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## Gender mainstreaming - from policy to management

An analysis on Swedish reform cooperation in Bosnia and  
Herzegovina regarding issues of gender equality linked to air  
pollution, within the framework of gender mainstreaming and  
Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy

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# Abstract

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) recognized a need for external help to implement a gender perspective in their project on improving air quality in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) extending from 2018-2022, which this thesis is a contribution to. To collect empirical material for the analysis, a cluster interview was conducted on site in Sarajevo with female representatives from ten CSOs working with gender equality nationally, in addition to a household survey targeted at six different cities in BiH through social media with the help of SEPA's partnering ad agency network. The empirical findings of this study hence consist of local representations of problems regarding gender equality and its links to environmental issues, which were subsequently used to put the goals and problem representations present in the *Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022* and *the Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey 2021-2027* in context. This was specifically done with the help of Carol Bacchi's policy analysis approach "What's the Problem (Represented to be). Throughout the analysis, it became evident that there was a gap between the discourse of gender equality problems on site in BiH versus how gender equality problems were represented in the analysed Swedish policies steering the project. It also became evident that there was a gap between the horizontal goals of gender equality in these policies, and the resources available at SEPA for the actual implementation.

The conclusion of the analysis implicates the occurrence of shortcomings in Swedish reform cooperation when mainstreaming gender into environmental policies, and that this could potentially lead to efforts reproducing and entrenching gendered and socio-economic inequity.

By exemplifying the relevance of implementing a context-based gender perspective in this specific case, this thesis is hoped to encourage improving the prerequisites for mainstreaming gender into all international reform cooperation projects and applying the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy accurately.

*Key words:* gender equality, gender mainstreaming, air pollution, socioeconomics, discourse, policy

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# 1 Introduction

In the fall of 2021, I came across an advertisement of an assignment from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) regarding a project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on improving air quality in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), a country that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) is one of the most polluted countries in the world and is within the top 3 countries for mortality linked to air pollution (SEPA, 2017). The project, extending from 2018 to 2022, was lacking a gender equality lens, something that they were looking to change. It was clear that the resources to complete a thorough gender analysis on issues regarding air pollution in BiH were not in place, and that SEPA needed external help.

Although I had intended to write about a completely different subject area, the advertisement immediately caught my attention. I was intrigued by the possibility of having a practical environmental issue to analyse from a gender perspective at a public authority, and to be able to access their allocated resources. I applied for the assignment and subsequently received it, which was both terrifying since it was a new area for me, but at the same time very exciting since I was going to be a part of practical gender equality work at a Swedish public authority. When explaining the project to my friends and that my study was going to analyse air pollution from a gender perspective, the majority smiled and kindly asked how bad air quality possibly could be linked to gender. At first glance, the connection seemed far-fetched, and explaining the relevance was initially not easy. I was, however, as a gender studies graduate certain that gender can and should be considered when it comes to environmental issues and their social effects. It was, however, not until I started reading previous research on the context of the post-war BiH and studies on air pollution and gender related issues that I started to realise that there were many highly relevant links between gender and air pollution, not only when it comes to direct health issues but also indirect socioeconomic consequences.

A solid and context-based gender analysis is relevant in any international reform cooperation project, to avoid the risk of policies and measures being gender blind which could potentially enhance and reproduce gender inequalities. Therefore, I am glad that the Swedish Feminist

Foreign Policy is attempted to be reflected in this SIDA-financed project and that the gender aspect has been taken into consideration. In the process of my work I have, however, come to find a gap between what the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy states and what resources that are available for mainstreaming gender onto international reform cooperation projects like this one.

My contribution to this specific project is hence hoped to encourage improving the conditions for the implementation of a solid context-based gender analysis, and to evolve the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy in all Swedish reform cooperation projects.

## 1.1 Background

Countries on the Western Balkans (WB) still suffer from the consequences of the fall of Yugoslavia in the ensuing wars in the 1990's. Ethnic tensions and unresolved conflicts within and between the countries makes reform cooperation hard and challenging, and there is a need for strengthened cooperation when working to prevent and mitigate conflict. An additional challenge concerns the fact that disinformation in BiH has been increasingly widespread which undermines reform efforts and cooperation with the EU (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021-2027: 5).

Sweden is one of the largest bilateral donors to Bosnia and Herzegovina and focuses its development program and cooperation first and foremost on human rights, democracy, and gender equality. Other priorities include rural development, economic development, and sustainable infrastructure. Sweden's support can be divided into three phases: (1) humanitarian support during the war followed by recovery and reconstruction during the immediate post war years, involving support to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords; (2) general state building and state building support from 2000 onwards; and (3) A significant focus on the EU accession agenda. A major theme throughout Sweden's bilateral support is the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Regarding vulnerable groups and minorities, SIDA has supported efforts to improve the status of LGBTI and Roma people (UN Women, 2021: 24-25).

The project that I am involved in, called the IMPAQ-project internally at SEPA, is currently guided by *the strategy for Swedish reform cooperation in Eastern Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey* extending from 2021 to 2027. The development in countries just outside the EU border is of big importance to Sweden and the EU, and a continuing cooperation with countries in the Western Balkans contributes to an increased democratic development. SIDA's activity in the Western Balkans consists of a total of 4.9 billion SEK (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021-2027: 2).

SEPA received funding from SIDA for carrying out an inception phase to develop a long-term programme to provide aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina in improving air quality assessment and management. This project's inception phase was carried out from September 2017 - July 2018 and the final results are planned to be presented in 2022. While SEPA fully administrates the project, the agency relies heavily on Swedish partners for carrying out specific activities. The aim of the project is broadly to reduce air pollution in the country but also help BiH to reach the environmental standards required in the EU accession process. The country is currently on the list of potential candidates. According to WHO's figures on air quality, BiH is one of the most polluted countries in the world and is within the top three countries for mortality linked to air pollution. The mortality rate attributed to air pollution in BiH is estimated to be 223 deaths per 100 000 people. Sweden, by comparison, has an estimated mortality rate of 0,4 deaths per 100 000 people (SEPA, 2017).

Air quality is particularly poor during winter months in most cities in BiH when increased emissions from heating sources coincide with temperature inversions that reduce the dispersion of air pollutants in ambient air, leading to air pollution being trapped close to the ground. Concentrations of particulate matter and harmful gases such as sulphur dioxide reach dangerously high levels during these periods, significantly surpassing the safety levels specified in the WHO's air quality guidelines. Responsibility for air quality in BiH is currently spread out over a range of institutions and at different levels. The current level of coordination between the different air quality institutions and stakeholders in BiH is inadequate considering the country's needs for EU reporting. A big part of this project is to propose ways in which BiH can legally and institutionally gather and integrate relevant data for the entire country (SEPA, 2017).

SEPA strives to pursue and implement projects in line with the overall Swedish line of a feminist foreign policy. BiH is ranked 83 among 144 countries in World Economic Forum's Annual Global Gender Gap Index. The country has closed primary, secondary and tertiary education gender gaps and scores above the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regional average on the Political Empowerment subindex. Meanwhile, its gender gap in Economic Participation and Opportunity remains wide. It is hence vitally important to apply a gender equal approach in any type of activity revolving around socio-economic development (SEPA, 2017).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The initial problem statement when starting this thesis was that research on consequences of air pollution from a gender equality perspective in a European context is scarce. Little knowledge regarding gender in connection with environmental issues, in this instance air pollution, leads to the risk of implementing gender blind measures that could potentially enlarge gender gaps and further reproduce socioeconomic and gendered discrimination. This lack of knowledge is reflected in projects at the international unit at SEPA – a gap that I was brought in to fill. However, in the process of my research, the problem statement developed to also include the fact that the resources for implementing a solid gender analysis within the strategy of gender mainstreaming and in line with the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy in international reform cooperation projects seemed to be insufficient.

## 1.3 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to provide a context-based gender analysis within SEPA's project on improving air quality in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Subsequently, the goal is to find out if the problem representations and the contextual reality on site harmonise with the Swedish policies steering this project. With these results, the end goal is to analyse how well gender is mainstreamed into this project, and see potential shortcomings of the gender mainstreaming strategy in this case, and use the results of my study to see ways that the strategy could be developed and improved. By doing this, I want to exemplify the importance of a solid and



context-based gender analysis in projects, to make sure that measures that are being implemented do not reproduce or entrench gender-based and socio-economic inequity.

## 1.4 Research Questions

1. How is the problem of gender equality represented in the Swedish Foreign Service action plan for Swedish feminist foreign policy 2019-2022 and the Strategy for Swedish reform cooperation in the Western Balkans 2021-2027?
2. What assumptions underlie these policies problem representations, what remains unproblematised and what effects do these problem representations produce in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

## 1.5 Scope

I will specifically analyse the situation of gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and how issues of gender equality and environmental issues like air pollution are related. Focus will lie on the gendered and socio-economic effects that non-context-based reform cooperation policies and measures on issues like air pollution can lead to. While there are issues internally in BiH's political system, this study focuses on the Swedish reform cooperation with the country, what potential shortcomings there are, and how the cooperation can be improved.

The main intersectional factors my study focuses on are gender and class. Other aspects like ethnicity are not being particularly highlighted due to the complex history of BiH, and the remaining ethnic tensions. However, it is important to be aware of the unquestioned presuppositions in a production of work like mine, that could result in negative effects for some social groups. The emphasis on gender in gender analysis, draws attention away from practices of racialization, which is important to notice. In many cases, like this one, fixed categories of "men" and "women" furthermore need to be used, but it is important that the meaning of these is subject to a critical reflection. However, as an academic there is sometimes a need to fix meanings to enable the results to be tangible and useful (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 12).

## 2 Previous Research

In this section, relevant previous research will be presented to give a thorough picture of the contextual situation in BiH regarding politics, social-economics, gender, social services, and of course air pollution. This previous research, in combination with my own empirical findings and theoretical framework, will constitute the knowledge and perspective needed for analysing the accuracy of the policies guiding the Swedish reform cooperation in BiH.

### 2.1 Legal Framework and Strategic Approaches for Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The legal system in BiH is challenging and is continuously providing opportunities for discrimination based on gender, due to the legislative discord across the political entities Republika Sprska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), which leads to inconsistent and ineffective implementation and monitoring. BiH's legal framework does not actively promote gender equality in private or public life, nor does it include specific provisions on gender equality. BiH has, however, made significant efforts to adjust its legislative framework in order for it to harmonize with international commitments and standards. In 2003, The Law on Gender Equality of BiH was adopted which specifically addresses employment, education, equal representation, labour and access to resources, social protection, culture and sports, public life, media, and healthcare. It also provides the framework for the gender institutional mechanisms that both implement and monitor the law. The law was amended in 2016, extending the list of discrimination grounds to also include sexual orientation, gender identity and characteristics, age, and disability. Another improvement pertains to the law on Development Planning and Development Management in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted to advance the development planning and furthermore contribute to a sustainable socio-economic growth where gender equality is prioritised. This has resulted in significant progress since fathers now can use parental leave,

which promotes the fatherhood role and ultimately increases gender equality in fields of economic relations and labour (UNW, 2021: 28-32).

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a strategy for gender equality and empowerment of women in BiH, based on international bindings and documents such as Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as national legal framework. Gender centres of the entities RS and FBiH coordinate the action plans and strategies at the entity level, concerning domestic violence, introduction of gender responsive budgeting, advancement of women in rural areas, and response to natural disasters. Some of the priorities for accelerating progress in BiH for girls and women through policies, laws, and programs include the right to work and rights at work as well as women's entrepreneurship and gender-responsive budgeting. Local gender action plans (LGAP) are also adopted in local self-governance units which operationalise the GAP's high-level priorities, adjusted to local circumstances. Local capacities for gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data were initially insufficient but has become increasingly enhanced with the help of the entities gender centres. The implementation of the BiH GAP is financed by The Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan (FIGAP). FIGAP was developed in response to the need of gender institutional mechanisms in the BiH to build their own capacities (UNW, 2021: 28-32).

Three international donors (Swedish SIDA, Swiss SDC and Austrian ADA) allocated EUR 2.8 million for the FIGAP program. With the support of the program funds, over 60 projects have been implemented by institutions and over 80 projects have been implemented by CSOs across BiH. Furthermore, a special agreement was signed in 2018 by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the SIDA called FIGAP 2 Program to support the implementation of the GAP BiH 2018-2022. The purpose of the program is, in line with the FIGAP proposal, to improve equal opportunities and socio-economic conditions for women and men, girls and boys through public decisions (UNW, 2021: 28-32).

The network of institutional mechanisms for gender issues in BiH consists of legislative and executive authorities at all levels - state level, entity level and cantonal/municipal level. At the state level, there is a Gender Equality Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and at the entity level, the Committee for Equal Opportunities of the National Assembly of the RS, and the Gender Equality Committee of the House of Peoples

and the Gender Equality Commission of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament. At the cantonal level, commissions for gender equality have been established, although the work of many of these commissions at the lower level of both legislative and executive authorities does not work properly or continuously (UNW, 2021: 33).

