Exploring the Norwegian paradox of vertical sex segregation: Strategies and experiences in politics, academia and company boards

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Cathrine Seierstad certify that the thesis entitled ‘Exploring the Norwegian paradox of vertical sex segregation: Strategies and experiences in politics, academia and company boards’ I have presented for examination for the Degree of PhD of the University of London (Queen Mary College) is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is joint work with others. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. I declare that this authorisation does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe the rights of any third party.

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Abstract

On all international measures of gender equality Scandinavian countries emerge as more equal with Norway as the most equal of countries. Yet, despite an apparent equality, vertical segregation is resilient in Scandinavian countries. The use of affirmative action (AA) has been offered as a potential way to challenge inequality and occupational sex segregation, yet, as illustrated by Acker (2006b) these strategies often fail. Few studies have investigated women’s experience of gender segregation in Norway, moreover, we know little of the experience of women in occupations influenced by AA strategies. This thesis aims to contribute to understanding the experience of women in the ‘most equal of countries’ and it draws on Acker’s (2006b) ‘inequality regimes’ as an analytical framework. This thesis takes a multilevel approach to explore gendering practices within Norway in three occupational groups; politics, academia and corporate boards of directors to understand the processes underpinning vertical segregation. The rationale for focusing on these three occupational groups lies in the nature of the groups and their use of AA, as well as the different representation of women. The thesis builds on a variety of methods of both a qualitative and quantitative nature and will demonstrate the nature of the interrelationship of structural factors and individual agency in understanding the Norwegian paradox. In particular, 66 in-depth interviews with women employed in senior positions within the three occupational groups form the key method. In addition, the thesis draws on secondary quantitative data to situate women in the three occupational groups and in Norway.

Findings reveal that the idea of Norway’s equality is still more of an aspiration than reality as gender inequality regimes are present in politics, academia, and boards of directors, but they take different forms. The thesis finds that Norwegian organisations are not gender neutral; instead they provide a set of institutional conditions that encourage forms of vertical segregation. In particular, the thesis identifies the importance of political strategies, both related to AA as well as welfare for improving equality. Nevertheless, the thesis also acknowledges the complexity of these strategies and the importance of designing country and occupational group specific strategies in order to progress. The thesis uncovers the resilience of gendered social processes in women’s exclusion but also highlights the fewer and more constrained conditions under which ‘woman’ may also have an advantage. Hence, this thesis contributes to the literature on occupational sex segregation and AA.
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A great share of the participants in this study described the importance of a supportive family, especially parents, in order to pursue higher education and career oriented goals. I couldn’t agree more. A more personal debt of gratitude is due to my parents. Thank you for the numerous phone calls and all the encouragement over the last years. Even though I have been far away from home, you have always made the distance feel smaller. In addition, I would like to thank my grandparents for being proud and supportive throughout the years. Finally, to my sister and friend Charlotte, thank you for all the visits, support, chats and all the wise words.
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Chapter One

1.1 INTRODUCTION
A century after the fight for universal suffrage and decades after the introduction of equality and antidiscrimination acts, occupational sex segregation is still a global phenomenon that occupies all corners of society (Acker, 2009). It is found at all economic development levels, under all religious and political systems, in addition to diverse social and cultural settings (Anker, 1997: 315). Yet, forms and patterns vary considerably between countries and regions. Together with the other Scandinavian countries, Norway is perceived as one of the most equal countries in the world on international rankings of gender equality (UNDP, 2007-2008; WEF, 2008) and has a variety of political strategies promoting equality, including the woman friendly (Hernes, 1987) social democratic (Esping-Andersen, 1990) welfare model, in addition to a variety of affirmative action (AA) strategies. Therefore, it can be seen as a puzzle that the labour markets in these countries are characterised with surprisingly strong patterns of occupational sex segregation, both horizontal (women and men employed in different types of occupations) and vertical (women and men employed at different levels). As illustrated by Alvesson and Due Billing (2009: 4) ‘the case of Scandinavia is not that atypical; even though it is reputed to have a high degree of gender equality, the overall picture is highly contradictory and in many respects contradicts the general positive view presented by the statistics on female political leaders and public sector top administrators’.

Vertical sex segregation and the lack of women in senior positions, especially in the private sector, politics and academia, are global phenomena (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003; Healy et al., 2005; Dahlerup, 2006). This is an indication that sex is a common barrier for women’s career advancement in large institutions worldwide (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003). The absence of women in decision-making processes in politics (Dahlerup, 2006) and corporate boards (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003: 349) has, over recent decades, become a key concern and an important topic globally both for states and policymakers as well as researchers (Huse, 2007; Vinnicombe et al., 2008; Huse, 2009). In addition, financial instability over the last few years has affected countries and companies globally, which has given a renewed focus that highlights the need for further strategies to challenge the persistent trend of vertical sex segregation. Huse et al. (2009: 581) illustrated that in the private sector this unstable economic environment has
given renewed awareness to areas of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate governance, as well as the composition and roles of boards of directors (BODs). Consequently, gender representation and the inclusion of women and employee-elected members on boards are central in contemporary debates (Huse et al., 2009). In addition, the rhetoric on the subject of women, leadership and occupational sex segregation has developed. In particular, this has affected how masculinities and femininities are perceived. As argued by Lewis and Simpson (2010: 166) ‘while the discourse of merit places an emphasis on the similarities between men and women, an equally strong discourse of difference gives prominence to women’s distinct feminine characteristics’. The recent financial crisis has therefore given new prominence to arguments which emerged in the 1990s that women possess qualities and characteristics necessary for organisational success in the 21st century (Lewis and Simpson, 2010). Consequently, they made the important point that ‘whether women are conceptualised as similar or different from men, the suggestion is that organisational success is now possible in ways that were previously unsupportable’ (2010: 166).

Political strategies are in use globally to counteract vertical sex segregation with the aim to reduce, and ultimately eradicate, the preferential selection of men over women for powerful positions in order to get more equal and democratic societies and take advantage of all the human resources. Chang (2000) stated that there are mainly two areas where state intervention into the characteristics of women’s labourforce participation is likely to take place; equality of access and substantive benefits. Both kinds of state intervention are in place in Norway which has a strong national focus on equality (see Appendix One). Since the early 1980s AA³ policies have been in place in the public sector and in politics. In December 2003 the Norwegian Parliament passed an amendment to the Public Limited Companies Act (see Appendix Two) establishing a demand for gender balance. 1st of January 2006 the rules regarding privately owned public limited companies entered into force with a transitional period of two years requiring public limited companies’ BODs to have at least 40 per cent representation of each sex (this law will throughout the thesis be referred to as the ‘gender representation law’). In addition, a social democratic welfare approach is one of the key political foundations of Norwegian society.

The high position on international equality rankings together with strong focus and use of strategies, yet still having surprisingly high levels of occupational sex segregation,
have been referred to as the Norwegian or Scandinavian paradox (Kvande, 1999; Høggaard, 2002). The aim of this thesis is to explore the reasons for the apparent paradox of the resilience of vertical sex segregation in Norway, which is deemed among the most equal countries in the world and has a variety of equality strategies, both related to welfare and AA. The main focus of enquiry is on the vertical axis looking at the tendency for low representation of women in the most senior and powerful positions in three occupational groups: politics, academia and BODs.

1.2 CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL SEX SEGREGATION

This thesis investigates patterns of occupational sex segregation and equality in Norway by using a multilevel focus influenced by Layder’s (1993) approach to research strategy. Before exploring the justification for this approach, there is a need to briefly identify some of the consequences of occupational sex segregation and identify why this is such an central issue for academics and policymakers, in addition to men and women globally.

Labour markets in Europe are highly sex segregated (Rubery and Fagan, 1993; Rubery et al., 1999). Høggaard (2002: 16) claimed that at the beginning of the 1990s it was anticipated that, at the current speed of change, it would take approximately 400 years for women and men to be equally represented in the top positions of power in the spheres of business and politics, although the development differs between countries, levels of society and the public and private sector. There is no authoritative explanation as to why different and sometimes opposite patterns exist between countries, between levels in society and between types of organisation. Therefore, to understand the dynamics of occupational sex segregation is a complex undertaking, yet as Bradley and Healy (2008: 21) illustrated, there is a broad consensus that the structure of sex segregation remained relatively stable throughout the 20th century and has continued into the 21st century. Clark et al. (2003: 24) argued that segregation of jobs by sex is one of the most important long-term aspects of labour throughout the world. Padavic et al. (2002) maintained that assigning of tasks on the basis of workers’ sex is present in all societies. However, what sex does which tasks varies both between countries and over time (Padavic and Reskin, 2002: 7). It is widely argued that occupational segregation based on sex is one of the main factors contributing to women’s inequality in the labour market (Anker, 1997). The effects and consequences can be many. Hartmann (1976:
stated that it is ‘the primary mechanism in capitalist society that maintains the superiority of men over women, because it enforces lower wages for women in the labour market’. Anker (1997: 315) argued that occupational sex segregation is disadvantageous to women, and as a result, it has an fundamental negative effect on how men view women and on how women view themselves. Alvesson and Billing (1997: 54) illustrated a crucial factor arguing that ‘the concept of segregation implies that the division of labour is not based on ‘natural’ skills or on the ‘free will’ of individuals but that it needs explanation, especially because the segregation also results in inequalities, mainly that women are concentrated within low pay areas, whereas men’s jobs are better paid and offer better promotion prospects’. Further, the resilience of occupational segregation is seen as having essential implications for women and men, economic growth and efficiency (Clark et al., 2003: 24), and labour market rigidities (Anker, 1997: 315). In addition, the persistence of expectations and gender stereotypes of what is appropriate for women and men to do has negative effects on education and training and can therefore result in gender-based inequalities which might also be carried on into future generations (Anker, 1997: 315). Melkas and Anker (1998) claimed that a stringent division of work between women and men limits labour market options. It can therefore lead to the devaluation of work and thereby cause gendered pay differentials. This cannot be explained by differences in terms of educational levels or work experience. In fact, they argued that as a consequence occupational sex segregation leads to a lack of equal opportunities, which is one of the cornerstones of overall equality in society (Melkas and Anker, 1998: 6).

Blackburn et al. (2001) argued that occupational sex segregation has generally been understood as a structure of gender inequality, and segregation indices have been used as direct measures of this inequality. Nevertheless, they recognise that there are some awkward findings, such as the high segregation level in egalitarian Sweden, which is believed to be quite equal (Blackburn et al., 2001). Blackburn et al. (2000) argued that the reason why some countries are ranked high on both equality and segregation might be that studies are pointing to overall segregation which combines both horizontal and vertical axes. Therefore, when analysing occupational segregation, the need to distinguish between the two different forms of occupational segregation is central (Blackburn et al., 2000; Blackburn et al., 2002; Hakim, 2004). It is the vertical axis of segregation that is often the focus of public policy and debates about women’s equality. The idea of a glass ceiling is a common metaphor for vertical sex segregation and lack
of equality (Mandel and Semyonov, 2006). In addition, it is also argued (Acker, 2006a; Glover and Kirton, 2006) that some occupations that do not appear to be segregated can, nonetheless, be internally segregated. For this thesis, my focus is centrally concerned with vertical sex segregation and equality as the focus of enquiry.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH

There are several justifications for the focus of this thesis, both empirically and methodologically, which will be highlighted by exploring gaps and shortcomings in the existing literature.

The paradox of occupational sex segregation in Scandinavian countries is not a new phenomenon, yet, with the introduction of the gender representation law in the private sector in Norway, this thesis argues that new research is required as there are essential changes in the labour market and the situation for women and men. Scandinavian countries are often clustered together as they do have similar characteristics in terms of welfare approach (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1996; Esping-Andersen, 2002), patterns of equality (UNDP, 2007-2008; WEF, 2008; WEF, 2010), and occupational sex segregation (Melkas and Anker, 1997; Melkas and Anker, 1998). References are made to the Scandinavian welfare approach and the Scandinavian paradox in terms of policies, equality and occupational sex segregation. Nevertheless, an exploratory study from 2007 (Seierstad and Healy, forthcoming) investigating Scandinavian academia and the experience of equality for women academics in Norway, Sweden and Denmark pointed to significant differences between Scandinavian countries in terms of the discourse and experiences of equality, accentuating the need for country specific investigations. Hence, the results warned against treating Scandinavian women as a homogenous group endorsing O’Reilly’s (2006) view of the limitations of typologies based on country clusters.

Teigen (2006: 15) pointed out that there exist few studies investigating the pattern of occupational sex segregation in Norway. Some influential studies do exist, such as Skjeie and Teigen (2003), who by investigating power elites in Norway pointed to the paradox with strong male dominance within elites in most settings. Nevertheless, Teigen (2006) emphasised that the few studies that exist mainly look at the condition and change of occupational sex segregation in the labour market from the 1980s to 2005, which points to Norway having a segregated labour market with modest changes
over the last few decades, with segregation both of a horizontal and vertical nature. Langvasbråten (2009), also building on quantitative national data, showed how there are gendered patterns in politics and the private sector up to 2009. This thesis therefore offers a multilevel multi-method investigation into the current pattern of occupational sex segregation in Norway, in particular within the three occupational groups: politics, academia and BODs.4

The justification for focusing on politics, academia and BODs lies in the nature of these occupational groups. They are all important, powerful, high profile, and high status occupations. In fact, these occupational groups can be seen as key power centres in terms of being the political, economic and intellectual elite. In addition, there are significant differences that also make them particularly interesting for comparison. Both politics and academia are located in the public sector, while BODs are located in the private. For academia, formal qualifications and merit are essential for a career and climbing the hierarchical ladder. For directors, there are no set qualifications, yet this is generally a highly educated area where merit is essential for being nominated for, and getting, positions. In politics on the other hand, individuals are nominated and elected by the people and no formal qualifications are needed. In addition, the use of AA varies considerably between the occupational groups. While the use of radical strategies in terms of legal quotas is newly introduced in terms of the gender representation law for BODs, quotas of a voluntary nature have been in place in politics in most political parties for approximately 30 years. In academia on the other hand, only strategies of a liberal character are in use (the use of AA is explored in Chapter Six).

Moreover, in an international setting, these three occupational groups and their use of AA have contemporary importance. In politics, Dahlerup (2006) illustrated how there has been a pattern over recent years to introduce quotas, both of a voluntary and compulsory nature, in order to increase the share of women in parliaments and governments globally. As Norway has operated with voluntary quotas for three decades, the experience from Norway is highly relevant as many countries are now following this path. In their study of Turkish academia, Healy et al. (2005) illustrated that while maybe surprisingly Turkey has the highest share of women professors in Europe, to me even more surprising was that Norway and the Scandinavian countries are all ranked below the EU mean in terms of women professors. This study underlines the need for investigating the academic setting further. The newly introduced gender representation
law for BODs in Norway is of contemporary importance. In particular, Terjesen et al. (2009: 334) argued that ‘research into women on corporate boards is an important tool, not only for making an academic contribution, but also to provide the basis for change, not just for a more equitable, but also for a more effective gender representation at the decision-making levels of the corporate world.’ As there is international focus and interest in the experiences of Norwegian boards because of the new law, and as several other countries have and are considering following this path, this thesis is among the first investigations into this contemporary and central area, both related to qualitative and quantitative findings. In particular, this thesis investigates quantitative changes within BODs from 2002–2009 looking at several aspects of equality going beyond gender representation as little research on the effect of the gender representation law exists. In addition, and importantly, a qualitative approach provides insight into the directors’ experiences of this process. As argued by Terjesen et al. (2009: 332) ‘as extant literature [on women in the board room] is predominately based on publicly available information, truly innovative research would tap into female directors’ experience’. Except for a few notable studies, such as Huse and Solberg (2006), research on BODs has been dominated by a tradition of focusing on corporate financial performance (Zahra and Pearce, 1989) or been of a quantitative nature (Nielsen, 2009). By taking a multi-method approach, including interviews with women directors to uncover their experiences, this study fills an identified gap in the literature.

There are also methodological justifications for this study. Structural factors and barriers inside organisations have been an essential focus explaining vertical sex segregation in the labour market. This is also highly relevant for this study. In addition, in order to explain the reason for vertical sex segregation and lack of women in senior positions, this study takes a multilevel approach influenced by Layder’s (1993) ideas of a research map, taking all levels of society and the interrelationship between the levels with multiple foci into account. Hence, the puzzle of occupational sex segregation in Norway will be explored by having a multilayered analysis focusing on the individual, organisational and state levels in society, as this study sees these as interrelated and necessary for grasping reality. A critical approach to the macro context is central, both regarding the welfare and political approach, but also the cultural and social setting which will be important for this study. Therefore, Layder’s (1993) idea of a research map will guide the methodological approach. No Norwegian study taking a multilevel approach comparing the three different occupational groups (politics, academia and
BODs) using both qualitative and quantitative data exist. Hence, this study is not a case study of organisations, but aims to enrich knowledge of three different occupational groups influenced by different AA strategies. In addition, this study will divide the groups into three hierarchical levels, which again will enrich the data and provide a comparison not only between occupational groups, but also between hierarchical levels within and between the groups. For these reasons, this thesis will provide a multilevel investigation of Norway using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, 66 semi-structured in-depth interviews with senior women politicians, academics and directors form the key data. In addition, the thesis builds on international, national and occupational group data and statistics up until 2009.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES
As mentioned earlier, the aim of this thesis is to explore the reasons for the apparent paradox of the resilience of vertical sex segregation in Norway, which is deemed among the most equal countries in the world and has a variety of equality strategies, both related to welfare and AA. Inspired by the gaps in the academic literature as well as my interest in equality this thesis asks; what factors are important in explaining the lack of women in senior positions in gender equal Norway? Sub research questions are; In what way do gender inequality regimes operate in three Norwegian occupational groups?; How does the Norwegian welfare state and national history affect women’s situation in the labour market?; and finally; How do different forms of AA, from liberal to radical, work to challenge inequalities?

Influenced by a broad range of feminist ideas and ideals (Kanter, 1977; Harding, 1987; Acker, 2006b; Bradley, 2007) and Layder’s (1993) research approach this study takes the position that such an enquiry can be best examined by focusing on the different levels of society, and as a result the research has several objectives and this study intends to:

1) Situate the case of Norway at a contextual level in terms of equality and occupational sex segregation, also positioning Norway in a Scandinavian and international setting. The study will look at how culture and national strategies, in particular welfare regimes and AA, affect and influence patterns of
occupational sex segregation and women’s position in the labour market and the overall gender regime in Norway.

2) Review the existing literature on occupational sex segregation and equality strategies in order to identify the theoretical framework adopted for investigating the case of Norway.

3) Investigate Norwegian women’s experienced equality looking at the different levels of society and the importance of cultural expectations and stereotypes and the effect political strategies have on experienced equality.

4) Explore, describe and compare patterns of ‘gender inequality regimes’ within politics, academia and BODs in Norway.

5) Investigate the effects of AA within politics, academia and BODs, how these strategies are experienced by women, and how this again feeds into the experience of equality.

6) Demonstrate the nature of the interrelationship of structural factors and individual agency in understanding the Norwegian paradox.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS
The thesis is organised as follows: Chapter One outlines the broad focus of enquiry, the aim of the thesis, justification for focus, research question and objectives, and the outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two reveals the macro context of Norwegian gender relations, patterns of equality and national gender regime (Walby, 2004) and puts this in an international context. In addition, political strategies, and both equality and welfare approaches are discussed. This chapter exemplifies the Norwegian paradox and the importance of different political strategies as well as within country differences.

Chapter Three explores the theoretical and philosophical understanding of occupational sex segregation using a variety of economic and non-economic theories. In particular,
the conceptual framework influenced by feminist ideas and ideals is highlighted as feminist ideas are key ‘orienting concepts’ (Layder, 1998) for this research. At the occupational group level, the chapter justifies Acker’s (2006a; Acker, 2006b) components of inequality regimes as a key analytical framework for the investigation into ‘gender inequality regimes’ at the occupational group level.

Chapter Four investigates the philosophical and theoretical background of equality strategies and the use of strategies in an international context. In addition, arguments used in the debate supporting or objecting to strategies are explored, in particular the importance of different arguments - justice, social or individual, and utility - are highlighted. In addition, the different strategies that exist are explored and the use of AA in Norway is discussed.

Chapter Five turns to the methodological approach adopted for this study. The ontological, epistemological and methodological influences are discussed where feminist ideals and ideas with a multilevel approach influenced by Layder (1993; Layder, 1997; Layder, 2006) are outlined. The study justifies its multilevel approach with a mix of strategies for investigating the pattern of occupational sex segregation in Norway. The chapter discusses the research design, strategies adopted, and the research process. In addition, the participants are introduced as these are important in the research design. The chapter presents a descriptive analysis of the participants in terms of demographic characteristics.

Chapter Six introduces the reader to the three occupational groups this study investigates: politics, academia, and BODs. Three occupational groups are considered in terms of the share of women in senior positions using the two first components from Acker’s (2006a) inequality regime framework: base, and shape and degree of inequality. In addition, the use of AA within the three occupational groups is examined.

Chapter Seven looks into the views and experiences of the participants in relation to equality at various levels in society. In addition, the importance of cultural expectations and gender stereotypes at the different levels are explored. Chapter Seven also provides an analysis of the participants’ views and experiences of the Norwegian welfare approach as this study argues that this is important for women’s situation, expectations
and gender stereotypes which in turn influence overall equality and occupational sex segregation.

Chapter Eight returns to the meso level and provides a closer investigation into the occupational groups and organisational level experiences in terms of gendered practices. Acker’s (2006b; Acker, 2006a) framework of inequality regimes is adopted for guiding the analysis of the different versions of ‘gender inequality regimes’ that exist in the three occupational groups.

In Chapter Nine, participants’ views, experiences and attitudes to the use of AA are explored. In particular, special emphasis is put on the participants’ views and experiences of the newly introduced gender representation law on public limited companies’ BODs.

Chapter Ten is the concluding chapter where the findings from the previous four analysis chapters are combined and discussed. The concluding chapter demonstrates how the aim and objectives have been met. The conclusion is divided into two main parts. The first and most important part presents the key findings of this research and the contribution it makes. I will argue that this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature on equality and occupational sex segregation as well as that on political strategies in terms of AA and welfare. The contribution section is divided into three – (i) theoretical and empirical, (ii) methodological, (iii) policy implications. The second part of the chapter discusses possible limitations and future directions for research as well as final comments.
Chapter Two
The Norwegian historical and social context – equality, occupational sex segregation and political strategies

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to outline the historical and contemporary context of women’s labour market participation in Norway. In particular, it provides a background of Norway’s paths to equality in terms of formal approaches by the state. This context is significant in analysing equality in Norway as it traces back the origins of women’s struggle for equality and the political strategies in use, which consequently illuminates their present position in the labour market. Also, even though the organisational level is an essential focus of analysis for this thesis, as illustrated by Healy (2009: 88) ‘inequalities in organisations need to be understood in the wider economic, social and political context’, and it is to this the thesis now turns.

Influenced by Walby’s (2004) idea of thinking of specific national gender regimes, this chapter seeks to set the context for the thesis in a number of ways. Walby (2004) argued for investigating four different levels of abstraction (the overall social system, gender regimes along national strategies such as domestic/public domain dimensions as well as degree of inequality, domains of society in terms of economic, polity, and civil society, and finally the level of social practices). This study will use some of Walby’s abstractions when studying specific settings in Norway. First, contemporary patterns of equality and occupational sex segregation in the labour market are investigated. Social, economic, legal, and historical contexts are important and vary between countries and regions, which shape labour market patterns and political strategies. The case of Norway is put in its regional and international setting and the struggle for women to get into positions of power and influence, both in the labour market and in politics, is discussed. Political strategies and the expansion of the welfare state are also discussed as these factors influence women and men at all levels of society. In particular, equality laws, the use of AA, and the welfare state approach are investigated. The chapter finally highlights the implications of this contextual setting for the study.
2.2 HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The massive increase of women entering the labourforce was one of the prominent changes to society following the industrial era. Rubery et al. (1999) argued that the integration is linked to a permanent change in economic as well as social life. Getting women integrated into employment was an essential part of the European Employment Strategy for increasing the labourforce (Rubery et al., 1999). Mandel and Semyonov (2006) described how the various states’ strategies impacted women’s opportunities in the labour market. The different factors central to women’s employment opportunities are: the state as a legislator, as a provider of social services, and as an employer. In addition, there has lately been an expansion of more flexible labour markets, particularly a growth in part-time and non-standard employment, as well as a growth of the service sector (Rubery et al., 1999: 1).

