and therefore both groups need to be represented in order to achieve a wider view on issues and thus better solutions. I perceive this as being important in order to be competitive on the global energy market. Then, feminist energy policy (in terms of more women in the energy sector) is good for the market and the economy. The participants mentioned a seminar about gender equality that was organised by the government and the Energy Minister with two purposes, 1) to discuss how to get more women into the energy sector and 2) to highlight and celebrate the competent women who are already there. It was expressed as a good seminar, where there was a gender balance among the speakers for the most part, except among CEOs of different companies within the energy sector as these were often men. However, this was expressed as reasonable because it is also a way of showing that they care about these issues and it would have been "strange" if they did not show up (in spite of invitation) just because they are not women. When I asked about the audience the reply was that it was mostly women. Then, feminist energy policy possibly is represented as being for women; women need support from these CEOs in the energy business and women need to learn from successful women in this business, so that they also can become successful and in turn so that Sweden can be competitive.

Energy policy was also discussed in terms of the differences between women and men and how they use energy or how they see climate risk. Using Fairclough to *How were these differences represented?* I see in the material that women and men were viewed as looking differently at climate risk and therefore make different decisions whether at home, in boardrooms or governments. The researcher said that according to research that she had come across, women can visualise risk better than men, but she did not mention due to what and I failed to ask during the interview. However, upon listening to the interview again and reading the transcript I get a sense of a gender essentialist view here, that somehow women are essentially better at visualising risk rather than having developed such skills due to the different experiences as women. This is a possibility, among others, and would contradict the point of view that rejects gender essentialism mentioned in the previous section (4.2.1). During the interviews, references to previous research were made and several participants mentioned the research conducted by political scientist Lena Wängnerud – a Swedish researcher who investigated critical mass in Swedish politics. Critical mass is the notion that when the representation of a group reaches a certain level (30%) there will be changes within the group and how the group works. The

participants argued for Wägnerud's research and agreed that decisions are made differently if women are present. Again, I can identify feminist energy policy as being represented from a point of view that it is about women; feminist energy policy is about women being present and represented quantitatively and that is important for decision making which in turn is important for Sweden in an international (business) context.

Sure, public transport is absolutely a matter of class but that was not the purpose of this interview.

Politician

As mentioned in section 5.2.1 the word feminism was used interchangeably with gender equality. When I asked the municipality P.O. about what a feminist energy policy is (without mentioning gender equality) her answer was, "*If we come to the topic of gender equality, how we work with that here, that is indeed energy policy. Even if we may not always think that way*". She expresses a clear certainty not only in regards to what feminist energy policy is – it is about gender equality – but also a certainty surrounding the work that she does in public transport; it is feminist energy policy that she works with. Public transport was brought up by most participants as women and men were believed to use transportation differently. With a focus on the differences between women and men in their use of transportation the participants argued that women favour public transport and that men prefer using the car and therefore improving the public transport system means benefiting women, which also brings us closer to attaining gender equality. I could not identify a *why*, an explanation, for women choosing public transport or *why* the participants had a view of women favouring public transport. When the politician brought this up I made a comment that public transport is also a matter of class, which makes it a matter of feminism, and I also lamented that we often tend to focus on women and men when we discuss feminism. My perception is that her response (quoted above) shut down the conversation in this regard. Using Fairclough, in her answer I find a possible point of view in which class is a separate issue; if the purpose of the interview is to discuss feminist energy policy or feminism then we are not to speak about class because that is unrelated to energy policy, feminist policy and feminism.

We need to think how...what behaviours...who shall be the norm. It's easy to say that one should become like men for society to be gender equal. But more men drive cars.

A.L. (SEA)

During the interviews there were some participants who mentioned the aspect of power in regards to feminist energy policy. The key point was that men generally still possess more power than women which means that decisions relating to energy are also mostly made by men. This was expressed as something that needed to change. Using Fairclough to ask *From what point of view is feminist energy policy represented?* I identify a point of view (again) that feminist energy policy is about having more women in the energy sector. There is also a focus on politics here; it is important to have women working with energy policy and energy issues on this level. However, we do operate within neoliberal structures with market agendas and as mentioned previously, when discussing energy in a Swedish context, there was a tendency to discuss labour and the energy sector as a business. This reproduces the dominant discourse of energy supply as a market for competition rather than energy supply as a public service. In terms of labour and education, I find that A.L. from the SEA has a different point of view than the dominating one that privileges the engineering disciplines. She argues that *more* educations can lead to work with energy issues; "*Rather than thinking that women need to enter these professions we need to think of competence as something bigger*". I can identify a perspective of

challenging the present norms. In the quote above, although she does focus on the differences between the choices of men and women in terms of transportation, she questions the discourse of changing women and begs the question of what norms we want to foster. Here, feminist energy policy becomes about questioning male and neoliberal norms of dealing with energy issues.