## 2.2 Gender Equality in the Western Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) operating in the Western Balkans have identified the main gender equality issues in the region in a report published in 2018. To start with, gender stereotypes are perceived as the general underlying cause for all other forms of discrimination and a reason for women's subordinated position in the WB. Conservative and traditional values are deeply embedded in society, values that education and media in turn further promotes and reinforces. Harmful stereotypes undermining women's capacities are often stimulated, and analyses have revealed issues of gender-biased media reporting where women are presented as devoted wives/mothers and objectified as sex-symbols (CSF, 2018: 4-23).

Gender discrimination in the labour market is particularly widespread in WB and one of the main reasons for women's unequal status in society, manifested either in discrimination at the workplace or in low participation in the labour market. The low level of female activity in the labour market (only 34 percent in BiH in 2018) and the lack of ability to climb the career ladder has been proven to be mainly a result of the difficulties in balancing private and professional life and the gender-stereotyped roles that comes with it. Discrimination most commonly occurs in the interview process when women are asked, unlawfully, about their future family plans and marital. Additionally, returning from pregnancy and maternity leave often leads to the termination of the contract which contributes to the unemployment rate. Even when employed, women are paid less than men, with a varying gender pay gap across the WB. The lack of childcare facilities and the necessity to do household work is a big obstacle when it comes to career advancement and professional growth (CSF, 2018: 4-23).

Women also face many obstacles when it comes to participating in politics and decision-making. Party politics has remained a male-dominated field, even though all WB countries have introduced female quota for their parliaments. In fact, Bosnia and Kosovo only have two

female ministers, which accounts for the lowest number in WB. Men, similarly, also dominate managerial positions in public administrations even though the civil service consists of most women. Participation of women in decision-making and politics is one of the key indicators of gender equality in a society, which is why this issue is important to highlight (CSF, 2018: 4-23).

Gender mainstreaming (GM) has become a recognized instrument since the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995 and the adoption of the Platform for Action. The platform called for a visible and active policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the evaluation and monitoring of all programmes and policies. It furthermore called for ensuring that close cooperation should be established between the governments and the non-governmental sector, for ensuring that an analysis is made regarding the effects on women and men respectively before decisions are taken. GM has been identified as a tool necessary to improve gender equality in the Western Balkan Region, and yet it has not been widely applied or prioritised by national authorities. The civil society in the WB have warned about the lack of such instruments and provided recommendations for the first step in introducing them (CSF, 2018: 4-23).

Public institutions and independent bodies in the Western Balkan countries with a mandate to deal with gender issues are overall under-resourced and characterised as inefficient and weak in ensuring protection of gender related rights. CSOs on the other hand, has been the main driver across the region in promoting national gender policies through various programmes and activities. Although public institutions to some extent have accepted cooperation with CSOs, distinct mechanisms for cooperation are missing as well as an institutionalised practice. National authorities are also characterized by poor monitoring and reporting practices and capacities, something that CSOs generally have helped to provide in the region. In the EU accession process, the WB countries have developed policy and legal framework, but it is evident that gender equality policies remain a challenge (CSF, 2018: 4-23).

The report from UNW 2021 named *Country Gender Equality Profile of Bosnia and Herzegovina* confirms and develops the picture of the gendered issues in BiH that the Civil Society Forum's (CSF) policy brief on gender issues in WB described in 2018. For instance, the report confirms that gender stereotypes based on a patriarchal upbringing affects the roles in which men and women are placed from the start, and usually reflects the notion that

women are more suitable for roles in private life and men are more fit for leadership roles. In one of the entities, Republika Srpska, a research was conducted where 39.1 percent of grown men and 31.6 percent of grown women think that women are more suitable for private activities and men for public activities (UNW, 2021: 36). Furthermore, unbalanced reporting and stereotyping contribute to unequal gender power relations (Ibid, 39). Women living in remote and rural areas are identified as one of the key groups that risks facing intersecting forms of discrimination and being left behind. The most significant challenges this group is facing are gender-specific patterns of upbringing practices including traditional and patriarchal values, as well as economic gender inequalities (Ibid, 18-19).

Despite the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on the Prohibition, the status of women in the labour market is still inadequate and highly unequal. This is reflected in the high unemployment rate of women, overly present patriarchal social norms, and a large reliance on women in the care economy (UNW, 2021: 40). According to a survey conducted in 2018, women have both a lower employment rate than men (25 percent versus 44.1 percent) and a higher unemployment rate (20.3 percent versus 17.2 percent), although most unemployed women had secondary education. BiH has the lowest percentage of women's participation in the total number of persons registered on the labour market compared to other countries in the region. Furthermore, there is a significant gap between marginalised Roma and neighbouring non-Roma in terms of material well-being and human capabilities. For young people, the gap is almost triple, since only 14 percent of Roma aged 18-24 are in employment, training, or education, in comparison to 41 percent of non-Roma. While women in both groups are less likely to be employed, marginalised Roma women have among the lowest employment rates in WB: in 2017, only 4 percent were employed in comparison to 19 percent of marginalised Roma men. That same year, labour force participation was only 13 percent for marginalised Roma women versus 39 percent among their male counterparts. Female marginalised Roma youth are more likely to be NEET (not in employment, education, or training) with figures as large as 93 percent in 2017, in comparison to 71 percent of their male counterparts (Ibid, 41).

Although it is prohibited by law, the practice of termination of employment contracts with pregnant women to avoid maternity leave-related legal obligations and payments is still present. Maternity leave pay across BiH is furthermore unregulated, with some of the 10 cantons offering full remuneration during maternity leave while some offers none. Furthermore, women employed in the public sector receive 100 percent of their salary during

maternity leave while women working in the private and real sector are paid 50 to 90 percent of their salaries. This leads to challenges for particularly single women and self-employed women to provide for themselves. The gender pay gap evidently exists despite the law provisions that prohibit it and regardless of the level of education and qualifications (UNW, 2021: 42). Women in BiH are furthermore disproportionately burdened with unpaid domestic work and act as primary caretakers of children and elderly, something that subsequently often leads to part-time jobs or the decision to leave the labour market (UNW, 2021: 43).

57 percent of the population in BiH lives in rural areas, which makes it one of the most rural countries in Europe. Remote areas are generally not well connected to urban centres where public services like for instance care facilities are available, which is affecting the rural population's quality of life. There is a wide difference between the population living in urban and rural environments reflected in the poverty rate, with 20.5 percent for the rural population and 11.3 percent in the urban population. Women account for a little over half of the rural population but suffer the most from the lack of access to and control over resources such as property, land, education, financial resources and access to modern technology and information. Policies related to agriculture reflect rural issues, but rarely provide an assessment and analysis on the gender impact. Additionally, policies are not harmonised between the two entities of BiH, and according to UNW a comprehensive strategy to combat poverty would reduce the chances of marginalised women such as rural women, Roma women and women with disabilities becoming increasingly vulnerable because of the lack of infrastructure that enables decent living conditions. COVID-19 has further deepened the prevailing gender inequalities in general as well as the issue of feminization of poverty in BiH, and vulnerable groups of women are more likely to face economic shocks caused by the economic downturn of the pandemic than men in BiH (UNW, 2021: 45).

The rate of illiteracy is predictably higher among marginalised women (women in rural communities, Roma women and women with disabilities) which contributes to difficulties in receiving important public information. In the age group 60-70, 15.3 percent women are illiterate, and in the age group over 70, illiterate women account for 70 percent (UNW, 2021: 54).

## 2.3 Gender and the political economy of the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

Post-authoritarian and post-war countries usually undergo transitions from war to peace, from an authoritarian political system to a democratic one, and additionally from their previous economic system to - in most cases - a market economy. In these situations, post-war justice processes respond to the needs of conflict-affected communities and their legacies of violence, while economic and political reforms are vitally important for post-war recovery. Transitional justice processes and economic reforms usually thus operate alongside one another. Daniela Lai (2020) argues that by overlooking the relationship between political economy and post-war justice, we fail to see overlapping dimensions and important aspects of the process. Lai tackles the issue by examining the interplay between interventions of International Financial Institutes (IFI's) in post-war countries and the gendered cementation of violence and socioeconomic injustice in the aftermath of war. Lai analyses post-war economic reforms and its gendered dimension through a justice lens, connecting it to women's experiences of socioeconomic violence during the post-war period. Instead of emphasising the centrality of the household according to the traditional theories of feminist political economy, focus lies on the sphere of social services and employment in which the political economy of households operates within (Lai, 2020: 1258-1259).

The example of Bosnia & Herzegovina is used to illustrate how ignoring justice considerations in post-war economic reforms can reproduce and entrench gender injustice. The case of BiH is interesting for two reasons: First, it was in post-conflict economies in the 1990's, that IFI's started having prominent functions. Second, BiH allows a multi-dimensional analysis of the relationship between socioeconomic violence in war, women's wartime experiences and the economic legacies of the conflict. The Bosnian case, in sum, provides important insights into how IFI's came to operate in environments of post-war without taking its legacies into consideration. Findings show how post-war reforms in fact reinforced and entrenched gendered forms of socioeconomic injustice that had their roots in the war. It also argues that gendered circuits of violence in fact can operate with the help of IFI's interventions that connect wartime political economy to peacetime politics of liberalisation and privatisation. The legacies of social injustice become particularly visible by



following women among marginalised working-class communities, described as the “losers” of the transition (Lai, 2020: 1258-1259).

Bosnia’s transformation from a socialist to a market economy was guided by the Dayton Peace Agreement that established that the scope of Bosnia’s post-war transformation was to “promote the general welfare and economic growth through the protection of private property and the promotion of a market economy” (Lai, 2020: 1267). This resulted in the introduction of new welfare reforms and labour laws that contributed to entrenching gendered injustice by overlooking women’s experiences of socioeconomic violence. These reforms were driven by the aim of switching the active role of the state in promoting employment to liberalising the labour market. This transformation included the dismantling of the “waiting lists” with workers of socially owned companies that did not operate during the war, that was supposed to secure their rights to work and social services when the war ended. This led to the failure of guaranteeing financial compensation for lost redeployment and lost income for those unjustly dismissed during the war. The new labour laws furthermore promoted temporary and part-time employment and established a system where dismissing employees became easier, with the argument that permanent contracts complicated the process of hiring new employees. Additionally, social services were also increasingly decentralised and privatised, which ended up contributing to a great injustice on who has access to good healthcare. Ultimately, the shrinking of social services and the failed protection of rights like maternity leave, healthcare and pensions aggravated the situation for already vulnerable people (Ibid, 1268).

Privatisations carried out had no regard for socioeconomic justice or gender disparities and deprived women of a workplace where they had been guaranteed reforms of economic and social equality. The removal of a series of services - such as social services and holiday resorts for workers and their children which had provided support for reproductive work that generally falls onto women - had implications not only for individual women but also for households and communities. This subsequently led to women’s exclusion from the workplace as a place of community building and socialisation. Additionally, microcredit programmes for women sponsored by international organisations in the early post-war period have been criticised for promoting gender stereotypes since employment projects often have been focused on “women’s jobs” such as knitting and handicraft, and overlooked the level of Bosnian women’s skills, education or aspirations (Lai, 2020: 1271).

Gender roles in society were redefined through the post-war economic intervention: during socialism women were expected to contribute actively to the labour market (and doing household work), while the end of the war marked the beginning of a period where legacies of socioeconomic violence became visible. Faced with interventions and the lack of job prospects, people (especially women with lower income) were drawn into the financialised economy through microcredit loans and other unsuccessful employment projects that failed to consider the need for economic policies to contribute to the redressing of gendered forms of socioeconomic injustice (Lai, 2020: 1271).

In conclusion, this article states that peripheral marginalised women in Bosnia were particularly vulnerable to IFI's economic agenda; the lack of consideration of justice issues brought them to even further marginalisation (Lai, 2020: 1271). The findings therefore argue for the importance of taking specific contexts into consideration and in this case adopting "Bosnian lenses", to not support post-war economic stability at the expense of gender justice. Women's voices, especially from disadvantaged communities, should furthermore be more present in conversations, processes and decision-making on peace and justice, since they still bear the greatest costs of the war (Lai, 2020: 1272-1273).

## 2.4 Childcare policy development in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dobrotic and Obradovic (2020) explores the shift in women's social citizenship in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1945-2019 and its effect on childcare policy development. While investments in parental-leaves and early childhood education and care services (ECEC) intensified in advanced democracies in Europe, newly democratised post-communist countries were facing complex processes in their transformation from socialist to capitalist political economies. Social policy reforms were forced by a changing structure of social risk, including abrupt growth in poverty, population, fiscal pressures as well as emigration and depopulation. In this process, women's social citizenship transformed as the gender contract remaining from the socialist period that supported women's employment and granted employed women fundamental social rights became questioned. To mitigate the rising unemployment in the first years of economic and political transformation in many former socialist countries, it was assumed that the male-breadwinner model was optimal. This re-

traditionalization of gender relations rooted in nationalist discourse, in combination with differences in socioeconomic context and gender-blind international interventions, subsequently affected post-socialist childcare policies (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020: 411-412).