In the Scandinavian context, four processes in the transfer period from the industrial society to the post-industrial society affected women and their work patterns (Jensen, 2004). These included de-industrialisation, expansion of the welfare state, development of the education system, and cultural changes related to women’s emancipation and equality (Jensen, 2004: 13). After the Second World War, Norway was a ‘housewife country’ and only saw a growth in women’s employment rate in the 1970s (Raaum, 1999). In 1970, only 23 per cent of Norwegian women worked outside of the home, while in comparison, the proportion in Sweden was 53 per cent (Raaum, 1999). In Norway, key factors influencing the situation of women have been the expansion of the welfare state and public sector employment (Jensen, 2004). Hence, authors have argued that the post-industrial society with expansion of service and public sector jobs is a female labour market (Ellingsæter, 1995 ). From the 1970s, women’s work activity increased considerably, and today the economically active population in Norway is gender balanced. However, typical ‘male’ or ‘female’ jobs continue to exist, and more women work part-time than men (Gangås, 2008). While women and men appear as relatively equal, a similar change has not occurred in work life as Norway has one of Europe’s most gender segregated labour markets. This will be explored further throughout this chapter.

2.2.1 Equality rankings

Turning to contemporary trends of equality, it is argued that in industrialised countries, a large majority of women regard themselves as equal to men. Nevertheless, despite the
idea of women being equal to men, occupational sex segregation exists. Equality between women and men is a global goal and most institutions (e.g., EU, ILO and UN) have strategies focusing on gender equality (Skjeie and Teigen, 2003).

Several international studies have illustrated macro trends between women and men in relation to equality and occupational sex segregation. The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2008) showed that, while equality between the sexes does not exist in the 130 countries sampled, Norway is the most equal country in the world. In particular, the data suggest that Nordic countries are getting closer to providing women with a quality of life almost equal to that of men. The WEF ranking is based on four critical areas of inequality between men and women and the ranking is based on: (1) economic participation and opportunity, (2) educational attainment, (3) political empowerment, and (4) health and survival\(^6\). All the Nordic countries score among the top seven countries on this ranking (see Table 2.1).
Table 2.1 Summary statistics from World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Index 2006–2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(WEF, 2008)

Table 2.1 contains the 15 highest ranked countries in addition to the US and Turkey which are included for later analysis.

Figure 2.1 demonstrates that with respect to the economic activity rate in 2002, it is indeed the case that women’s economic activity rate is closer to men’s in Scandinavian countries. Sweden’s women’s economic activity rate was 90 per cent of men’s, while Norway’s was 86 per cent and Denmark’s 85 per cent.
In addition, evidence presented by the UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP, 2005; UNDP, 2007-2008), provides information and comparison of 177 countries. The human development indicator tables presented in Table 2.2 provide a global assessment of country achievement in different areas of human development. For this research, important insights flow from the women’s economic activity rate, the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).
### Table 2.2 Summary statistics from Human Development Report 2007-2008 (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Female Activity rate</th>
<th>Economic GEM Rank</th>
<th>GDI Rank</th>
<th>HDI Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>3 (1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>5 (4)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>11 (13)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The findings from UNDP (2007-2008) show that Scandinavian countries are ranked numbers one, two and four on the GEM ranking, and numbers three, five and eleven on the GDI ranking. This report also indicates that equality in Norway and the other Scandinavian countries is relatively high, and women in these countries are in a unique situation with (arguably) equality being close to being achieved in several areas.
2.2.2 Political representation

Internationally, Nordic countries are often considered gender equal with respect to political representation. This could be due to the relatively high number of women in politics as well as woman-friendly welfare policies (Raaum, 2005; UNDP, 2007-2008; WEF, 2008; UNDP, 2009). As Bystydzienski (1995: 4-5) argued, ‘Scandinavian political structures, with their multiparty, proportional representation and preferential voting features, are other important factors conducive to the entry of women into politics. However, despite historical and social similarities, differences in rates of women’s political representation exist among the Nordic countries’. Based on Rokkan’s (1970; Rokkan, 1987) theory of the four thresholds that mobilising groups have to overcome in the parliamentary system, Raaum (1999; Raaum, 2005) explored historically Nordic women’s entrance into the political sphere by showing women’s entry into the four institutional thresholds (legitimisation, incorporation, political representation, executive power). Rokkan’s argument is that each threshold represents an institutional barrier, but the periods in between can also be comprehended as different phases of mobilisation (Raaum, 2005: 874).

The first threshold is legitimisation, which is about setting women’s demand for equality on the agenda. This era was about making the case of women legitimate and gaining acceptance of women as political actors in the public sphere (Raaum, 1999). In respect of the introduction of feminist organisations and suffrage organisations, there are similar trends within the Nordic countries with feminist and suffrage organisations emerging from the 1880s. The second threshold is incorporation, which has to do with the introduction of universal suffrage and the right to stand for election (Raaum, 1999). Here, Finland was the first country to give women the right to vote in 1906, while Norwegian women’s right to vote came in 1913, with Denmark following in 1915. Finally, Swedish and Icelandic women got the right to vote in 1919 and 1920. The third threshold is political representation in parliament and the fourth is executive power, i.e. obtaining ministerial positions in the cabinet. A common factor in all the Nordic countries is that women met strong barriers in comparison to men entering the political arena (Raaum, 1999). As Table 2.3 illustrates, there have been differences in time and speed for Nordic women entering the powerful arena of political participation and how far the representation of women has gone.
Table 2.3 Nordic women’s entrance to the political arena.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threshold</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Iceland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Legitimation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feminist organisations (First wave)</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Suffrage organisations</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Incorporation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal suffrage, the right to vote</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Political Representation (Parliament)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First woman elected to parliament</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 per cent of the members</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 per cent of the members</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40 per cent of the members</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Executive power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First woman minister</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 per cent of all posts in cabinet</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40 per cent of all posts in cabinet</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50 per cent of all posts in cabinet</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Prime minister</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female president (Finland, Iceland)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Existing literature on women in politics often argues that the high level of women in Scandinavian politics is due to quotas. Yet, there are no legal quotas in these countries, and voluntary party quotas were not introduced until the 1980s when women already
occupied 20–30 per cent of the seats, which were also at that time the highest share of women in politics in the world (Freidenvall et al., 2006). There are great variations between Scandinavian countries in relation to the use of quotas in politics. In Denmark, none of the political parties operate currently with gender quotas, while the majority of Norwegian and Swedish political parties have quotas. In addition, a consequence of high political participation for women might be that it affects other areas of society as well. Raam (2005) stated that a few women pioneers can play essential political roles in parliamentary politics. Although in relation to the mobilisation of women as a group, passing a threshold must at least imply that women do not appear as an extreme minority group (Raam, 2005: 875). This is important in relation to the labour market and the use of quotas in order to enhance the share of women both in politics as well as in other areas of the labour market. Dahlerup’s (1988) idea of critical mass and Kanter’s (1977) influential work on the importance of numbers, tokens and women’s representation in organisations will be explored further in this study.

2.2.3 Patterns of occupational sex segregation
Scandinavian countries are frequently cited as successful when it comes to equality of access. Nevertheless, Scandinavian countries are characterised by having a high level of occupational sex segregation (Charles, 1992; Anker, 1997; Charles and Grusky, 2004). Charles (1992) found that Scandinavian countries have a higher level of occupational sex segregation than more perceived gender traditional countries, such as Japan and Italy. As demonstrated by Charles and Grusky (2004), ‘Sweden is well known for its egalitarian and family friendly policies, yet it remains deeply segregated to the present day.’ (Charles and Grusky, 2004: 6). Anker (1997: 334) also pointed out that occupational segregation is lower in Asia than in Europe and within Europe it is actually highest in Scandinavian countries. Wright (1997: 361) argued that the reason for the gender gap between countries ‘may be the result of interaction between variations in the relative abundance of authority positions and the effectiveness of different women’s movements in challenging the barriers women face in moving into those positions’. Political and economic factors ought to be seen as key in order to explain variations of gender inequality in workplace authority, while cultural differences specifically linked to gender ideology are seen as less significant (Wright, 1997). Building on the argument presented by Kanter (1977), Wright et al. (1995) argued that male managers in a male dominated hierarchy are likely to act in ways that preserve male privileges and advantages. If this is the case, gender inequality in organisations becomes a key
institutional element in the reproduction of gender inequality (Wright et al., 1995: 407-408). Their findings also showed that variation exists within countries. The intra-country gap is smaller in Canada, England, the US, and Australia, while it is large in Scandinavian countries and Japan where a significant proportion of the differences in men’s and women’s attainment of authority are probably attributable to direct discrimination (Wright et al., 1995: 433). Healy and Seierstad (forthcoming) found in their study of women academics in Scandinavia that academia is highly segregated where different types of discrimination exist, yet with variations between countries both related to the share of women professors as well as experiences of equality. Acker (1994a) found in her study of Swedish banks that gender is part of the organising processes and there are gender regimes, even in organisations in egalitarian countries. In addition, there are studies that moderate the idea of strong levels of sex segregation in Scandinavia, such as Nermo (2000) who also pointed to variations between Scandinavian countries and illustrates that occupational sex segregation is stronger in Norway than Sweden (Denmark was not part of this study).

The reasons that these patterns of unequal gender distribution are particularly present at organisational levels are neither clear nor logical and these findings can be seen as a puzzle in relation to the high level of equality in Scandinavian countries as shown earlier in this chapter. When it comes to the concept of equality and occupational segregation, this confirms that there is no correlation that guarantees that a country scoring high on equality in society in general will have a low level of occupational segregation as maintained by Blackburn et al. (2000). A relevant factor is illustrated by Hakim (1993: 304) who argued that ‘it is well established that studies of occupational segregation at the sub national level – within regions, establishments, or organisations – always reveal a much higher level of occupational segregation than at the national level’. She further stated that ‘studies at establishment level are sometimes portrayed as more correct because they correspond more closely to people’s own work experiences, and the way these shape expectations and stereotypes’ (Hakim, 1993: 304). In the case of Scandinavian countries it is valuable to see how the statistics regarding macro trends contradict the actual case inside organisations. Scandinavian countries have experienced a gender revolution, where women and men appear as relatively equal in society and view themselves as relatively equal, but a similar change has not appeared in work life. They have one of Europe’s most gender segregated labour markets although they have,
as illustrated earlier, one of the highest shares of women in the workforce internationally and are presumed to be relatively equal (Ellingsæter and Solheim, 2002).

2.2.4 Occupational sex segregation in Norway

Even though gender balance and equality for women and men are central aims of Norwegian equality politics, male hegemony is the dominant characteristic in most institutional settings of leadership, power and influence (Skjeie and Teigen, 2005: 187). Therefore, it is essential to look at the current trends and patterns within the Norwegian labour market and this section will explore patterns of occupational sex segregation, both horizontal and vertical. It is important to focus on employment trends in different sectors, occupational groups, as well as the different levels in order to explore the Norwegian paradox. In addition, patterns of part-time work as well as the pay gap in Norway are briefly discussed as this is necessary for understanding the wider context in the labour market.

2.2.4.1 Horizontal sex segregation

One of the characteristics of social democratic welfare states is the high level of women employed in the public sector. This is also the case in Norway as 69 per cent of all public sector employees in 2007 were women, while only 37 per cent of the workforce in the private sector were women as shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Public and private sector employment in Norway by sex 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women (per cent)</th>
<th>Men (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>796 000</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>1 631 000</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gangås, 2008)²

The fact that Norwegian women are overrepresented in the public sector might be an indication that the social democratic welfare approach tends to have a high share of women in the public sector as the state takes over some of the responsibilities that
previously belonged to the family. Hence, it can be seen to be a move from private to public patriarchy (Holter, 1984).

Although women are taking tertiary education to a greater extent than men in Norway, young Norwegians are still to a certain extent gender traditional in their choice of education. While at high school level the largest share of both boys and girls are found in general education, girls are overrepresented in areas such as health and social education, while boys are dominating in areas such as trade (apprenticeship) related activities (Teigen, 2006). Nevertheless, there has been some changes in terms of choice of education at university level with women going into traditionally male dominated educations such as business, economics and science. This change is beneficial for women both in relation to salary and status – economic, positional and symbolic power in Bradley’s (1999) terms – as traditional male education and occupations have both higher salary and status than traditional female occupations (Teigen, 2006). Interestingly, the same change of men going into traditionally women dominated areas such as pedagogy, health and social education has not occurred (Teigen, 2006).

By looking at specific occupational groups, it is clear that women and men tend to work in different occupations. As shown by Table 2.5, there have been some changes when it comes to the gender distribution in the occupations over the years; however, horizontal segregations seem to have been relatively persistent over the last 20 years.
Part-time work is another gender specific characteristic in the labour market. As shown in Table 2.6, part-time work\(^9\) is especially prominent in Norway. The high proportion of part-time women workers would suggest that occupational sex segregation is a feature of Scandinavian labour markets as the larger proportion of women part-time workers affects pay and the opportunity to climb the hierarchical ladder. Norway is number 16 in an international ranking when it comes to having equal pay for women and men (Gangås, 2008). Women in Norway make only 84.3 per cent of men’s salary, while Slovenian women make 93 per cent of men’s salary. This is surprising for the most equally ranked country (Gangås, 2008).

\(^9\) See Table 2.6 for more details on part-time work.
Table 2.6 Part-time workers (per cent) of the total workforce by sex 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women (per cent)</th>
<th>Men (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gangås, 2008)

2.2.4.2 Vertical sex segregation

An essential aspect of equality is the gender balance within the most powerful and senior positions. While the proportion of women in Norwegian politics is high, and thereby vertical sex segregation does not appear to have a strong foundation in that occupational group as earlier discussed, the patterns differ in other areas of the labour market such as academia and the private sector. A survey of the broader Norwegian power elite (Skjeie and Teigen, 2003) found that male dominance is persistent in top-level leadership positions. Overall male dominance is 84 per cent in the Norwegian elite, with a variation from 63 per cent in party politics to 96 per cent men in business corporations. Table 2.7 illustrates that there are great differences between men and women in managerial positions in Norway, and that this gap is significantly higher in the private sector and in the most senior positions.
Moreover, for the very senior managerial level in the private sector, it is apparent from data from 2005 to 2007 (Gangås, 2008) that it has even been a small decrease of women at the most senior level as described in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8 Share (per cent) of women and men in top managerial positions in Norway in the private sector 2005-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women (per cent)</th>
<th>Men (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gangås, 2008)

Turning the focus to academia which is a key public sector occupational group, clear differences are found between women and men when looking at the hierarchical levels.
with few women employed in the most senior positions as professors. As Table 2.9 illustrates, there has also been very little movement over the last 3 years.

Table 2.9 Share (per cent) of women and men as professors in Norway 2005-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women (per cent)</th>
<th>Men (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gangås, 2008)

Consequently, the share of women in senior positions in academia contradicts the pattern found in politics discussed earlier. The above data from academia and the private sector both question Norway’s position as equal as the data shows strong patterns of vertical sex segregation which yield the need for further investigation.10

2.3 POLITICAL STRATEGIES

Looking at the different approaches to challenging inequality and occupational sex segregation, Chang (2000: 1662) argued that to understand cross-national variation in patterns of occupational sex segregation one has to recognise the institutional context within which these sex segregation regimes exist. This includes the potential role the state can have for interfering with market and family relations, which can influence women’s economic status. Political strategies and the welfare approach are essential for understanding labour market patterns in Norway. Hence, analysing women’s participation in the labourforce, occupational sex segregation and equality in Norway and the Nordic countries is rarely done without illustrating the importance of the welfare state as well as strategies in use. Melkas and Anker (1997: 343) even claimed that ‘one cannot describe the labour markets of Nordic countries without first describing the structure of the welfare state in these societies’. Scandinavian countries are classified by Esping-Andersen (1990: 28) as social democratic, with the hallmark of universalism and equality; ‘all benefit, all are dependent, and all will presumably feel
obligated to pay’. Scandinavian countries are commonly known for their commitment to gender equality and their policies for women’s integration into almost all spheres of public life (Melkas and Anker, 1997).

Political strategies are vital for influencing the situation for women and men, not only related to the labour market but in the domestic sphere and society as well. Hence, political strategies and state intervention are in use globally to counteract vertical sex segregation and the selection of men over women in order to get more equal and democratic societies and to take advantage of all the human resources that exist. Strategies can be of different natures. While equality of access means that states can intervene in the public sphere by passing legislation that either promotes or inhibits women’s access to participate in all occupations, substantive benefits take the approach that states can interfere in the private sphere by taking over some of the responsibilities of families (e.g. childcare, cash support) (Chang, 2000: 1662-1663). For this thesis, both areas of strategy are relevant in the case of Norway.

2.3.1 Equality approaches

Political leaders often frame gender equality as a kind of national journey for handling the persistent pattern of inequality between the sexes (Skjeie and Teigen, 2005). Skjeie and Teigen (2005: 187) described how this road towards gender equality is often built on the view of gradual equalisation between women and men with respect to power and resources as well as participation and influence. The description of gradual, harmonious progress towards gender equality in a country is represented as a series of steps where the final destination is a gender equal democracy (Skjeie and Teigen, 2005: 187). Nevertheless, even though equality is the political goal for countries, there is great disagreement over why and how to achieve this. Where to interfere and the difference between state involvement and organisational level strategies are central factors. Glover and Kirton (2006: 16) pointed out that while some policies designed to increase and advance women’s earnings and employment prospects are clearly located at the level of the state, there are also other key actors in the employment relationship, such as employers and trade unions. Chapter Four explores the different political perspectives and strategies in terms of equality.

State feminism has been essential in the Scandinavian equality approach, also in the development of the ‘woman-friendly’ welfare state (Hernes, 1987). The concept ‘state
feminism’ was introduced by Scandinavian feminists (Hernes, 1987) and describes the political alliance between feminist groups and the political arena. As argued by Hernes (1987: 11) ‘Scandinavian state feminism is a result of the interplay between agitation from below and integration policy from above’. State feminism has been a type of utopia, where the idea of the women-friendly society was drafted theoretically with the goal of creating a society where different treatment and opportunity based on sex can and will disappear (Skjeie and Teigen, 2003: 34). Freidenvall et al. (2006) argued that to a great extent, the Nordic discourse can be described as an incrementalist discourse of empowerment, which is built on the idea that gender equality develops gradually, and where state involvement can maintain movement of equality in the desired direction. Equal right to equal participation is, according to Skjeie and Teigen (2003: 216), state feminism’s fundamental belief. While they pointed to the fact that equal pay has been the social democratic unsolvable equality problem, quotas have been a key tool on the way to ‘the land of equality’ (Skjeie and Teigen, 2003: 165). Raaum (2005: 884) argued that the Norwegian gender profile, like the Swedish, is based on a relatively high level of institutionalisation of gender equality. Yet, even though often clustered together, there are differences between Norway and the other Scandinavian countries. While Skjeie and Teigen (2005: 188) pointed out that gender quotas have played a prominent role in Norwegian equality policies, they also emphasised that this is the case in Norway possibly more than in other Scandinavian and Nordic countries.

2.3.2 Norwegian equality approaches

In Norway, gender balance is a political goal (Teigen, 2003). A variety of strategies for promoting equality are in place and a range of initiatives and directives have over the past three decades been introduced which aim to challenge and eliminate discrimination and inequality between the sexes. The Norwegian Gender Equality Act was introduced in 1978 (The Norwegian Government, 2005) (see Appendix 1) aiming to promote gender equality. In particular it aims to improve the position of women. An objective is that women and men shall be given equal opportunities in education, employment and cultural and professional advancement. It is stated that public authorities shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote gender equality in all sectors of society. In addition, employers shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote gender equality within their enterprise. Employee and employer organisations shall have a corresponding duty to make such efforts in their spheres of activity. The
Equality Act states that direct or indirect differential treatment of women and men is not permitted. However, the Equality Act opens the way for AA and states that;

Different treatment that promotes gender equality in conformity with the purpose of this Act is not a contravention of section 3 (stating that direct or indirect differential treatment of women and men is not permitted.) The same applies to special rights and rules regarding measures that are intended to protect women in connection with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

Legally regulated quota arrangements were first introduced in 1981 in section 21 of the Gender Equality Act, which regulates the gender composition of publicly appointed boards, councils and committees. The Act states that;

When a public body appoints or elects committees, governing boards, councils, boards, etc. each sex shall be represented as follows: If the committee has two or three members, both sexes shall be represented. If the committee has four or five members, each sex shall be represented by at least two members. If the committee has six to eight members, each sex shall be represented by at least three members. If the committee has nine members, each sex shall be represented by at least four members, and if the committee has a greater number of members, each sex shall be represented by at least 40 per cent of the members. The provisions of nos. 1-4 shall apply correspondingly to the election of deputy members.

For 25 years this was the only kind of quota procedure that was subject to legislation. As will be explored further, the introduction of gender representation regulation on BODs in public limited companies is under the Public Limited Company Act (see Appendix 2), not under the Equality Act. Nevertheless, the former has regulations in relation to quotas on BODs similar to section 21 of the Equality Act.

There are four main areas where AA strategies are in place in Norway. These include education, employment, politics and boards. The strategies in use are of both radical and liberal natures and include preferential treatment, promotion procedures and minimum representation rules. Looking at the different areas, Table 2.10 illustrates the types of strategy and the procedures in place.
Table 2.10 AA strategies in place in Norway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Society</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment (Public sector)</td>
<td>Preferential treatment</td>
<td>• If candidates qualifications are of an equal nature the applicant of the underrepresented sex are given preferential treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting procedures</td>
<td>• In cases of equal qualifications, candidates of the underrepresented sex are given priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• There are two variations of promoting procedure for education; additional entry points are given to applicants of the underrepresented sex, or earmarking of student places for candidates of the underrepresented sex, with strict restrictions to qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Minimum representation</td>
<td>• Voluntary quotas (either of 40 or 50 per cent) are in place on the party election lists in five out of the seven major political parties (includes Social Left Party, Labour Party, Centre Party, Christian Party, Liberal Party, excludes the Conservative and Progress Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly appointed boards and councils</td>
<td>Minimum representation</td>
<td>• A minimum of 40 per cent of each sex to be represented in publicly appointed boards, councils and committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Boards</td>
<td>Minimum representation (implemented in 2006)</td>
<td>• A minimum of 40 per cent of each sex to be represented on the boards. The law affects several types of companies and the legislation applies to all publicly-owned enterprises (including: state-owned limited liability and public limited companies, state-owned enterprises, companies incorporated by special legislation and inter-municipal companies) and all public limited companies in the private sector. Employee representatives are not included in the law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Teigen (2003), The Norwegian Government (2008b), Freidenvall et al. (2006))

2.3.3 Substantive benefits and the importance of welfare approaches
Grouping countries according to similarities in order to understand the relationship between state, market and family has been done by several authors (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Chang, 2000). The most famous approach is by Esping-Andersen (1990) who
argued that cross-national differences in welfare state approaches can be identified by looking at the level of social rights and the extent to which these rights liberate citizens from market forces, that is, the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation. Esping-Andersen (1990) demonstrated that the welfare state variation between countries is not linearly distributed, but clustered by regime-types. Based on this Esping-Andersen identified three relatively coherent clusters of nations; liberal, conservative, and social democratic, each organised around its own discrete logic of organisation, stratification, and societal integration (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 26-29). The liberal welfare states include the US, Canada and Australia. The characteristic for this group is that benefits are mainly available to a clientele of a low-income, usually working class, and state dependents. As benefits are modest there is little tendency to choose welfare instead of work (1990: 26-27). The conservative states include Austria, Germany, France and Italy where the granting of social rights has hardly ever been a seriously contested issue. Esping-Andersen (1990) argued that what predominated was the preservation of status differential rights, attached to class and status. Therefore, social insurance usually excluded non-working wives, and family benefits encouraged motherhood, the more traditional male breadwinner approach. Consequently, day care, and similar family services, are conspicuously underdeveloped (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 27). Social democratic countries include Scandinavia where the idea is the principle of an egalitarian society with universalism and decommodification of social rights for everybody. The dominant force behind social reforms is the idea of social democracy and rather than accepting a dualism between state and market, between working class and middle class, Esping-Andersen (1990) described how these countries have a welfare state that would promote an equality of the highest standards, not the equality of minimal needs as identified in other approaches. The state is committed to a heavy social-service burden, not only to service family needs but also to allow women to choose work rather than the household (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 28). The idea of Scandinavian countries having woman-friendly potential was illustrated by Hernes (1987: 15) more than 20 years ago;

A woman-friendly state would not force harder choices on women than on men, or permit unjust treatment on the basis of sex. In a woman-friendly state women will continue to have children, yet there will also be other roads to self-realization open to them. In such a state women will not have to choose futures that demand greater sacrifices from them than expected of men. It would be, in short, a state where injustice on the basis of gender would be largely eliminated
Esping-Andersen’s welfare theory/typology is not the only approach to the analysis of clusters of welfare states and other scholars have other classifications of welfare regimes. Melkas and Anker (1997: 344) used Julkunen’s classifications of the western European and north American welfare states, which include a conservative social structure (Germany, France), the Mediterranean belt (Greece, Spain and Portugal), modern Nordic welfare state countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland) and the liberal social structure (UK, US and Canada). Melkas and Anker (1997: 344) pointed out that the Nordic welfare state is based on the normalisation of women’s participation in employment as well as a weak breadwinner role, with women’s integration into the labour market and political decision-making being encouraged. Another approach is provided by Chang (2000) who proposed that cross-national variation of equal access and substantive benefits results in four distinct regimes of sex segregation; formal-egalitarian, substantive-egalitarian, traditional family-centred, and economy-centred systems. Scandinavian countries are according to Chang (2000: 1665) characterised by being substantive-egalitarian, where the state may accommodate demands from working women for services that support the integration of both work and family, such as state-financed childcare, guaranteed parental leave, and benefits for part-time workers. Walby (2004: 11) described the Nordic approach as a social democratic service route. She argued how this includes the development of public services which consequently have given women the opportunity to participate in paid employment.