4.2.3 *Feminist energy policy as a source/symbol of national pride*

The participants generally spoke of Sweden quite proudly. The politician mentioned the photo of Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin where she signs a climate law and has only women around her, including one who is pregnant. She compares it with the photo of Donald Trump signing a law and has only men around him and made a remark about the Swedish picture being "*quite a funny picture*". The three staff members from the Swedish Energy Agency brought up the Energy Minister and his support for the agency's gender equality efforts and how he has mentioned that he will follow up on this. Both the politician and the manager agreed and mentioned the Energy Minister's concern and interest for this issue throughout the seminar on increasing gender equality in the energy sector (mentioned in section 4.2.1). In particular, A.L. from the SEA explains, "*[...] and now in the Energy Research Proposition there is quite a lot about gender equality and how to bring in such perspectives*". In section 4.1.2 I have assessed that "quite a lot" is not the case as, in the Energy Research Proposition of 86 pages, the section about gender equality (9.5) within energy research is placed on pages 80-81. As argued previously, this gives an impression of gender equality as being something to "add on" at the end of documents rather than something to be permeating a policy. Using Fairclough, I find a possible point of view to be that Sweden is *good* and cares about feminist energy policy because Sweden cares about women. I also found a different perspective as the manager challenged the focus on numbers, statistics and quantitative representation. She questioned whether that was enough and argued for the importance of creating a culture that is actually inclusive. "*It's about inclusion, not only statistics. It's about having a culture that is inclusive. That we use a language that is inclusive and accepting of each other's differences when we speak. That is an important issue.*"

We always attract attention. For the climate area we have a female minister. We have a female chief negotiator on climate issues. On the energy side we also make sure there is a gender balance. Our energy minister is a man but he has a different appearance than typical Swedish. It draws attention that we are so many women when we represent Sweden. I am very proud of that. [...] Even if the energy minister is male he is a visible symbol for diversity. This is not just for a certain group in our country but relevant to all.

Politician

If you look at values, Sweden is quite different in comparison to many other countries.

L.I. (SEA)

I can say that I believe Sweden absolutely can play a role in inspiring other countries.

Manager

The politician's statement above presents the good qualities of Sweden and our efforts in terms of feminist energy policy, in an international context. Asking *From which point of view is this represented?* one possibility is that she takes the point of view of Sweden being special, in a good way, because we showcase a lot of women on leadership positions. This is rare among other countries and therefore we "always attract attention". Other countries can learn from

Sweden, which is also the perspective of L.I. from the SEA and the manager (see quotes above). Thus, feminist energy policy is important to Sweden because we want to be a frontrunner, because we are a modern country, with progressive values and we can be proud of this. However, in relation to this pride about feminist energy policy, I identified another side; some participants lamented the fact that the Energy Minister is a man when discussing what feminist energy policy is; "[...] *the Energy Minister is a man but...*" (government P.O.). This presents feminist energy policy and feminism from the point of view that it equals women and that gender equality equals the inclusion of women *and* women on leader positions. There is a discourse, here, about how women's representation will solve "women's problems". For example, women's representation in the energy sector will make it more gender equal and improve women's lives. This point of view implies that men cannot drive feminist agendas and that women always will, although it has been expressed earlier that the Energy Minister is concerned and supportive of feminist energy policy and having more women in the energy sector.