Reforms of childcare policy instruments like ECEC and parenting-related leaves are central in explaining development of gendered care and employment practices - with Bosnia and Herzegovina being a particularly interesting case. This is regarding their critically different political system in comparison to other post-socialist countries, with a highly complex system of multi-level governance that affects social policymaking. BiH experienced one of the greatest post-1990s erosion of maternity leave rights among the post-socialist countries, with a full withdrawal of maternity benefits in some parts of the country (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020: 411-412).

As previously mentioned, the political system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly complex. The former Yugoslav republic consists of two asymmetrically organised entities, centralised Republika Srpska (RS) and decentralised Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH; into ten cantons) - and District Brcko (DB). The lack of any social policy functions at the central state level has resulted in a country marked by a highly differentiated regulation and implementation of social rights, including a devolved system of maternity leave benefits. Political scientists in South-eastern Europe largely focus on questions like ethnicized nationalism and war and peace with little interest in public policy, especially childcare policy. Important to note, however, is that in-depth research in Bosnia and Herzegovina is particularly challenging to undertake, since accurate statistics and policy-related material is hard to obtain (while some also was destroyed during the war). In addition, there is still not a functional monitoring system of family and child benefits which makes it even more difficult to collect data (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020: 412-413).

Research on gender and welfare state has been able to show the importance of childcare policy in changing the unequal division of labour and argues for a social citizenship that includes measures related to reproduction and care. Policy proposals that value parental care entitles men to care-related rights. Available and affordable ECEC would also help in the process of moving away from the traditional public-private division and male-breadwinner model inherent in the traditional concept of social citizenship, and its exclusionary practices

that aimed to push women towards the private sphere and financial dependency. Beyond contributing to gender equality issues, countries relying on a segmented social citizenship that mainly enables people with stable employment child-care related rights, tend to encourage exclusionary citizenship based on class (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020: 414-415).

Already selective childcare-related rights inherited from the socialist period became even further fragmented within the context of political and economic transition, bringing in new inequalities in employment and care due to the state-/nation-building process that tended to prioritise ethnicity and nation discourses over gender and class. Due to the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina that resulted in 12 different childcare policy regimes in the country (RS, DB and 10 FBiH cantons), a policy vacuum was created where parents residing in one entity but working in another, could be left without maternity benefits. However, one common institutional characteristic remained throughout the country, a 12 months “regular” maternity leave period (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020: 420).

Leave policy has remained gendered, since parental leave has never been discussed as a possibility at the policy level (not even in EU negotiations where there is a need to align with the parental leave directive). Even though fathers have become more openly recognized as beneficiaries of maternity leave with changes in labour legislation, there are several conditions within the policy design that discourage any development. Fathers in the entities of RS and FBiH can use maternity leave after the 60th or the 42nd day after childbirth, but only with the mother’s consent to transfer the leave, *and* if both parents are employed *and* the mother returns directly to work. This in combination with low female employment rate (35.8 percent compared to 59.5 percent of men aged 20-64) as well as conservative gender roles speaks for a high risk of reproduction and reinforcement of gendered practices in employment and care (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020: 422).

Female labour force participation (FLFP) stands for one of the main gender equality issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Less than one third of women are active, despite making up roughly half of the total working-age population. One main reason for this is sought to be the pertaining traditional views on gender in the society. There have been improvements on legislation addressing women’s subordinate roles, but there is no law governing nor fostering women’s participation in the labour market in BiH (Abaz & Hadzic, 2020: 2591-2592).

Traditional family roles are generally associated with an economic environment in which women tend to reduce the paid work to take care of their household and family. Specifically, numbers from the EU27 region from 2016 shows that 19.3 percent of women aged 20-64 stressed that looking after children was one of the main reasons for them staying outside the labour market. Studies from BiH specifically show a similar result, with demanding household and childcare responsibilities being one of the main reasons why women invest less in their economic activities (Abaz & Hadzic, 2020: 2593).

Results from previous studies show that FLFP is largely influenced by their education level, since women whose education improves often decrease in housework and instead increase paid work (Abaz & Hadzic, 2020: 2593). To provide a strong basis for reaching labour market equality, efforts to eliminate the education gap have been invested in BiH. Although most of these efforts have been proven successful, highly educated women still tend to leave the labour market - mainly due to the gender pay gap. What is also evident is the fact that working mothers in BiH are paid less than non-mothers and stand for one of the main pillars of the wage gaps, which could be explained by reduced working time, labour market interruptions or stereotypical hiring among others (Ibid, 2593-2594). Another interesting finding is that women living in urban parts of BiH, in comparison to rural areas, are less likely to be inactive on the labour market (Ibid, 2599). To encourage women to partake in the labour market and as a first step towards decreasing women's economic inactivity, some argue for increasing part-time employments, which would leave space to take care of the household work (Ibid, 2603).

## 2.5 Gendered effects of air pollution

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and their brief called *Air pollution in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a gender equality, social equity and poverty reduction lens* explains how air pollution is intertwined with both social and gender inequity. The brief mentions the fact that BiH has one of the highest average mortality rates from air pollution in the world, and that air pollution is associated with health concerns such as respiratory, cardiovascular and lung diseases, as well as cancer and impacts on the nervous system. Emissions from household heating by using coal and firewood, and further from industrial vehicles and activities,

generate severe air pollution. This is especially evident during winter months, when numbers often exceed the EU air quality standards and WHO Air Quality Guidelines (SEI, 2020: 3).

The briefs' key message is that economically and socially deprived groups are more likely to be exposed to higher levels of air pollution. At the same time poverty contributes to air pollution since poor households are more likely to use highly polluting and cheap fuels for domestic use and to run older cars that are highly polluting. To mitigate the harmful impacts of air pollution, addressing structural drivers of social poverty and inequity is thus key. The brief argues that it is therefore essential to incorporate aspects of poverty, social equity, and gender equality into environmental policy and vice versa (SEI, 2021: 1-2). Measures to cope with air pollution may also have gendered effects. In Sarajevo, for instance, prolonged school closures have been implemented in response to particulate matter that have exceeded safe limits. Not only has this had consequences on children's education, but it has also had a negative impact on women's labour opportunities and working hours due to the prevailing gender-biased distribution of care responsibilities (SEI, 2021: 4).

Other previous research has shown similar results regarding air pollution and its gendered effects on labour supply, and that there is a clear link between air pollution, labour supply, and the care economy. In the long term, environmental degradation affects labour supply through two main channels: worker's own health deterioration and dependent caregiving. Outdoor and indoor pollution can have direct effects on working individuals' ability to work, or indirect effects when the care of dependents like for example children and elderly relies on working individuals. Results made from studies in Santiago, Chile (Montt 2018) shows that pollution does not affect overall labour supply, but a gender-aggregated analysis shows a gendered effect: when pollution rises, women - and women with children, in particular - are more likely to work fewer hours This is explained by the fact that healthy children are likely to attend childcare or school and need to be cared for by someone when sick (Montt, 2018:1).

There are several contaminants producing urban outdoor pollution. Measures show that the most common ones are Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Nitrogen Oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and the airborne particles PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>. These contaminants are mainly associated with respiratory problems which in the long term can cause health deterioration. Urban air polluted areas also tend to contain heavy metals like lead, that are dangerous especially to children's physical and cognitive development (Montt, 2018:1).

Air pollution worldwide counts for the fourth leading fatal health risk, and apart from direct health consequences like premature deaths, it reduces productivity and labour supply as a result of lost working days (Montt, 2018:1). A second channel of impact operates indirectly through dependents. Workers may still be healthy enough to work when pollution is high, but elderly and children may fall sick. In situations where care for sick children relies on working adults, children, for instance, cannot go to school or day-care because of illness. The distribution of care work is gender-biased, and although there are some variations across countries, a large part falls on women in unpaid arrangements. Care for elderly and children largely relies on one group of workers, as in women, which means that the air pollution's effect on labour supply will disproportionately fall on this group. Even though this indirect effect of air pollution will only affect people who combine care and paid work, it will further limit full-time caregivers' possibility to enter the labour market (Montt, 2018:2).

In Santiago, high levels of pollution are more common during winter months just like in BiH. One big difference between the two is nevertheless the fact that studies on air pollution in Santiago have access to daily measurements of pollution that goes back 20 years - something that BiH lacks - and can cross-analyse this with a continuous quarterly measurement of employment (Montt, 2018: 3). Results of these studies show that when air pollution rises, men increase their hours worked while women reduce their hours worked. For each 100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  increase in a week's PM10, men increase, on average, their work week by 2 hours while women reduce theirs by 2.6 hours. It is not clear whether men compensate for women's reduced working hours in the workplace or the household (Ibid, 8-9). What is clear, however, is that most of the gender-related difference in hours worked and the gendered effect on air pollution in general is driven by childcare (Ibid, 11). In turn, this gendered effect is rooted in the inequalities of the distribution of care obligations and contributes to the perpetuation of inequality in the labour market. In conclusion, Montt's study shows that policies to reduce air pollution tend to help eliminate this source of gendered effects on labour supply. Gendered effects can also be reduced by policies that promote a more equal distribution of care. Montt encourages further research on the relationship between air pollution, income and labour supply, and mitigation processes to include a social-equity perspective and wants future research to explore the generalizability of these findings. This is something I have taken into consideration in my own study (Ibid, 14).

## 3 Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 Post-structuralism

Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) aims to fill a gap recognizing that the post-structuralist approach has been extremely influential across the social sciences and humanities but occupies a more contested and less well-articulated position in the field of policy research and analysis. A post-structuralist approach encourages policy workers to reflect on their own role in governing and emphasizes the possibilities for political and productive practices of interrogating, theorizing, and resisting. A post-structuralist lens can bring new perspectives to policy analysis and challenge the heterogeneous knowledge practices that produce hierarchical forms of rule. This approach emphasizes the fact that the realities we live in are contingent, and that social arrangements involve politics that actively shapes what is taken for granted. Rather than a fixed essence, political subjects are shaped in ongoing interactions with practices like discourse (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016: 3-4).

In this view, “policy” refers to an “order maintaining” practice through politics and is a practice that involves an active categorization of objects, subjects, and places. According to this theory, people in terms of subjects are classified, shaped, and ordered according to politics from their cradle to their grave. Lived realities are hence created by, rather than reflected in, social practices, including policy. Within this broader perspective, policy workers are brought to reflect upon their role in governing practices and how they contribute to shaping social order. Here it is relevant to ask additional questions regarding what assumptions underpin their activities and the politics they contribute to as well as what effects their governing results in. These are some of the questions included in the approach What’s the Problem (Represented to be) (WPR) that will be used as the analysing tool of my empirical material, further described in the method section (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016: 6).



## 3.2 Gender Mainstreaming

The term *mainstreaming* has become popular within public policy circles and within the global adoption of the sustainable development goals, with gender being one of the most notably mainstreamed terms. The idea of gender mainstreaming was introduced within the EU as early as 1990, in line with the introduction of the Third Community Action Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, recognizing the fact that existing policies lacked coherence and were failing to have any impact on the majority of women's lives. At the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 gender mainstreaming entered the core of international public policy, with the aim to ensure that governments and institutions incorporate a gender perspective in all policy-making areas. The EU, as a pioneer in developing gender mainstreaming following the Beijing Declaration of 1995, describes the meaning of the term as the recognition of equality between men and women being a fundamental right and necessary for achieving the EU goals of employment, social cohesion and growth. With time, and through repeated use, the term has however become trivialized which has resulted in the meaning behind the approach becoming diluted. This loss of clarity has led to a great diversity of applications and confused mainstreaming efforts. What is important to acknowledge is that while mainstreaming deals with policy, the policies in question directly affect the lives of real people (Kotze, Blazheva & Dymitrow, 2021: 171-172).

Because gender mainstreaming focuses on the process, its implementation is left open to different interpretations, which has led to mixed experiences. It has furthermore resulted in discussions whether gender mainstreaming is a strategy worth pursuing, and if it has become a goal in itself instead of actually achieving gender equality. In addition, one of the major challenges of gender mainstreaming in Europe is the relationship with other inequalities, such as class, ethnicity, age, disability, faith, and sexual orientation. When two or more forms of inequalities overlap, difficulties tend to appear regarding how to approach such multidimensional issues (Kotze, Blazheva & Dymitrow, 2021:172-173).

Gender Mainstreaming is a relatively recent policy development associated with gender analysis procedures. The overall idea of gender mainstreaming is that *every* policy should address the needs of so-called marginalised or disadvantaged groups, and the objective is

gender equality (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 1-2). Bacchi and Eveline (2010) questions the tendency to treat gender analysis and gender mainstreaming as generic reform initiatives that, through their introduction, automatically signal some sort of progression in gender equality. Instead, they try to find spaces where shifts towards a more egalitarian politics emerge and where such moves are blocked (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 3). Their analysis is, besides feminist theory, based on a post structural theoretical outlook, as it aims to shift from the fixed meaning of things to the political dimensions of meaning-making activities. The primary focus in post structural approaches is the always contestable nature and the textually unstable reality. Language, in this view, gives a version of meaning to events and things retrospectively, rather than reflecting a given or indisputable meaning. Such an approach challenges the view that policy design is a rational process in favour of the common good, performed by actors without any interest (Ibid, 4).