2.3.4 Gender and welfare regimes
Sainsbury (1999) argued that the gender division of welfare was previously a neglected area of research; however, over the last few decades the focus on gender, welfare and work has improved. Esping-Andersen’s three types of welfare state have been recognised by some feminists as having analytical potential explaining the position of women in employment (Von Wahl, 2005: 69-70). Nevertheless, other scholars, such as Chang (2000) argued that while Esping-Andersen’s typology has been relatively successful in explaining class-based stratification, it is not readily applicable to systems of gender stratification and offers little explanation for cross-national differences in the nature of occupational sex segregation. Sainsbury (1999) raised the question of whether Esping-Andersen’s welfare regime typology would hold up if gender were incorporated
into the analysis. Esping-Andersen (1999: 76) did take the critique into account and analyses the (changing) family in the overall infrastructure of welfare production and consumption. Esping-Andersen (1999: 51) argued that there are two main approaches; de-familialisation and familialistic system. He argued that ‘de-familialization does not imply ‘anti-family’; on the contrary, it refers to the degree to which households’ welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed- either via the welfare state provision, or via market provision. A familialistic system, again not to be confused with ‘pro-family’, is one in which public policy assumes-indeed insists- that households must carry the principal responsibility for their members welfare’ (Esping-Andersen, 1999: 51).

The welfare state importance for women’s employment growth is heavily documented. Esping-Andersen (1996) argued that Scandinavian welfare states are service intensive in contrast to Catholic welfare states. In Scandinavia healthcare, education and to a lesser extent day-care citizenship or residence rights are provided free or with a small co-payment (Esping-Andersen, 1996: 35). Rubery and Grimshaw (2003: 89) argued that the case of Scandinavia and the Nordic model is that everyone is a breadwinner. Esping-Andersen (2002: 13) presented the viewpoint that ‘the Scandinavian welfare model is internationally unique in its emphasis on the government pillar. It has actively ‘de-familialized’ welfare responsibilities with two aims in mind: one to strengthen families (by unburdening them of obligations) and, two, to strive for greater individual independence’. Further, Esping-Andersen (2002: 94) portrayed how there exists a broad consensus of what constitutes woman-friendly policies and that these include; affordable day care and paid parental leave, as well as provisions for work absence when children are ill. Scandinavian social democratic countries do all have these policies as part of their national welfare strategies, yet there are, as will be explored further, also variations between social democratic countries. Sainsbury (1999) considered the debate about the validity of Scandinavian countries being clustered together. She illustrated some findings and theories proving that the differences in services are at odds with the thesis of a common Scandinavian model (Sainsbury, 1999: 76). Kautoo et al. (1999: 1) took the viewpoint that in welfare state research, one can convey a large amount of information about public policy, social policy arrangements, labour markets, etc. by speaking of a Nordic (or Scandinavian) model which is shown to be common to Nordic countries. Nevertheless, and importantly, they also acknowledged how findings show that the similarities between the countries may sometimes prove arbitrary and therefore subject to criticism. It is necessary to bear in mind that there are
differences between Scandinavian countries and the evolution of the welfare state and the pattern of women’s labourforce participation (Melkas and Anker, 1997: 345).

2.3.5 Scandinavian Welfare policies in relation to parenthood

Scandinavian countries and their welfare approaches pioneered the shift of parenthood into also being a political issue (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006: 2). The historic expansion of welfare states in Scandinavia has gone through several phases. Even though there are differences between the countries, the expansion of the welfare state shows similar patterns. In the 1960s, there was an increase of women entering the labour market. However, the position for women was debated as women at that time faced inequalities in several arenas; in the educational system, in access to labour market, in wages, politics and public life (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006: 2). During this period, these inequalities were also redefined as political concerns, which overlapped with the larger collective project of welfare state expansion and institutionalisation of social rights. Throughout the 1970s, gender equality was a significant part of the welfare state model. During this period the dual earner, dual carer model developed and set new standards for gender relations also within families (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006: 2). During the 1990s, parenthood policy redesign took place in the context of a rapidly changing economic and cultural environment categorised by economic recession, increased pressure from globalising economies, and with some variations between Scandinavian countries (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006).

2.3.5.1 The different strategies

The Scandinavian social democratic approach has the highest focus and expenditure on parenthood policies (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006: 2). In particular, the need to involve fathers in parental leave has been a central goal for the Nordic countries over the last few years (Rubery, 2002). In addition, they were the only countries expected to reach the target set by the European council in Barcelona 2002 in relation to childcare provision by 2010 (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006).

Paid parental leave arrangements are usually classified as policies enhancing gender equality (Ellingsæter, 2006: 122). However, parental leave can be unclear with respect to the gender equality objective, both in relation to policy justifications as well as the impact of policy on women and their labour market patterns. One potential problematic issue is that there has been a tendency for women to take the bulk of the parental leave,
which again has led to the concern about potential unfavourable effects of long parental
leave for women and how this again might affect their opportunities in the labour
market (Ellingsæter, 2006: 123) as well as expectations of young women of
childbearing age. Ellingsæter (2006: 123) argued that it is unquestionable that to have
good and subsidised childcare services is one of the most important components in
supporting parents/mothers to have the right to work and have a good career. As
illustrated, the economic activity rates for women are high in all Scandinavian countries,
which have the highest coverage of subsidised childcare. Consequently, childcare is a
key strategy affecting labour market trends. The final strategy, cash-for-care, on the
other hand has a different underpinning and is consequently affecting women and their
work patterns. Cash-for-care benefits can be, and are usually, classified as a traditional
male breadwinner family policy (Ellingsæter, 2006: 123). The idea of cash-for-care is
that it includes a main breadwinner who is not the main carer; thereby, this is generally
understood as furthering a traditional, male breadwinner/female career family (Leira,
2006: 29). In countries with cash-for-care in place, there has, unsurprisingly been the
effect of women staying at home family (Leira, 2006: 29).

It is highlighted that the three policies; childcare, paid parental leave, and cash-for-care
demonstrate two distinctly different approaches to mothers and fathers as breadwinners
and carers which consequently also influence labour market trends (Leira, 2006: 28).
While one of the approaches involves a strengthening of the traditional gender-
differentiated family, the other aims to challenge and change this. Looking at the three
Scandinavian countries’ use of these policies in Table 2.11, it is apparent that even
between them, there are quite different pathways.
Table 2.11 Welfare policies in Scandinavian countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Parental leave</th>
<th>Childcare services</th>
<th>Cash-for-care benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Norway   | •Parental leave is a total of 46 weeks with full wage compensation or 56 weeks with 80 per cent wage compensation (this is up from 44/54 from the 1st of July 2009)  
•Maternity leave is included in the legislation on parental leave and is three weeks before and six weeks after delivery  
•Paternity leave, a daddy-quota of six weeks was introduces in 2006 and from the 1st of July 2009 this is prolonged until 10 weeks | •Full coverage of childcare is a political goal, yet this is not achieved | •Parents with children of one to two years old who do not attend publicly subsidised childcare are entitled to a cash benefit |
| Sweden   | •Parental leave is 480 days  
•Maternity leave is 60 days  
•Daddy-quota of 60 days  
•Paternity leave is statutory leave of 10 days in connection with the birth | •Municipalities have an obligation to provide day care for children whose parents work or study, or for children with a particular need for preschool activities |                                                                     |
| Denmark  | •Parental leave 52 weeks  
•Maternity Leave is 18 weeks (income based with a maximum of 435 euro a week)  
•Paternity leave entitles the father to two weeks of during the first 14 weeks after birth where he receive unemployment benefits  
•Parental leave is 32 weeks following maternity leave to be shared by the parents. The wage compensation is 90 per cent. There are possibilities for prolonging the parental leave period by accepting reduced benefits | •From July 2005 municipalities has to offer a guarantee of childcare for children from the age of nine months until school-age |                                                                     |

(Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006: 21-23), updated data for Norway: (NAV, 2009)

In the case of Norway, clearly the strategies in use diverge, both from the other Scandinavian countries and in relation to policy approach. As a consequence of this dualism of strategies, scholars have pointed to Norway’s path as a family policy
'hybrid', which is combining dual-earner support with traditional breadwinner elements (Ellingsæter, 2006: 121) and can be seen as a puzzle (Sainsbury, 2001). Therefore, the need for an investigation into the specific welfare strategies that exist in Norway is important. Consequently, the three strategies, parental leave, childcare and cash-for-care, are of particular interest as they have the opportunity to influence equality between the sexes at all levels of society, including labour market trends such as occupational sex segregation.

2.4 THE WELFARE STATE, OCCUPATIONAL SEX SEGREGATION AND WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

As illustrated by Stier et al. (2001), the rates of women’s labourforce participation and the pattern of work differ in accordance with the country’s welfare regime and the specific family and gender oriented policies. It is assumed that a high rate of women’s labourforce participation exists in social democratic countries, slightly lower economic activity for women in liberal countries where market controls the demand for labour, and a relatively low rate of participation in conservative countries, in which women are marginal to the economy. Moreover, international rankings (WEF, 2008; UNDP, 2009) suggest that social democratic countries are more equal and seem more women-friendly than the other regimes; nevertheless, Scandinavian countries also have strong vertical and horizontal segregation.

The increase of employment in the public sector has been used as an example explaining the increase of women in the labourforce throughout recent decades as the public sector has comprehensive social benefits, which make it easier to combine work life with family life (Hansen, 1995: 150). Hansen (1995) argued that explanations as to why patterns of occupational segregation are so high in social democratic Scandinavian countries often use the public sector as an important factor as an argument used is that when the state is set to take over some of the responsibilities that used to belong in the private sphere, more people will be employed in the public area and several theories set out to explain why these are women (such as human capital, patriarchy, etc.). Nevertheless, the effect this has on the situation for women in society is unclear. Gornick and Jacobs (1998: 688) drew on Kolberg’s argument that ‘welfare state employment in the Nordic countries has improved the strategic position of women in society’. Even though, as importanty pointed out by Hansen (1995: 150) this factor explains horizontal segregation in the workplace, but it does not provide an explanation
for the pattern of vertical segregation which is also present in Scandinavian societies. Consequently, the importance of the welfare state improving the situation of women is questioned as occupational segregation, both on the horizontal and vertical axis, is present in Scandinavia.

Mandel and Semyonow (2005) discussed how paid parental/maternity leave serves as a device through which women’s employment rights are protected and secured. They emphasised that a long absence from paid employment may discourage employers from hiring women to positions of authority and power and thus hinder women’s ability to successfully compete with men for the most senior positions. They found how the rise of the welfare state accompanied by a massive entrance of women into the labourforce did not alter the traditional division of labour between men and women, on the contrary, it did actually transfer the gendered division of labour from the private sphere into the public domain. Mandel and Semyonov (2006) further argued that in this process traditional gender roles are maintained; while women are disproportionately channelled to public services and care roles men get hold of the more attractive jobs, the jobs that hold power and high salaries. They pointed out that in fact, ‘we know very little about the implications of the welfare state for women’s occupational opportunities’ as while facilitating women’s entry into the labour market, it does not assist their entry into high authority and powerful positions which might result in lowering and hardening of the ‘the glass ceiling’ and thereby patterns of vertical sex segregation. Similarly, Walby (Walby, 1990) made a distinction between private and public patriarchy in line with that of Hernes (1984), who argued for a change from private to public patriarchy in relation to the social democratic welfare approach. Hernes (1984) maintained that women have reduced their dependence upon their husbands (private patriarchy), they have increased their dependence upon the welfare state, both as employees of the state and as clients receiving services (public patriarchy). Chang (2000) referred to Bielby and Baron’s study of sex segregation and took the viewpoint that considerable and organised reduction in gender segregation seems unlikely to occur without fundamental shocks to the social system. Chang (2000: 1667) argued that the most likely sources of meaningful changes in patterns of segregation arise from either economic or state interventionist sources. Chang (2000) took the position that the most common type of state intervention occurs with legislation adopted to address sex inequality within the labour market. The argument is that when opportunities for women are expanded via equal opportunity and AA legislation, women are most likely to press for entry into the more prestigious (and
traditionally male dominated) managerial and professional occupations because of the income, prestige, and autonomy associated with these occupations. Based on this Chang (2000) argued that countries with strong equal opportunity or AA policies would experience desegregation within professional and managerial occupations in particular. Chang (2000) described how, in some cases, despite efforts to minimise the tension between ‘home and work’, segregation may actually increase with such substantive intervention because the expansion of services for working women can create female-typed jobs. In this regard, one by-product of the strong commitment to gender equality in substantive-egalitarian countries is that segregation increases as women flow into female-typed service jobs created by the differentiation of functions, such as childcare, out of the family and into the formal economy. These lines of argument are interesting in the case of Norway where we find a high level of occupational segregation while having political strategies both in terms of AA and welfare.

2.5 SUMMARY
In this chapter the context for the study is set by exploring the Norwegian gender regime and pointing to the Norwegian gender paradox. That being characterised by high representation of women in politics, in the labour market and being acknowledged as the most equal of countries in international rankings, yet with a resilient pattern of occupational sex segregation, both horizontal and vertical, despite a social democratic welfare approach and a variety of strategies for promoting equality in the labour market and society. This makes the case for Norway as a particularly relevant country for further investigation.

This chapter argued that all Scandinavian countries are perceived as relatively equal as well as having a social democratic welfare approach that facilitates women’s entry to the labour through comprehensive child care provision. Scandinavian countries are often clustered together in discussions on the welfare state and gender. Yet, this chapter has also presented differences between the countries and made the case for country specific approaches, arguing that it is not sufficient to talk about a Nordic or Scandinavian approach, especially when looking at the use of AA and welfare strategies. In particular, this chapter discussed the importance of a country’s welfare approach for patterns of occupational sex segregation. In addition, this chapter identified significant differences in terms of occupational sex segregation within the Norwegian labour market and between politics, academia and private sector managerial
positions. Consequently, this chapter identified three occupational groups as a worthwhile focus of study: politics, academia and BODs. The occupations were selected because of their importance, as the political, economic and intellectual elite, as well as their different use of AA and gender representation.

The research question emerging for this chapter is ‘how does the Norwegian welfare state and national history affect women’s situation in the labour market?’
Chapter 3

Occupational sex segregation: Theoretical approaches and frameworks

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Following on from the previous chapters which explored the types and consequences of occupational sex segregation as well as set out the macro level trends of Norwegian women’s labour market participation, this chapter engages with theories aiming to explain the persistent patterns of occupational sex segregation. As Chapter Two illustrated, occupational sex segregation is a global phenomenon and exists everywhere, even though differences exist both between and within countries, regions and welfare regimes (Anker, 1997). The fact that occupational sex segregation exists globally shows that even with a focus on equality and with various strategies promoting equality between the sexes, there is still a long way to go before achieving equality between men and women in the labour market.

Considering the data provided in Chapter Two (WEF, 2008), women account for (in western countries) almost half of the workforce, and the fact that they only possess 10–15 per cent of the top positions in organisations is intriguing. Wajcman (1996) argued that for around 30 years there had been much talk about the glass ceiling preventing women from ‘getting on the top’ in management careers. The barriers to women’s advancements that were identified by the mid-1990s include factors such as; lack of family friendly employment policies, poor access to training, and the pattern of career development (Wajcman, 1996: 259). However, years after the implementation of equal opportunity policies, Wajcman (1996: 259) pointed out that there is increasing recognition of the informal barriers that inadvertently continue and reproduce a world in which there are only a small number of women managers. This debate has continued into the 21st century. In the case of Norway this is of great interest as there are various AA and welfare strategies in place, yet vertical sex segregation remains resilient.

There is a variety of studies aiming at understanding and explaining patterns of occupational sex segregation in the labour market. Rubery et al. (1999: 168) pointed out that sex segregated patterns of employment arise from a combination of the labour supply and labour demand conditions. The supply side often understands the gender segregated labour market as the result of preferences and free choices from men and women (Hakim, 2000) as well as that men and women might have different skills and
qualifications, which can be seen as different investment in human capital (Becker, 1957). The demand side, on the other hand, focuses more on institutional factors and preferences in addition to expectations within organisations and from the employer (Becker, 1971; Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Kanter, 1977; Acker, 1990; Collinson et al., 1990). The fact that the process for neutralizing occupational sex segregation is going slower than desired is heavily documented, nevertheless, at what level obstacles or discrimination exist is not clear and scholars have different approaches to the issue. Consequently, this study focuses on the interrelationships between different levels of society and considers a variety of theories aiming to explain occupational sex segregation at the respective levels. The macro level refers to general features of society, the meso level focuses on the occupational group level, and the micro level focuses on the individual. Even though this study argues for all levels being relevant, the key focus in this study is the occupational group level. Important to bear in mind is, as illustrated by Alvesson and Billing (1997: 79), that to differentiate between the three levels is to a certain extent superficial as they overlap. Accordingly, the discussion of occupational sex segregation will take this into account and explore a variety of supply and demand side theories and how they operate at the different levels of society. This chapter is organised as follows: first, the theoretical approaches, divided into economic and non-economic theories are discussed, where the importance of feminist theories for understanding and investigating occupational sex segregation is highlighted. Next, the chapter turns to the meso level and explores theories aiming to explain patterns of occupational sex segregation in the workplace using different feminist approaches. This chapter identifies the sensitising concepts that inform the analytical approaches used in this enquiry. In particular, this chapter outlines the main theoretical framework, Acker’s (2006b) theory of inequality regimes, for investigating the meso level.

3.2 THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS TO OCCUPATIONAL SEX SEGREGATION
Explanations for the persistence of vertical segregation are disputed; with the well repeated discussion of whether women’s position is a product of their preferences (Hakim, 1991; Hakim, 1996; Hakim, 2002) or whether women make ‘choices’ under constrained (or enabling) circumstances (Crompton and Le Feuvre, 1996; Ginn et al., 1996). This section looks at some of the key theories aiming to explain occupational sex segregation from an economic point of view using neoclassical, human capital and labour market segmentation theories as well as non-economic approaches using
different feminist perspectives. While both neoclassical and labour market segmentation theories make a valuable contribution to how patterns of occupational sex segregation exists, it is argued that none of them successfully explain why this pattern is still present worldwide (Anker, 1997). As a result, the importance of non-economic and feminist theories as key influences is emphasised. Nevertheless, even though the theories are separated for analytical purposes, some arguments and theories do overlap.

3.2.1 Economic theories: The rational explanation for occupational sex segregation

The rational and efficient functioning of the labour market is the main idea upon which both the neoclassical and labour market segmentation theories are built (Anker, 1997). A combination of individual merit as well as preferences and choices are often used to explain patterns of occupational sex segregation. Two key lines of argument are identified within these theoretical frameworks. The first has a supply side focus on workers’ skills, also emphasises the choices of workers. The second approach has a demand side perspective which is built on the idea that the employer will try to maximise profits and minimise costs, which can potentially lead to discrimination against certain groups (Anker, 1997).

3.2.2 Supply side arguments

Supply side theories focus on the characteristics of those supplying their labour and understand occupational sex segregation as an investment in human capital, which again labour market forces have to accommodate. Gender differences in interest in, preparation for, as well as willingness to participate in, various jobs are identified as supply side explanations (Ridgeway and England, 2007). They focus on why women ‘prefer’ certain types of occupations – for example, women may ‘prefer’ those with flexible working hours in order to allow time for childcare, and may also ‘prefer’ occupations which are relatively easy to interrupt for a period of time to bear or rear children (Anker, 1997: 316). As a result, for explaining occupational segregation the assumption from the labour supply point of view is based on rational choice of individuals with regards to their occupations and education, which again is directly linked to differences in human capital. Two highly influential theories, human capital (Becker, 1964) and preference theory (Hakim, 1991; Hakim, 1996; Hakim, 2002) will be explored further.
3.2.2.1 Human capital

Terjesen et al. (2009) pointed to the fact that central to capital theory is the role of the individual’s cumulative stocks of education, skills, and experience in enhancing cognitive and productive capabilities that benefit the individual and his/her organisation. Becker’s (1964) theory of human capital is highly influential. He argued that human capital theory has a broad range of important applications. He declares that it helps to explain phenomena as ‘interpersonal and interarea differences in earnings, the shape of age-earnings profile- the relation between age and earnings –and the effect of specialization on skill’ (Becker, 1964: 153). A key argument for the pattern of occupational sex segregation from this point of view is therefore, that ‘because observed earnings are gross of the return of human capital, some persons earn more than others simply because they invest more in themselves’ (Becker, 1964: 153). In agreement with Becker, Mincer and Polachek (1974: 76) argued in their influential study that ‘the family is viewed as an economic unit which shares consumption and allocates production at home and in the market as well as the investments in physical and human capital of its members. In this view, the behaviour of the family unit implies a division of labour within it’. Consequently, they described that women choose to enter areas that can accommodate their personal responsibilities in relation to family life. As a result, women choose areas that may offer fewer severe penalties for the discontinuity that home duties cause. Nevertheless, the argument by Mincer and Polachek (1974) that women seek or rather hold jobs in which continuity is penalised less has been widely challenged and criticised by others taking a feminist perspective (England, 1982). Neoclassical theories stress the fact that women are almost exclusively responsible for households around the world and as Blackburn et al. (2002: 516) argued:

A key element in the economic (and other) explanations is the impact of domestic work on earnings. It is argued that spending time and energy on domestic work prevents women from investing in human capital. (even the prospect of future domestic work associated with child-rearing influences many younger women to make decisions not to develop their human capital). The rational choice, therefore, is for the person with more human capital, the man, to be the principle earner, while the woman takes primary responsibility for domestic work.

From this point of view it is argued that in contrast to men, women have usually made fewer investments in education as well as having less work experience, which consequently is reflected in their lower pay and promotion. As a result, as described by
Anker (1997: 317) ‘according to these theories, women rightfully receive lower pay than men because of their lower productivity’. The theoretical approach of human capital has been heavily critiqued and Tharenou et al. (1994: 925) found in their study on Australian BODs that the participants’ education and work experience as well as human capital investments appear to advantage men’s managerial progression more than women’s. This they argued, suggests that controlling human capital variables will not eliminate differences between men and women in managerial advancement, therefore these findings are important as gender appears to influence the career resources and power that enhance managerial advancement (Tharenou et al., 1994: 926). Oakley (2000) pointed to the fact that gatekeepers in organisations offer men and women different rewards, both related to training, development, promotion and pay, which have a negative impact for women in comparison to men.

Heilman (1997: 877) described how there is theoretical support for the idea that it is just a matter of time before women get to the top in senior positions. This is because women’s absence from top level management has been a natural consequence of their not having been in managerial positions long enough, and natural career progress takes a while. Hence, as women’s human capital rises, they will get the positions when qualified; this is referred to as the ‘pipeline’ theory. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Heilman (1997: 877) little empirical evidence supports this theory. Burke and Mattis (2000) pointed to the case that there is a common assumption that for board positions, women do not hold the ‘right’ human capital, yet this assumption is questioned. A study of new directors of the FTSE 100 firms in UK by Singh and Vinnicombe (2004) found that women were more likely to have MBA degrees and international experience than their male counterparts. For this study, to look at the level of education and human capital for the participants is therefore important.

