

THE POLITICS OF

INTERSECTIONALITY

**GENDER EQUALITY,
INTERSECTIONALITY, AND
DIVERSITY IN EUROPE**

LISE ROLANDSEN AGUSTÍN



The Politics of Intersectionality

The Politics of Intersectionality series builds on the longstanding insights of intersectionality theory from a vast variety of disciplinary perspectives. The books in this series represent an interrogation of intersectionality at various levels of analysis. They unabashedly foreground the politics of intersectionality in a way that is designed to both honor the legacy of earlier scholarship and push the boundaries of intersectionality's value to the academy and most importantly to the world. We interpret the series title, "The Politics of Intersectionality," in two general ways:

First, we emphasize the politics of intersectionality, broadly conceived; that is to say we include debates among scholars regarding the proper conceptualization and application of the term "intersectionality" as part and parcel of the series' intellectual project. What this means pragmatically is that rather than dictatorially denote an extant definition of intersectionality and impose it on every author's manuscript, as series editors our task has been to push each author to grapple with their own conceptualization of intersectionality and facilitate their interaction with an ever-growing body of global scholarship, policy, and advocacy work as they render such a conceptualization *transparent* to readers, *reflexive* as befits the best feminist work, and *committed* to rigorous standards of quality no matter the subject, the method, or the conclusions. As editors we have taken such an active role precisely because grappling with the politics of intersectionality demands our adherence to the normative standards of transparency, reflexivity, and speaking to multiple and mutually constituting sites of power for which intersectionality is not only known but lauded as the gold standard. It is our honor to build this area of scholarship across false boundaries of theory and praxis, artificially distinct academic disciplines, and the semipermeable line between scholarship and activism. No less importantly we emphasize politics to mean, well, *politics*, whether everyday senses of justice; so-called formal politics of social movements, campaigns, elections, policy, and government institutions; or personal politics of identity, community, and activism across a broad swath of the world. While this general conceptualization of politics lends itself to the social sciences, we define social sciences in a broad way that again seeks to unite theoretical concerns (whether normative or positive) with interpretive and empirical approaches across an array of topics far too numerous to list in their entirety.

The second way we interpret the series title is with an emphasis on the word intersectionality. That is, the books in this series do not depend solely on 20-year old articulations of intersectionality; they are steeped in a rich literature of both substantive and analytical depth that in the twenty-first century reaches around the world. This is not your professor's "women of color" or "race-class-gender" series of the late twentieth century. As series editors we seek to develop manuscripts that aspire to engagement with the best and brightest global thinking on intersectionality as a body of research that is in fact worthy of the intellectual, political, and personal risks taken by so many of its earliest interlocutors in voicing and naming this work. We thus relate to intersectionality as both methodological and analytical tools that are firmly rooted in the epistemological tradition of the feminist-situated gaze but do not necessarily prioritize discussion of gender relations over other crosscutting social, economic, and political power relations.

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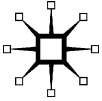
Gender Equality, Intersectionality, and Diversity in Europe

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*To Óscar and Kira
Linus and Marcos*

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SERIES INTRODUCTION: THE POLITICS OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Currently intersectionality scholarship lacks a meaningful clearing-house of work that speaks across (again false) boundaries of a particular identity community under study (e.g., Black lesbians, women of color, environmental activists), academic disciplines or the geographical location from which the author writes (e.g., Europe, North America, Southeast Asia). For that reason we expect that the bibliographies of the manuscripts will be almost as helpful as the manuscripts themselves, particularly for senior professors who train graduate students and graduate students seeking to immerse themselves broadly and deeply in contemporary approaches to intersectionality. We are less sanguine, however, about the plethora of modifiers that have emerged to somehow modulate intersectionality—whether it be intersectional stigma, intersectional political consciousness, intersectional praxis, post-intersectionality, paradigm intersectionality or even Crenshaw’s original modes of structural and political intersectionality. Our emphasis has been on building the subfield rather than consciously expanding the lexicon of modes and specialities for intersectionality.

In this fifth book in the series, we are expanding our focus from social movements and theoretical debates to study also the ways politics of intersectionality operate in the arena of public policies. Rolandsen Agustín studies the complex ways in which the EU has been tackling issues of diversity and intersectionality. In particular she differentiates but also examines the relationships between questions of mobilization and issues of institutionalization of policies in the EU. Focusing on the EU also facilitates the examination of the methodological question of how to study politics and policies of intersectionality in the supra-, if not transnational space.