I would like to go back to the politician's statement discussed in the previous paragraph. Using Fairclough, the politician's perspective could be that when there is not a woman (on a leader position) at least there is a man who is "non-typical Swedish" looking. In regards to feminist energy policy, she had mentioned power and structure earlier in the interview but this, here, is a perspective of gender and "race" as two separate power dimensions; we either include white women or racialised men. Crenshaw (2016) would argue that there is a lack of an intersectional perspective because many other groups, for example racialised women, are made invisible here. Thus, feminist energy policy is viewed as inclusive of white women and non-white men. Furthermore, the politician's perspective reproduces the view of what a "typical" Swedish person should look like. Instead of challenging this view and renegotiating "the Swedish look", I perceive the politician as taking a point of view of the Energy Minister as a "symbol for diversity". Ahmed (2012:151) explains that diversity can become "a means of constituting a 'we' that is predicted on solidarity with *others*" (emphasis added). It also becomes an apparatus to reproduce whiteness as default; "diversity pride becomes a technology for reproducing whiteness: adding color to the white face of the organization *confirms the whiteness of that face*" (ibid., emphasis in original). Here, feminist energy policy becomes about showcasing Sweden as an inclusive country, a modern country and thus a source of pride as feminist energy policy is used as a tool for measuring how "good" Sweden is at development because we include "everybody". As mentioned, I identify a lack of intersectional perspectives in this point of view (of what feminist energy policy is) and a lack of including "everybody" because non-white women (among others) are forgotten.

With intersectional perspectives we have looked at how we convey information in regards to waste management...important that it is available on different eyesight levels and in different languages.

J.S. (SEA)

Generally, intersectionality is (still) not a well-known concept and even researchers who are well acquainted with it may have difficulties with its application, not only because it is complex but also because intersectionality is a theory under continuous critique and development (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; de los Reyes 2017). During interviews the only participant who brought up intersectionality, on their own, was J.S. from the SEA (quoted above). Only with the politician did I specifically ask about intersectionality due to the direction that our conversation had taken (as mentioned in the previous paragraph). With the researcher, she had asked me about what analysis approach I would use for my material and whether she could be of any help. I revealed that I would, potentially, be interested in using an intersectional analysis for my

research upon which she replied, “*That is interesting but I have not used that because I have personally not been interested in it. But it feels modern to do so*”. Intersectionality was expressed as something modern by the researcher. Intersectionality was expressed as something important for diversity and inclusion by J.S. from the SEA. When asked about her thoughts on intersectionality, the politician first replied that she had them (thoughts) but that they are not so related to this topic (of feminist energy policy). This view of intersectionality as not related to feminist energy policy could potentially be because intersectionality is a complex concept that is difficult to grasp, connect and apply to feminist energy policy.

But absolutely. That’s something that must permeate all politics. However, the group that does not want to identify as woman or man or so is smaller than the group women. So of course the problem of a big group of women being excluded from the energy business is maybe where you start off. Then you could also step into intersectionality and such. So maybe it is that feminism makes way for that discussion too, I think.

Politician

Following a moment of silence, the politician gave an account on something that, in my view, is another conversation (see the quote above) rather than a conversation about intersectionality. It could be that my question was not asked in a clear manner, or, that the politician has a different idea of what intersectionality means as she brought up social identities of, what I assume, includes transgender and non-binary identities. Either way, if I look at the material and ask *From what point of view is this represented?* one answer, among others, could be that the politician has a view that feminism equals women and that this comes first *before* you include other dimensions of power. Then, which women does she mean? Combining this with the previous finding that there is a lack of intersectional perspectives, I conclude that the politician’s perspective separates different power dimensions and assumes a homogenous “big group of women” as the subject, and main beneficiaries, of feminist energy policy. According to de los Reyes (2017), in Sweden, sex is viewed as the foundational social identity in discussions about marginalisation while other dimensions, such as “race” or class, are often obscured, thus discussions about gender equality often end up being about white middle-class women (although not explicitly). In addition, values (such as gender equality or diversity) are produced to be specific to the Swedish state, which creates a sense of pride when put in comparison with other states (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005). With this, I interpret a possible image in the politician’s mind, that this “big group of women” is “Swedish looking” (or white), identify as women, and will be included in the energy sector thanks to feminist energy policy. The few *other* women will be included too (although not at first), which makes feminist energy policy something for Sweden to be proud of because in the end “all” women will be included. This also implies a trickle down effect – where those at the top are expected to benefit *first* and the rest will follow – which is a concept of the dominating neoliberal discourse.