A key term in post structural analysis is *discourse*, in which the contestation or struggle over meaning takes place. Discourse is here understood as socially produced forms of knowledge that sets limits upon what to speak, write or think about a given social practice or knowledge. For instance, the way in which “gender equality” or “climate change” is spoken about creates it as a form of social knowledge, establishing specific terms of reference and a conceptualisation, difficult to think or speak outside of. Discourse is, however, not what is said but what constrains and enables what can be said. Some discourse has greater status than others, and these tend to be discourses that are institutionally sanctioned and which reinforce established legal, familial, religious, economic, and educational norms. In the struggle for control of discourses, institutional mechanisms allow some discourses to be dominant. Gender analysis policies for example, have a hard time gaining credibility since they oppose the rule of relevance and are in most policies seen as an extraneous consideration. Simply put, it is evident that there exist hierarchical networks of discursive relations. Discourses are finite, often in competition and the object of political struggle. They can be understood - not as human based practices or linguistic performances - but as the means through which some statements are rendered as legitimate and credible (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 5-6).

Political subjects are, in a poststructuralist perspective, understood as constituted temporarily as an effect of discourses that are available to them - a practice called “subjectification”. Political subjects are not fixed essences but take shape in the interaction with discourse and other practices. For instance, policies in this sense, are gendering in their effects as they

produce and reinforce specific categories such as “men” and “women” (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 7). Most policies assume and work with these categories as if these are fixed, a view that this theoretical framework counters, claiming that categories like “men” and “women” are produced through policies and other discursive practices. It is however possible to trace how women, through a range of practices expressed through for example advertising, religious texts, and child-rearing manuals, are being designated as “carers”. Post structural politics understands power as productive and as dynamic within relationships, as opposed to something that people *have* as a possession. The focus is on how power operates and what it produces, not on who has it (Ibid, 8-9).

Bacchi and Eveline (2010) furthermore emphasise the productive capacity of policies, and how they exercise productive power. They observe this dynamic in two areas: how policies produce understandings of the addressed “problems”, and how certain kinds of political subjects are constituted through this process. While Bacchi is mainly interested in the constitutive dimensions of social politics, Eveline, in addition, is primarily interested in contributing to organisation theory regarding the importance of involving policy actors directly in the development of reform initiatives in order for a sense of ownership to be created. Together, they complement each other in their contribution to the field of gender mainstreaming as well as in the process of reaching their goal generating gender analysis procedures for public servants (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 10).

Their analysis concludes that policy workers often lack space and time to reflect on the constitutive dimension of policies (for example how they are gendering) due to the deadline-driven nature of bureaucratic work practices, which suppress the transformative potential of gender analysis practice. New work practices, as a form of deeper evaluation that for example incorporates Bacchi's WPR-approach are suggested. However, in a political climate, where public servants generally are expected to do more with less resources, it is difficult to see that these types of time-consuming work practices will develop and be mainstreamed anytime soon. Guesses are instead that gender analysis will continue to involve simple procedural checklists (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 11-12).

### 3.2.1 Gender Mainstreaming and Neoliberalism

As mentioned shortly in the methodology section, Bacchi and Eveline (2010) have their own specific theoretical approach on gender mainstreaming and gender analysis frameworks in relation to neoliberalism. They challenge the portrayal of mainstreaming as necessarily resistant to neoliberalism; instead they claim that dominant forms of mainstreaming are coherent with neoliberal agendas and premises. Their goal is to find ways to step outside the strategic norms of neoliberalism in order to be able to implement gender mainstreaming initiatives effectively, and suggest a focus on policy's active role in shaping gender relations and constructing "problems" (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 41).

Gender mainstreaming has since the middle of the 1990's become the official strategy in a lot of gender equality work. The main argument is that gender equality cannot be a question on the side but instead incorporated in all areas of politics. It is also argued that inequalities are produced within the ordinary structures which is why they also must be countered in the same context. The European Council describes gender mainstreaming as (re)organisation, improvement, development, and monitoring of decision-making processes - so that a gender equality perspective is being implemented at all levels of the process. According to Rönnblom & Alnebratt (2019), this is a radical ambition. Extensive efforts have been conducted in the past 20 years, but to this day, people are still struggling to implement the strategy successfully (Rönnblom & Alnebratt 2019: 8).

Gender equality is a question that is constantly being made through processes of formulation and reformulation. What gender equality is thought to be furthermore affects what type of change that is considered desirable and who is being held responsible for change. By studying gender mainstreaming, it is possible to see the "doing" of gender equality and what effects this leads to. This "doing" often becomes a bureaucratic question rather than a political one, and this political area is generally dependant on temporary resources, and it is hence of relevance to analyse how this affects what actions that can and cannot be implemented (Rönnblom & Alnebratt (2019: 9-10). Previous investigations on Sweden's political work on gender equality has concluded that the governance of gender equality politics is fragmented and built on ad hoc efforts, and that there is a need for an improved institutionalised

organisation. Critique has been directed to the fact that continuous activity has been replaced by many temporary projects (Ibid, 18).

The division between politics and the market have become more and more diffuse. The strategy of gender mainstreaming was introduced at a time when public policies went through a transformative period into what is usually called New Public Management. A range of governance mechanisms common in market- and business areas have been introduced into the public sector, like for example result oriented management. The politics of gender equality is particularly interesting to study in this case since it is a political field often comprehended as driven by the strive for justice, something that could be seen as the complete opposite to the interest of profit and competition. The question is - what happens when steering mechanisms made for commodity production are transferred to the governing of changing complex power structures in society? (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019: 11).

Swedish policy documents formulated ambitions when it comes to gender equality are formulated in a general manner and rarely explicit. The overall goal is for example formulated like this: “*Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives*”. What does it mean? It is a fair ambition that everyone regardless of sex should be able to participate in the change of society, but what does it mean that everyone should have the same power to change their own lives? And why do these lives have to change? There is an underlying assumption that possibilities differ between men and women, but it is not clarified in what way. Do men stand in the way of women changing their lives or is it something or someone else? Diffuse formulations like this tend to depoliticize gender equality issues and are decreasing the chances of actors to take accountability (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019: 16-17).

Gender mainstreaming and its formulated goals often lack a connection to concrete problems that should be resolved. The goals of gender equality that are supposed to lead agencies in their development work tend to be left hanging when they are not based on a problem formulation. Men and women *should* have the same rights, but why they do not have it today is neither explained nor described in a clear way. This means that it is up to someone else to be responsible for figuring out what the problem is and what should be done about it. Closest at hand is directing this responsibility towards individual agencies. However, their range is

limited, and many of the goals demand coordinated efforts in many areas as well as political decision-making (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019: 31-32).

In line with Carol Bacchi's perspective on policies, Rönblom and Alnebratt (2019) assume that every goal is built on an unstated problem. This means that goals put certain light on some problems while others are pushed aside. Men's dominant position over women is often taken for granted among feminists and others who work with gender equality, but that does not mean that this is considered as an underlying problem when the goals of gender equality politics are being formulated. In these formulations, it is not obvious which group has more power in different parts of the society. Goals and strategies are often formulated in such a comprehensive way that the connection to the problems in society that they are supposed to address is nowhere to be found. The point here is to illustrate the ambiguity; the goals are big and horizontal, while the actual doing is small and limited (Rönblom and Alnebratt, 2019: 38-39).

The question is why it has become the agency administrator's job to define what gender equality is, rather than it being a task for the politicians (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019: 61). Vital for the chance of implementing the strategy of gender mainstreaming is if the organisation and prerequisite is available for carrying out the ambitions (Ibid, 57). It is furthermore vital to do systematic follow ups on projects, but this generally falls on the individual unit of implementation, that in turn might not have the resources nor the mandate to complete the assignment of following up these efforts (Ibid, 60-61). Therefore, the demand for external experts and consultants has grown to be common, and while this is not always necessarily bad, it is important to note that consultants cannot be held accountable for the execution of the state's politics (Ibid, 63). When formal institutions are replaced by consultants and experts, transparency, and accountability therefore risk to suffer (Ibid, 116).

In sum, there is a gap between the high ambitions of an equal society that gender mainstreaming is supposed to lead to, and the lack of formulations of specific problems that need to be solved. In addition, there is a gap between the idea that gender mainstreaming is something to be done by everyone all the time and the fact that there are very few people that receive responsibility and resources for the implementation (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019: 125). This gap can be derived from the shift in the 1990's from the political to the bureaucratic, meaning that mainstreaming became "outstreaming" in political terms - politics

abdicated from its responsibility and left it to government officials and projects. Instead of analysis, auditing, and reform efforts the new strategy was formed by support, knowledge, and administration (Ibid, 128).

In parallel, there was a horizontal shift in management policies in the 1990's - "government" became "governance" with the argument of efficiency. The traditional, more hierarchical organised policy of government with clear organisational boundaries where people have clear responsibilities and tasks, hence shifted into governance which promotes networks, partnerships, and cooperation but with less clear organisational structures. The Swedish political scientist Patrik Hall calls today's market-inspired networking model "management bureaucracy" - meaning that New Public Management is what characterises today's public politics. Here we find evaluation, auditing, and competition as central instruments for steering as well as quality assurance and efficiency measures. The division between two logics of steering, the logic of politics (justice, solidarity) and the logic of the market (profit, productivity, efficiency) becomes more and more diffuse - the logic of the market has come to also shape politics (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019: 130-132).

# 4 Methodology

## 4.1 Method of data collection

### 4.1.1 Household Survey

To gather first-hand knowledge from citizens of Bosnia & Herzegovina regarding their experienced effects of air pollution, a respondent survey conducted by me with the help of SEPA was digitally targeted through social media towards households in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, Zenica, Brod and Bijeljina. The choice of these cities is motivated since it is these cities that are being targeted for source apportionment of air pollution in the project on improving air quality in BiH. By targeting these cities, it is therefore possible for SEPA to further analyse the results from the survey and compare them to numbers and sources of pollution in these cities. The survey will be executed by the ad agency network called McCann, specifically by employees at their office in Sarajevo as an assignment for SEPA, and they also compiled the results. The results chosen as empirical material for my analysis are answers to the questions included in the survey that were conducted as a part of my study.

During respondent surveys, it is the thoughts and objectives of the respondents that are the study object itself. The survey will include structured, standardized questions which will be targeted at households in BiH with the aim to find patterns in the answers and subsequently analyse and explain what these patterns stem from. The survey is built on multiple-choice questions. Surveys are in most cases a tool for enabling a generalized view of a population, and this survey is considered a quantitative study since it is structured and based on comparable information with many respondents that can ultimately be explained and analysed statistically (Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud, 2012: 227-231).



The aesthetics of the survey should give a professional impression in order to attract respondents, something that could be provided in this case thanks to the help of SEPA and McCann. When formulating the survey questions, one should also preferably take inspiration from other already conducted surveys on the same topic. This helps with ensuring that the questions are well elaborated and provides validity to the research, so that this study hopefully can serve as a basis for and be compared with future studies on the subject (Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud, 2012: 240-241). I therefore took advantage of the fact that I had access to previous surveys that SEPA and McCann had done on the topic and built my own survey with them as my steppingstone, inspired by their formulations and structures. In addition to this, taking previous research on related issues into account has further helped me in my attempt to construct well informed questions.

#### 4.1.2 Cluster Interview

With the support of SEPA, I organised a seminar on site in Sarajevo with one representative each from ten nationally active CSOs. The representatives were all women, working in CSOs targeting different issues of gender equality in BiH. The group was brought together with a special purpose - first to present and discuss their view on the most urgent gender equality issues in the country and find connections to the substantial national problem of air pollution. Furthermore, they were asked to discuss the biggest challenges in their work to tackle these issues. Secondly, to give me, as a representative of SEPA - inputs and knowledge on how to improve the gender mainstreaming in the particular project on improving air quality in BiH and let this state an example of the importance of adjusting gender mainstreaming processes to different contexts accordingly.

Some of the participating CSOs were first handily invited with the help of SEPA's contact list of partners and associates, but some were invited through a snowball effect, meaning that we asked already invited organisations for further suggestions of organisations that they thought to be relevant participants. The term "cluster interview" best describes the process at the seminar, that consisted of a semi-structured interview with a joint discussion with the representatives from all ten CSOs. The point of cluster interviews instead of individual interviews is to minimise the role of the interviewer and to get a conversation going between

the participants and by doing so get a broader representation of the thoughts on a specific topic. A cluster interview shows how the participants *together* are reasoning on a specific topic, and the structures of reflections, statements and underlying values in the joint conversation constitute the units of analysis. Cluster interviews are furthermore especially useful when it comes to generating ideas (Esaïasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud 2012: 319-320).

The transcribed results from the cluster interviews at the seminar are used as findings for making a comparison between CSOs and their experiences on site, to the discourse represented in Swedish policy documents. They are also used to enhance the validity of my analysis, in the way that I have created my own empirical material and not only rely on previous research. The ambition is that these findings can play a part in proving the value and importance of adjusting Swedish policies and efforts according to specific contexts.