One of the major contributions of this book is serving as a cautionary tale for policy makers from other regions of the world who seek to implement such policies at the national or transnational level as well as for feminist and other activists who seek to intervene in this domain.

While on the one hand this tale is disappointing to strong advocates of intersectionality, to ignore these risks might just enhance them in other parts of the world. Part of the issue, of course, is that just advocating politics and policies of intersectionality is a necessary but not a sufficient step and the analysis offered in this book is important when we aspire to refine and constitute case-sensitive approaches to tackle these issues. To do so, Rolandsen Agustín suggests we differentiate analytically, when studying these issues, between the dimensions of ideas, agency, and context that interact with each other as strategic policy frames are set forward in a context of particular political and discursive opportunity structures, which create dynamics of inclusion and exclusion within the European transnational framework of multilevel politics.

The Politics of Intersectionality series therefore includes theoretical, empirical, and policy considerations of the ways questions of equality, diversity, and marginalizations are being tackled in different geographical, social, and political spaces. We welcome further proposals from any scholar or activist who can offer us and the readership of the series further insights of these complex issues in either a monograph or an edited volume.

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LISE ROLANDSEN AGUSTÍN
Aalborg, August 2012

INTRODUCTION: CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN UNION GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

Gender equality policies in the European Union (EU) have, from the adoption of the equal-pay principle in the 1957 Treaty of Rome up until the late 1980s, mainly focused on equal treatment in the employment field. In the 1980s and especially in the 1990s measures of positive action and equal opportunities were increasingly introduced in the soft law policies of the Union.¹ In this way a dual-track strategy emerged, combining formal equality before the law (equal treatment and women's rights) with substantive equality of outcome (positive action and gender equality) (Hoskyns 1996; Kantola 2010; Lombardo 2003; Lombardo and Meier 2007; Rees 1998; Stratigaki 2005).² However, in the mid- and late 1990s, the limited impact of both equal treatment and positive action led to the introduction of a third gender equality strategy, namely gender mainstreaming (Squires 2007). All policies at all levels should take into account gender equality concerns and the potentially gendered impact of their adoption. This was a way of directing attention toward structural and systemic dimensions of gender inequality, and at the same time the strategy broadened the scope of EU gender equality policies to areas outside employment (Kantola 2010; Lombardo 2003; Lombardo and Meier 2007; Stratigaki 2005).³

Nevertheless, the dominant discourse on gender equality, not least in the European Commission (EC) and the Council, has been marked by the main objective of increasing women's labor-market participation (Duncan 1996).⁴ This is directly linked to aims of economic development and growth (COM[2000]335; COM[2006]92): Higher rates of women's labor-market participation are thought to strengthen economic competitiveness by enhancing the labor force as well as diversifying it. Thus, the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth, adopted by the Council in March 2010, includes the aim of a 75 percent employment rate for both women and men, and the 2009

Council conclusions on gender equality: Strengthening growth and employment specifically state that

gender equality is crucial for fulfilling the EU objectives of economic and social cohesion and of a high level of employment, as well as for ensuring sustainable growth and competitiveness, and for tackling the demographic challenge; all these aims can be furthered by reaching the target of higher employment rates for women and men. (15488/09)

This book focuses on how specific gender equality policies in the EU have come about by analyzing policy-making processes and negotiations over policy meanings, which include both EU institutional actors and civil society organizations operating at the transnational level. The empirical analyses of the different chapters illustrate the ways in which the dominant discourses and practices of the EU gender equality policy framework influence what can be done and proposed through current policy-making structures and mechanisms, as well as vice versa. As an example, gender equality demands that are phrased and formulated in such a way as to resonate with the dominant EU discourse of economic growth will have a better chance of impacting policies, even if this means reducing the meaning of gender equality to cover mainly women's labor-market participation. Inspired by the methodological perspective of frame analysis, I consider frames, such as the articulation of gender equality as women's labor-market participation, to relate to discourses, such as the one on economic growth, in the sense that frames draw on discourses as general ideational frameworks. Framing can be considered a possibility of enacting agency within the limits and constraints of a particular discourse.