5 Discussion

In this chapter I discuss the main results as to what a feminist energy policy for the climate means for Sweden. The aim is to place my research questions and results in a larger context and also discuss possibilities for future research. As presented in the results chapter the Swedish government has defined feminist policy, in general, to be dealing with gender equality. Both the Swedish government (through documents) and the interview participants have defined gender equality as equal opportunities and the equal distribution of power between women and men – the two legal sexes. Feminist energy policy specifically concerns the equal representation of women and men in decision making that relates to energy issues and has also been portrayed as a means to improve women's lives and their financial stability. I have defined feminism previously as the struggle to end sexism, sexual exploitation and sexual oppression. I have also emphasised that this struggle cannot be separated from other dimensions of power, such as racism, because our colonial histories still manifest themselves, *with* material consequences, in present day practices dominated by capitalistic values of exploitation of labour (hooks [1984] 2000; de los Reyes 2016; Ahmed 2017). In *When feminism became gender equality and anti-racism became diversity management* de los Reyes (2016) discuss how the feminist movement and struggle has been reduced to gender equality through dominating neoliberal discourses. She argues that the framework of neoliberal citizenship has limited the feminist struggle into the inclusive subordination of women, which "includes" them in the labour market but restricts them to low-wage jobs. Now, rather than questioning why some jobs are low-wage – because how can welfare be devalued in a welfare state? – women are directed to head towards the well-paid jobs and it is somehow natural that these jobs are well-paid. This is what a dominating discourse can do, it can restrict what people think can be said and it can mask things as natural when everything should be open to critique (Fairclough [1989] 2015).

If feminist energy policy is viewed as what will empower women (as my findings from chapter 4 show) then women become the subject of feminism. However, the view of women as a homogenous group of middle-class white women who will benefit from feminist energy policy (if they choose engineering!) ignores women who are racialised by society and women who do not choose "right" or are not able to choose due to their preconditions. Furthermore, this view consents a neoliberal agenda of what is "right" or valuable to do with one's time and energy in terms of labour. The dominating neoliberal discourse extends the market mindset by offering "freedom of choice" although this freedom places the responsibility on the individual to choose "right" (Giritli Nygren et al. 2016:50-1). With experience from engineering studies, mechanical engineering specifically, I personally did not feel empowered by heading into a male-dominated area only for the sake of it – for the sake of proving that I am just as good, or, for the sake of a financially stable future. This is problematic because, again, it accepts the premise that certain disciplines are better than others and thus should be valued more. This is not an issue of gender alone as the power dimension of gender is intertwined with power dimensions such as "race" and class. For a girl or woman from a migrant working class family, like myself, "choosing right" can become even more important but it makes us forget to beg the question of *why* there are options that will allow a person's time and labour to be valued less and *why* do we value certain labour more? Is this labour more important for society and development? If all women

were to go into the well-paid jobs that are classified as "male", what would happen to low-wage jobs classified as "female"? At the moment, the low-wage jobs within the welfare sector are outsourced predominantly to racialised women while white women can head into engineering (or other valued sectors). Thus, "race" becomes an important power dimension to take into account, in terms of feminist energy policy and public policy in general, although in a neoliberal framework that rarely happens, especially in the Swedish context. I agree with Fairclough ([1989] 2015:252) that "the primary struggle now must be against neo-liberalism".

Within dominating neoliberal discourses, feminist energy policy becomes about the labour market. My results show a focus on women as the subject of feminist energy policy (and feminism) and therefore, within the neoliberal framework, women must choose accordingly (choose engineering!) in order to gain more power and live better lives. Bacchi (1999:116) argues, "The emphasis upon encouraging girls to study science and technology fits an economic discourse which emphasizes technological innovation as the key to international competitiveness". This brings us to the finding that Sweden must be competitive, or "exceptional", to stay at the top, not only in terms of economic development but also to maintain the sense of nation-pride constructed in comparison with other nations in regards to progressive policies, whether these are about gender equality or diversity. de los Reyes (2016:24) argues, "The focus on diversity as a political and management strategy tends to hide the impact of power relations and structural inequalities at the social level". The way that the word diversity is used freely and in a generic manner without a clear definition, and the agenda behind this manner, must be placed under scrutiny. Ahmed (2017) argues that the word diversity is used because there are other words that are difficult to use; the "buzz" of diversity can create a buzz (or noise) that obscures the "noise" of racism. Ahmed (2012:66) poses the question, "What happens when the words we use allow us to pass over the reasons we use them?". This study has been limited and I find that it could be interesting and relevant for future research to investigate the meanings of the word diversity, in the context of energy policy, as social research and energy research is not widely connected (Sovacool et al. 2014; Fri and Savitz 2014).