3.2.2.2 Choices and preferences
One approach building on the ideas of human capital theory and the importance of ‘choice’ is Hakim’s preference theory (Hakim, 1991; Hakim, 1996; Hakim, 2002). As pointed out by Blackburn et al. (2002), Hakim did criticised Becker’s rational choice perspective in terms of treating all women as comparable in relation to childcare, hence she described in her controversial preference theory how there are variations between women. Hakim (2004: 4) pointed out that while the standard sociological explanation for women’s position in society and in the workforce is related to social structural and
institutional factors and the idea that women’s lives are determined by external forces, such as the particular country they live in, its social policies, and employers’ policies, she on the other hand, takes an agency approach and argues that women’s own choices and preferences affect their situation. In one important, yet much critiqued paper, Hakim (1991) argued that women are either ‘grateful slaves’ or ‘self made’ women (although she later added a third category of the ‘adaptive women’ (Hakim, 1996). Hakim (1991) challenged the view that occupational sex segregation can be explained by feminist theories of patriarchy and oppression. Instead, she argues that five conditions or changes in society and the labour market are producing a qualitatively different and new scenario of options and opportunities for women in the 21st century. The five conditions are: the contraceptive revolution, the equal opportunity revolution, the expansion of white collar occupations, the creation of jobs for secondary earners, and the increasing importance of attitudes, values, and personal preferences in the lifestyle choices of prosperous, liberal modern societies (Hakim, 2000: 3). Hakim (2000) argued that these changes are historically specific developments in any society and the timing might vary between countries. As a result, women now have a choice in relation to work and private life. Hakim’s (2000: 273) argument is that ‘in modern society, work-lifestyle preferences and the roles played by women and men are not only the product of contextual influences, but also the expression of chosen gendered identities’. Charles (2003: 270) presented what arguably is an agency approach adapted to existing structures by contending that ‘some women may self-select out of high status positions, because these are too demanding or time-consuming to be compatible with the heavy domestic responsibilities that they expect to assume’. Implicit in this approach is an uncritical recognition of the status quo of vertical sex segregation in the labour market where women are the problem, rather than organisations.

Nevertheless, the agency approach is heavily criticised and Hakim’s (1991) influential claims in preference theory have been the subject of controversy (Crompton and Harris, 1998; Blackburn et al., 2002). Blackburn et al. (2002: 253) pointed out that Hakim’s preference theory aims to provide ‘the missing link between biological theories and accounts of patriarchy, while being a refinement of rational choice and human capital theories’. Although there is some empirical support for a human capital explanation, an important factor is that Hakim’s preference theory arguing from a labour supply perspective can be critiqued because of the argument of ‘choice’, as she implies that women are free to choose between the two roles of home and work. Critics argue that
women are not free and that women’s decisions are made in a constrained context (Crompton and Le Feuvre, 1996; Ginn et al., 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998; Healy, 1999). As illustrated by Blackburn et al. (2002: 524) ‘at all points it is assumed that people choose their course of action. Of course there is a sense in which this is necessarily true. However, choices are always constrained by social circumstances, and this is insufficiently allowed for’. Crompton and Harris (1998: 131) argued that ‘preferences may shape choices, but do not, contrary to Hakim’s assertions, determine them’. Another convincing point made by Glover and Kirton (2006: 38) is that an effect of Hakim’s preference theory is that it might have given academic legitimacy to employers’ views that employment decisions are made by individuals therefore interventions from employers might seem inappropriate. In addition, Glover and Kirton (2006: 16) pointed out that Hakim’s theory has given academic respectability to some employers’ perspective on women’s lack of commitment. Nevertheless, although heavily contested, Hakim’s theory of choice and preferences is constructive for further analysis of sex segregation and the structure and agency debate.

3.2.3 Demand side arguments
In contrast to the supply side arguments, turning to the demand side for economic theories, the key arguments are centred on the idea that the labour market and the employer will try to maximise profits and minimise costs, which can potentially lead to discrimination against certain groups, such as women.

A branch of theories building on economic logic is institutional and labour market segmentation theories. According to this position, the labour market is divided into two historically rooted sectors, primary and secondary sectors with little mobility between them. Consequently, it is difficult for workers to pass from one segment to another, especially is it difficult to pass from secondary to primary. This affects women more than men, especially after childbirth (Anker, 1997: 321). An influential approach is that of Doeringer and Piore (1971: 204) who argued that ‘racial discrimination, disparities in union organization, and differences in the impact of social insurance taxes operate on the demand side of the market to strengthen the distinction between primary and secondary jobs’. They had the idea that a primary sector is distinguished from a secondary sector and that while jobs in the primary sector are relatively good in terms of pay, security, opportunities for advancement and working conditions, secondary-sector jobs, on the other hand, have lower pay, chances for promotion, working conditions and
job security. They also argued that discrimination is a significant barrier to the movement of minority groups from secondary to primary employment. Consequently, the elimination of the effects of racial discrimination is therefore essential to the upgrading of minority groups and the ultimate elimination of income and employment inequality (Doeringer and Piore, 1971: 205). As Anker (1997) pointed out, it is obvious that the concept of dual markets can be adapted to occupational segregation, where the primary sector is mainly ‘male’ jobs, and the secondary sector mainly ‘female’ jobs.’

Another school of thought related to labour market segmentation is that focusing on statistical discrimination. Becker’s (1971) theory of employer behaviour took the viewpoint that employers (as others) are prejudiced against certain groups of workers, and therefore they will discriminate, for example on the basis of race, religion, sex, colour, social class, personality etc. Because of this prejudice, employers are said to sustain a cost when they hire someone from the group discriminated against. From this perspective it is argued that employers act rationally when they employ fewer people from those groups, since they wish to avoid this cost (Anker, 1997: 320). As Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (1999) highlighted, according to the statistical discrimination theories, there are average underlying productivity differences between men and women and Whites and Blacks, which again encourages discriminatory behaviour in employers. In addition, they illustrated that these theories assume that as long as employers are making decisions in relation to hiring based on imperfect information they may use easily acquired information that is often related to group membership as a signal for the potential productivity of all possible hires based on group attributes (1999: 423). Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (1999: 437) criticised this viewpoint arguing that ‘there is no consistent evidence in these analyses that the aggregate productivity of women or minorities is lower that that of men or Whites’. Hence, Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (1999: 439) argued that ‘the sociological version of statistical discrimination is more compelling than the economic version’. The idea of statistical discrimination where employers discriminate against individuals based on perceived group characteristics will be explored further also from a feminist perspective. As stereotypes are bound up with opinions of what is acceptable in an employee, this can often lead to a preference for a white man or woman over a person of minority ethnic origins (Cockburn, 1991) or a young worker over an old worker, a non-disabled over a disabled one and so on.
3.2.4 Cultural, feminist and gender theories: The non-economic approach to occupational sex segregation

One of the main criticisms of economic theories, both the neoclassical and labour market segmentation theories as discussed in the previous sections, is that they have failed to consider non-economic and non-labour market variables and forms of behaviour (Anker, 1997). As this thesis argues that non-economic concerns are crucial for understanding patterns of sex segregation, the need for cultural and feminist theories is recognised.

Clark et al. (2003) pointed to how societal, cultural values and historical experiences influence patterns of occupational sex segregation in a country. They argued that patriarchy and sex stereotypes in a country affect the choice of occupations and positions within occupations, even though they also point out how most of the stereotypes are, in fact, wrong (Clark et al., 2003: 20). Alvesson and Billing (1997) contended that the present gender division of labour is the result of a long historical process. They pointed out that ‘the general cultural conceptions and expectations of the sexes are influenced by those left over from a time when the ‘roles’ of men and women were more fixed’ (Alvesson and Billing, 1997: 79). Historical and cultural factors are to a great extent affecting patterns of work. Acker (1990: 155) argued that ‘the rhythm and timing of work would be adapted to the rhythms of life outside work’. Therefore, demand side arguments are also key for feminist theorists such as Kanter (1977) who talked about homosocial reproduction and the masculine ideal as well as Acker (1990) who referred to organisational gendered practices for explaining occupational sex segregation. In addition, Heilman (1997) pointed to the fact that no scientific evidence exists confirming the assumption often made that women lack the desire to get to the top of senior managerial positions. Further, she acknowledged that no differences between managerial men and women have been found in their level of motivation, or in psychological needs and motives, such as the need for achievement or need for power. In addition, Heilman (1997) found that at least one researcher has concluded that women in management positions actually may be more motivated to succeed than their male counterparts because only the most motivated women would have continued a career path after meeting so many obstacles. Despite Hakim’s claim that women are less committed to careers that men, Heilman (1997: 879) maintained that there is no research evidence supportive of the view that women managers are less committed to their careers because their primary commitment is to the family and home. According to
these arguments, other factors than human capital, motivation and choice need to be used in order to explain why women struggle to climb the ladder and break the glass ceiling and thus organisational structures and gender stereotypes are important for further examination.

3.2.5 Feminist theories and the concept of patriarchy

As identified by Blackburn et al. (2002: 520) ‘a more social approach to understanding gender segregation has been in terms of patriarchy’. While feminist theories focus on patriarchy and male dominance in society, feminist theories also embrace a variety of viewpoints and are often positioned according to the political positions on how they view society and what they consider to be desirable changes. Patriarchy is a key concept for feminist theories and relates to power at different levels of society. Hartmann (1976: 138) defined patriarchy as ‘a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men, and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women. Patriarchy is thus the system of male oppression of women’. Walby provided an important foundation for the development of the debates on, and understandings of, patriarchy where she defined patriarchy as ‘a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women’ (Walby, 1989 124). Nevertheless, as feminist theory has developed, different approaches and meanings corresponding to the different political strands of feminism have emerged.

It has been argued that patriarchy as a concept has been instrumental in enabling an exposure of the ways in which public and political agendas are embedded in social structural processes (Cockburn, 1991). An example is unequal power and/or exploitation in which women are subordinated and are either invisible, or when they are visible, portrayed as unimportant or uninteresting (Acker, 1989). Nevertheless, Walby’s ideas of patriarchy received much criticism (Blackburn et al., 2002; Kirton, 2006; Bradley, 2007) as she implied that men are always and everywhere dominant, allowing no room for alternative power relations between the sexes. In particular, Blackburn et al. (2002: 521) took the position that ‘a major weakness with theoretical approaches such as that of Walby is that they underestimate women’s agency and over-estimate men’s agency’. Walby (1997) answered some of the critics arguing for a switch from private to public patriarchy, and she also takes her theory further arguing for the more open-ended concept of gender regimes. She highlighted six forms in which patriarchy can be in
place which are; mode of production (the home), relations in paid work, relations in the state, male violence, relations in sexuality and relations in cultural institutions. In addition, within these structures patriarchy is historically and culturally dependent. Walby (1997: 61) defined gender regimes as systems of interrelated gender structures; different articulations and combinations of these structures result in different forms of patriarchy. Kirton (2006: 60) pointed out that despite the justifiable criticisms of patriarchy, it has proven to be a useful conceptual tool in order to underscore types of women’s employment and to make women visible within the analysis of the capitalist labour relation, and therefore to abandon it altogether contains danger. Kirton (2006) demonstrated that an attractive compromise struck by many academics is to continue to use the term adjectivally, as ‘patriarchal’ to describe specific situations and circumstances. The adjectival use of the concept does not promote it as a social structure, but rather sees it more as a relation or dynamic (Kirton, 2006). Another criticism of the concept of patriarchy is that it assumes that there is a singular identity among women and that they all experience the same type of subjugation. In relation to this argument, the concept of intersectionality – the idea that gender must be understood in addition to other forms of oppression such as race, class, religion and sexuality as women’s experience will vary depending on such factors – is important. An approach of intersectionality that will be discussed in greater detail is that of Acker (2006a; Acker, 2006b) who argued that inequality regimes describe the gendered and racialised class practices, which again might result in different types of discrimination within organisations.

The understanding of patriarchy, power relations, society and organisations varies between the different feminist disciplines. As a result, the position of liberal, radical, Marxist, social and postmodern feminist theories will be briefly discussed. Nevertheless, a vital factor is described by Calas and Smircich (1996: 219); ‘despite their diversity, most feminist theories share some assumptions, notably the recognition of male dominance in social arrangements, and a desire for changes from this form of domination’.

The liberal feminist standpoint focuses on individual detailed instances of prejudice against women. The oppression liberal feminists identify involves the injustices fostered by gender roles, which favour men over women. Hence, they differ from radical feminism and Marxist feminism as they do not engage with an analysis of social
structures. Instead they are focusing on numerous small-scale deprivations (Walby, 1990: 4). Walby (1990: 4) portrayed two main focuses for liberal feminism, the denial of equal rights and sexist attitudes. While practical in engaging at the micro level, liberal feminism has been criticised for being insufficiently radical and too individualistic – being more concerned about making women more like men without questioning the gendered cultural assumptions that form the basis of society (Bradley, 1996).

Radical feminists on the other hand perceive patriarchy as an independent social system; universal, trans-cultural and trans-historical in its influence (Acker, 1989). The idea is that gender inequality is a result of men as a group dominating women as a group and therefore men are the main beneficiaries of this subordination of women as a group (Walby, 1990: 3). As represented by Calas and Smirich (1996: 226), while liberal feminists tended to view lack of promotion opportunities and sexual harassment as individual problems, radical feminists see this as an outcome of the systemic male gender privilege in which the male and masculine define the norm. For radical feminists the best solution to women’s subjugation would be to treat patriarchy not as a subset of capitalism but as a problem in its own right. A central critique of this perspective is that it tends towards essentialism and biological reductionism (Acker, 1989).

As a reaction to, and critique of, capitalism and liberal political theory, Marxist feminist theory emerged. Marxist feminist theory is critical of liberal feminism for its flawed conception of human nature and insufficient ideas of the labour process; in addition, it is also critical of traditional Marxist perspectives for their gender blindness (Calas and Smircich, 1996: 231-232). For Marxist feminists, patriarchy is linked to the capitalist mode of production and it preserves men’s control of women as a by-product of capital’s control over labour (Walby, 1990). As such it makes a link between gender and class and sees power relations as central. However, this stance has been criticised based on the contention that it fails to explain how working class men, e.g. black men, benefit alongside capitalists from patriarchal structures as for example in the arrangements in the domestic sphere. Further, patriarchy predates capitalism and therefore, cannot have either been created by or developed from capitalism as posited by some feminists (e.g. Hartman, 1979). Walby (1990) also acknowledged that patriarchy is context specific and its form changes with space and time.
Calas and Smirich (1996) argued that socialist feminist theory is actually a convergence of Marxist, radical and psychoanalytical feminism which identifies the value as well as the limitations of these separate approaches. In particular, socialist feminists have described the need for the analytical integration of social structure and human agency to explain the persistence of gender segregation and gender oppression; socialist feminists have addressed the complex intersection of factors such as gender, race, class and sexuality (Gherardi, 2003: 217). Besides, socialist feminism took the viewpoint that both the private and public spheres are sites for women’s oppression, which is relevant for this study. They also argued that gendering practices might occur at different levels of society. From the standpoint of socialist feminism, focusing solely on the organisation as a unit of analysis is a mistake as the private sphere cannot be separated from the public, since organisations, families and societies are mutually constituted through gender relations (Calas and Smirich, 1996: 233). This is highly important for this study’s investigation of occupational sex segregation and power relations focusing on occupational groups, yet with a multilevel approach.

Postmodernist feminists address issues of diversity, difference and subjectivity by deconstructing the notion of a single understanding of ‘woman’ (Riley, 1988) and rejecting scientific claims of objectivity and rationality. Moreover, postmodernist feminists discard the idea of the existence of social structures and rather have the understanding that reality cannot be known independently of language and discourse (Barrett, 1992). Culture is emphasised rather than structure, allowing the development of a version that is able to see women as agents, active in the construction of their own worlds rather than just victims of structures which they have little control over (Bradley, 1996). The ideas of postmodern feminism, according to Calas and Smirich (1996: 237) ‘allow for more complex intersections of gender and other social categories that both deconstruct taken-for-granted analytical subject positions (e.g. women, and women’s oppression as unitary categories) and open the space for different political engagements which recognize asymmetrical power relations among those who purport to be ‘the same’’. An important criticism of postmodern feminism on the other hand is that it offers only a partial understanding of gender domination as it denies the existence of dominant social structures such as class, gender or race. As asked by Bradley (1996: 98) ‘is it possible to have a version of feminism without some notion of gender inequalities as structured or built into societal organization?’. 

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This thesis values multiple points from the different feminist perspectives and is influenced by feminist ideas and ideals, which is much in line with the ontological and epistemological influence of this study having a multilevel approach arguing for different levels of society being important and interrelated. This opens up the possibility of using patriarchy in an adjective manner, investigating patriarchal systems without claiming for patriarchy (Kirton, 2006). In particular, this thesis values the idea of a mix of structure and agency which fits with the understanding of potential patriarchal structures at all levels of society. Similarly, a valuable aspect illustrated by Bradley (2007) is the recognition of how individual women and men are actively involved in ‘doing gender’. Bradley argued that this gendering can be seen to operate at three levels, the micro, meso, and macro level. Bradley (2007: 24) further illustrated that ‘however liberated and gender-aware we may be as individuals, institutions such as schools and workplaces operate with quite rigid rules, conventions and expectations about gender, which place restraints on people and which they find difficult to resist without being penalized’. Finally, these institutional practices feed into the expansion of gendered structures at the macro level as well. Moreover, Bradley (2007: 24) took the position that ‘choices people make and the rules governing social interaction and social institutions come together and coagulate into gendered structures such as the sexual division of labour, which are remarkably robust and operate across a whole society’. This contradicts Hakim’s (1991) theory arguing for women’s free choice as the explanation for labour market patterns. Bradley (2007: 24) argued that ‘this brings us to address the prevailing and longstanding issue in sociology concerning the relationship between agency and structure’. While we as individual agents, are quite free to choose our route, we are at the same time constrained by contextual factors, such as structures and cultures (Bradley, 2007: 24). These arguments are important and will be explored further in the study of occupational sex segregation and equality in Norway.

### 3.2.6 Feminism and Power

Power is a broad and complex phenomenon, but important and intertwined in most writing about women, men, and occupational sex segregation. Kaufman (1999: 59) took the viewpoint that ‘in a world dominated by men, the world of men is, by definition, a world of power. That power is a structured part of our economies and systems of political and social organisations: it forms part of the core of religion, family, forms of play, and intellectual life. On an individual level, much of what we associate with masculinity hinges on a man’s capacity to exercise power and control’.
Bradley (1999: 139) considered that power at the national and world level is located in all-male enclaves at the pinnacle of large state and economic organisations. Further, Kaufman (1999: 60) illustrated what he refers to as obvious ‘that almost all humans currently live in systems of patriarchal power which privilege men and stigmatize, penalize, and oppress women’. Rosenfeld et al. (1998: 25) argued that at the organisational level ‘much gender inequality in the workplace results from differences in the power, privileges, and responsibilities that come with the positions women and men hold. Authority, one such characteristic of jobs, has a number of dimensions. A worker has \textit{formal} authority when he or she has a job title such as manager or supervisor’. Wright et al. (1995: 407) argued that real power in the workplace is associated with positions, authority, and the hierarchical level which makes the consequences of strong levels of vertical sex segregation in the labour market problematic.

Power is, as illustrated, a key component of occupational sex segregation, patriarchy and equality, and with these statements conventional views regarding power and the relationship between power and gender at different levels of society are illustrated. Patriarchy and power are closely related; in fact power is essential to most feminist influenced research. Yet, even though the struggle for power is often referred to in gender research, power is not a straightforward concept. Even among feminist theories, the understandings of power differ. In fact, Allen (1999) exposed how the literature regarding power is marked by a deep disagreement over the basic definition, yet she demonstrates that it is possible to identify three directions in the conceptualising of power, where you can see power as a resource to be (re)distributed, power as domination, and power as empowerment, both individual and collective. The understanding of power as a resource is built around the idea that women should have equal amounts of (resource) power as men. Allen (1999: 8-9) refers to the relevant work of authors such as Mill (1997) and Okin (1989) who argued for a redistribution of power, to equalise resources in terms of all levels of society which is in line with the liberal feminist perspective. In terms of power as domination, Allen (1999: 11) refers to the work of MacKinnon (1987) and Dworkin (1979) who see power more as domination in terms of male domination and female subordination together. In terms of power as empowerment, Allen (1999: 18) described how this line of thoughts emerged as a result of identified shortcoming from the two other approaches. Allen (1999: 18) argued that it
is built on the idea that ‘feminists who conceptualize power as a empowerment do of course acknowledge that, in patriarchal societies, men are in a position of dominance over women; but they choose to focus on different understandings of power: power as the ability to empower and transform oneself, others and the world’. Influential approaches are, according to Allen, found in the work of Gilligan (1982) and Ruddick (1989). Nevertheless, Allen (1999: 26) argued that none of the approaches as such is enough and took the position that there is a need for feminists to have a broad approach looking at multifarious relation of power investigating the interplay between domination and empowerment.

In terms of gender, power and structure versus agency, Bradley (1999: 32) took the position that ‘feminists have looked elsewhere for a theory of power which can deal with agency’. She contended that ‘the work of Giddens and Bourdieu can be the basis for theorising power in terms of different forms of resources (Giddens) or capitals (Bourdieu)’ (Bradley, 1999: 32). Yet, as Bradley (1999) pointed out, neither Giddens nor Bourdieu relates their theory to gender. Therefore, Bradley (1999: 32) developed a gendered account of power for investigating how women and men have access to, and control, different forms of power resources, which can also change in time and settings. Gendered power is according to Bradley (1999) ‘a broader concept which allows for variable relations between men and women, but does not rule out the possibility that power relations might be patriarchal’. Hence, power is a concept integrated into patriarchy and gender relations at all levels of society and can itself be gendered. Bradley (1999) set out a model based on the resource account of power and argued that there are a number of different dimensions of gendered power and that a full understanding of gender and class relations requires analysis at both the macro and the micro level. Bradley (1999: 31) asserted that ‘while at a societal level power might generally take the form of male dominance over women, it is possible (and empirically observably) that in certain contexts some women exercise domination over some men’. Hence, a micro level analysis of power, which can cope elastically with these complexities and how power as domination and empowerment can also change in different settings and contexts, is needed. Bradley (1999: 31) argued that power relations operate across a given society and are placing some groups in a superior, and others in a subordinate position, yet that power relations are fluid and can change and might take different forms at different levels at different times. Bradley (1999: 33) defined power as ‘the capacity to control patterns of social interaction and distinguished
between nine different dimensions of resources; (i) economic power, (ii) positional power, (iii) technical power, (iv) physical power, (v) symbolic power, (vi) collective power, (vii) personal power, (viii) sexual power and (ix) domestic power. These types of power can be seen as operating at different levels of society; hence power relationships might vary at different levels which are in line with the methodological approach of this study. While power analysis is not the key focus in this research, power is essential for understanding and investigating equality and gender differences. Hence, Bradley’s (1999) feminist ideas of gendered power dimensions are adopted in the analysis of gender differences in power and potential patriarchal structures at different levels.

The understanding of power in this study is not in line with an essentialist approach. Instead, the analysis of power engages with power in terms of the complexity, variability and fluidity of power relations, also allowing for historical changes both in terms of structural and individual factors. This study considers different dimensions of power as a resource, yet sees power also as empowerment and potential domination which is in line with the methodological influence of the study, showing the interrelationships of structure and agency for understanding gendered patterns at different levels of society at particular historical moments.

3.2.7 The influence of feminist ideas and ideal
From the feminist theories discussed several factors and arguments are important and will be influential in further investigation. Feminist theories argued that common attitudes towards gender and the distinction between the breadwinner versus homemaker, public versus domestic roles are deeply embedded. There is rich support that much stereotyping occurs prior to women and men’s entry into the labour market (Heilman, 2001) and that patriarchal structures exist at all levels of society. In addition, there is little indication of extensive change in these attitudes, even in the more egalitarian cultures as illustrated in Chapter Two where occupational sex segregation was shown to be a global phenomenon also seen in the egalitarian Scandinavian countries. Hence, different types of gendering practices at various levels of society will be investigated in order to uncover the dynamics behind the patterns of occupational sex segregation.
3.3 OCCUPATIONAL SEX SEGREGATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FEMINIST THEORIES AT THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

The previous sections explored a range of theories used to explain occupational sex segregation from different perspectives. Occupational sex segregation is often referred to and researched as a macro phenomenon using macro level data such as labour market and educational statistics, while gender and feminist studies in particular also see the need for meso level analysis of gendered processes at the organisational level (Teigen, 2006). As discussed, feminist theories allow for the investigation of patriarchal processes which are important for this study. In addition, different theories looking at supply and demand factors have been explored, and the importance of demand side theories related to the problematic issues of gender expectations, stereotypes and discrimination also at the organisational level is recognised. As illustrated by Ridgeway and England (2007: 190) demand side patterns of behaviour pointed to three types of sex discrimination that might occur; within job discrimination is unequal treatment on the basis of the sex of the worker within the same job title or rank; valuative discrimination refers to unequal treatment of men’s and women’s jobs in terms of wages and authorities associated with them. The third option is allocative discrimination, which refers to sex discrimination in hiring, job assignment, promotion and dismissal. All these types of discrimination might occur in the labour market, and consequently, in the following section, drawing on a variety of Norwegian and international studies, the focus shifts to organisations and how this level contributes to reproduce and strengthen disadvantages between the sexes. In particular, Acker’s (2006b) theory of inequality regime is discussed in great detail as this influences the analytical framework for the meso level analysis of this study.