Shedding light on these processes of policy making, throughout the book I focus particularly on the institutionalization of intersectionality in the EU and the ways in which intersectionality concerns have developed at the transnational level. This is linked to the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), which introduced one of the major novelties of EU equality policies in the last decades, namely article 13 on antidiscrimination.⁵ This article has become a common point of reference for European policy makers⁶ and academic scholars alike (Kantola 2010; Lombardo et al. 2009a; Squires 2007; 2010; Van der Vleuten 2007). It envisages EU actions to combat the six grounds of discrimination: sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation.⁷ The EU works with a multiple discrimination perspective on these grounds, meaning that there is

a focus on addressing several grounds together when pertinent (see the 2007 EC report “Tackling Multiple Discrimination. Practices, Policies and Laws”). Together with the introduction of article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty and multiple discrimination policies on the EU policy agenda, I argue that the enlargement process, the right-wing turn in member-state policies as well as in the composition of the Council and the European Parliament (EP), the struggle over competences, and the increased focus on migratory processes and minority groups, as well as economic growth and employment have impacted the discourses of the three key EU institutions (Commission, Parliament, and Council) and influenced the understanding of gender equality within the EU.

However, it does not follow from this interpretation of recent events in EU policy making within the social field that developments are linear. Rather, I dispute the idea of an evolutionary policy constantly increasing and improving the gender equality content of EU policies. On the contrary, I find developments to be marked by conjunctures or waves through which strong gender equality substance is replaced by weaker notions and vice versa. Similarly, strong notions in one area coexist with weak notions in other areas. I thus contest the suggestion made by Ruzza (2004) that “bureaucratic incrementalist logics” may take over once a policy issue is introduced on the EU agenda; I do not find this to be necessarily the case in the field of gender equality policies. Usually, elements of policies articulated in the context of EU gender equality policies in recent years have references or more elaborated antecedents in the early years of the EP.

The political scope for action is always contested as gender equality policies beyond the labor market is placed in a limbo between the impossibility of advancing policies due to legal constraints, the division of competences between the EU and the member states, as well as member states’ reluctance, and the apparently strong political will demonstrated by specific actors across the institutional spectrum.⁸ Gender equality policies are a particularly interesting policy field in this sense; it is a contested area of policy development and this strengthens the research interest in the negotiation of the policy content and the lessons that can be drawn from its analyses. One Council representative interviewed in relation to this research endeavor particularly argues that gender equality policies are understood to be a sensitive political area due to its value-laden characteristics:

We have actually had some quite hard battles in order to agree on some of the texts in [the gender equality] field precisely, harder than I have

experienced with any of the other fields because there are such cultural values behind this really... I think there is more of a struggle regarding gender equality... When we have had debates on gender equality, then they have been harder to finish, it has been more ferocious debates, they have reached a higher level [institutionally]... So I actually think, you could say that, that there is somehow more at stake because it is a matter of value communities. (Council official, permanent representation, interview June 2010)

In this sense, gender equality stands out as a policy field from which we can learn important lessons about policy-making processes. More importantly in a broader perspective, the role of the EU case can be used as a lens through which we can interpret and assess transnational politics in general. The EU case analyzed here is, in many senses, a forerunner of transnational policy making due to its relatively advanced multilevel structure. Even though the EU in these terms is rather unique on a global level, the case nevertheless potentially sheds light on transnational policy dynamics elsewhere, be that in other regions or at a universal level. This concerns, for instance, other contexts in which a multiplicity of states are involved in policy negotiations or where civil society actors make use of differentiated channels of institutional access, at different levels of decision making, in order to make an impact on policy outputs. Whereas the EU is an advanced case of both transnational policy dynamics and multilevel policy structures, the findings of this case study may shed light on similar yet less-developed trends elsewhere in the world and on a global level, for instance, through the institutions of the United Nations.

AIM OF THE BOOK

Empirically, the book analyses EU policy-making processes in the field of gender equality, up until 2010, with a particular focus on diversity and intersectionality. The focus is placed on gender as a ground of discrimination. The legal and institutional framework of multiple inequalities is a challenge for gender equality policies (Squires 2007) and, thus, the tension between different grounds of discrimination is one of the key dimensions of this book. Concerns have been voiced by civil society actors as to whether gender would be marginalized with the increased attention to multiple discrimination. This debate is central to the contents and analyses of the book, as it seeks to uncover the impact that the particular way of institutionalizing intersectionality in the EU has had on gender equality policies and whether or not processes of policy degendering has occurred as

a consequence of this. At the same time the civil society landscape at the European, transnational level is becoming increasingly diversified as new groups begin to mobilize. Herein lies a potential for a second impact of the institutionalization of intersectionality in terms of gender concerns, in this case the ways in which women's interests are being represented in EU policies and policy-making processes through civil society participation and whether or not this interaction may have changed due to intersectional concerns, that is, how women's organizations and their demands are included or excluded from policy making.