Since men are not equals in white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal class structure, which men do women want to be equal to? Do women share a common vision of what equality means? Implicit in this simplistic definition of women's liberation is a dismissal of race and class as factors that, in conjunction with sexism, determine to the extent to which an individual will be discriminated against, exploited or oppressed. (hooks [1984] 2000:19)

As my results show that feminism has been reduced to gender equality (for white middle-class women), likewise, feminist energy policy is reduced to gender equality and women's struggle to attain the rights and power that men have. Therefore the view of feminist energy policy as lacking existed among the interview participants because feminist energy policy focuses on *just* women. This point of view of "just women" implies, again, that women is a homogenous group without social identities other than their appointed sex and thus this lacks an intersectional perspective as sex is intertwined with other power dimensions, such as "race" and class, as I have argued previously. I will let bell hooks speak for me through the quote above as she explains it so fiercely and eloquently. It is problematic that feminism is reduced to gender equality because it obscures the multiple struggles of feminism and reproduces an image of inequality as something that only exists between women and men, at the same time implying

homogeneity within these two groups. The dominating view of feminist energy policy as gender equality within the energy sector is limiting and needs to be challenged. To connect this to the discourse of international competitiveness and the Swedish nation-pride, Martinsson et al. (2016) claim that “racist and other oppressive stances are obscured by a rhetoric of Swedish exceptionalism”. This is another aspect that could be interesting to research, not only in regards to energy policy, as Sweden (like many other countries) operate within processes that are affected by overt histories of marginalisation and thus are still affected by less overt traces of marginalisation based on “race”. de los Reyes (2016:41) argues, “[...] Intersectional perspectives represent a way out of the earlier limiting theorisations about race and gender. However, this is not seen as an evolutionary development but, rather, as an ideological conflict between different perceptions of the possibilities of achieving gender equality and anti-racist goals within capitalism”. Thus, intersectionality could be a concept that is useful for future research to not only explore what discourses dominate our social world but also to understand how dominating discourses are connected and how this reproduces multiple systems of domination that cannot be separated from each other or from history – especially in the context of Sweden and Swedish exceptionalism.

6 Conclusion

The answers to my two research questions are, for the most part, coherent because the domination of neoliberal, capitalistic and labour market oriented discourses have been found to be consistent - in the Swedish Government's documents relating to energy policy, and, in the interviews conducted with Swedish people who work with energy issues on different levels. The results show that feminist energy policy has been expressed to focus on gender equality, which in turn is defined as equal opportunities and equal power distributed between women and men. Feminist energy policy, like gender equality, are discursively constructed as a core value that is specific to the Swedish state, which both reproduces the image of Sweden as at the top of the class in terms of progressive policies, and, constructs a sense of pride in relation to the modernity of Sweden. Ahmed (2017), de los Reyes (2016) and hooks (2010) argue that, within a neoliberal labour framework, the feminist struggle of ending sexual exploitation has been reduced to a discussion about gender equality – where women are assumed to be a large homogenous group of white women, or, white girls who are all about to choose education and, consequently, choose work, thus implying all women as middle-class.

In conclusion, in this study I have interpreted the central views of feminist energy policy to be 1) an administration concern of distributing equal access to decision making between women and men, within the valued male-dominated energy sector, 2) a means for international competitiveness through the assimilation of girls and women, according to what the neoliberal market framework values as important for economic development, and 3) a tool to confirm the progressiveness of the democratic welfare state Sweden, and, to reproduce the image of Sweden as a symbol for modernity and thus a source of nation-pride. I have identified these points of views as rooted in the neoliberal discourse of marketisation. Fairclough ((1989] 2015) and Bacchi (1999) argue that the dominating neoliberal discourse must be challenged because representations of social events and problems operate within it and thus solutions to inequalities are restricted accordingly. My results show that feminist energy policy, like feminism, is reduced to gender equality, which reproduces the idea of inequality (in singular) as only existing between women and men. This point of view is limiting and must be challenged in order to attain policies that take into consideration dimensions of power (other than sex) and the inequalities (in plural) that are tied to these intertwined power structures.