3.3.1 The illusion of gender neutral organisations

It is now widely recognised that organisational knowledge and theory, as well as analysis have traditionally occurred through a lens which is primarily male and white (Gherardi, 2003). Acker (1990) argued that most feminist writing about organisations has historically assumed that organisational structure is gender neutral. Even though organisational logic appears to be gender neutral with gender neutral theories of bureaucracy, Acker (1990: 147) took the position that ‘underlying both academic theories and practical guides for managers is a gendered substructures that is reproduced daily in practical work activities and, somewhat less frequently, in the writings of
organizational theorists’. Acker (1990: 139) pointed out that it is rather that assumptions about gender lie behind the documents and contracts used to structure organisations which also give the commonsense ground for theorising about them. Ely et al. (2003) expressed the opinion that in our society, organisations have been central to creating and maintaining our perception of what is suitable for women and men. While the participation of women in the workforce has changed dramatically over the last few decades, organisations have not followed the same path (Ely et al., 2003). The changes with new jobs and work patterns have, according to scholars, not succeeded in neutralising occupational segregation at organisational level, and as Acker (1990: 145) maintained ‘we know now that gender segregation is an amazingly persistent pattern and that the gender identity of jobs and occupations is repeatedly reproduced, often in new forms’. Acker (1990: 143) built on the work of Kanter (1977: 291-292) to support her argument that gender differences in organisational behaviour are due to structure rather than to characteristics of women and men as individuals. Acker and Van Houten (1974) considered that there is a sex structuring in organisations, which consists of differentiation of women’s and men’s jobs, a hierarchical ordering of those jobs so that men are higher than women and are therefore not expected to take orders from women leading to men having more power than women. Melkas and Anker (1998) claimed that even where women have entered occupations traditionally dominated by men, as has happened recently to a certain extent in a lot of countries, women are likely to be found in lower status and lower paid positions than men. Researchers have taken the viewpoint that women are subject to gender regimes within organisations, where women’s careers and their experiences of the workplace are defined by male work patterns (Crompton et al., 1990; Cockburn, 1991; Halford et al., 1997; Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a). Reskin (2000) argued that research done by scholars such as Bielby and Baron (1984), and Baron et al. (1991) and several others has revealed that levels of inequality in work organisations are affected by organisational demography, organisational leadership, the degree to which personnel practices are formalised, recruitment methods, external pressure, as well as the availability of slack resources. Calas and Smirich (1996) believed that the task of feminist theory is not finished. Instead they took the perspective that feminist concerns continue to intersect with organisational issues and they contended that ‘feminist theories’ are not only about ‘women’s issues’: by using feminist theories as conceptual lenses, we believe a more inclusive organization studies can be created, one that brings the concerns of others, not just women, who are directly affected by organizational processes and discourses. Thus feminist theories articulate
problems in both the theory and practice of organizations which otherwise might go unnoticed’ (Calas and Smircich, 1996: 218). Following on from this, the next section will explore some of the key influential theories looking at occupational sex segregation from an organisational perspective.

### 3.3.2 Gender inequality regimes and the vicious circle of job segregation

As described earlier in this thesis, occupational sex segregation is a global phenomenon and organisational research points to gendered behaviour and inequality in various countries. In the British context, Cockburn (1991) argued that men engaged in a coherent and consistent discourse of gender differentiation in the workplace. The dynamics of gendered relations are played out at the organisational level in controlled and unconcealed forms. Collinson et al. (1990) provided a persuasive description of the vicious circles of job segregation. This entails the replication of existing practices (e.g. information recruitment and promotion practices, patriarchal control strategies and organisational norms and cultures), validations of existing structures (e.g. blaming the victim, society, and history), resistance and compliance. Oakley’s (2000) study on American corporations and corporate boards revealed two key explanations as key for the absence of women; barriers created by corporate practices as well as behavioural and cultural causes such as stereotyping, tokenism, and preferred leadership styles. In the British corporate context, similar explanations were presented by Singh and Vinnicombe (2003). Acker’s work (Acker, 1989; Acker, 1990; Acker, 1994b; Acker, 1994a; Acker, 2006a; Acker, 2006b) found how much of the social and economic inequality in the US and other industrial countries is created in organisations, in the daily activities of working and organising work. In her study of Swedish banks Acker (1994a) found that gender differences within organisational processes are integral to gender differences in life outside the organisation, in the reproduction of organisational participants. In the US context, Acker (2006a; Acker, 2006b) puts forward that inequality pervades organisations in what she calls ‘inequality regimes’.

Acker (2006a: 208) argued that the term gender regime stands for the ways that gender is part of organisational processes at a particular time, in a particular organisation. To explore different gender regimes an important focus is therefore the actions and interactions that constitute organisational life (Acker, 2006a: 196). Acker (2006b: 443) defined inequality in organisations as ‘systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as
how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasure in work and work relations’. She also described how ‘all organizations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations’ (2006b: 443). An especially important factor Acker (2006b: 443) pointed out, referring to a wide range of research, is that ‘even organizations that have explicit egalitarian goals develop inequality regimes over time’. With this approach, Acker (2006a) addressed two feminist issues, first, how to conceptualise intersectionality, the mutual reproduction of class, gender, and racial relations of inequality, and second, how to identify barriers to creating equality in work organisations. For this study, the second part of the theory is of particular relevance. In particular, Acker (2006b; Acker, 2006a) usefully draws attention to the different components of inequality regimes, i.e. the bases of inequality, the shape and degree of inequality, the organising processes that produce inequality, the legitimacy of inequality, the visibility of inequality and control and compliance. This approach encourages an engagement with the politics, the systems and the norms and culture of an organisation in understanding inequalities and their reproduction (Acker, 2006b). This is particularly relevant in the case of Norway where attempts at promoting gender equality, both from organisational and state level, have been on the agenda for decades. Therefore, Acker’s (2006b; Acker, 2006a) components of inequality regimes will be used as the analytical device for guiding the organisational analysis. As the foci for this study are equality, vertical sex segregation, and the use of gender equality strategies in Norway, including quotas, this study naturally gives precedence to gender. The analytical boundaries are related to gender and occupational groups at the organisational level, and consequently, intersectionality is not the focus for this study. Even though her concerns are wider than gender, Acker (2006b: 442) also stated that her theory of inequality regimes has its origins in her earlier arguments about the gendering of organisations which has been discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, some of the components of intersectionality might arise with respect to gender and occupation (such as age, class and sexuality) in the comparative analysis of the three groups and their experiences of ‘gender inequality regimes’. Consequently the analytical framework of gendering practices and structures at occupational group level is influenced by Acker’s approach11 and the components of inequality regimes:
• The bases of inequality: These might vary, although class, gender and race are usually present.

• The shape and degree of inequality: The steepness of hierarchy is one dimension and the degree and pattern of segregation by race and gender is another. In addition, jobs and occupations may be internally segregated by both gender and race. In addition, it might be power differences within organisational class levels as managers are not always equal.

• Organising processes that produce inequality: There are five factors important for this component; organising the general requirement of work; organising class hierarchies; recruitment and hiring; wage setting and supervisory practices; informal interactions while doing the work.

• The visibility of inequalities: This relates to the degree of awareness of inequalities.

• The legitimacy of inequalities: This aspect varies between organisations and while some organisations, such as cooperatives, professional organisations, or voluntary organisations with democratic goals may find inequality illegitimate and thereby try to minimise it, other organisations, such as rigid bureaucracies, have the view that inequalities can be highly legitimate.

• Control and compliance.

(Acker, 2006b: 444-453)

A central factor recognised by Acker (2006b) is that inequality regimes are highly variable, and they tend to be fluid and changing and that these regimes are linked to inequality in the surrounding society, its politics, history and culture. In particular, Healy (2009) took the position that the bases as well as shape and degree of inequality are operating at a macro social as well as institutional level of the organisation and that, even though Acker (Acker, 2006a; Acker, 2006b) avoids levels in her theory, these are not mutually exclusive. For this thesis arguing for the importance of different levels of society in order to understand specific patterns and trends, Healy (2009) made an important point.

Important to emphasise, the idea of gender regimes and inequality regimes is also shared by other scholars, yet with significant differences from Acker’s (2006b; Acker, 2006a) approach. One influential approach is that of Connell (1987) who also emphasised the need to look at the intermediate level of organisations when
investigating gender. Connell’s theory of gender structure brings together structure and practice, and gender and class. Connell (1987) argued that practice is the transformation of that situation in a particular direction and that to describe the structure is to specify what it is in the situation that constrains the play of practice. In particular, it was argued that since the consequence of practice is a transformed situation which is the object of new practice, ‘structure’ specifies the way practice (over time) constrains new practice (Connell, 1987: 95). Connell (1987: 99) argued that ‘recognizing the procedure of structural inventory does not introduce a separate set of issues and topics. The division of labour, the structure of power, the structure of cathexis are the major elements of any gender order or gender regime’. Connell’s argument was that an analysis of gender has to recognise at least those three structures. Later Connell (2000) adds a fourth structure, symbolism. Understanding of the configuration of gender relations in a particular society at a particular time can be achieved with a ‘structural inventory’ of the three (or four) main gender structures. Connell (2000: 29) maintained that ‘the patterning of all these relations within an institution (such as school or corporation) might be called its gender regime. The overall patterning of gender regimes, together with the gender patterning of culture and personal life, may be called the gender order of a society. It is implicit in these concepts that gender regimes and gender orders are historical products and subject to change in history’. In relation to Connell’s approach, Acker (2006a: 30) argued that ‘in summary, while Connell does not analyze in detail the intertwining of gender and class, she offers many resources of doing so in his approach to relating practice and structure, in his view of gender divisions as components of production, and in his analysis of the role of the hegemonic masculinities in the history and present functioning of capitalism’.

Another influential approach is, as discussed in Chapter Two, that of Walby (Walby, 1997; Walby, 2004) who provided a more macro focus operating with the concept of ‘gender regime’. Walby (2004: 8) argued that Connell (2002) ‘uses the notion of gender regime to look at only one institution at the time (reserving the concept of gender order as the sum of these gender regimes)’. Walby (2004: 8) on the other hand argued that her theory does not have those restrictions because her focus is wider than either welfare regimes or singular institutions. Walby’s (2004: 10) model of gender regime has four levels of abstraction. The first level is that of regime, the overall social system (parallel to, though somewhat different from, Connell’s concept of gender order). The second of Walby’s levels contains various forms of gender regimes that are differentiated along
two dimensions. The first is that of continuum from domestic to public, which is further differentiated into market led, welfare state led and regulatory policy led trajectories. The second dimension is that of the degree of gender inequality, which is analytically distinct from the domestic/public dimension. The third level is constituted by a series of domains; economic (divided, in industrialised countries, into market and household), polity (including states and transnational bodies, such as the EU), and civil society (including sexuality, interpersonal violence, and social movements). The fourth level is that of a level of social practices. Gender relations are constituted by all of these levels, rather than there being one privileged level. Walby (2004) argued that in most industrialised countries, there is an ongoing transformation of the gender regime from a domestic to a public form. Walby has a broader focus with her theory of gender regimes than that of both Connell (1987; Connell, 2002) and Acker (2006b; Acker, 2006a) as her focus is wider than on institutions. It provides a valuable strategy for comparing countries in relation to gender regimes and some of her levels of abstraction were adopted looking at the contextual setting in Chapter Two.

In terms of the occupational group analysis, Acker’s (2006a; Acker, 2006b) framework provides a comprehensive account for investigating potential gendered practices and will be adopted as an analytical framework in this study. In addition, a variety of other important feminist research will influence the inquiry and are discussed in the following sections.

3.3.3 Masculinity vs. femininity – expectations and stereotypes in the workplace
Expectations and stereotypes in the workplace are by feminist theorists described as important for occupational sex segregation. Hegemony, the domination of one group over another, does in feminist research refer to a masculine power exerted over women and men. As described by Cockburn (1991: 168), this is ‘not by legal coercion or economic compulsion, but by cultural means, by force of ideas’. Kanter (1977) portrayed that within the ‘general’ cultural attitudes to management, there has been an assumption that men make better leaders and Heilman (2001:659) found that there has been a tendency for research to consistently indicate that a good manager is characterised primarily by masculine attributes. In fact, most types of work and occupations are associated with masculine or feminine characteristics. Heilman (1997) pointed to the fact that there is a commonly ‘accepted’ idea that men in comparison to women do a better job in the leadership role in organisational settings because they are
task-focused (focused on getting the job done), rather than interpersonally focused (focused on keeping people happy) (Heilman, 1997). Kanter (1977: 20) illustrated how scientific management, with its emphasis on rationality and efficiency, is infused with an irreducible ‘masculine ethic’ which presumes that only men have the necessary qualities of the ‘new rational manager’; a thorough-minded approach to problems, analytical abilities to abstract and plan, a capacity to subordinate personal concerns in order to accomplish the task and a cognitive superiority in problem solving. As a result, stereotyped as ‘too emotional’ women are excluded from managerial positions and the consequences can be that ‘if women have been directed into the ‘emotional’ end of management, they have also been excluded from the centres of power in management for the same reason’ (Kanter, 1977: 25). Clearly, gendered stereotypes are important and Heilman (1997: 879) defined serotypes as ‘a set of attributes ascribed to a group and believed to characterise its individual members simply because they belong to that group’. Further, it is found that gender stereotypes continue to affect women as they climb the organisational ladder which is persistent, widely shared, and have proven to be very resistant (Heilman, 2001: 658). Hence, Heilman’s (2001: 658) proposals contested economic explanations of occupational sex segregation, such as ‘pipeline’ theories that lay the blame on time and supply and deficit theories that presume women to be underprovided with the characteristics necessary to fulfil traditional ‘male roles’. In particular, Heilman (2001) maintained that stereotypes, descriptive and prescriptive, and the ideas of what women are like and how they should behave, are central for explaining the lack of women in senior positions. Yet importantly, these prevalent ideas contradicted by recent literature, which points out that no scientific evidence has been reported validating the often made assumption that women lack the drive to get to the top (Heilman, 1997: 878).

3.3.4 Homosocial reproduction and social identity – the importance of ingroups, outgroups and gender queues

Within organisations, the informal social network that saturates organisations is of great importance. As Kanter (1977:181) argued ‘in a large, complex system, it is almost a necessity for power to come from social connections, especially those outside of the immediate work group’. Therefore, networks can be understood as contacts that individuals rely on, which might include sponsors (mentors and advocates upward in the hierarchy), peers, and subordinates (Kanter 1077:181). These types of networks have traditionally been gendered and ‘the old boys club’ is a commonly used description. The
old boys network can work within organisations, but can also be used to describe the social ties men rely on outside of their organisations which are equally important for getting opportunities within the labour market.

Gendered stereotyping does, as illustrated, often result in discrimination against women as a group. Kanter’s (1977: 48) research suggested that ‘managers at Indsco [the organisation she researched] had to look the part. They were not exactly cut out of the same mould like paper dolls, but the similarities in appearance were striking’. Kanter (1977: 48) described them as being ‘invariably white and male, with a certain shiny, clean-cut look’. Kanter (1977) revealed some of the organisational processes through which the power of men and managers can be reproduced. With homosocial reproduction ‘women were excluded from managerial posts as certain managers and men are selected as they reproduce their manager’s image (Kanter, 1977: 48). Because of the situation in which managers function and the position of managers in the corporate structure, social similarities tend to become extremely important to them (Kanter, 1977: 48). The group level processes and the social identity between groups creates a setting that often disadvantages some groups; this group is often women. Collinson and Hearn (1996) argued that Kanter’s idea of homosocial reproduction usefully illustrates how the power of men as managers and managers as men could continue in organisations.

Collinson et al. (1990) found in their UK study several ways that men can and do consistently discriminate against women in contemporary recruitment and promotion practices, while at the same time also privileging male candidates. Even though the legal perspective in the UK (section 6(1) of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) state that it is unlawful for employer to discriminate on the grounds of sex (and marriage), the reality Collinson et al. (1990) found was that both direct and indirect discrimination can and do occur. While direct discrimination is described as when a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of sex or because he or she is married, indirect discrimination might have the same result by applying a condition or requirement to all candidates, which is more difficult for one sex to meet (Collinson et al., 1990: 5). Collinson et al. (1990: 192) argued that both forms of discrimination can occur in organisations and ‘a substantial number of employers, many of whom publicly subscribe to equal opportunities are still ‘managing to discriminate’'.
An interesting factor related to structures, practices and discrimination in organisations is illustrated by Reskin (2002) who argued that ‘the core cognitive process that links gender and race to workplace outcomes is categorization. We automatically categorize the people we encounter into ingroups and outgroups, into ‘we’ and ‘they’” (Reskin, 2002: 221). She further pointed out that ‘the paradigmatic definition of discrimination is the differential treatment of persons because of status characteristics that are functionally irrelevant to the outcome in question’ (Reskin, 2002: 219). To support this Reskin (2002) argued how a more anonymous procedure for hiring could neutralise discrimination. In particular, she points to the work of Goldin and Rouse (2000) who in their study of symphony orchestra investigated whether the hiring process became more impartial through the use of blind auditions by focusing on the impact on using screens on the employment of women. They found that a ‘screen increases the probability a woman will be advanced and hired’ (Goldin and Rouse, 2000: 715). The findings from studies such as Goldin and Rouse (2000) are clear and Reskin (2002: 227) argued that ‘screens that concealed the sex of the candidates circumvented intentional discrimination and obviated the discriminatory consequences of nonconscious sex stereotyping and ingroup favouritism’.

Reskin and McBrier (2000) contend that the methods that organisations use to recruit managers are fundamental for the extent of sex-based ascription. They further argued that ‘using social networks to identify and select managers – a method employers favour for its efficiency, low cost, and ability to provide information unavailable through formal sources – tends to favour ingroups’ (Reskin and McBrier, 2000: 214). Reskin and Roos (1990) stated in their job queuing theory that employers consistently prefer to hire men rather than women, if men are available. Consequently, men get the best paid jobs and women end up with the worst paid jobs. Reskin and Roos (1990) argued that most employers maintained the structure of the labour queue around a gender queue; when the supply of men was scarce, either because rapid growth affected the supply or because men rejected jobs as inferior to other alternatives, employers then turned to women. Reskin and Roos (1990: 64) took the point of view that employers also did so when economic considerations made hiring women cheaper and regulatory agencies made not hiring them potentially costly.
3.3.5 Tokenism, the importance of numbers

One way to challenge and change the under-representation of women in specific areas and achieve a more balanced group is through the use of equality strategies such as quotas and gender representation regulations, as are in use in Norway. Kanter (1977) made a powerful argument stating that the share of women and men in the organisation affects their chances for influence. She argued for four types of group that can be identified based on different proportional representation of different kinds of people.

The first group, the uniform, has only one group of people, while the skewed groups are those in which there is a large preponderance of one type over another, up to a ratio of perhaps 85:15. The numerically dominant types also control the group and its culture in enough ways to be labelled dominant. The few members of the minority group in a skewed group are called tokens. Kanter (1977) argued that the Indsco women were often treated as representatives of their category, as symbols, rather than individuals, as the organisation was highly skewed. The third group, the tilted groups begin to move towards less extreme distributions and less exaggerated effects. Kanter (1977) argued that this group has a ratio of perhaps 65:35. The dominants are just a majority and the tokens have become a minority. The idea is that the minority members have potential allies among each other, can form coalitions and can affect the culture of the group. The last group, consists of a balance of 60:40 to 50:50 where the group becomes balanced and culture and interaction reflect the balance. Kanter (1977) argued that the outcomes for individuals in such a balanced peer group, regardless of type, will depend more on other structural and personal factors, including formatting of subgroups or differentiated roles and abilities (Kanter, 1977: 208-209). Similarly, Dahlerup (1988) discussed the notion of ‘critical mass’ in politics, yet in terms of Scandinavian politics she argued for 30 per cent women as the line for women as a group to have impact. Nevertheless, both Kanter and Dahlerup’s work and ‘critical mass theory’ has been critiqued and Childs and Krook (2008) described the need for clarifying the concepts and research agenda in terms of women’s political representation and influence. Chapter Two also emphasised the importance of numbers and threshold in order for women to get power in the political arena. The importance of numbers is a central aspect for organisational analysis and an important argument for using gender quotas. Consequently, differences in relation to women’s representation in the occupational groups will be explored further as this is also part of Acker’s theory of inequality regime in terms of gender as base of inequality.
3.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the major influential theoretical frameworks that have developed to explain and make sense of patterns of occupational sex segregation.

The chapter began with an examination of the economic accounts for occupational sex segregation, both from supply and demand perspectives. The supply side theories were found to be limited as both the human capital (Becker, 1964) and pipeline arguments have been rejected as the lack of human capital is not sufficient to explain the strong pattern of vertical sex segregation. In addition, preference theory (Hakim, 1991; Hakim 1996; Hakim 2002), taking an agency approach fails to acknowledge potential patriarchal structures and how women’s choices might be constrained. Critiques of preference theory assert that personal preferences are not enough to explain the deep rooted patterns of occupational sex segregation. Furthermore, economic theories from demand side approaches (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Becker, 1961) were found to be limited for the purposes of this thesis as, even though they successfully point out how a pattern of occupational sex segregation exists, they fail to justify why this pattern is still present. In contrast, this chapter illustrated the importance of feminist theories (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997; Bradley, 1999; Clark et al., 2003) for explaining occupational sex segregation and discussed how the thesis is influenced by feminist ideas and ideals. In fact feminist ideas and ideals can be seen as ‘orienting’ concepts (Layder, 1998) and important background influences for the thesis. This thesis values the concept of ‘patriarchal structures’ and the chapter discussed how gendering and gender power relations might operate at different levels of society at different times. In particular, this chapter presents Acker’s (2006b) theory of inequality regimes, which is used as the key analytical framework for investigating occupational sex segregation, gendered organisational practices and the dynamic nature of gender regimes within occupational groups, unpicking gendering at meso level.

Finally, building on theories of occupational sex segregation, in particular feminist theories and theories of gender regimes, two research questions emerged from this chapter. In particular, the key question for this thesis is ‘what factors are important in explaining the lack of women in senior positions in gender equal Norway?’ In addition, in terms of the occupational group analysis the sub question emerging is ‘In what way do gender inequality regimes operate in three Norwegian occupational groups?’
Chapter Four
The use of equality strategies

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following on from the previous chapters which set out the historical and contemporary context in Norway in relation to occupational sex segregation and equality as well as the theoretical underpinnings and framework for investigating occupational sex segregation, this chapter explores literature and approaches for improving equality in the labour market and thereby countering patterns of occupational sex segregation. As such, this chapter intends to discuss a range of equality policies and the theoretical underpinnings of approaches to equality.

Equality strategies have been seen as potential ways to counteract the strong patterns of occupational sex segregation, both from governments, policymakers as well as researchers. A variety of Acts focusing on equality between men and women have for decades been in place in countries such as Norway (Equality Act 1978) and the UK (Sex Discrimination Act 1975), yet, how organisations focus on and implement strategies for equality varies. As highlighted by Acker (2006b), these attempts do also often fail. Hence, whereas the idea and pursuit of equality have been a central goal for many countries for decades and a variety of policies for equality and diversity exist, how to achieve equality and strategies in use differ, both between and within countries.

As identified in Chapter Three, several theorists (Chang, 2000; Acker, 2006b) highlighted a need for greater use of strategies to challenge the existing and persisting pattern of occupational sex segregation in the labour market. As presented in Chapter Two, Chang (2000: 1662-1663) took the position that states’ interventions can focus on two main areas for tackling occupational sex segregation. First, governments can ensure equality of access. This refers to policies in which the state can intervene by passing legislation that either promotes or hinders women’s access to participate in all occupations. The state can enhance women’s economic status by passing laws promoting equality, such as equal pay and antidiscrimination laws. The second approach is substantive benefit which means that the state can interfere in the private or domestic sphere by taking over some of the responsibilities and thereby facilitating the combination of work and motherhood. For this chapter, the former point is the main centre of attention as an essential focus for this study is the use of strategies as a
response to inequality, in order to challenge and change patterns of occupational sex segregation, in particular in relation to the vertical axis. First, the theoretical and philosophical underpinning of equality strategies is discussed. Next, the chapter uncovers global trends of using strategies. The chapter then examines the contemporary debates and arguments supporting or objecting to the use of strategies. Next, the different methods and tools are discussed, and finally, concluding remarks and implications for the thesis are highlighted.

4.2 THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES

As discussed, strategies for improving equality between men and women are important internationally, yet there is no consensus on political perspectives and choice of strategies in the goal for equality. In fact the debate about the meaning of equality and the different ideas of ‘equality of opportunity’ or ‘equality of outcome’ has been central for strategies and approaches over the last few decades. In addition, the fundamental discussions about whether equality strategies should be built on the idea of sameness or difference have been important (Bacchi, 1990). In particular, the shift from equal opportunities to managing diversity marked a shift from sameness and justice to difference and the business case, highlighting the complexity in terms of discussion, types of strategy and the principle for equality.