Analyzing the developments that have characterized EU gender equality policies and women's mobilization at the European, transnational level since the introduction of multiple discrimination policies, two specific challenges are identified: (1) diversity of women's interests and (2) concerns regarding the degendering of policies. On the one hand, these two aspects are separate, in that the former focuses primarily on the civil society panorama and its actors and the latter on policy making. On the other hand, they are interrelated as they address some of the developments that have characterized the field of EU gender equality policies in recent years, especially after the introduction of the multiple discrimination approach.

The diversity challenge is intensively discussed in the literature, both on a theoretical and on an empirical level. Some attention has been directed toward the interaction (alliances or competitions) between different nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) combating discrimination and inequality (see for instance Woodward 2006). However, little focus has been placed on transnational organizations working with constituencies who are discriminated against in multiple ways.⁹ I analyze the challenges faced by these organizations and their interaction with majority organizations focusing on one discrimination ground exclusively. I also seek to address the ways in which majority organizations themselves handle the challenges coming from the current panorama of European, transnational civil society that includes both organizations covering other discrimination grounds and minority organizations. The aim is to cover new empirical ground by identifying, analyzing, and discussing the diversity challenges faced by women's organizations in Europe. Furthermore, I analyze the interaction between the different transnational women's organizations and the EU institutions with a particular focus on processes of in/exclusion.

As regards degendering, this can be defined as the disappearance or inarticulation of gender dimensions in relevant policies of a given

field or institution. Even though references to the concern regarding degendering recur in the relevant literature, few scholars have conducted detailed textual analyses of the phenomenon or looked into policy-making processes and immediate policy consequences.¹⁰ I analyze whether or not tendencies of degendering can be detected and to what extent they might be problematic for gender equality objectives at the EU level. The increased focus on diversity and multiple discrimination in EU policies may lead to a diminished focus on gender and, subsequently, a degendering of policies. In this way, the two identified challenges are intimately related to each other.

Mobilization and Institutionalization

The book is structured around the two thematic challenges related to the development of intersectionality at the transnational level, as mentioned above, namely those of diversity (chapters 2 and 3) and degendering (chapters 4 and 5), as well as the interrelation between them (chapter 6). I argue that transnational intersectionality in practice concerns processes of institutionalization and mobilization (chapter 1). This means that both a top-down and a bottom-up perspective are included in the theoretical arguments and empirical analyses presented in the book. Processes of institutionalization and mobilization occur in relation to three different levels, each of them addressed in the individual chapters of the book: (1) the institutional setup (see especially chapter 2 on multiple discrimination and chapter 5 on transnational policy framings); (2) policies and policy making (see especially chapter 4 on policies combating gender-based violence and chapter 6 on the “gendered other”); and (3) civil society mobilization and interaction (see especially chapter 3 on minority intersectional constituencies). Attending to intersectionality at the transnational level through mobilization means that we must look at the diversity of (intersecting) voices present in civil society through the organizing of majority and minority women, their demands, and the ways in which they are in/excluded as policy interlocutors of the transnational institutions of the EU. The dimension of institutionalization is concerned with making room for diversity in policies (i.e., the content and the diverse interpretations of “women’s interests” and “gender equality”) as well as in policy making (i.e., the institutional processes of in/exclusion).

Thus, throughout the chapters and analyses of this book, I will argue that the development and practice of intersectionality at the European, transnational level are the result of the parallel and

interrelated processes of mobilization, on the one hand, and institutionalization, on the other. Mobilization refers here to the claims-making efforts set forward by transnational women's organizations in their attempts to influence EU policies on gender equality as well as their representation of the diversity of women's voices, seen from a transnational perspective. Conceiving mobilization as a dual dynamic that covers both the representation of interests through civil society activism and the inclusion of these voices and interests in institutional policies and policy-making processes through participatory mechanisms, I analyze in-depth the ways in which mobilization, in particular of transnational women's organizations, has been conducive to the way in which intersectionality is developed and practiced transnationally through EU policies and institutional structures. Social movements can attempt to put pressure on decision-making institutions in order to achieve change, but they are often limited in their efforts by the discursive structures in which they are embedded:

Movement actors and institutional actors often participate in the same discourse, framing specific ideas differently... Institutional discourses carry important assumptions that affect what even the challengers' discursive logic is able to "see." (Ferree and Merrill 2000, 459)

Thus, ideas are included and excluded through framing processes (Ferree 2003). In other words, I argue that while transnational mobilization of women's interests is constrained by the EU discourses and practices, it has nevertheless, at times, been decisive in terms of how, and which gender equality concerns were placed and maintained on the EU policy agenda and thus contributing to the institutionalization of intersectionality concerns.