## 4.2 Method of analysis

### 4.2.1 Discourse Analysis and Social Constructivism

Discourse analysis is a qualitative text-analysis method that can be described as a study on social phenomenon where language is in focus. The idea is that language does not describe reality in a direct way, but instead contributes to shaping it. Discourse analysis can be related to power and to different types of power structures, since the pattern of language sets limits to our way of thinking and acting (Bergström & Boréus, 2012: 354). Discourse analysis can be used as a tool to identify, interpret, and understand underlying power structures in the discourses present in the chosen empirical material (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000: 11-12).

Discourse analysis is based on the theory of social constructivism, which is characterised by its critical view of knowledge. Its approach is built on the structuralist and post-structuralist premises that language is forming our view of the world, and that knowledge cannot be regarded as an objective truth (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000: 97). The view we have of the truth is always culturally and historically marked, which means that our opinions of the world are

contingent; our identities and worldviews can change over time. The world is constructed discursively through language and social interaction, processes in which people build common views on what is right and what is wrong, and what is true and what is false. The social construction of truth and knowledge makes some actions seem given, and others totally unreasonable. Hence, discourse leads to actual consequences of action (Ibid, 11-12). Important to note is the fact that social constructivism does not imply that there is no physical reality outside discourse, only that discourse gives it meaning (Ibid, 104).

#### 4.2.2 WPR - What's the Problem (Represented to Be)?

The analysis of my results is specifically analysed with the help of Carol Bacchi's policy analysis approach called What's the Problem (Represented to be), WPR. This approach is adapted to analyse policy documents, since the baseline of the theory is that politicians and decision-makers and their framing of issues often represent the dominant discourse in society. The presence of social constructivism in WPR is evident, since Bacchi claims that it is impossible to talk about a real social matter without applying your own interpretation of it. As soon as a real problem is interpreted and articulated, it is just an interpretation and not a direct image of reality. Real social problems do exist, but the point is that we cannot discuss them outside of their representations (Bacchi, 1999: 9-11). The WPR-approach is commonly used to problematise discursive processes where some things are assumed to be the truth, and some things are represented as the problem. The approach is further helpful in understanding power structures, as in which social groups that certain problem representations benefit, and which social groups that are being overlooked and forgotten (Ibid, 13). Bacchi takes the regular approach of social constructivism that focuses on what is discursively articulated and develops it further by also highlighting what is *not* being said or approached. This means that after analysing what is represented as a problem in a specific discourse, the WPR approach strives to find what is being left out and unproblematized (Ibid, 1-2).

However, rather than simply understanding policy as a *reaction* to the "problem" of gender equality, she wants to rethink public policy as being productive. In this understanding, policy becomes a gendering process producing gender, which Bacchi hopes will help create the space to reflect on underlying premises rather than whether these policies impact women and

men differently. This kind of analysis is in her view necessary to expose neoliberal policies' tendencies to undermine gender equality agendas (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 18).

Bacchi's policy analysis approach is based on six questions that will inspire my analysis:

1. What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy or policies?
2. What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)?
3. How has this representation of the "problem" come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualised differently?
5. What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?
6. How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated, and defended? How has it been and/or can it be disrupted and replaced? (Carol & Goodwin, 2016: 20)

### 4.3 Choice of Method

The reasoning for my choice of the method WPR is my interest for the discourse and narrative of policies, and to understand the process of how ideology affects discourse. In turn, I am interested in the practical effects of discourse. I therefore wanted to follow the process from policy to practicality, to analyse if these policies are in fact leading projects to work towards gender equality. During the course of writing this master's thesis I have an internship at SEPA's international unit, involved in a SIDA-financed project on air pollution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provided the insight and resources needed to do my research. SEPA provided the resources for me to conduct a household-survey and also for going to Sarajevo to conduct a seminar (cluster interview) with CSOs working with gender equality nationally in BiH, with the objective that they would provide knowledge and insight on if the current Swedish policies subject to my analysis are context-based and provides accurate directions for Swedish reform cooperation in BiH. The opportunity to both collect quantitative empirical material in form of a survey in combination with a more qualitative empirical material in form of a cluster interview in Sarajevo is something I cherished and saw as beneficial for my study.

## 4.4 Empirical Material

The empirical material for my analysis consists of policies, the results from the conducted household-survey, and the results from the cluster interview conducted at the seminar in Sarajevo. The policies referred to are *The Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022* and *the strategy for Swedish reform cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey 2021-2027*. The choice of these policies was natural when analysing SEPA's SIDA-financed project improving air quality in BiH, since the first policy mentioned is the guide for how to mainstream gender in all Swedish reform cooperation projects (under the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs), and the second policy is the strategy guiding all SIDA-financed projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## 4.5 Ethical considerations / Reflexivity

Although the aim of this thesis is to get a first-hand perspective from people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the material is still analysed by me - a white female woman born and raised in Sweden (with my "being" being much more problematic and contingent than that) - and my individual situated knowledge will undoubtedly affect the outcome. In line with Donna Haraway's (1988) theory on situated knowledge I state that genuine objectivity on "reality" is impossible to reach, and that by admitting that fact, one's research instantly becomes more valid. Feminist objectivity quite simply can be called *situated knowledges* (Haraway, 1988: 581). The moral of this is that only partial perspective and limited location promises objective vision, hence various forms of unlocatable knowledge claims, common in Western cultural narratives, are contested (Ibid, 583). There are positive aspects of establishing the capacity to see from a peripheral perspective, but here there also lies a danger of appropriating and/or romanticising the vision of the "other" or the less powerful, while claiming to be able to see from their position (Ibid, 584). With these considerations guiding me in every step of the process, my hope is that I will provide a thesis as "objective" as possible in line with feminist situated knowledge. Reliability and subjectivity in this instance is not about being able to get the exact same results in studies conducted in the same way of the same phenomenon, since that is based on the perception that there is such a thing as a neutral observation. Instead, reliability in this context is about being accurate and cohesive in every step of the analysis, to

eliminate potential misinterpretations. In addition, reliability in this case is dependent on providing a detailed and transparent picture of how all the steps of the analysis could lead to the results that were found (Bergström & Boréus, 2012: 42-43).

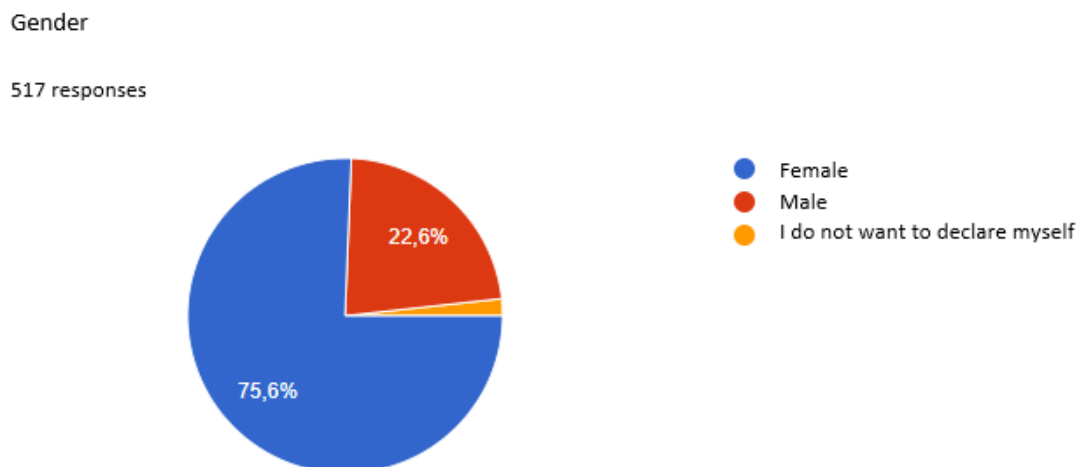
Whether a discourse analysis is valid or not is mainly decided by the analysis's explanatory ability (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000: 123). The political significance can furthermore be motivated by science's role in questioning current power structures in society and that its results can be used to change them (Ibid, 111). One can aspire to achieve as high internal validity as possible by drawing cohesive conclusions based on the analytical units (Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud, 2012: 58).

# 5 Results & Analysis

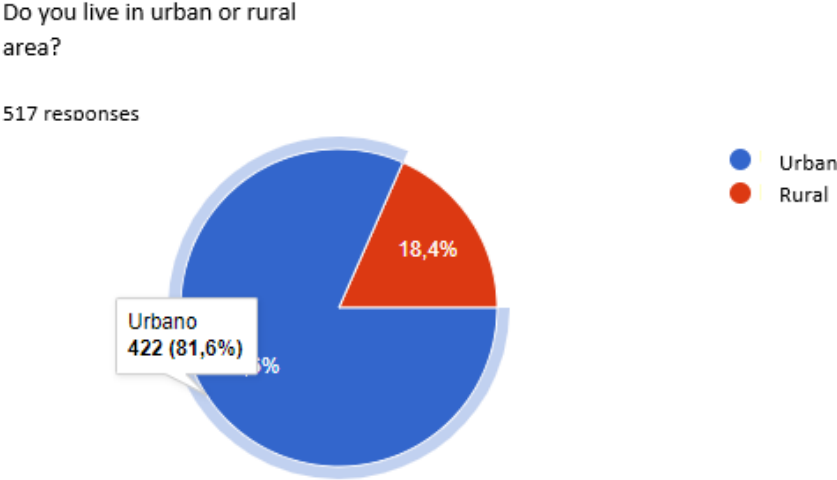
## 5.1 Results from the household survey

The results from the household *survey* are used exactly as the name suggests – for providing an overview of the large problem of air pollution in the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This survey was answered by 514 respondents, situated in different parts of BiH. The survey was targeted at six cities around the country through marketing in social media (by the ad agency network McCann and their office located in Sarajevo), but the results showed that respondents were also living in many other parts of the country.

Most of the respondents were women. While I suggested having “other” as a category when stating one’s gender, this was not supported by the ad agency, which resulted the third option being named “I do not want to declare myself”:

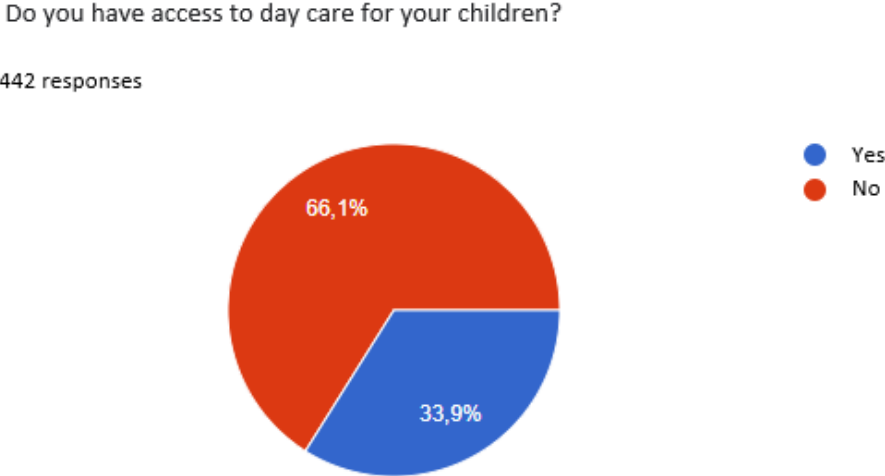


Even though 57 percent of the population in BiH is rural, which makes it one of the most rural countries in Europe (UNW, 2021), only 18 percent of the respondents were living in a rural area:



There is a wide difference between the poverty rate in rural versus urban areas, with the poverty rate in rural areas being around the double of the rate in urban areas. Women represent only a little over half of the rural population but suffer the most from lack of resources, which means that the most marginalised groups of women people by default are not represented in this survey (UNW, 2021: 45). Additionally, the rate of illiteracy is higher among marginalised women, which contributes to further difficulties in reaching them through this channel (Ibid, 54).

Results show that most of the respondents with children do not have access to day-care:

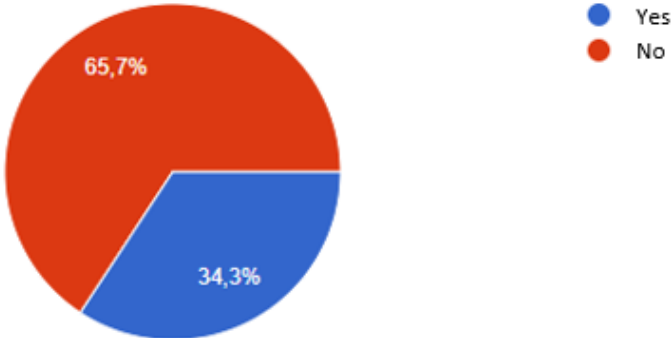




Of those who *have* access to day-care, 34 percent answered that air-quality related problems like for example asthma and bronchitis had affected their kids sick-leave from day-care/school:

If yes, have they had air-quality related problems like for example asthma or bronchitis that have affected they're sick-leave from day-care/school?