As equality strategies are complex there is a need for an investigation into the different theoretical and philosophical underpinnings. Jewson and Mason (1986) argued in their influential article that equal opportunity (EO) in the workplace can take two approaches, namely the liberal or radical approach. They pointed out that liberal EO policies are working towards the removal of unfair treatment in the labour market by means of institutionalising fair procedures in every aspect of work and employment. They state that ‘equality of opportunity exists when all individuals are enabled freely and equally to compete for social rewards’ (Jewson and Mason, 1986: 313). The liberal approach advocates positive action and the principle of fair procedures is crucial. The radical approach, on the other hand, seeks to interfere directly in workplace practices in order to achieve a fair distribution of rewards among employees as measured by some standard of moral value and worth (Jewson and Mason, 1986: 315). Thus, the objective is not only to achieve fair procedures, but also to achieve fair distribution of rewards, hence the outcome is fundamental to the radical approach. Effectiveness from the radical perspective entails positive discrimination, where strategies such as quotas can be used
to reach the goal of greater equality of outcome. Based on the work of Jewson and Mason the elements of the different EO policies from liberal and radical stands are presented below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Liberal and radical stands on equal opportunity policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Perspective</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Fair procedures</td>
<td>Bureaucratisation of decision making</td>
<td>Positive action</td>
<td>Justice to be done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>Fair distribution of rewards</td>
<td>Politicisation of decision making</td>
<td>Positive discrimination</td>
<td>Consciousness training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Jewson and Mason, 1986: 312)

Both the approaches of liberal and radical EO have been criticized. Cockburn (1989: 217) identified how in the British context she found little support for radical EO within organisations where she in fact found that ‘women spoke bitterly of the disadvantage of women, black people of racism, but there was nonetheless a powerful dislike of the idea of favouritism, of moving the goal posts to make things easier for one’s own particular group’. In addition what fair and equal actually mean has been debated (Glover and Kirton, 2006: 101). In order to be treated equal, should people be treated differently or the same? For the liberal approach, the aim has been to minimise differences, hence treating people the same, while the radical approach is more inclined to treat people differently in order to be equal. In the UK context, both (Collinson et al., 1990) and (Cockburn, 1991) showed how the liberal approach was easily avoided within organisations and strategies for improving equality were ignored. Webb (1997) described how potential problems are related to gender stereotypes in terms of femininity and masculinity and what is suitable for specific jobs. Discrimination can occur based on expectations in terms of suitability rather than skills and qualifications. Hence, both liberal and radical types of EO policies were criticised in terms of effectiveness as discrimination continued to occur within organisations. In addition, scholars (Webb, 1997) described how also within the feminist movement strategies were critiqued as they only favoured certain groups of women (such as white middle class).
The discourse of equality is also complex. Miller (1996) identified four types of equality. The first idea is ‘ontological equality’, which is built around the belief in the sameness of human beings. Second, ‘equality of condition’ refers to the logical extension of ontological equality translated into the economic and social sphere, aiming to equalise the material conditions of the disadvantaged. The third idea is ‘equality of opportunity’ which has been associated with liberal bureaucratic approaches to fair recruitment and selection and with positive action. The fourth approach, ‘equality of outcome’, is the approach related to the more radical approaches and a shift in the composition of the workforce (e.g. positive discrimination) (Miller, 1996: 204). Miller (1996: 203) offers an attempt ‘to unravel and map out the very complex and elusive meanings of equality management in the 1990s’ including a discussion of the variety of EO approaches where he points to the narrowness of the equality of opportunity and equality of outcome approaches. According to Miller (1996: 210) ‘equality of condition has its roots much more within a materialist approach to the question of inequality and as such could serve as a banner for a number of contemporary campaign issues’ where the principle is related to parity in terms of both pay and conditions between segregated social groups with strategies challenging the existing notion of merit and pay hierarchies. In a development of the work from Jewson and Mason (1986), Miller (1996) introduced what he refers to as a mid-way point between the liberal and radical approach named ‘liberal progressive’ which is moving towards equality of outcome with a variety of methods in use building on the principle of AA. In addition, Miller (1996) also discussed the approach of ‘managing diversity’, which is a newer approach introduced first in the US where there was a backlash against AA. While EO ‘is derived from liberal political philosophy which asserts the rights of the individual to universally applicable standards of justice and citizenship’ (Webb, 1997), the diversity approach is built on the idea of the business case for diversity, and the understanding of equality is ‘profit aligned with organisational objectives’ (Miller, 1996).

Table 4.2 below is based on Miller’s (1996) work, which describes the approach of equality strategies from political perspectives; liberal, liberal progressive, radical, and managing diversity in relation to the principles of equality, strategy, method and type of equality wanted.
Table 4.2 Political perspectives on equality and diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Perspective</th>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Type of equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Fair equal opportunity</td>
<td>Level playing field</td>
<td>• Policy statement, equality proof recruitment and selection procedures</td>
<td>Equality of opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Vision statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organisation audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Business-related objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication and accountability, change culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive action</td>
<td>Assistance to disadvantaged</td>
<td>• Monitoring, pre-entry training</td>
<td>Moving towards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>social groups</td>
<td>• In-service training</td>
<td>equality of outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Special courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Elevate equality within management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal progressive</td>
<td>Strong positive</td>
<td>Give positive preference to</td>
<td>• Family-friendly policies, improve access for disabled, make harassment a disciplinary offence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>action / AA</td>
<td>certain groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>Positive discrimination</td>
<td>Proportional equal representation</td>
<td>• Preferential selection/ quotas</td>
<td>Equality of outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing diversity/ Neo-liberal</td>
<td>Maximize individual potential</td>
<td>Use diversity to add value</td>
<td>• Vision statement, organisation audit, business-related objectives, communication and accountability, change culture</td>
<td>Equality means profit aligned with organisational objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Miller, 1996: 205-206)

Miller (1996: 203) described how there has, since the 1980s and 1990s, been a ‘widening of the meaning of equal opportunities’ which again has resulted in ‘more complex and confusing messages for employers and practitioners’. Later, this chapter investigates global trends in political perspectives taken, strategies in use, and types of equality, as there are great variations, but first, the key approach important for this thesis will be discussed in greater detail.
4.2.1 Affirmative action

Using Miller’s (1996) framework, AA is the principle underlying the liberal progressive political perspective moving the type of equality wanted towards equality of outcome. The principle of AA is the terminology often used by researchers, countries and policymakers discussing EO approaches globally. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged how ‘the public discussion of affirmative action appears to be complicated by disagreements regarding definitions and by the lack of a theoretical framework from which to begin to understand this complex public policy’ (Taylor-Carter et al., 1995: 129). In addition, AA has different meanings for different countries. AA is originally the American term for equality strategies often operating with specific targets. In Europe, the two approaches, ‘positive action’ which is in line with equality of opportunity and of a liberal nature (give the applicant from the minority group the opportunity as long as equally qualified), as well as ‘positive discrimination’ which is in line with equality of outcome and of a radical nature (give the applicant from minority group the opportunity as long as the minimum requirements have been met) are the terminologies often used. AA as described in Miller’s (1996) theory can embrace both the principles of positive action and positive discrimination as it is arguing for going in the direction of equality of outcome.

Teigen (2000) took the viewpoint that what is meant by AA, and what kinds of strategies are included, varies. Reskin (1998: 2) pointed to the fact that in the US context AA is not one specific strategy, rather it is a variety of processes and practices that have evolved over three decades from the 1960s to the 1990s with the overall goal of actively averting unfair discrimination. Further, Reskin (1998: 1) proclaimed that in the US, ‘affirmative action in employment is among the most politicized social reforms of the second half of the twentieth century’. Dahlerup (2006: 9), coming from a Scandinavian background, argued that AA implies measures that target structural discrimination or that make it possible to leap over the barriers, as in the case of gender quotas. She stated that it is certain that AA has the potential for contributing to substantial changes, which is probably why it is so controversial, especially in the western world. Teigen (2000), also coming from a Scandinavian background, took the viewpoint that ‘most would agree that affirmative action is about applying differential treatment procedures to achieve a more balanced composition of individuals according to group characteristics’. Johnson (1990: 77), located in the US, argued that ‘affirmative action is a generic term for programmes which takes some kind of initiatives either
voluntary or under the compulsion of law, to increase, maintain, or rearrange the number or status of certain group members usually defined by race or gender within a larger group’. Bacchi (1996) pointed to the value of Johnson’s (1990) definition because of its open-endedness as Bacchi emphasised the importance of acknowledging how globally there are different interpretations of AA as well as the reforms it includes. Similarly, Bergmann (1996: 7) described AA in the US context as ‘planning and acting to end the absence of certain kinds of people – those who belong to groups that have been subordinated or left out –from certain jobs and schools’. Bacchi (1996: x), writing from an Australian context, portrayed how the intention of AA can be proactive. It does not have to wait for discrimination to occur and act upon a complaint of discrimination. The intention is to be forward-looking, as well as redressing past and present discrimination. In the US, Reskin (1998: 19) described how AA addresses two forms of employment discrimination. First, job discrimination which relates to the assignment of people to jobs based on their sex or race, and second, promotion discrimination. Bacchi (1996) argued how AA policies take two forms: policies to alter the composition of the labourforce, and/or policies to increase representation on public committees, political parties, and educational institutions, both of which can be seen in the Norwegian approach.

Bacchi (2004) illustrated an important problem when describing how the understanding of AA as preferential treatment has become hegemonic. As a consequence of this understanding, there might be several negative effects for the targeted groups which leave the status quo largely unchallenged. The problematic issue is that this understanding is built upon a view that social rules are in general fair, and that members of groups targeted by AA, such as women, need ‘special help’ to succeed (Bacchi, 2004). As Bacchi (2004) emphasised, the basis of the privilege of dominant social groups is invisible in this conceptualisation. Hence Bacchi (1996: 17) argued that ‘labour market affirmative action needs to be understood as a response to identified inadequacies in antidiscrimination legislation’. While antidiscrimination policies are generally reactive and reliant on an individual complaint, AA on the other hand, is proactive aiming to create a non discriminatory environment. Consequently, how to define AA, arguments used supporting or objecting to it, as well as what kind of strategies to use are complicated.
For this study, the term AA will be used when looking at the different types of strategies in the Norwegian context. Again, going back to the definition provided by Johnson (1990) ‘affirmative action is a generic term for programmes which takes some kind of initiatives either voluntary or under the compulsion of law, to increase, maintain, or rearrange the number or status of certain group members usually defined by race or gender within a larger group’ it is clear that AA can, with this wide definition, be seen as including strategies of both radical as well as liberal natures, both compulsory in terms of laws from the state, and voluntary in terms of strategies from organisations.

There are several reasons for investigating the case of Norway within an AA framework including both liberal and radical strategies: Norway’s approach has, as was illustrated in Chapter Two, some characteristics of the liberal progressive perspective with its use of radical strategies such as quotas to reach a minimum representation in certain areas of the labour market, a variety of liberal strategies, as well as family friendly strategies which are a foundation of the social democratic welfare approach. Therefore, it can be argued that the principle of AA with a variety of methods in use and the idea of equality moving towards equality of outcome in certain areas are in place in the Norwegian political approach. Gender balance is a political goal and a variety of strategies are in place in the labour market, educational institutions and in politics. The Norwegian Gender Equality Act (The Norwegian Government, 2005) uses the term ‘affirmative action’ in the legislation and opens the way for a variety of strategies of radical and liberal nature to be used in the Norwegian equality approach. In addition, prominent Norwegian scholars have used the concept AA in relation to research in/on Norway (Teigen, 2000). Besides, as McHarg and Nicholson (2006) illustrated, the use of the term AA avoids some of the (intended or unintended) negative implications associated with alternatives like ‘positive discrimination’ and ‘preferential treatment’ whereas the less negative term ‘positive action’ which is favoured in the EU context is sometimes confined to what are otherwise called ‘soft’ or ‘weak’ forms of AA. Accordingly, this study will use the term AA in order to capture the variety of strategies of both radical and liberal approaches that exist in Norway.

4.3 GLOBAL TRENDS IN EQUALITY STRATEGIES

Globally, the need for a focus on equality is recognised as revealed in the previous section. AA, although controversial, has been on the political agenda in many Western countries (Teigen, 2000: 63), though the attitudes towards equality strategies and approaches in use now differ. On the one hand, in the US where AA has had a long-
standing tradition, the political climate has turned against it (Bacchi, 1996), both in terms of race and gender strategies. As Sturm and Guinier (1996: 953) illustrated ‘opponents’ have defined affirmative action as a program of racial preferences that threatens fundamental American values of fairness, equality, and democratic opportunity’. Taylor (1995: 1385) pointed out how, in public debates about race-targeted social policies, critics tend to insist that race-targeted interventions will inevitably bring about a white backlash and consequently greater racial polarisation making the effort ineffective. Nonetheless, Taylor (1995: 1385) questioned findings such as that of Sowell (1989) who found that ‘group polarization has tended to increase in the wake of preferential programs, with non-preferred groups reacting adversely, in ways ranging from political backlash to mob violence and civil war’ taking the position that AA strategies for race did not find that race-targeting creates white resentment or polarises the groups involved. Therefore, she pointed to the theory of backlash more as a myth. Nevertheless, the backlash to AA has influenced the change in US strategies, both in terms of race and gender where diversity management has become a key strategy (Miller, 1996). European research supports the idea of male backlash being a fear of men in organisations, yet the myths of the male backlash tend to be stronger than the reality experienced (Burke and Black, 1997).

Turning to Scandinavian countries, it is apparent how they are known for their comprehensive efforts to reduce occupational sex segregation. In fact, the family and equality policies in Scandinavian countries, and especially Norway, are often used when exemplifying successful policies at promoting equality between the sexes (The Nordic council of Ministers, 2007). In addition, Scandinavian countries are perceived as AA friendly countries (Bacchi, 1996). Freidenvall et al. (2006) argued that to a great extent, the Nordic discourse can be described as an incrementalist discourse of empowerment, which is built on the idea that gender equality develops gradually, but where state involvement can assist in progressive movement of equality in the desired direction, hence opening the way for the use of AA. Nevertheless, there are also different approaches between Scandinavian countries. While Skjeie and Teigen (2005: 188) took the position that radical strategies such as gender quotas have played a prominent role in Norwegian equality policies, they emphasised that this is the case in Norway possibly more so than in other Scandinavian and Nordic countries. While Norway, in the areas of employment and education, has moved towards the idea of equality of outcome, Denmark’s approach has been more in line with equality of opportunity. Teigen (2000:
points to the fact that in Norway a diverse set of (re)distributive regulations have been put in place over the past 30 years. This includes, as described in Chapter Two, national laws in order to regulate the gender composition of publicly appointed boards and committees at state and municipal levels, as well as the newly introduced gender representation law for BODs on public and private companies.

Although the use of radical strategies such as quotas are important tools for promoting equality and are fundamental approaches in some countries, such as Norway, in other countries, such as the UK, ‘positive discrimination’ (radical strategies such as quotas and earmarking) is illegal and consequently radical strategies are not in use there. Nevertheless, it is recognised by British scholars (Malleson, 2003: 16) how the use of AA in certain areas such as the judiciary is likely to emerge as a political issue in the UK and Noon (2010) took the position that it is time to rethink and reconsider positive discrimination also in the UK. In addition, there are differences within countries with occupational group specific trends. An example of occupation specific areas with a strong focus on AA of a radical nature is politics where the use of quotas has become a powerful trend worldwide (Dahlerup, 2006). In addition, private sector BODs have recently become an important area for discussion, especially after the introduction of the Norwegian gender representation regulations on BODs (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003).

4.4 THE EQUALITY DEBATE

As illustrated in Chapter Two, the road towards equality is a commonly used metaphor for political leaders, yet even though equality is the goal, there is great disagreement about why and how to achieve it. Consequently, countries and regions have adopted different strategies. Several understandings, arguments and views both for and against equality strategies exist where the debate generally revolves around two interrelated issues; arguments about justice and arguments about utility (Hernes, 1987; Teigen, 2000; McHarg and Nicolson, 2006).

Bacchi (1996: 1) described how the critics of AA describe it as at odds with the idea of EO and as undermining procedures designed to appoint the best person for the job. Supporters typically feel the need to qualify their support by specifying that their form of AA does not weaken merit in any terms. This thesis will use the distinction between justice and utility arguments as the two main categories guiding the analysis for supporting or objecting to the use of AA. Justice arguments can focus either on formal
justice and individual rights, or on justice at the societal level where the emphasis is on the outcomes of AA for disadvantaged groups and on the distribution of power between groups (Teigen, 2003: 48). Utility arguments on the other hand focus on what economic benefits AA will bring about (Teigen, 2003: 48). Arguments related to justice and utility can and often do focus on different areas of society. While the social justice perspective is often closely linked to AA in politics, individual justice is more related to AA in employment and education. The utilitarian position on the other hand focuses mostly on AA for integrating women in political decision-making and in economic life (Teigen, 2003: 52). The utilitarian argument or the business case is also the key argument used for managing diversity (MD) which is, as illustrated earlier in this chapter one of the newer important strategies globally (Wrench, 2005). Even though AA/EO is seen as building on the social justice case, Bradley and Healy (2008: 89) proposed the important argument that ‘the reality is that advocates of equal opportunities have always drawn on the business case as well, in its various forms, in order to convince those most resistant to change’. Hence, it is important to recognise that the business case for equality was not a new approach that came with MD, rather the business case has traditionally been important for strategies for improving equality for decades.

The importance of identifying the key arguments in the AA debate is essential for further analysis and therefore some of the main arguments supporting as well as objecting to the use of AA will be explored further. Hence, the analytical framework employed concise justice, social and individual, as well as utility arguments.

4.4.1 Individual justice
One of the key lines of argument from the individual justice perspective is related to prevention and compensation (Reskin, 1998). As argued by Reskin (1998) ‘affirmative action does not replace one form of favouritism with another; it replaces cronyism with objective personal practices’. If discrimination against certain groups exists, strategies can be used to balance this. Thus, equal treatment is secured by favouring women candidates when qualifications are about the same (Teigen, 2003: 50). As a result, AA will cancel the institutionalised or unconscious discrimination that exists and thereby promotes integration as a democratic value (Teigen, 2003: 50). Teigen (2003), working in a Norwegian context, described the need for the individual justice perspective; the idea of individualism and the right to be treated as an equal and not equality of treatment. Consequently, according to Teigen (2003: 66), ‘the right of every individual
to be treated as an equal allows for a broader set of differentiating criteria, including affirmative action’. A similar point is made by Dworkin (2000: 425) who argued that ‘affirmative action in universities, in that way, makes the eventual economic and social structure of the community not more artificial but less so; it produces no balkanization, but helps to dissolve the balkanization now sadly in place’. Hence, this line of argument is built on the fundamental belief that there is no ‘level playing field’ and strategies are needed to counteract this.

Nevertheless, also from the individual justice point of view, several arguments against the use of AA exist. One line of argument is related to the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment. The argument is that AA is a form of discrimination for those not benefiting (Reynolds, 1992). This again is built around the idea that you should be judged by individual qualities not group characteristics, hence ethical individualism (Elster, 1992: 195). Thus one of the key critiques of AA is that it might discriminate against people that belong to a majority group (Lynch, 1997). Therefore, people might argue against reverse discrimination from a moral principle. For that reason AA can be seen as complicated. As Fullinwider (1980: 156) illustrated, preferential hiring is paradoxical: ‘if we do not use preferential hiring, we permit discrimination to exist. But preferential hiring is also discrimination. Thus, if we use preferential hiring, we also permit discrimination to exist. The dilemma is that whatever we do, we permit discrimination’. Another argument is that skewed distribution based on sex and/or race in a specific area may well be a manifestation of barriers that women and non-white men met when they tried previously to enter certain areas of the labour market (Teigen 2003). Nevertheless, Elster (1992) argued that the past does not matter; rather there is a need for ethical presentism. According to Elster (1992:200), ethical presentism is violated in a vulgar feminist argument for giving women priority for jobs over more qualified male applicants: ‘in the past, men were given priority over more qualified female applicants; now its our turn’. This argument does not hold according to Elster as it violates ethical individualisms and ethical presentism. Another strong argument often used against AA is that it potentially violates the principle of merit. As illustrated by Young (1990: 200) ‘a widely held principle of justice in our society is that positions and rewards should be distributed according to individual merit. The merit principle holds that positions should be awarded to the most qualified individuals, that is, to those who have the greatest aptitude and skill for performing the tasks those positions require’. Nevertheless, Young (1990: 206) pointed to the fact that unconscious
aversions and devaluations exist, which again makes the selection process based on merit unfair as evaluators, especially those belonging to groups defined as neutral, often carry unconscious biases and prejudices especially against ‘marked’ groups. Consequently, Young (1990: 193) argued that ‘for the merit principle to apply it must be possible to identify, measure, compare, and rank individual performance of job-related tasks using criteria that are normatively and culturally neutral’. As this is not the case she raised the point that ‘a major issue of justice must be who decides what are the appropriate qualifications for a given position, how they will be assessed, and whether particular individuals have them’. Malleson (2003: 16) took a similar position when she argued for the possibility of using AA in the British judiciary: ‘one approach to this problem without offending the equity principle is to rethink the traditional definition of merit so that it gives greater weight to the experiences and career patterns more commonly found in women’.

4.4.2 Social justice
The key underlying principle from the social justice viewpoint is the idea of an equal society. One essential argument is related to democracy and that the use of quotas is necessary so that as long as women represent half the population they should have a right to half the seats of power, a claim of a more equal society (Dahlerup, 2002). In the UK and legal context Malleson (2003) pointed to the need for a stronger focus on legitimacy arguments for equal opportunity. Malleson (2003: 17) argued that ‘the weakness of equity-based arguments is that they appear to be concerned more with the interest of the participants rather than society as a whole’. Therefore, she identified the need for equity-based arguments to be supplemented with a justification which demonstrates that equal participation is a requirement for the proper functioning of an organisation, however it should not rely on difference-based quality of justice arguments. Malleson (2003) described how democratic principles and the need for legitimacy are especially important even though not straightforward in the area of judiciary. Along similar lines, Hernes (1987), from a Scandinavian perspective, described the gender balancing/parity argument with the idea that women should be represented equally with men in areas of power and influence; whether or not discrimination causes it is of less relevance. One viewpoint is that AA is just reparation for historical injustice, and now it is women’s turn. Teigen (2003: 66) made a convincing point that the ‘social justice strategy argues for gender balance in terms of
pure demand for justice, and the focus is then transferred from individual rights to groups based on social differences. The claim is, that it is evidently unfair that power and resources are predominantly possessed by men’. Noon (2007: 781), coming from a UK perspective, took the viewpoint that ‘equality of opportunity is a human right based in moral legitimacy (social justice), rather than economic circumstance. Its base is therefore an inalienable right that is universal. The traditional moral case for equality remains the strongest foundation for underpinning equality of opportunity.’

Nevertheless, also from the social justice point of view, there are several arguments against the use of AA. One is related to the contra effects; it might be the case that too much time and energy are actually spent debating AA in relation to the outcomes of these procedures and then the consequences of these debates might include an increase in negative attitudes towards both AA and the groups that these regulations are designed to favour (Young, 1990). Heilman (1997: 887) argued that sex discrimination has shown to be resistant, despite numerous efforts to eliminate it. Yet, in the US context she argued that ‘it is equally clear that affirmative action, as is currently constructed, creates its own set of problems for those it is intended to help’(1997: 887). In addition, Teigen (2003: 51) described how there is also an individually oriented version of the argument which ‘maintains that affirmative action is taken mainly in cases where ‘protected’ candidates are so qualified that they would have been nominated anyway’. Consequently, according to this argument AA contributes primarily to weaken the self-esteem of those benefiting from the procedures which again might be experienced as problematic. Similarly, a counter argument is that it might raise doubts among whether a ‘minority’ candidate really was skilled for the position as it might produce a situation in which the incentives offered to minorities to acquire the skills needed to perform adequately in positions are maintained permanently below the incentives provided to majority workers (Loury, 1992: 29).