Institutionalization, in turn, is conceptualized in this context as the ways in which policies and policy-making processes at the transnational level include and direct attention towards different inequalities. This concerns both policy contents and participatory processes, as mentioned above, that is, the potential inclusion of civil society organizations in policy-making processes or what can also be labeled as the institution/civil society interface of the EU gender machinery.¹¹ Thus, I analyze the ways in which intersectional concerns have been institutionalized at the transnational level by looking at the ways in which gender equality policies are formulated and framed, on the one hand, and at the institutional setup developed to include or exclude a diversity of (intersectional) voices, on the other. Concerning the

latter, I argue that the transnational model developed by the EU over the years have proven not to be inclusive enough to reflect the diversity of demands set forward by civil society organizations operating at the European level. Whereas the transnational space of mobilization opens up possibilities of collective action not found at the national and local levels, the difficulties of initiating and maintaining mobilization transnationally may exclude minority groups that do not have the resources or the institutional know-how to work as efficient advocacy groups at the European level. Thus, the institutional channels of access and the practices surrounding them impact the concerns, which may or may not be reflected in transnational gender equality policies.

The dual processes of mobilization and institutionalization and the ways in which they work at the transnational, European level in the development and practice of intersectionality in the EU is the key contribution of this book. It entails a combined focus on policy-making processes, civil society activism, and interaction between EU institutions and transnational women's organizations, which requires attention towards both policy content and policy processes. In this vein, a key argument set forward here is that diversity at the transnational level concerns both collective mobilization, through civil society organizations, as well as contestation over policy meanings, as an expression of the diversity of women's interests.

Political Intersectionality

Combining discursive policy analysis with a focus on institutions and collective agents, this book explores interrelations between gender equality, diversity, and intersectionality at the European level as these are expressed through EU policy-making processes and women's transnational mobilization. The theoretical and empirical aim of the book is to integrate the concepts of difference, diversity, and gender equality into a coherent and contextualized model for analyzing intersectionality at the European transnational level. I argue that such a model must take into account gender and diversity in relation to women's organizing in the transnational sphere and EU policy-making processes. Furthermore the interrelation between the two—the EU/civil society interface—should be incorporated into the model as it highlights the dynamic aspects of the intersectionality model proposed and the way in which EU institutions and civil society organizations mutually influence each other (see chapter 1). Thus, a key integrating dimension of the book is the way in which

intersectionality is institutionalized at the European level, bearing in mind that this institutionalization is dynamic and changing and occurs in an interaction between EU institutions and transnational civil society organizations.

Intersectionality is intimately linked with the dual dynamic of mobilization and institutionalization, the theoretization of which is a key concern of this book. I distinguish intersectionality, as a theoretical and methodological concept implying the interaction between different inequality creating categories, from multiple discrimination, which is the term used in EU policies, suggesting an approach where different inequalities are added to one another rather than necessarily interacting. I furthermore argue that in politics, intersectional concerns can be expressed both in an inclusionary and an exclusionary manner, depending on the ideology and political strategy of the articulating actors.

In terms of mobilization, intersectional concerns come to the fore in relation to the representation of minority groups and intersectional constituencies. In terms of institutionalization, the recognition of minority women as policy interlocutors and target groups and of their demands as legitimate policy concerns, are key indicators of the development and practice of intersectionality at the European, transnational level. Thus, here I address the political dimensions of intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological approach. This is operationalized through a dual focus on intersecting categories in policies, on the one hand, and minority intersectional constituencies, representing diverse interests and setting forward a plurality of claims in civil society, on the other. In other words, the intersectional analysis pursued here is divided into the intersectional categories articulated through policies; the way in which different categories are addressed in the institutional setup of the EU (i.e., how are intersectional categories reflected in the institutional division of responsibilities of the different units); and the channels of access offered to different constituencies through the EU/civil society interface.