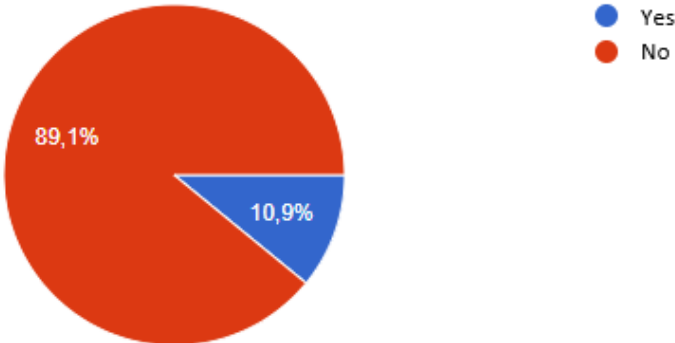
362 responses



Regarding experiences of schools closing due to dangerous air pollution levels, 10 percent of the respondents said that they have experienced it:

Have you experienced schools closing due to dangerous air pollution levels?

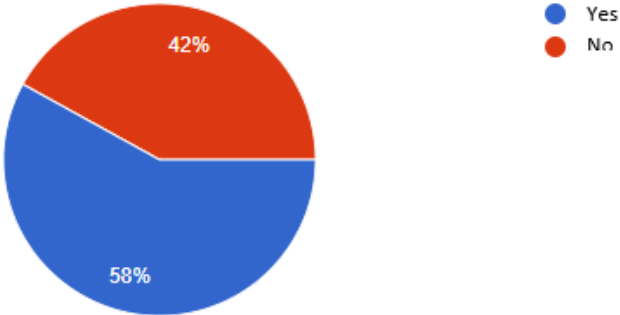
403 responses



58 percent of the respondents answered that somebody in their household have a breathing or respiratory problem:

Does anybody in your household have a breathing or respiratory problem?

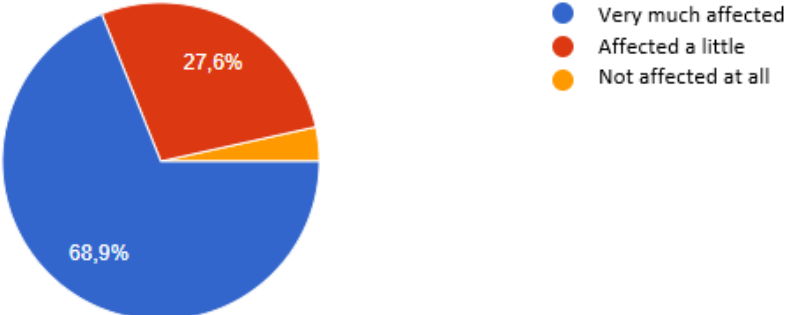
517 responses



There is also a large amount of the respondents who feel highly affected by air pollution in general:

To what extent is the air pollution affecting you?

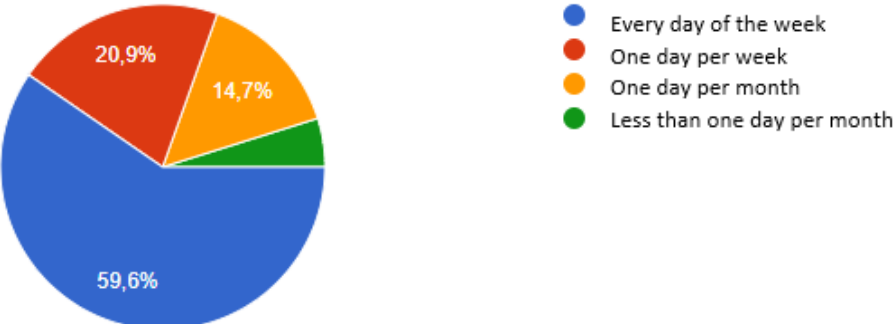
517 responses



Numbers also show that most respondents think about air pollution daily:

How much do you think about air pollution?

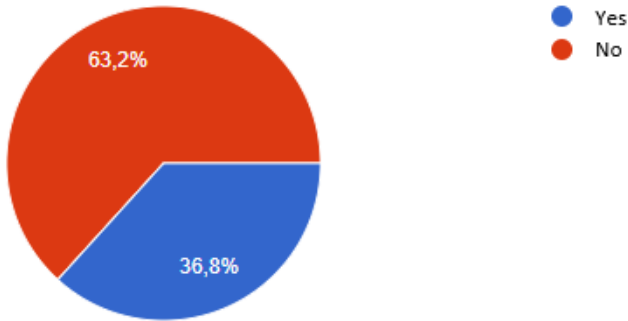
517 responses



Results furthermore show that a large amount of the respondents owns a wood/coal burning stove for heating or cooking:

Do you have a wood/coal burning stove at home for heating or cooking?

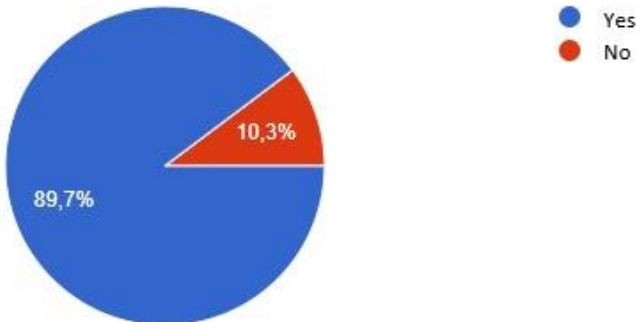
517 responses



This, even though most of the respondents are aware of the negative health effects that comes with wood/coal burning:

Are you aware of the negative health effects from the wood/coal burning?

517 responses



Results from this survey indicates that air pollution seems to have a large effect on the population in BiH, and the fact that most of the population thinks about air pollution daily puts it into perspective. Many furthermore still burn wood/coal for heating and cooking at home, while being aware of the negative health effects, which is also indicating an economical inability to raise their standard of living. These numbers indicate that air pollution has a big impact on the population in BiH in general, which support findings from previous research. This section provides an important overall view of the effect of air pollution in the country, and in the following analysis issues of social and gender equity will be further problematised.

## 5.2 Results from the cluster interview

In March 2022, I, with the help of SEPA, organised a seminar in Sarajevo with representatives of 10 nationally active CSOs attending, for the purpose of doing a cluster interview. The representatives were all women, working in different CSOs targeting issues of gender equality. The cluster interview resulted in specific problem representations regarding gender equality, and issues of gender equality linked to environmental issues like air pollution. The results in this section are divided into findings of gender equality issues in BiH, findings on the gender equality issues linked to environmental issues like air pollution in BiH, and findings on their biggest challenges in working with these issues. The interview was semi-structured around these main topics. These results, together with the results from the survey, provides the context-based findings that I need as reference for my analysis on the policy documents in the following sections. Here, the results from the cluster interview will be displayed without any in depth-analysis to give an overview of the results and will be deeper problematised in the following sections of analysis. The point of this is to organise a structured results and analysis section that clearly differentiate the results of the cluster interview and the survey from the statements in the analysed policies. Statements from the cluster interview will hence be summarised here and will subsequently be brought in continuously in section 5.3 and 5.4 to exemplify the arguments of my analysis. Due to ethical considerations, the representatives and the CSOs attending the seminar are all held anonymous.

As recently mentioned, the cluster interview initially revolved around the question of what the main gender equality problems the participants find to be the most urgent in BiH, followed by what links of these issues they can draw to issues of environmental issues like for example air pollution, and lastly their biggest challenges in working with these issues. To start off with, the main gender equality problems that were represented in the joint discourse of these participants involves violence against women, women's participation, poverty, traditional/patriarchal norms, the lack of political will to work with gender equality and a lack of social services:

- *“We have a strong legislative framework but are lacking implementation. This is especially talking about gender equality.”*

- *“Bosnia and Herzegovina do have a law on gender equality. The country has also signed many conventions, but unfortunately it is not really implemented and practised.”*
- *“We live in a traditional society where women are supposed to take care of people in need, the family, children, elderly, sick. Women are the most likely to lose their careers to take care of sick family members. There is also a lack of social services.”*
- *“The biggest challenges today regarding women’s rights are tradition and patriarchal norms as well as local and state level’s understanding of the importance of women’s participation.”*
- *“Poverty of women is the biggest challenge which prevents women from achieving equal opportunities and puts them in a dependent position.”*
- *“Related to the services that are available, we talked a little about participation of women in politics and local government, but in order to do that they have to have time, and they have to have some basic security, and they have to have some living wage or source of economic income. The lack of services is definitely decreasing the amount of available time for women, both culturally and from available social services.”*
- *“We (I mean myself included) take care of our parents, our relatives, which takes a lot of both time and money since the services for elderly is very very restricted. If your family member is sick it gets even harder. Furthermore, it is not easy to be enrolled in kindergarten - the condition is that both parents have to be working (at least at national level but it is possible at private level).”*
- *“You get parental leave one year as standard, by law parents can split it, but in real life there are very few cases. Often mothers do go back to work earlier than one year because you need to survive. In addition, your position is not going to wait for you, and you risk getting fired.”*

- *“More than 60 percent of the country is considered to be a rural area. Less than 15 percent of kids are enrolled in preschool programs. The system is just non-existing. We definitely do not have enough institutions in urban areas, and in rural areas it is a disaster. That is why women stay at home, they are unemployable because they need to take care of kids.”*
- *“If I work for an SME, Small and medium sized enterprise, my maternity leave is not going to be the same as someone working in a ministry, so you have segregation there. We don't have equal rights that should be guaranteed by the constitution. Your maternity leave is based on the salary of your last three months, so working in the private sector might be very low.”*

When asked to discuss what connections they could see regarding gender equality issues and environmental issues like air pollution, many could see how the issues are related but at the same time stated that they have little support in targeting these issues both from international development programs but also from local partners:

- *“Regarding the connection between gender equality and environmental issues, this connection is extremely strong. The control of natural resources is according to our view related to the distribution of power and as you know the men have the power in our society. The management of the resources have an impact on us and future generations.”*
- *“If we want to solve the environmental problems, we have to first solve the social injustice, and if you want to solve that you need to work towards gender equality.”*
- *“In 2014 when we had the large floods, was when our organisation started to deliver humanitarian aid, and when we started to really see the difference in how these large catastrophes influence men and women differently. It is really obvious that climate change and different environmental problems are affecting women more than men, especially in these catastrophic situations because it is clearly influencing the position of women in the working force*

*and also the influence on women's health over all, the availability of high quality health protection and other things that can relate to the complications in pregnancies and other health issues. It is evident that in these environmental catastrophic situations, women are more susceptible to trafficking and other kinds of violence. "*

- *"When we talk about the connection between gender equality and the climatic change and the different environmental problems, our organisation is trying to follow this subjects and these connections but you would also need to pose these questions to many NGO's that we meet in our work who are practically ignoring or are not aware of the importance of these connections."*
- *"Related to support from international development programs in the field of the environment, we do not have support in this segment but we think that it would be very important and significant to our organisation."*
- *"Regarding pollution. If your child gets sick, who stays more at home? Who is on sick leave? Who's getting a lower salary that month because the mother is on sick leave? Is that going to have an impact on your retirement, on your pension? There are so many things that are being influenced by the environment. One thing leads to another."*

The biggest obstacles in order for them to tackle and work with these issues was furthermore described as a lack of financial resources, and the fact that all efforts are project-based and short-term with no follow-ups once the project is finished, which makes it difficult to implement any sustainable change.

- *"The biggest challenge for us and our work is getting sufficient numbers of funds. Also lack of strategic approach at the level of the state. Another issue is insufficient service support."*
- *"I don't like to talk about projects, since you cannot achieve any sustainable changes with short term projects. All of us need to have a clear long-term*

*vision. I say that we have to move slowly, but what I mean is that, it takes time to achieve sustainable change.”*

- *“I am currently running a two-year project, and two years is very little time. After the first year I have already started the evaluation process and the results of that evaluation is not going to be the right evaluation because I’m going to implement the commons and conclusions after only 50 percent of the time. In addition, this happened in the period of Covid-19. 99 percent satisfactory results will come in the second year or even after the second year. So my proposal is, if possible, to have projects a minimum of 3 years and then evaluation, because after those 3 years you will apply for another project, and in that application for another project, you will implement evaluation from the first project. And if it’s happening after two years it is already 70 percent of the time so you can really see the results on the horizon.”*

Results from the cluster interview at the seminar in Sarajevo, March 2022, together with previous research, provides a context-based problem representation of issues regarding gender equality. The results from the cluster interview confirms a lot of findings from previous research, something that will be further described in the next section.

### **5.3 What’s the Problem (Represented to be) in the Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022, including direction and measures for 2021**

In this section I use questions inspired by Carol Bacchi’s WPR-approach to analyse the problem representations of gender equality issues, and gender equality issues in connection to environmental issues, starting with the *Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022, including measures for 2021*. Previous research, theoretical framework as well as the results from both the household survey and the cluster interview are used as the contextual foundation for my policy analysis.



### 5.3.1 What's the problem (Represented to be)? What assumptions underlie these representations, what is left unproblematised and what effects do these problem representations produce?

The Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022, including direction and measures for 2021 (The latest one published) is a guideline for implementing the strategy of gender mainstreaming in international reform cooperation. The action plan sets out the “direction, objectives and measures” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 3). The feminist foreign policy is part of the overall gender equality agenda of the Swedish government, and is therefore supposed to contribute to achieving its overarching gender equality policy objective: “*Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives*” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 30). As mentioned in the theory section, very generalised and depoliticized formulations like this one decreases the chances of actors to take accountability (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019) The question is if the action plan, despite this, manages to formulate a more substantial plan for action, with concrete representations of the problems to address. However, regarding problem representations in the action plan on gender equality issues, as well as gender issues connecting to environmental issues, I found that the range is very small and that the definitions of the “problem” are wide and horizontal. These following three statements are the most concrete formulations of the “problem” that I found:

*“The climate crisis continues to particularly affect women, girls and marginalised groups, who have contributed the least to the crisis and are often overlooked in the political debate”* (Foreword).

*“The Foreign Service will take particular account of the capacity of women and girls as actors, but also their vulnerability and specific needs”* (p. 7).

*“To be accurate, the analysis must take account of the fact that women, girls, men and boys are not homogenous groups, but rather that their identities, needs, influence and living conditions differ (p.22). The analysis must therefore consider other factors besides sex, such as age, place of residence, socioeconomic status, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, functional variation, level of education, belief and religion”* (p. 22).

In the first two statements, there are formulated problem representations of that women, girls and marginalised groups are particularly affected by the climate crisis and that they are often overlooked in the political debate, and the fact that they are vulnerable and have specific needs that have to be addressed. In the third statement, there is an intersectional problematisation made clear, that motivates why an analysis must consider other factors besides sex. There are definitions of problems here, that previous research can underpin. However, they are discussed in general terms without any clear definition of what concrete issues we are dealing with or what structures that underlie them, which makes it complicated to approach them. The lack of concrete problem formulations motivating the goals that should be resolved, is common within the strategy of gender mainstreaming. This means that the responsibility of figuring out what exactly the problem is and how it should be resolved often falls on individual agencies that might not have the resources needed to apply a thorough gender analysis that could guide projects and efforts (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019). Due to the deadline-driven nature of bureaucratic work practices, policy workers often lack the space and time to reflect on the constitutive dimension of politics, like for example how they are gendering, which makes the potential for transformative gender analysis small. Instead, the lack of resources risk that gender analysis will continue to involve simple procedural checklists (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010).

While the examples above include somewhat formulated problems to address, the following statements are examples of the common discourse in the action plan, which consists of directions disconnected to any clear problem representations.

*“Sweden’s feminist foreign policy requires the Foreign Service to apply a systematic rights and gender perspective in its ongoing operations, from analysis to monitoring and new analysis, and in all policy areas” (p. 22).*

*“The Foreign Service will work to promote the mainstreaming of the gender and rights perspectives in processes for a sustainable recovery that ‘builds back better and greener’. This will be done, for example, by promoting women’s and girls’ full enjoyment of human rights in climate and environment action, with its links to oceans, biodiversity, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene” (p. 6).*

The first statement above is rather horizontal, encouraging all operations to have a systematic rights and gender perspective, in all policy areas. In the second statement, there is a clear attempt to connect gender equality with environmental issues and encouraging gender mainstreaming in the work in climate and environmental action. However, there are no description of the “problem” that motivates *why* women’s and girl’s human rights should be promoted. It is assumed that it is common knowledge. This reflects the strategy of gender mainstreaming, where goals are often formulated in such a comprehensive way that the connections to the actual problems in society are missing. It also illustrates the ambiguity between the goals that are big and horizontal, and the doing that is small and limited (Rönblom and Alnebratt, 2019).

A big part of the action plan regards women’s participation both politically and in the labour market:

*“Sweden will highlight women’s and girl’s needs of participation within the scope of various climate adaptation strategies, and work to ensure that women and girls are reached by climate adaptation fund initiatives to increase resilience”* (p. 13).

*“The Foreign Service will promote women’s and girl’s representation, participation and influence in institutions, organisations and processes at multilateral, regional and local level”* (p. 12).

*“The Foreign Service will promote social security systems that include the entire life cycle, apply a gender perspective, and contribute to women’s economic empowerment. The Foreign Service will also promote gender balance in unpaid care and domestic work”* (p. 15).

The “problem” represented here is women’s lack of representation, participation, and economic empowerment. In the first statement, women’s participation is encouraged in general but also within the scope of climate adaptation strategies. In the second and third statement, the importance of women’s and girl’s participation in institutions, organisations and political level is highlighted, and the importance of gender balance in unpaid care and domestic work is also promoted. The “problem” here could be summarised as women’s exclusion from participating in decision-making and lack of influence over political processes

as well as exclusionary tendencies on the labour market in general. To know the processes *how* and *why* these problems exist, and why these problems are important to address, I have however turned to previous research that shows that gender discrimination in the labour market is widespread and one of the main reasons for women's unequal societal status globally. In 2018, the female activity in the labour market was only 34 percent in BiH, which is mainly a result of difficulties in balancing professional and private life as well as deep seated gender-stereotyped roles (CSF, 2018). While this is examples from BiH specifically, guesses are that these gender related issues are horizontal and can be found not only in this case. This lack of a concrete problematisation enables the next statement, saying that the Foreign Service will promote women's rights in the labour market by working towards formalising the informal economy where most workers are women:

*“The Foreign Service will promote women's agency and rights in the labour market. This will be done, for instance, by supporting their access to productive employment and decent work, and by working towards the formalisation of the informal economy, where the majority of workers are women”* (p. 14).

This statement that claims that the Foreign Service will work towards the formalisation of the informal economy, where the majority of workers are women, do not harmonise with encouraging women's participation in institutions, organisations and at a political level. If the goal is women's participation in these areas, then promoting care and domestic work as a formal economy could be contradictory. Deep-seated patriarchal norms play a significant role in this statement, which do not problematise why women dominate the informal sector. The lack of female labour force participation stands for one of the main issues in BiH, with less than one third of women being active. One of the main reasons for this is sought to be traditional gender roles in society (Abaz & Hadzic, 2020). While formalising the informal sector might sound like a good idea to decrease the pay gap, there is a risk that it would entrench gender norms, where care work would continue to be dominated by women, further cutting them off from participating in the public sphere. If the problem instead would be formulated as a lack of available and affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) which tend to encourage exclusionary citizenship based on class, this would open up for the implementation of efforts that instead of entrenching the traditional public-private division, would help in moving away from it (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020).

The removal of social services in the post-war period which had provided support for reproductive work that generally falls onto women, has had implications for individual women and for households, since it has led to women's exclusion from the workplace. Formalising the informal economy can be compared with the criticised microcredit programs for women sponsored by international organisations in the early post-war period that promoted gender stereotypical employment projects like knitting and handicraft, entrenching gender roles in society even further and overlooking the capacities of women in BiH (Lai, 2020). Different representations of the "problem" ultimately leads to different prerequisites for what efforts that are implemented. Policies exercise productive power since its represented problems legitimates some efforts while others become unwarranted (Bacchi and Eveline, 2010). In this perspective the world is discursively constructed through language and social interaction, and in these processes, people build common views of right and wrong, which makes some actions seem given and other unreasonable. The discourse in policies leads to real consequences of action, thus the importance of policies being clear and well-thought out (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000).

A results-based management is furthermore promoted:

*"The Foreign Service will continue to develop its results-based management to strengthen the planning, governance, resource allocation and results of policy-related work" (p. 19).*

*"Foreign Service multi-agency strategies will be used to emphasise and monitor the actors' gender equality efforts, focusing on the need for efforts to produce tangible results" (p. 23).*

Result-based management is assumed to be the best and most effective strategy. Within this narrative, it is assumed that results and progress of gender equality can and should be proven fruitful in a short amount of time. Efforts need to have tangible results in the end of a project for it to be considered meaningful. This management approach can be derived from the shift in the 1990's from the political to the bureaucratic, when politics over time has more and more left it to government projects and officials to define strategies and to realize implementation of the policies. This new management approach was formed by support, knowledge, and administration instead of analysis, auditing, and reform efforts. With the

argument of efficiency, government became governance. It is particularly interesting to study this case within politics of gender equality - a field that normally is driven by the strive for justice, and not by the interest of profit and competition. The fact that the discourse in this policy promotes results-based management is an example of the fact that the governing of changing complex power structures are heading more and more towards steering mechanisms made for commodity production. It also exemplifies a case of how the division between politics and the market have become increasingly diffuse (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019).

Findings from the cluster interview testifies that this results-based management approach has resulted in experiences of projects funded by international reform cooperation being too short-term, with little consistency and possibility to bring out any sustainable change. This statement from the seminar by one of the CSOs representatives is an example of that:

- *“I don’t like to talk about projects, since you cannot achieve any sustainable changes with short term projects. All of us need to have a clear long-term vision. I say that we have to move slowly, but what I mean is that, it takes time to achieve sustainable change”* (Cluster interview, 2022).

This statement is also in line with findings from previous research on Sweden’s political work on gender equality that has concluded that the governance of gender equality politics is fragmented and built on ad hoc efforts, and the fact that continuous activity has been replaced with many temporary projects. This political area is generally dependant on temporary resources which limits the possibilities of what actions that can and cannot be implemented (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019).

One important part of the policy, and something I attempted to follow by conducting the cluster interview with female representatives of CSOs on site in Sarajevo, is:

*“Dialogue with international, national and local women’s rights organisations, and with other civil society organisations, is essential to support them and enhance their visibility. It is also essential to consider the knowledge, problem analysis and proposals of these actors with a view to creating conditions for sustainable solutions”* (p. 25).

This statement is in line with Lai's (2020) argumentation where he emphasises the importance of having women's voices, especially from disadvantaged communities, present in conversations, processes and decision-making on peace and justice, since they are still carrying the greatest cost of the war.

By conducting the cluster interview, I received valuable information and inputs from women in the civil society working with gender equality on site in BiH, on how activities from Swedish authorities can improve and get adjusted to the local context.

## 5.4 What's the Problem (Represented to be) in the Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation in the Western Balkans 2021-2027

The Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022 stated that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will ensure that all agencies' new policy documents are consistent with this policy direction, including regional strategies (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 20). I will therefore now move over to analyse the problem representations in the *Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey 2021-2027* to analyse if the problem representations and goals regarding gender equality is further specified and context-based in the strategy. In the policy, directives for the Western Balkans and Turkey are displayed separately, and the analysed statements are exclusively from the parts of the policy regarding the Western Balkans. I will again use questions inspired by Carol Bacchi's WPR-approach for my analysis. Previous research, theoretical framework as well as the results from both the household survey and the cluster interview are used as the contextual foundation for the policy analysis. The analysed statements in this section has been translated by me from Swedish to English.

#### 5.4.1 What's the problem (represented to be)? What assumptions underlie these representations, what is left unproblematised and what effects do these problem representations produce?

Regarding the goals and objectives of gender equality in this strategy, they are once again formulated in a horizontal way, but with an attempt to formulate more context-based problem representations regarding gender equality.

As far as context-based problem representation goes, they are formulated like this:

*“An improved legislation has contributed to progress in strengthening gender equality, but big challenges remain regarding the implementation”* (p. 4).

*“Special challenges exist when it comes to women's and girl's political and economic underrepresentation”* (p. 4).

BiH has made significant efforts in legislation on gender equality to meet international standards. For example, the law on gender equality of BiH was adopted in 2003, that addresses factors like education, employment, equal representation, labour and access to resources, social protection, healthcare and equal representation. The law was further amended in 2016 to also include gender identity, age, disability, and sexual orientation in the list of discrimination grounds (UNW, 2021). These two policy statements above acknowledge the shortcomings of implementing laws on gender equality, and the concerning fact that women and girls are underrepresented politically and economically. The policy hence addresses the fact that implementation of this law among others is not satisfactory. This is a discursive representation of the “problem” also represented in the cluster interview, with this statement for instance:

- *“Bosnia and Herzegovina does have a law on gender equality. The country has also signed many conventions, but unfortunately it is not really implemented and practised”* (Cluster interview, 2022).

While the shortcomings of implementing laws on gender equality are addressed, other concrete problem representations in the policy are scarce, and directives regarding goals are



again dominating the policy without any further representations of why these are the goals or what problems these directives should solve. Directives and goals of gender equality are furthermore presented as separate from the environment, hence there is no obvious attempt to mainstream gender into environment and climate efforts.

Regarding gender equality, SIDA's activities are supposed to contribute to:

*“Decreasing gender discrimination, strengthen women's economic empowerment and rights and women's rights defenders, increase women's influence and participation in political processes as well as an increased access and respect for SRHR” (p. 7).*

*“Strengthen the prerequisite for a gender equal society” (p. 7).*

Regarding climate and the environment, SIDA's activities are supposed to contribute to:

*“Decreased environment- and carbon footprint and sustainable administration and sustainable use of natural resources” (p. 3).*

*“Increased resilience against climate change and strengthened prerequisites for protection, perseverance of biological biodiversity and ecosystem” (p. 3).*

The opportunity to address and problematise gendered effects of environmental issues like for example air pollution is missed by this separation of environmental issues and issues regarding gender equality. Previous research has found that air pollution is intertwined with both social and gender inequity, since socially and economically deprived groups are more likely to be exposed by air pollution. Research also show that air pollution has gendered effects because of gender-biased distribution of care responsibilities, evidently affecting women's labour opportunities and working hours when for example prolonged school-closing has been implemented and when children are on sick-leave from school due to high levels of pollution. Air pollution and social equity is additionally linked since poor households tend to use cheap and highly polluting fuels, which means addressing structural drivers of social poverty and inequity would mitigate harmful impacts of air pollution. BiH has one of the highest average mortality rates from air pollution in the world, and it is thus highly motivated

and essential to incorporate aspects of social equity, gender equality and poverty into environmental policy and vice versa (SEI, 2020).