4.4.3 Utility
Utility justifications focus on the benefits of AA and the business case for equality. Skjeie and Teigen (2005: 188), operating within a Scandinavian context, described how one line of argument often used in order to justify why equality is so important to achieve is related to usefulness. The statement is that women- as such – have special contributions to make. Hence, the key of the resource argument is the focus on the organisational advantage gained by including women (Hernes, 1987; Helgesen, 1990).
As illustrated by Helgesen (1990: xiii) using her experiences from the US labour market ‘working for a variety of companies over the years had convinced me that most organizations had absolutely no idea how to take advantage of the talents, skills, and ideas of the ever-increasing number of women who were joining their ranks’. The claim is related to difference, that because of gender differences in management styles, attitudes, experiences, interests, etc., more women in male dominated areas will contribute to new perspectives and ways of solving problems, which will result in higher productivity and a better working environment. Thus Teigen (2003: 66) argued that ‘the utilitarian strategy stresses gender complementarity, and the special contribution of women in male dominated fields. This argument of difference aims at creating a shift of focus, from affirmative action as a tool to prevent discrimination towards seeing affirmative action as a tool for organisational enhancement by recruiting women’. Furthermore, human capital argument states that since the total potential of a population is about evenly distributed between men and women, the few women in high status positions implies that the talent potential is not fully utilised (Hernes, 1987). It is important to correct for biased criteria of merit to enable the identification of talented among the disadvantaged, thereby adding them to the labour pool. A utility argument especially used in the debate about quotas in politics illustrated by Dahlerup (2002) is also related to difference, where the argument is that women have different experiences (biologically or socially constructed) that ought to be represented. The argument is for diversity where group attributes can contribute to positive outcomes over and above the attributes of individuals. Dahlerup (2002) also described how one argument is that women and men have partly conflicting interests and as a result men cannot represent women. Representation of women’s interests is a related argument and is especially valid in politics. According to these arguments, women should be given preference in order to represent the interests of women as a group in political decision-making (Hernes, 1987; Skjeie, 1992; Phillips, 1995; Dahlerup, 1998). Hence, it can be seen that permutations of the utility argument may underscore that women stand for an ‘unused’ pool of talent; a ‘different’ set of perspectives, a ‘broader’ point of view, an ‘extended’ legitimisation basis, etc.

Nevertheless, there are also strong arguments against the use of AA from a utility point of view. Malleson (2003) also pointed to the danger of difference arguments. The danger with this, that Malleson (2003) pointed to, is the danger of essentialism using the British judiciary as an example as ‘these arguments assume that is not the presence of
women per se that is needed on the bench but what women will do once there’. Malleson (2003: 21) argued that ‘difference-based arguments for equality are therefore attractive but insufficient. Instead, arguments based on equity and legitimacy provides a sounder foundation for equality’ as ‘difference-based arguments are too weak to stand as the principal foundation of gender equality at the bench’. Noon (2007: 776) raised an important concern taking the position that a potential problem with the business case and utility arguments can be that employers might actually fail to recognise benefits of diversity as they only have short term goals. Another critique of AA from the utility point of view is related to the potential problem that diversity might not ‘add value’ and might not be beneficial from a business perspective for the organisation, hence, it is a dangerous argument (Noon, 2007). In addition, another important point is the unintended consequence of such measures. The argument is that AA might negatively affect individual and organisational efficiency as well as productivity (Loury, 1992; Reynolds, 1992). A different argument is that, even if the validity of a particular goal is accepted, unlike arguments from justice, this kind of utilitarian argument always requires calculations of whether the benefits of pursuing the goal outweigh any ensuing costs. Utility arguments are therefore always vulnerable to the possibility that others might weight the costs and benefits differently (McHarg and Nicolson, 2006: 17). McHarg and Nicolson (2006: 17) further argued that this focus on goals does at least appear to have the advantage of deflecting attention from questions about the legitimacy of AA as a means of achieving social benefits.

This section has pointed to how numerous arguments both supporting and objecting to AA exist. This is also the case in Norway where the use of radical AA has forced a national debate where a variety of arguments have been used by the government and in the national debate. In fact, Skjeie and Teigen (2005) described how there has been a shift in Norway from relying on justice to utility arguments, which has been especially apparent with the introduction of the gender representation law where a mix of justice as well as utility arguments are in use. Exploring experiences and views from women affected by a variety of AA will give insight into how women are justifying their perspectives. The separation between justice, individual and social, as well as utility will be employed as the analytical framework in the case of AA in politics, academia and BODs.
4.5 AA: WHERE TO INTERFERE AND THE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

It is often argued that there are two areas where AA can take place: policies to alter the composition of the labourforce, and/or policies to increase representation on public committees, political parties, and educational institutions (Bacchi, 1996: 15). Arguments related to the use of AA differ slightly in these two circumstances. For the second area, arguments commonly used are that institutions ought to reflect, to an extent, the composition of the population. Bacchi (1996: 15) argued that electoral quotas are more easily defended than employment quotas, since the issue of political representation is a crucial distinction. Dahlerup (2002) described quotas in political representation to be more clearly justifiable than quotas in numbers of lawyers or university professors as the argument is related to representation in democracies. Bacchi (1996: 16) also took the position that there are two labour market domains where AA is needed; the public and private sectors. She further argued that policies tend to differ for the two domains, with government generally being willing to impose stricter obligations on the public sector, while private sector policies vary to an extent; nevertheless, the general trend is voluntarist. Hence, this thesis will, by investigating the use of AA in politics, academia and BODs look at arguments and approaches within employment in both the public and private sectors as well as in political institutions. In particular, investigation into the unique case of the gender representation law for Norwegian BODs will provide insight into an occupational group where mandatory quotas are put in place in a sector generally characterised by voluntarism.

4.5.1 The different strategies

As clarified by Teigen (2003: 17), the debates around AA strategies sometimes wrongly give the impression that there is only one approach and strategy. Earlier in this chapter, it was identified how the political perspective taken will affect the strategies employed and methods used for reaching specific types of equality. Bacchi (1996), working within Australian academia, described how AA policies can be categorized as ‘soft’ or ‘hard and ‘other’ strategies depending on the method employed. In a US study, Taylor-Carter et al. (1995: 133) referred to strategies in use as ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ preferential treatment. Teigen’s (2003) Norwegian study separated strategies into radical and moderate approaches which correspond with hard and soft strategies and the liberal and radical strategies in Jewson and Mason’s (1986) and Miller’s (1996) terms. The distinction of liberal and radical types of strategies will be used in this thesis. In addition, a variety of
strategies not coming under the liberal-radical divide will be classified as enabling strategies.

4.5.2 Radical strategies

The use of radical strategies, also referred to as hard strategies (Taylor-Carter et al., 1995; Bacchi, 1996), include reforms which make membership of a designated group one or the only criteria for access to jobs or positions of influence. This includes policies which specify that being a member of an underrepresented group counts in assessing candidates for appointment and promotions. Taylor-Carter et al. (1995) believe that radical treatment means that a woman (or black, or member of any other underrepresented group) is granted an employment opportunity as long as she meets minimum qualifications for a job.

4.5.2.1 Minimum representation: Quotas

Quotas are a form of radical strategy. Teigen (2003), referring to the Norwegian setting argued that quotas are in use when there is a specified proportion of the share of the underrepresented sex (or other minority groups) that should possess certain positions and where there are tools to make sure the quota target is met. Dahlerup (2006) argued that gender quotas are part of a new type of equality policy (which is especially visible in the political arena), and it represents a shift from ‘equality opportunity’ to ‘equality of result’. Nevertheless, the concept of quotas has different meanings in different countries. While the Scandinavian discourse discusses quotas in terms of minimum representation of certain groups, the case in the US context is to use quotas as targets hoping to be met. This emphasises the importance of positioning studies within geographical contexts as discourses may vary.

4.5.2.2 Promotion procedure and earmarking

Promotion procedures can be an example of a hard strategy, but this is a slightly different kind of AA. According to Teigen (2003) these kinds of procedures imply that a candidate’s chances are improved by being moved upwards in a prior ranked queue or row. For example, the additional points system is the most commonly applied procedure to balance the gender composition of students within gender skewed fields of learning. Another promotion procedure is ‘earmarking’ of positions, which has been used in academia in several countries (e.g. Sweden, Norway); this is where certain positions are exclusively made available to certain groups.
4.5.3 Liberal strategies
Liberal strategies are also referred to as soft strategies (Taylor-Carter et al., 1995; Bacchi, 1996) and can be described as being built on the idea that as a long as a minority and a majority applicant for an employment opportunity are equally qualified, the minority member is granted the opportunity or the removal of unfair treatment (Jewson and Mason, 1986). Bacchi (1996: 16) portrayed how ‘soft reforms include attempts to remove structural impediments which affect particular groups’. Liberal treatment is most widely used in recruitment and promotions in the state, the municipal sector, in some private companies, and in connection with admission to gender skewed types of education; applicants from the underrepresented gender are given priority, when qualifications are about equal (Teigen, 2003). Nevertheless, as Teigen (2003) further argued, the carefulness of the formulation of these types of strategies have small effects. Regardless of their relative efficiency, studies point to the fact that they positively affect organisations’ prioritising and legitimising of gender equality (Teigen, 2002).

4.5.4 Enabling strategies
While the liberal approaches can be seen as ‘fixing’ the women and the radical approach, ‘preferring’ women, enabling strategies include strategies that can be seen as ‘facilitating’ women without being completely separated from liberal or radical approaches. Taylor-Carter (1995: 133) referred to ‘other’ strategies such as recruiting, training, and simple removal of employment barriers as being important. In this thesis, the terminology used for additional strategies for challenging inequality and occupational sex segregation is ‘enabling strategies’ as they are designed with the aim of enabling women. These strategies can be of importance for occupation specific groups as well as more general labour market strategies.

4.6 SUMMARY
This chapter has discussed the use and approaches of AA strategies. Years and decades after introducing equality acts and strategies, we still find gender inequality, sex discrimination and unequal treatment (Kanter, 1977; Collinson et al., 1990; Acker, 2006b). Authors and policymakers have therefore acknowledged the need for new and additional strategies, hence the focus on equality between the sexes is recognised as an important aspect worldwide. Equality strategies are seen as key for improving women’s
(and other underrepresented groups’) situation in the labour market, yet as discussed, this is far from straightforward.

This chapter illustrated how a variety of political ideas and approaches have framed the equality debate in recent decades. In addition, this chapter has justified the focus of this thesis, analysing the case of Norway within an AA framework comprising strategies of both a liberal and radical nature. The debate surrounding AA is also marked by disagreements. Influenced by Teigen (2003) the analytical framework adopted for investigating the arguments is divided into justice; individual and social, as well as utility arguments. This is done in order to investigate experiences and justifications of AA in politics, academia and BODs in Norway and how the use of AA affects patterns of occupational sex segregation and equality in the respective groups and wider society.

The research question emerging from this chapter is ‘How do different forms of AA, from liberal to radical, work to challenge inequalities?’
Chapter Five
Research philosophy, methodology and strategy

5.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter aims to situate the research within a recognised research methodology and draw attention to the research methods employed in the study. First, the justification for this study is described, drawing on my personal interests and history. Next, this chapter defines the research approach for this study influenced by a feminist multilevel paradigm. It then goes on to evaluate the ontological and epistemological approaches, influenced by Layder (1993; Layder, 1997; Layder, 2006), as well as standpoint feminism (Harding, 1987) and to rationalise the methodology employed in the study. Next, the research strategy and design are brought to light and discussed building on the ideas of Layder’s research map and social domain and adaptive theory. Following from the strategy, the methods adopted in the research are discussed, including the mixed methods employed in the research design. The justification for focusing on politics, academia and BODs is presented and the participants for this study are introduced. In addition, a reflection on the data collection methods, the data analysis techniques employed and the research process is presented. This research is of a reflexive nature, and the importance of reflexivity is discussed. Finally concluding remarks and implications for the thesis are presented.

5.2 POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCE
I value the suggestion by Silverman (2000) of a ‘natural history’ approach to writing the methodology chapter and to explaining the origin of this thesis. Throughout my upbringing and education I have always been politically active and I had a special interest in human rights and equality. Yet, my interest in equality was not on my behalf, it was related to democracy and human rights for the developing world, especially for women and children. My special interest in the topic of occupational sex segregation and equality in the Norwegian labour market started when I as a Master’s student was presented with international labour market statistics where the case of Norway did not make sense to me. Why and how could it be that the most equal country in the world with a high share of women politicians had so few women in senior positions in other areas of the labour market? The proud idea of equality I was presented with growing up in Norway did not match the pattern of vertical sex segregation in the Norwegian labour market in international comparison. Being perceived to be amongst the best countries in
the world to live in, with high GDP per capita, being amongst the richest countries in
the world in addition to the high ranking of equality, the strong pattern of vertical sex
segregation was a surprise. My Master’s thesis included an analysis of women at the
University of Oslo, based on an email questionnaire with a mix of closed and open
ended questions which revealed a reality I had been ‘privileged’ not to see. This gender
consciousness and strong political belief in equality has affected my research focus, my
assumptions, questions, and bias of the study. Therefore I am aware of the paradox of
the difference between the lived experiences of the women in senior positions and the
general macro understanding among women and men regarding equality in Norway.
This background has affected my philosophical and methodological approach which
will be elaborated further. As a Norwegian woman studying trends of equality for
women in Norway, I acknowledge the subjectivity in my study.

The research philosophy of the PhD study is in line with a feminist multilevel approach,
particularly influenced by standpoint feminist theory which allows me to have a
reflexive and multilayered approach demonstrating the nature of the interrelationship of
structural factors and individual agency in line with Layder’s (Layder, 1993; Layder,
2006) adaptive and social domain theory. My decision to allow particular paradigms to
guide this research is tied in with my acknowledgement of the political ideas I as a
women with a strong belief in equality bring to it.

5.3 A FEMINIST MULTILEVEL PARADIGM
This section aims to locate my research by discussing the philosophy and methodology
adopted. Given the existence of competing epistemologies and ontologies, in order for a
reader to interpret research findings it is important to have an understanding of the
philosophy and paradigm that the researcher was working within.

Several approaches to methodology exist. In particular, at one end of the spectrum you
find the middle-range theory (Merton, 1967) which emphasises theoretical hypotheses
and a positivist approach to guide the research. At the opposite end of the spectrum you
find the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) which has a
methodological approach which can be seen as the opposite to middle-range theory by
taking more of an interpretive approach. The approach of this study is building on
Layder’s (1993; Layder, 2006) thoughts which can be seen as somewhat of a bridge
builder between grounded theory and middle-range theory, between theory-building and
theory-testing. Layder’s adaptive and social domain theory includes a multilevel approach and as described by Layder (2006: 298) ‘the theory of social domains and the methodology of adaptive theory together provide a social analytical framework with which to understand agency-structure links’. Layder is influenced by critical realism which can be seen as an anti-positivist movement in social sciences. Critical realists oppose logical positivists, relativists and anti-foundational epistemologies. Nevertheless, critical realists agree with positivists that there is a world of events out there that is observable and independent of human consciousness. In addition, they hold that knowledge about this world is socially constructed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 13). Feminist ideas and ideals are central influences for this study, yet the approach and understanding of feminism is not straightforward and a variety of perspectives exist as discussed in Chapter Three. Influenced by Layder, feminist ideas and ideals are used as key ‘orienting concepts’ drawn from the literature. Orienting concepts are used ‘to give direction and guidance in the initial stages of a new research project’ (Layder 1998:101). As described by Mertens (2003: 137) ‘feminist views on research take many different forms, but all are premised on the knowledge of women’s oppression and the vision of social justice for women through research as one of a range of strategies’. As a result, it can be argued that what distinguishes a feminist approach to research is that it allows one to problematise women’s position as well as the institutions that frame them, by examining policy and theoretical or action frameworks in order to achieve social justice for women in particular contexts (Olesen, 2000). Nevertheless, Olesen (2000) emphasised that this does not mean that there is one approach of feminism, rather, it is the case that the outlook of the new millennium is that feminist research can be and is ‘highly diversified, enormously dynamic and thoroughly challenging to its practitioners, its followers and its critics’ (Olesen, 2000: 215). Therefore, feminist ideas and ideals are used as orienting or background concepts. In particular, the feminist influence on the study involves the idea of using patriarchy in an adjective manner, opening up the possibility of patriarchal systems without claiming that patriarchy is present everywhere as discussed in Chapter Three.

All research is interpretive argued Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 13) pointing to the fact that research is guided by a ‘set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied’. The paradigm that researchers are working within includes several components and the different paradigms are characterised by divergence over three interrelated questions that establish the foundation of scientific
inquiry. These are the ontological question of what is the nature of reality, the
epistemological question of what is the nature of the knowledge of reality, and the
methodological question of what are the ways of attaining the knowledge of reality
(Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The intention in this study is
not to engage extensively with competing theories of ontology and epistemology, but
rather the next section will explore this study’s assumptions of ontology, epistemology
and methodology, building on ideas from feminism and Layder’s adaptive theory.

5.3.1 Ontology
Ontology refers, according to Burrell and Morgan (1979), to the assumptions which
concern the very essence of the phenomenon under investigation. Ontology is
conceptions of reality and the nature of being. Neither feminism nor Layder reject
objectivity per se, but allow for a more subjective ontological stance. Layder (1993,
1998, 2006) argued for a wider view of social science that embraces ontological variety
in the social world by recognising its multiple domains, where he argues for the
individual-society dualism at the base of his diagram, with agency-structure above it,
and macro-micro at the top. The reason for this is to avoid compacting or conflating
elements of agency and structure into a one-dimensional view of social reality
(2006:293). As described, Layder (2006) supports the critical realists school of thought
on disagreeing with the flat ontologies that are characterised by both positivist and
interpretivists. The ontological building block of critical realism is the layered nature of
social reality and transcending the dualism of agency versus structure. Layder
(2006:272) operates with four levels that the social universe or reality is made up of:
self/psychobiography, situated activity, setting/social setting and context/contextual
resources, which arguably can be understood as the ontological depth of social reality.
The structure and agency debate has been central for social enquiries (Archer, 1995). A
fundamental problem with the agency and structure debate is explained by Mutch
(1999: 329) as ‘the need to avoid, on the one hand, collapsing all social structures into
aggregations of individual behaviours and, on the other, creating extra human structures
which mould and direct human actions without their conscious choice’. The critical
realism scope of the structure-agency debate is situated as ‘a central place for human
choice, arguing that it is always open to humans to act in manners which are not
suggested by the situation in which they find themselves. However, it is not their
immediate actions which create those situations, although they might well contribute to
their production. Rather, such situations, and their constraints on activity which they
Accordingly, critical realism holds a conception of structure and agents as ontologically different from and irreducible to each other, whilst at the same time it emphasises the existence of relationality and interdependence between the two spheres. This is in line with Layder’s idea of a layered nature of social reality. Feminist theory also points to the importance of multiple levels and focuses when investigating gender differences in terms of equality. As argued by Bradley (2007), an important aspect is that women and men are actively involved in ‘doing’ gender and that this operates at different levels of society. Particularly interesting for this thesis in terms of occupational sex segregation is the debate on whether choices are made under free or constrained conditions (Hakim, 1995; Ginn et al., 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998). Consequently, the ontological influence in this study is in line with Layder’s adaptive/domain theory as well as feminist theory that also allows for ontological depth.

5.3.2 Epistemology
Epistemology is related to the nature and scope of knowledge. Thinking epistemologically involves a consideration of the relationship between the knower and the known, and the issues of epistemology relate to the issues of ontology (being, and the nature of things) (Letherby, 2003).

As much of research is conducted by and for men, it has been argued that this has excluded women’s position, viewpoint, and voice. Mertens (2003: 137) pointed to the fact that ‘feminist epistemologies hold that it is a mistake to ask for value-free science. Rather, it is important for good science to focus attention on the dynamics of gender and oppression in the theories and methods of science.’ I value the point offered by Letherby (2003: 6) that ‘feminist researchers are concerned to do research which reveals what is going on in women’s lives (and men’s too, because to fully understand women’s lives we need to also understand what men are thinking and experiencing), and to undertake research in a way that is non-exploitative’. Several authors (Harding, 1987; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, 2004) argued that there are three epistemological positions that are and have been very relevant for feminism: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and post-modern feminism. Harding (1987) described two styles of feminist empiricism. Spontaneous feminist empiricism keeps
strictly to conventional research norms and standards, and contextual empiricism recognises the importance of the influence of social values and interests in scientific knowledge. In its attachment to existing methodological rules and principles, it can be seen that feminist empiricism continues to focus on objectivity and places the researcher, not the women, in the position of the knower (Webb 2000). Standpoint theory on the other hand views all attempts at knowing as socially situated and, in rejecting the goal of absolute objectivity, argues that some standpoints or social locations are better than others in order to attain knowledge about specific issues (Harding, 1998). The third feminist approach is feminist post-modernism, which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, emphasising the heterogeneity of women, which again denies the possibility of a single feminist stance and argues in favour of the individuality of women, their multiple identities and therefore the uniqueness of the individual stories they tell about the knowledge they have (Harding, 1987).

This thesis is influenced by a broad feminist standpoint theory. Feminist standpoint epistemology begins, according to Hesse-Biber and Yaiser (2004: 15) with ‘research questions (methodologies) rooted in women’s lives (the researched) – women’s everyday existence. Standpoint theorists explain that a hierarchical society will produce different standpoints, or vantage points, from which social life is experienced’. Hence power and power relations are of great importance for this theoretical approach. As illustrated by Harding (1987: 185) ‘to achieve a feminist standpoint one must engage in the intellectual and political struggle necessary to see nature and social life from the point of view of that disdained activity which produces women’s social experiences instead of from the partial and perverse perspective available from the ‘ruling gender’ experience of men’. Arguably, standpoint theory is often employed in feminist methodology because women, having been dominated by men, have formed this dual outlook; they know the workings of not only women’s world, but also much of men’s. Problems that women face on a daily basis - at home, in the workplace and society - are often invisible to, or ignored by men. It is these problems that are of interest to many feminist influenced researchers. Accordingly, many feminist researchers use standpoint epistemology as a part of feminist methodology (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, 2004: 16). Moreover, the emancipatory idea is important for my work as the motivation for potential change and improvement is an essential motivation for researching the subject.
Layder (1998) in his adaptive theory argued for an epistemological position which is neither positivist nor interpretivist and argued for a disciplined epistemological inclusiveness by claiming that it is able to ‘incorporate and reconcile the equally valid insights of objectivism and subjectivism. Dogmatic or narrow epistemological assumptions cannot embrace the ontological diversity of the social world’ (Layder, 2006: 293). Accordingly, the epistemological influence in this study reflects and is influenced by a feminist and multilevel approach. This involves using an interpretive approach to challenge the epistemological foundations of the emphasis on objectivity and therefore alternative ways of researching the social world. An important point made by Layder (1997: 55) is that ‘in my opinion epistemological questions (how we know things) and ontological claims (about the nature of the things we know) cannot be completely separated from each other because they are intrinsically related’.

There are several reasons for the chosen approach. A feminist approach allows one to give priority to women’s experiences and to acknowledge the impact of the researcher on the project and vice versa, while at the same time acknowledging that diversity exists within women as a group as well as recognising the historical and contextual nature of experience and the multiple elements of analysis which is also key to Layder’s approach. Different ontologies, epistemologies and models of human nature are likely to incline social scientists towards different methodologies which is where the chapter now turns.

5.3.3 Methodology

With methodology, the focus turns to the study of methods and practices employed in the research. Earlier in this chapter it was described how feminist epistemology asks ‘whose knowledge are we talking about’ while the question for feminist methodology is ‘how should we go about producing knowledge’ (O'neill, 2000: 339). Letherby (2003) pointed out that while all feminist research is aiming to understand why inequality between men and women exists, feminists do not all agree on where to find the causes of male domination, or how to approach it. For Layder, the notion of methodological pluralism is a prevailing principle and there are methodological principles stemming from the ontological and epistemological stances adopted pointing to the use of multiple methods. In line with the philosophical influences presented in the previous section I value Layder’s (1998) approach constructed around the ideas of the ontological building blocks of ontological depth and the agency-structure dualism, where adaptive theory
encourages a multi-pronged strategy in terms of the employment of methods and techniques in order to maximise the potential for theory-generating. Layder (1993) revealed, as discussed, a gap between theory-testing research (Merton, 1967) and theory-building research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). With this in mind, Layder (2006) argued that this ‘more comprehensive outlook’ has two important consequences; first, it enables social research to address the problem of the division between macro and micro levels of analysis in sociology by concentrating attention on the organic link between them. Such an approach directly opposes those which assume either that one level can be reduced to, and explained by, the other more ‘favoured’ level, or that the less favoured level can be simply tacked on to the more ‘important’ focus of analysis. Secondly, Layder (2006:8) argued that viewing society or social reality as a series of interdependent layers each with its own distinctive characteristics enables the researcher to be sensitive to the different units and timescales that are involved in social processes and social change. This also fits with the strong feminist influence and the standpoint epistemological position. These methodological principles guided this research to help explain the invisible underlying mechanisms that are embedded and necessary for understanding of specific patterns. All the domains overlap and interweave with each other. Each element or area has its own distinctive characteristics which must be carefully registered to understand how they all connect to shape behaviour and social activity in general (Layder 1993, 9). The micro processes of everyday life as reflected in the situations and identities of the persons involved can only be understood properly when seen in combination with more macro features (Layder 1993:10). Layder (1993) emphasised that the elements refer to levels of social organisation which are closely interrelated, but which for analytic and research purposes can be scrutinised separately as explained in Table 5.1.
Table 5.1 Layder’s adapted research map and the layering of social domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research elements</th>
<th>Research focus</th>
<th>Relations of power</th>
<th>Stretched across time and space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Context/contextual resources | Macro social forms/organisation  
• Social, political and legal relations  
• Values and traditions  
• Class, gender and ethnic relations |                    |                                |
| Setting/social setting | Immediate environment of social activity  
• Work: labour market organisations  
• Non-work: school and family |                    |                                |
| Situated activity | Social activity  
• Dynamics of face to face interactions.  
• Focus on the emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by the context and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individuals (below) |                    |                                |
| Self/psychobiography | Self identity and individuals social experiences  
• Biographical experiences and social involvements |                    |                                |

(Layder, 1993: 8; Layder, 2006: 273)

The different elements presented in Layder’s research map are strongly interrelated, but for analytical purposes they are separated:

1. The ‘self’ (psychobiography) refers principally to the individual’s relation to her (or his) social environment. It is characterised by the intersection of biographical experience and social involvement.