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Appendix 1

Feminist energy policy for the climate

If we are to tackle the challenge of climate change, both women and men must be involved. In many low income countries, women must devote many hours each day to carrying wood and fetching water.

We must therefore invest more in small-scale production of renewable energy such as sun and wind, which can easily be installed even in small villages far out in the countryside. This will contribute to reduced emissions and simplify everyday life for these women.

This was Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin's main message when she spoke today at the climate change conference in Paris at a side event that focused on 'Women and Sustainable Energy'.

In connection with the Paris climate conference, the Swedish Government has announced that it is giving an additional SEK 15 million to the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and an additional SEK 20 million to the World Bank's programme to increase support to renewable energy in low income countries.

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Appendix 2

Isabella Lövin at the UN Women side event on gender and climate at COP21

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the UN Women side event on Gender and Climate at COP21 in Paris on December 8th 2015.

Check upon delivery

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For far too long the world has been blind to gender issues and the role of gender equality for sustainable development. This includes not least the dimensions of energy and climate issues.

How many of us haven't seen the pictures of starving polar bears and melting icebergs? Quite recently, people started realising that human beings would be affected too, especially those living in poverty.

Slowly there was also recognition that men and women are affected differently, both by the impacts of climate change and by the effects of energy poverty.

Today we have come to realise all this, but the world has yet to realise the full potential of women as key stakeholders to combat climate change and promote sustainable energy for all.

Experience shows that the resilience of households and communities depends greatly on the resilience of women. Women's and girls' traditional responsibilities as food growers, water and fuel gatherers, and caregivers connect them closely to available natural resources and the climate.

In parts of Africa, as much as 80% of the workforce in food production are women. If women had as much resources as men, food production would increase by more than 20%. Women are experts on food, water and energy systems and have the crucial knowledge needed for the transformation to sustainable development. This must not go to waste. But how can we ensure this?

"We wake up at 5 a.m. to pound our millet and to collect water. We have one single tap, which is far away.

After the pounding is over we do not even have time to sweep our compounds as we have to run to join the queue for water collection."

This is a snapshot of a normal day for a great number of women around the world. Imagine what a difference a solar-powered milling machine, water pump or lighting could make if this was your everyday life. Promoting green and renewable energy is not only a way to promote environmental sustainability – it is also an important part of the puzzle to promote gender equality. The time and effort spent by women and girls on routine tasks could be reduced significantly if adequate resources were in place to deliver green electricity, modern cooking and heating fuels, running water and sanitation, and basic transportation services. Today women in developing countries are working on average 13 hours more per week than men. Reducing women's household burdens can therefore have dramatic effects on women's levels of empowerment, education, literacy, nutrition, health, economic opportunities and involvement in social and political activities.

But promoting women in the local context is not enough. Estimates by the International Renewable Energy Agency shows that only around 20% of the workforce in the modern renewable energy sector are women, and examples of women energy entrepreneurs remain largely limited to small-scale initiatives. This must change in order to unleash the powerful role that women can play as agents of change in the transition to sustainable energy, and is also something I will promote through my role on the Advisory Board of Sustainable Energy for All.

We must also ensure that women are included and allowed to be active in planning, finance and policy-making processes. And in order to achieve this we must also work with the men. Yes, look around you here at COP21 – even though we have many good examples of excellent women in the negotiations, we can see the patriarchal structures reflected even here.

We must therefore highlight the benefits of having both men and women involved in the decisions being made. We must encourage the men in power to dare to share.

Lastly I would like to say that I am proud to represent a government that promotes gender issues through key organisations like UN Women and ENERGIA. But as a feminist government we know that we have to work with these issues wherever we are, and that is why mainstreaming gender considerations is a fundamental principle of our development cooperation – also in relations with the multilateral climate funds, such as the Global Environment Facility [GEF CEO Naoko Ishii is next speaker, TBC]. Step by step we have put in place gender policies and action plans. Step by step we are building a greener and more equal world, one reinforcing the other.

Thank you very much.

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ⁱ The initials L.I., A.L. and J.S. that have been used, as epithets for staff members of the Swedish Energy Agency, are derived from Luce Irigaray, Audre Lorde and Julia Serano.