Following Ferree (2009), I argue that analyzing political intersectionality requires attention to the contextualization of how inequalities have been institutionalized, in this case at the transnational level. This has several implications in the case of the EU: Contextualizing intersectionality implies taking into consideration the privileged position of gender in the history of EU equality policies, where gender has hitherto been the most significant inequality category, as well as the recent turn towards diversity and multiple inequalities, emphasizing other inequalities in new policy initiatives, with the risk of ignoring or

downplaying gender. Furthermore through contextualization, attention is also directed towards the multilevel structure of EU policy making and the way in which the institutional setup has influenced the institutionalization of intersectionality, by facilitating different levels of policy making and channels of access to policy processes as well as the consequent possibilities of civil society mobilization and participation in policy-making processes. The latter also concerns conflicts and contestations between different actors; the increased emphasis on multiple discrimination in EU policies has led both to competition between civil society organizations representing different inequality categories and to new alliances, facilitated and promoted by the new institutional framework that favors cooperation across inequality grounds and their respective transnational umbrella organizations.

Ideas, Agency, and Context

A key interest in this book is how frames (understood as configurations of ideas) are institutionalized in the development of gender equality policies in the EU. Building on the presumption that ideas and framing of ideas¹² matter in policy making, one of the objects of analysis is the particular frame articulations set forward in the policy processes and the development of EU policies in terms of change and continuity. As an interviewed Council official argues, “There is a wording. You really have to look at wording very carefully... The wording is very, very important because that is always negotiated in detail... It is important to look at exactly how these things are phrased” (Council official, General Secretariat, interview May 2010). Analyzing the “phrasing” or the framing of policies is a central aspect of my arguments here.

Discursive policy analysis and studies of policy making at the EU level are still developing, and research within these areas are not many. This book contributes to the methodological challenge of developing and qualifying policy frame analysis mainly by strengthening the attention directed at contextual dimensions, on the one hand, and frame nuances, on the other. The aim is to interpret framing strategies in policy-making processes as well as shifts and contestations in the ideational development of EU policies, both in terms of continuity and change. Particularly, I interpret the role of ideas in policy processes as well as their interrelation with dimensions of agency and context. The ideational elements include both frames and discourses, as articulated through policies; agency refers to particular institutions and organizations active in the field as well as their strategies and intentions; and

context covers the institutional setup and structures, including the civil society interface, as well as political and discursive opportunity structures emanating from this context. The interrelation between the dimensions of ideas, agency, and context leads me to focus on the key actors' strategic framings of policy ideas as well as the specific opportunity structures of the institutional context of the policy-making processes. A key argument made throughout the book is that the identified dimensions interact with each other as strategic policy frames are set forward within a particular context, namely that created by the political and discursive opportunity structures of the EU as well as its civil society interface. This context is marked by processes of inclusion and exclusion, which means that certain actors have more and better access than others to policy-making processes within the transnational framework of multilevel politics. For example, at the transnational level, the agenda of women's organizations defending women's participation in the labor market as a primary goal of gender equality policies has resonated with dominant EU policies. According to an EC official interviewed, the Commission is open to listening to and receiving all organizations, but an organization such as the European Women's Lobby (EWL) adapts more adequately to the needs and interests of the EC than other organizations because they share the political goals and dominant discourse of the EU institution, namely those of increased female labor-market participation (EC official, DG Employment, interview December 2007). Thus, organizations whose demands resonate with the dominant discourses of the EU institutions are to a larger extent included in policy-making processes than those organizations who challenge the dominant discursive framework. Ideally the institutional inclusion of civil society voices would allow for the expression of a diversity of ideas and challenge dominant discourses; however, I argue that in practice efficiency is often prioritized over plurality, and resonance and dominant institutional discourses are given prevalence over challenging alternative discourses in the actual functioning of the transnational institutions of the EU.

The aim of the analysis presented throughout the chapters of the book is to interpret key actors' strategic framings of policy ideas within particular political and discursive opportunity structures, contextually related to the policy-making processes of the EU. Methodologically, I focus on discursive approaches to policy analysis¹³ by highlighting the intersubjective construction of meaning in EU policy making as well as the discursive negotiations taking place in the interinstitutional dialogue and in the EU/civil society interaction. In relation to this, the distinction between frames and discourses is significant.