Results made from studies in Santiago, Chile (Montt 2018) shows that when pollution rises, women (in particular women with children) are likely to work fewer hours. A big impact of air pollution operates indirectly through dependants. Contaminants in air pollution are mainly associated with respiratory problems and tend to contain heavy metals that are especially dangerous to children. While workers may be healthy enough to work, children may fall sick. When care for sick children that cannot go to school due to illness relies on working adults, a large part falls on women in unpaid arrangements. This indirect effect of air pollution will only affect women combining work and care; however, this will further limit full-time caregivers' possibility to enter the labour market. Policies to reduce air pollution will therefore help eliminate this source of gendered effects on labour supply (Montt 2018).

Results from the cluster interview also shows that while it is not recognized in the strategy for reform cooperation, national CSOs working with gender equality in BiH have acknowledged gendered effects of environmental issues like for example air pollution, and states that they lack resources for addressing them:

- *“Related to support from international development programs in the field of the environment, we do not have support in this segment but we think that it would be very important and significant to our organisation”* (Cluster interview, 2022).

This experience of lack of resources from international development programs in working on targeting environmental issues in the field of gender equality, may stem from the fact that gender is not mainstreamed in policies on the environment (like in the example of the Swedish strategy for reform cooperation in the WB), which would naturally result in environmental projects not having gender as an aspect in the implementation of efforts.

The CSOs participating in the cluster interview furthermore saw the problem of indirect social effects of air pollution like Montt (2018) discussed, regarding air pollution's effects on children's health resulting in mothers having to take care of them:

- *“Regarding pollution. If your child gets sick, who stays more at home? Who is on sick leave? Who’s getting a lower salary that month because the mother is on sick leave? Is that going to have an impact on your retirement, on your pension? There are so many things that are being influenced by the environment. One thing leads to another”* (Cluster interview, 2022).

CSOs in BiH working with gender equality ultimately sees a link between environmental issues and issues of gender equality in the country, but this link is not acknowledged or problematised in the strategy for reform cooperation in the WB, which shows an inconsistency in the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

The overall focus and goal of the strategy is furthermore formulated as:

*“Strengthening democracy, rule of law, human rights, gender equality and to implement a functioning market economy”* (p. 4).

This means that the goal of a market economy is one of the dominating goals, and this discourse can be compared with the encouragement of results-based management in the action plan. The fact that BiH does not have a functioning market economy is thus presented as one of the main problems to address in the reform cooperation. This representation of the “problem” can, when applying a more multidimensional perspective, be interpreted as simplistic. Post-war countries and post-authoritarian countries commonly undergo transitions from war to peace, from an authoritarian political system to a representative democratic one, which in most cases includes transitioning into a market economy. Lai (2020) illustrates how economic reforms and transitional justice processes often operate alongside one another, meaning that we fail to see overlapping dimensions of the process. Ignoring justice considerations in post-war economic reforms can reproduce and entrench gender justice, which is the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates.

Lai analyses post-war economic reforms and its gendered aspects through a justice lens and connects them to women’s experiences of socioeconomic violence during the post-war period. Results show that gendered circuits of violence operated through International Financial Institutes (IFI’s) interventions during BiH’s post-war period in the 1990’s, in the process of transitioning from wartime political economy to peacetime politics of privatisation and

liberalisation. This becomes particularly evident when studying women among marginalised working-class communities. The transformation from a socialist to a market economy in BiH was guided by the Dayton Peace Agreement, that established that the scope of the country's post-war transformation was to promote a market economy. This resulted in new welfare reforms and labour laws that overlooked women's experiences of socioeconomic violence, thus entrenching gendered injustice. The active role of the state in promoting employment was switched to liberalising the labour market. The new labour laws promoted a system with part-time and temporary employment where dismissing employees became easier, while social services also became increasingly privatised and decentralised (Lai, 2020).

The shrinking of social services and failed protection of rights like healthcare, maternity leave and pensions made the situation for already vulnerable people even worse. Privatisations carried out had, in addition, no regard for gender disparities or socioeconomic justice and deprived women of a workplace where they previously had been guaranteed reforms of social and economic equity. The removal of a series of social services that had provided support for reproductive work that mainly falls onto women, subsequently led to women's exclusion from participation in the workplace. The market economy agenda ultimately supported the post-war economic stability at the expense of gender justice, redressing gendered forms of socioeconomic justice (Lai, 2020). The discourse in the policy where market economy is the end goal thus risks being too oversimplified, where aspects of socioeconomic justice and gender justice fails to be problematised. Practical effects of this type of discourse can be found in the results from the cluster interview, where the CSOs confirmed the lack of social services and a system reinforcing traditional gender norms, with these statements for instance:

- *“Related to the services that are available, we talked a little about participation of women in politics and local government, but in order to do that they have to have time, and they have to have some basic security, and they have to have some living wage or source of economic income. The lack of services is definitely decreasing the amount of available time for women, both culturally and from available social services”* (Cluster interview, 2022).
- *“You get parental leave one year as standard, by law parents can split it, but in real life there are very few cases. Often mothers do go back to work earlier*

*than one year because you need to survive. In addition, your position is not going to wait for you, and you risk getting fired” (Cluster interview, 2022).*

In the transition into a capitalist political economy from a socialist one, women’s social citizenship transformed as the gender contract remaining from the socialist period supporting women’s employment and granted fundamental rights for employed women became questioned. To solve the abrupt growth in poverty and fiscal pressures and mitigate rising unemployment, the male breadwinner model was assumed to be optimal. This re-traditionalization of gender relations in combination with gender-blind interventions affected post-socialist childcare policies, and BiH for example experienced one of the greatest erosions of maternity leave rights among the post-socialist countries. Today, fathers in the entities of FBiH and RS can use maternity leave after the 60<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> day after childbirth, but only if both parents are employed and if the mother directly returns to work. This, in combination with conservative gender roles and low female employment rate, are aggravating factors when talking about women’s economic empowerment. Countries that rely on a segmented social citizenship that mainly enables people with stable employment child-care related rights, not only leads to gender equality issues but also tend to contribute to an exclusionary citizenship based on class (Dobrotic and Obradovic, 2020). The assumption that a functioning market economy is the solution, without any further justice problematisation, in this aspect lacks the contextual perspective needed to break patterns of gendered and social inequity within the country.

Further goals regarding economic progress and democracy is in the policy formulated in terms of:

*“Strengthened prerequisite for accountability, increased transparency and decreased corruption” (p. 3).*

*“Strengthened prerequisites for open economies that are integrated in regional, EU:s and international value chains and markets” (p. 3).*

*“Civil society’s role in creating an inclusive dialogue, anchoring the respect for democracy and contributing to increased trust in society should be strengthened,*

*including increased prerequisite for accountability and a sustainable cooperation between a range of actors of change” (p. 7).*

*“In the area of an including economic development, the activity should contribute to developing the possibilities for employment with decent working conditions. Marginalised groups are prioritised” (p. 7).*

The last statement is contradictory to the goal of market economy, since market economy, without a context-based justice perspective, tend to decrease possibilities for employment with decent working conditions, especially when it comes to marginalised groups, as previous research from the post-war period has exemplified. Problem representations being too horizontal and unspecified creates the possibility for these types of contradictions, where it is evident that efforts to solve one problem might lead to the reproduction of another. Furthermore, studies show that agencies have less and less resources to mainstream gender into their projects, which is why the demand for external experts and consultants has grown, leaving consultants to be responsible for executing the government’s politics. When formal institutions are replaced by experts and consultants, transparency and accountability suffer (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019).

These statements and goals above are policy directions that leaves a lot to the interpreter to make more tangible and concrete. Hence, it is in this case up to the officials at the international unit at SEPA, to interpret and transform the policy into practical efforts. In these policies, it is often assumed that the reader already knows what the “problem” is, making it complicated for administrators to implement the policy in projects in the “accurate” way (Rönblom & Alnebratt, 2019). Evidently the strategy of gender mainstreaming leaves the implementation open to different interpretations, which has led to discussions on if the strategy has become a goal in its own right instead of in fact achieving gender equality. Overly simplified statements like “marginalised groups are prioritised”, would be accurate if there were any further policies or directions based on the situation of marginalised groups of specific countries, but with the strategy of reform cooperation in the Western Balkans being the closest guide to the reform cooperation in BiH, there is a lack of an intersectional perspective needed for approaching multidimensional inequalities in the specific context of a specific country (Kotze, Blazheva & Dymitrow, 2021).

## 6 Conclusion

I went to Sarajevo to get a picture of local experiences of the problem regarding gender equality and the connection with environmental issues like air pollution in BiH. Not only did I want to rely on previous research but also gather my own empirical material to see if it was coherent with previous findings. The findings from the cluster interview and the household survey, together with previous research in combination with my theoretical framework, gave me the contextual insight that was needed for an analysis on the chosen policies and find out the accuracy of their problem representations.

I found that the problem representations on site in BiH differ with the representations of the problem in the Swedish policies. I also found that this discrepancy and the lack of defined goals and problem representations in the policies could potentially lead to misdirected efforts that reproduce processes of gender inequality. This since the analysed policies lack an in-depth and well-defined justice perspective, a perspective needed to not risk reproducing and reinforcing gender blind measures like in the post-war period in the 1990's. When performing this study and disseminating the policies *Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022* and the *Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation in the Western Balkans 2021-2027*, I found that one of the biggest problems represented in these, is the lack of functioning market economies integrated with the EU and international markets. When looking at the case of BiH, however, there are studies supporting the fact that economic reforms post-war, with the attempt of implementing a market economy, reinforced socio-economic and gender inequity due to the lack of a justice perspective (Lai 2020). The explicit goal of a functioning market economy in these policies, formulated without any further problematisation of the country's challenges regarding social and gendered equity, could therefore be an issue. Findings from the cluster interview supports this problematisation of the discourse in the policies that encourages results-based management, due to the participants expressed experiences of internationally funded projects being too short and allocated insufficient resources, resulting in a lacking ability to implement profound and sustainable change.

The fact that I, as an intern, had the responsibility of applying an in-depth gender perspective on a SIDA- funded project (additionally in the concluding phase), indicates shortcomings of in-house resources available for applying the strategy of gender mainstreaming onto Swedish international reform cooperation. When dissecting the policies steering the project on improving air quality in BiH, the analysis concluded that the prerequisites for practically mainstreaming gender into the specific project were insufficient – due to a lack of context-based problem formulations and practical hands-on directives to follow. Policies are hence left to the officials at SEPA to interpret, and when resources to do so are insufficient, the question is how these policies are supposed to turn into implementation and who is accountable for the execution.

However, one thing that the policies state is to listen to and communicate with local actors, a strategy that I have followed by conducting the cluster interview with local CSOs on site in Sarajevo, as well as conducting the household survey. The empirical findings from the cluster interview was, together with previous research and theoretical framework, used to form a contextual analysis on gender issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina for it to be applied on the work on improving air quality in the country. Findings from the cluster interview show that CSOs in BiH addressing gender issues lack sufficient resources for working with gendered effects of environmental issues like air pollution. My analysis of the policies also show that the subjects of environment and gender equality are presented as separate issues without any explicit connection, even though the results from the cluster interview showed that the CSOs on site sees a clear connection and urgency on issues connecting gender equality issues and environmental issues. If gender is not mainstreamed even in the policies that guides projects, this ultimately aggravates the possibility for individual projects and officials to apply a gender perspective successfully in projects and implementing environmental efforts that are gender responsive.

This study is hoped to act as an example that can prove the importance of, and inspire future execution of, contextual and in-depth gender analyses within Swedish international reform cooperation that could help transforming the Feminist Foreign Policy and the gender mainstreaming strategy from horizontal bureaucratic statements into practical efforts.



## 7 Future Research

My study on the project on improving air quality in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that the resources lack for applying the strategy of gender mainstreaming accordingly. It can be assumed that this case is not an isolated phenomenon, and further similar studies should be done on other cases to see if this problem is widely spread in Swedish international reform cooperation. If these studies show that this problem is indeed horizontal, I furthermore want to suggest evaluating the possibility of implementing a systematic development of the horizontal gender mainstreaming strategy. I would propose analysing if there is another way to go, other than relying on individual projects and officials to interpret generalized statements of gender equality in policies, and instead have both the goals and the problem representations in each policy being more concrete and defined. However, if the current strategy of gender mainstreaming continues to guide the Swedish feminist foreign policy and the international reform cooperation, I suggest analysing the possibility of increasing agencies resources for having in-house officials responsible for creating specific context-based guidelines and tools adapted for working with gender equality in each individual country and/or region, that can steer the implementation of projects and ensure accountability for the implementation of the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy. In addition, I want to stress the benefit of having a gender perspective applied on a project in the inception phase rather than towards the end when all efforts already have been implemented.

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