2. For the element of ‘situated activity’ the research focus shifts away from the individual to the emergent dynamics of social interactions.

3. The element of setting (social setting) represents a research focus on the midway forms of social organisation (examples can be work organisations, schools, hospitals and factories) that provide the immediate arena of social activity.
4. Context (contextual resources) refers to the wider macro social forms that provide the more distant environment of social activity.

5. History and power enter into the operations of all elements of the map.

This multilevel approach encourages a holistic perspective where the vertical dimension of layers as well as the horizontal dimension which stretches across times are adopted with no clear boundaries.

5.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The aim of this section is to link my philosophical and methodological principles to the research strategy and to explore the whole research process. While the previous section was of a more philosophical character, this part is more practical and focuses on the whole research process and methods employed. This section explores how the research strategy and design has developed in order to answer the research questions for the study. Layder’s idea of a research map was adapted and used to design the project enabling an investigation of the different layers of social elements and their differing and overlapping influences on the experiences of the women in the study using multiple methods. Hence, a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods are employed. The philosophical and methodological principles presented are guiding this thesis to explain the invisible and underlying mechanisms that are important for exploring occupational segregation, equality and equality strategies for women in Norway. Adopting a feminist multilevel approach, this thesis is based on an understanding that occupational sex segregation and equality are materialised in a multilayered context. Therefore, first I present experiences from women as individuals, next, social interaction both in settings such as the domestic sphere and the workplace, as well as at the wider social and cultural macro level which again influences the different settings. A more in-depth discussion regarding the strategy and use of the research map will be further explored in the next section.

5.4.1 Research design

In my thesis I have followed a traditional process starting with literature review, methodology, research design, field study, analysis and writing up. All of these phases have influenced and played a part in the research process and design.
5.4.2 Analytical framework and my research map

My analytical framework is, as presented, based on Layder’s (Layder, 1993) ideas of a research map. This approach allows me to include several elements of analysis, analytical foci and levels, as well as the interrelation between these levels. I see this interrelation as absolutely essential for the study of vertical sex segregation, equality and AA in Norway. Various theories discussed in my literature review section such as feminist ideas and welfare theories guide the design of the research, constructions of the methods and analysis. In particular, Acker’s (2006) theory of inequality regimes, Collinson et al.’s (1990) theory of the vicious circle of job segregation and Bradley’s (1999) notion of power are core theories employed as analytical frameworks.

To design the project looking at the different layers of reality and social action, Layder’s elements – self, situated activity, setting, and context – are adopted. The idea of focusing on different levels – micro, meso and macro level – is in line with the argument presented by Bradley (2007) and Alvesson and Due Billing (2009:88) who explained that gendering can be seen to operate at the three levels: the macro level of the social totality, the meso or institutional level, and the level of individual interaction. Labour market dynamics (social setting) will be the primary focus of this research, although the other domains influence the study and analysis of data, as these issues could not be examined independently of other influences. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show the relationship between the research elements, the aims and objectives, the methods employed, and the theoretical issues considered.
Table 5.2 Research Map 1 (adapted from Layder, 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research element</th>
<th>Research focus and objectives</th>
<th>Key methods</th>
<th>Theoretical considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Context/ contextual resources** | **Focus:**  
• Macro social organisations  
• Gender relations in the context of patriarchal based society  
**Research objective:**  
• To set the experiences of Norwegian women in historical and socio-economic context  
• Explore pattern of equality, equality strategies and welfare approaches | • Systematic literature review  
• International data  
• National data | • Feminist theories  
• Labour market theories  
• Welfare state theories  
• Equality theories |
| **Setting/ social settings** | **Focus:**  
• Intermediate social organisations.  
• The focus is on workplaces and family units  
**Research objective:**  
• To explore pattern of occupational sex segregation in the Norwegian labour market. In particular, the three occupational groups - politics, academia and BODs- are investigated in terms of occupational sex segregation and use of AA. In addition, the setting of the domestic sphere is discussed | • Systematic literature review  
• Policy review  
• Semi-structured interviews with a sample of Norwegian women politicians, academics and directors  
• Data collection on gender representation in politics, academia and corporate boards  
• Media analysis | • Feminist theories  
• Occupational sex segregation theories  
• Equality theories  
• Welfare state theories |

With the ‘context’, the macro level research focus on gender in the framework of a patriarchal society, the objective was to set the experiences of women in their historical and socio-economic context as influenced by occupational segregation, feminist and welfare theories. Hence, the wider social conditions are investigated. This is achieved through a systematic literature review, the findings of which are discussed in Chapter Two. The national gender regime and trend of gender patterns in Norway is put in a historical and social as well as a European and Scandinavian context. Given the importance of political strategies, both AA and welfare strategies are discussed. Norway is, as discussed, perceived as an AA friendly country which has affected gender and employment patterns. In addition, the Scandinavian welfare model is important in enabling women to participate in the labour market, hence, it is essential to understand
women’s experience of the home–work nexus and how strategies affect society, but also other settings such as the labour market and the home.

With the ‘social setting’ element, the key research focus for this thesis is on intermediate social organisation in the work setting, in this case, the three occupational groups, politics, academia, and BODs. The objectives are to explore the level of vertical sex segregation, the use of AA policies, and the institutional framework, in order to understand how these structures motivate (or not) women to climb the occupational ladder. This is done through a systematic literature review, policy documents review, participation at training events and through interviews and observations with the participants. A quantitative approach was taken analysing Acker’s first two components of inequality regimes’ bases, as well as the shape and degree of inequality. In addition, qualitative interviews focusing on the women’s experiences are used. A non-work setting analysed is the domestic sphere and the importance of family life as a unit of analysis. Hence, the social setting can refer to both meso and micro settings.

Table 5.3 Research Map 2 (adapted from Layder, 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research element</th>
<th>Research focus and objectives</th>
<th>Key methods</th>
<th>Theoretical considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Situated activity| Focus: Social activity       | •Semi-structured interviews with a sample of Norwegian women politicians, academics and directors | •Feminist theories  
•Occupational sex segregation theories  
•Motivational theories  
•Power theories |
|                  | Research objective:          | •Observation of participants in their work setting |                          |
|                  | •To examine the social activities of the participants both in their occupational groups and the experiences of social activities outside work (private sphere etc.) |                          |                          |
| Self/psychobiography | Focus: Self identity and individual social experiences and perceptions | •Semi-structured interviews a sample of Norwegian women politicians, academics and directors | •Feminist theories  
•Preference theory  
•Domestic theories  
•Power theories  
•Welfare state theories |
|                  | Research objective:         |                          |                          |
|                  | •To explore views, stories, and characteristics of participants |                          |                          |
The element of ‘situated activity’ focuses on several settings including the ones discussed above. One key area is, as illustrated, the institutional setting in politics, academia, and BODs. One of the aims is to examine the actual situation women employed in these sectors are experiencing in relation to factors such as opportunity and constraints looking at gender inequality regimes and how situated activity and emergent dynamics of social interactions take place. In addition, situated activities in terms of the micro level domestic sphere and how it affects the macro settings are also included and will be discussed also in terms of power and the importance of different types of power in social interactions.

Finally, at the level of ‘self/psychobiography’ the main focus is on the interviewees’ and the women’s psychobiographies, experiences, and thoughts regarding their ambitions, preferences, domestic focus, work experiences, responsibilities, as well as other factors that came up. One of the aims of this study is to explore the ways in which the women utilise their agency to reach senior positions. This is done through in-depth interviews with 66 women from politics, academia and BODs. Hence, the level of ‘self’ is important. These experiences feed into the experienced ‘situated activities’ in the different ‘settings’ this study investigates.

Layder (1993) emphasised that although the various layers of analysis are interrelated, they are also distinct enough to be separately examined for analytical purposes. As such, primacy can be accorded to a particular level in one study. The value of this methodological approach is that it gives the flexibility to adopt different methods depending on the layers of reality and the focus. For the contextual and setting elements, quantitative data is valuable. In terms of understanding social interactions within different settings, both in the domestic sphere and the workplace as well as ‘self’ qualitative data is essential. Influenced by feminist theory and the aim to give voice to women, the key method employed is of a qualitative nature, yet quantitative methods are also, as illustrated, employed for contextual data at all levels.

5.4.3 The three occupational groups

The Norwegian paradox with high levels of equality as well as a strong pattern of vertical sex segregation in the labour market points to the direction of the ‘setting’ and in this thesis, this is explored with respect to three occupational groups, politics, academia and BODs. The choice of occupational groups was influenced by a) the
importance of these groups within a country, b) the share of women in senior positions, and c) the use of AA in these occupational groups. Hence, these occupational groups are carefully chosen. Arguably academia, politics, and BODs have significant similarities, but also considerable differences making them valuable from a comparative perspective. This thesis is not a case study of specific organisations; rather I have sought to research a mix of individuals working in a wide range of organisations within the three occupational groups in order to get a broader range of views and experiences from three distinct and important occupational groups in relation to experiences in different settings and situated activities which will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

The occupational groups are all high profile and respected areas important for a country’s success and growth politically, intellectually, as well as economically. The participants can be seen as successful as these occupational groups are all powerful, and the selected women possess high status positions. Politics (referring to the parliament and government) is vital and influential in all countries. Politics and power are closely related and politicians set the agenda, make the laws and decide on a country’s approach to national and international affairs. Norway is a monarchy and operates with an elected parliament which again forms the government at national level. Academia is an old and influential institution in all countries. The characteristics of academia are high intellectual environment, advanced research, as well as teaching of the next generation. The third occupational group, BODs, is not an occupational group in similar terms to academia or politics, as directors (non-executive) work in various organisations, mostly in the private sector. Corporations are critical actors in the public sphere, and as a result, directors on their boards can exert influence over society in general. Being a member of a board includes deciding on corporate strategies, which is important for the private sector and thus in the country as a whole.

As established, the three occupational groups share the common feature of being highly important for a country’s growth in terms of political, intellectual and financial power as well as international affairs. Nevertheless, the occupational groups also have significant differences. Those relevant to this thesis are organisational structures, the share of women, and the use of AA. Politics belongs to the public sector and even though being a traditional and formal institution, it has a less traditional and hierarchical structure than academia, for example. Climbing the hierarchical ladder can be seen as less traditional and merit based as individuals are nominated and elected by the people and
merit and formal education are not required for attaining positions. Consequently, positions within parliament are decided by election results which means that experience does not alone affect the hierarchical ladder. For the government, there is a different system where Secretary of State/ministers are employed based on invitation from the Prime Minister. In both parliament and government, there are great variations in the most senior positions related to age, experience, and education. In addition, salary is more standardised. Academia is a traditional hierarchical public sector organisation where merit and formal qualifications are essential for climbing the hierarchical ladder.

The formal qualification for becoming a professor is having a PhD degree and high quality research and publications. This indicates that academia has a high level of formal education and climbing the ladder is a long journey where you need to go through formal procedures and career paths. Directors on BODs on the other hand are from the private sector and can be seen as located in the secondary sector as directors tend to have other jobs and/or directorships in addition, as being a director (non-executive) is not considered a full-time job. The procedure for hiring is again different from the other two groups. There are nomination procedures and, even though there are no formal requirements as to educational level, such as in academia, the levels of education and experience required for these positions are high.

As will be explored in Chapter Six, the share of women in these occupational groups and at different levels within them varies considerably. In politics the share of women at national level has been high for decades, while in academia and on BODs the share of women has historically been low. For BODs, the composition of directors has changed dramatically since the introduction of the gender representation law as the use of AA has challenged the under-representation of women. In addition and importantly, one of the main reasons for focusing on these occupational groups is the use of AA and national involvement in relation to equality strategies. While BODs have recently experienced the introduction of a gender representation law requiring at least 40 per cent of each sex, the majority of political parties have for more than 30 years had voluntary quotas on their party lists for national politics. In academia on the other hand, radical strategies are no longer in place due to a ruling from the European Court of Justice 2003 which will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

The participants from the occupational groups are deliberately chosen from three hierarchical levels based on seniority in each occupation (high, middle and low, see
Table 5.4). This will allow me to make comparisons both between sectors, but also between the levels of seniority. In addition, this study includes participants from occupational groups from different parts of the country. In particular, all three occupational groups include participants from Norway’s two biggest cities, Oslo and Bergen in addition to other smaller cities in order to get diversity among participants in terms of geography. Next the focus turns to the different occupational groups and how the participants and organisations are chosen to get diversity within the occupational groups. In addition, the next section will discuss the characteristics of the organisational groups and the justification for the separation of hierarchical levels.

5.4.3.1 Politics

The politicians are separated into three hierarchical levels. Level one includes members of Parliament, level two includes members of the Parliament being chair or vice chair of a committee, and level three includes Secretary of State/ ministers in Government.

Public administration in Norway has a structure with three levels: central government (The Parliament and Government), county government and municipal government. Norway is divided into 19 counties (fylker) and more than 400 municipalities (kommuner). For this study, participants are recruited from national level, members of the Parliament and the Government. Nevertheless, by default the majority of women do also have experience from the counties and/or municipalities (for a description of the political levels and political system see Appendix 3).

In Norway there are currently (for the term 2005–2009) seven political parties in Parliament, and this thesis has participants from all the political parties apart from the Liberals. In Parliament there are 13 committees; the thesis includes participants from 11 committees.12

Norway is a small country and it is worth emphasising for this thesis that the total numbers of people employed in these positions is relatively low. In fact in the Parliament, of the 169 positions, 108 are men and 61 are women. 34 per cent of women in the Parliament and 71 per cent of women chairs or vice chairs in Parliament (2005–2009 period) have been interviewed for this thesis. The participants from the governmental level (level three) were either a minister in the 2001–2005 period or 2005–2009 period and are from the Labour party, the Centre Party, or the Conservative
party. For the sake of participants’ anonymity, whether they were in the Government during the 2001–2005 or 2005–2009 period will not be revealed.

As the politicians represent all the different counties in Norway, there is great regional diversity within the Parliament. For this thesis participants from 15 out of 19 counties have been interviewed (see Figure 5.1). This was feasible as they are all located in Oslo.

Figure 5.1 Politicians, geographical distribution

5.4.3.2 Academia

The academics are separated into three levels, where level one refers to associate professors, level two to professors, and level three to professors who are also heads of department, dean, vice dean, or principal. The participants come from various disciplines including humanities, maths and natural sciences, social sciences, technology, and medicine.

This thesis is mainly focusing on three respected and well known institutions in Norway: the University of Oslo, the University of Bergen, and the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration. The vast majority of the participants are from these three institutions, though three academics from other colleges (Østfold, Vestfold
and Aas) were also interviewed (see Figure 5.2). Altogether, participants from five counties from the central and western part of Norway were interviewed.

Figure 5.2 Academics, geographical distribution

5.4.3.3 BODs

Participants from the BODs group are also separated into three levels. Two of the levels include directors of PLC BODs. Level one includes women in senior managerial positions that are directors of company boards, executive directors. Some of the participants also have previous experiences from non-executive BODs. Level two includes directors (non-executive) on PLC BODs as well as having senior responsibility. At level three, the participants are directors (non-executive) of more than one BOD. This thesis includes directors who are members of two, three, four, five and more than eight PLC BODs. The reason why level three includes both women being members of two BODs and women being members of eight or more BODs is to ensure the women’s anonymity; as very few women belong to these categories, in order not to reveal identities, the group is broad. The Scandinavian model for BODs is characterised by a one-board, two-tier system. This means that a single BOD exists, which in turn, is
composed of shareholder representatives and employee representatives. In addition, a second tier exists where a managing director or CEO is delegated the day-to-day running of the organisation (Huse 2007:106). The boards’ duties, and sources of influence, include: defining the company’s purpose and broad objectives, selecting, appointing, supporting, and evaluating the chief executive; providing advice; making ties with other organisations; financial stewardship; and monitoring and evaluating performance (Golden and Zajac, 2001; Lervik et al., 2005). To ensure that the senior management and the board do not overlap, the chief executive officer cannot be the chair of the board in Norway. Moreover, the employees are responsible for electing one-third of the board members in firms that have more than 50 employees (Huse et al., 2009).

Of the participants in the BODs group the vast majority are employed in the private sector, and are from a range of disciplines such as finance, law, marketing, HR, strategy, as well as CEOs. All the participants have senior managerial positions in their organisations and some have their own companies. The majority of the participants are from the Oslo region, but there are also participants from Bergen as well as the counties of Østfold, Hedmark, and Akershus (see Figure 5.3). In addition, several of the participants, from all three levels, have participated at the Female Future course.13
5.5 METHODS AND FIELDWORK

Following from the philosophical underpinning and the research strategy for this study, this section will describe the research methods used and the fieldwork process. As stated, I have chosen a multi-method strategy reflecting the idea of the complex multi layered nature of reality and the justification and approaches are discussed in the following section.

5.5.1 Mixed methods

Layder (1993) argued that one successful way to do research is to mix the micro, meso, and macro levels, and mix qualitative and quantitative methods in multi-strategy research. This approach fits with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of my study.

5.5.2 Primary data collection

The primary part of my data collection is both of a qualitative and quantitative nature. Yet, in line with the methodology presented earlier, a crucial part of my research is of a qualitative nature with semi-structured interviews, observations, and a research diary as
core methods allowing me to have a reflexive approach. In addition, an important part of this thesis is the quantitative data gathered. This is particularly relevant in order to analyse the contextual setting of the three occupational groups influenced by Acker’s (2006) components of bases and shape and degree of inequality regimes.

5.5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

King (2004) argued that interviews are the most widely used method of collecting data in qualitative research. Even though interviews can take different forms, King (2004: 11) took the position that the definition given by Kvale (1983) in the early 1980s is still appropriate describing the technique as ‘an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomenon’. According to Robson (2002) the semi-structured interview is characterised by having set questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer’s perception of what seems most appropriate. Questions can also be changed, adapted, and explanations given and questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be missed out and/or additional ones included (Robson, 2002: 270). For me, there was considerable value in having the interviews semi-structured. Some of the questions were of a private character and flexibility was crucial. As a result, my interviews were of an open nature with the possibility to adapt depending on the situation.

5.5.2.2 The interview schedule for the participants

The interview schedule is designed such that each section focused on a specific theme. As the interview schedule is crucial to the robustness of the study a great deal of time was put into the process of designing it. The themes my questions were based on emerged from the literature review, review of policy documents, national and international data, as well from as an exploratory study conducted in 2007 (Seierstad and Healy, forthcoming). I also had two mock interviews with friends/colleagues in order to improve the interview schedule in terms of content. The interviews normally lasted between 40 and 80 minutes, with a few lasting longer, one taking 2 hours and 25 minutes. I have a reflexive and flexible approach which allowed me to adapt, include, and probe questions that emerged from the interviews as I went along while still retaining the key themes and questions.
Before starting the interview the participants signed a consent form (see Appendix 4) which is in line with the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee requirement. I had already emailed the consent form together with a biographical information sheet (see Appendices 5 and 6) about the research project to the women and informed them that they would have to sign this. A few of the interviewees sent it back to me signed straightaway, while with the majority of the participants we started the interview with signing the consent form. I saw this as a very valuable way to start the interviews as it was emphasised that this was a serious project that was supported by the University of London, and that I would handle the information in an ethical manner emphasising their anonymity. The trust relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is something I consider essential in order to get high-quality data. I also had the biographical information sheet (see Appendix 7) which the women filled in before the interview. This was done to gather information about aspects such as marital status, number of children, age, and level of education in order to get data that is easily comparable, as well as being able to adapt the questions to the participants situation.

The interview schedule was adapted to include sector specific questions identified in the literature review chapters. Following is a brief description of the themes used in the interview schedule (see Appendix 8 for the interview schedule).

**Workplace, you and your organisation**

This section is designed to get the participants to talk about their workplace and the open-ended nature of the first question (‘could you please tell me about your current position and workplace’) is a nice way to start the interview and get the conversation going. The first section of the interview schedule aimed to identify organisational positioning of the participants. In addition, this section includes questions which set out to investigate the state of participants’ awareness of occupational sex segregation and sex segregation at their workplace. Questions within this theme enabled an exploration of activities taking place on a day to day basis.

**Ambition, motivation and influences for career**

The participants were asked to give their reasons and influences for choice of education and work. This was designed to enable women to indicate all the factors that had influenced them along their path. Besides, participants were asked if they had periods away from work and if they had experienced difficult choices in terms of career and
other aspects of life. This was designed to engage with structure-agency factors affecting their career which is vital for understanding sex segregation in the labour market.

Questions within the theme of ambition and motivation include questions related to the importance of their job to participants, their job progression, ambitions and professional goal in order to address the ideas of work centred, adaptive and home-centred women (Hakim, 2000). This section also includes questions related to key influences or support in professional life (such as mentors, parents, and partners) as well as reflections related to promotions or nomination processes participants have been through. The importance of choice (Hakim, 1991; Hakim, 1996) or how women might make choices under constrained conditions (Ginn et al., 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998) are relevant to the study. In particular, it is discussed how work-life balance issues affects participants and their experiences.

Equality
Equality is a key factor in this study and this section focused on participants’ perceptions, understanding and experience of equality at the different levels of society. Feminist ideas and ideals with the importance of potential patriarchal structures were important for questions in this section. Influenced by authors (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009), the idea of looking at all levels of society in terms of equality and gender differences is adopted. Hence, macro context is discussed in terms of expectations and cultural influences where equality strategies and history also come into play. In terms of equality at the micro level, situated activity in the domestic setting is discussed. In relation to equality at the micro level, questions about personal circumstances of the women centred on the domestic sphere were asked as this also relates to the meso level and plays a part in terms of situated activities and social settings using Layder’s (1993) terms. At the meso, organisational level, equality is discussed looking at several components of equality, which are - bases, shape and degree, organizing processes, visibility and legitimacy of inequalities (Acker, 2006b).

Within this theme potential patriarchal structures and different dimensions of gendered power comes to play (Bradley, 1999). While no direct question is asked about gendered power, different dimensions of power and how these might be gendered are central at different levels at different times and are intertwined with other themes and questions.
Organisational practices and inequality regimes

As the occupational group setting is particularly important, experiences at this level are investigated further. Questions within this theme enabled an exploration of experiences of situated activities in particular settings. Questions within this theme turn the focus to the organisational setting where workplace and work pattern are investigated (Collinson et al., 1990; Acker, 2006b). Dynamics and procedures at the workplace, networks, and procedures for hiring/nomination are investigated as these are important in terms of understanding vertical sex segregation in the labour market.

In addition, this section aimed to explore networks in the participants’ work setting, both formal and informal/social networks. The importance of gender in these networks was of particular interest as were the participants’ experiences and thoughts related to the ‘old boys club’ (Kanter, 1977). Within this theme direct questions were asked about experiences of discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace.

Welfare

As the social democratic welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 2002; Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006) is often referred to as crucial for Scandinavian countries, this section aimed to elicit participants’ views and experiences of this strategy. Questions within this theme included experiences of different welfare strategies such as child-care, parental leave and cash-for-care. In addition, how these strategies affect women’s situation at different levels of society was explored.
Equality strategies and affirmative action
A central theme for this study is views and experiences of equality strategies. In particular, participants’ views on radical and moderate strategies (Jewson and Mason, 1986; Miller, 1996) were investigated. Questions asked about participants’ justification for views are investigated in a justice-utility framework (Teigen, 2003).

Society, culture and gender roles
An important finding from the literature review chapters was the emphasis on gender stereotypes (Heilman, 1997; Heilman, 2001) and cultural expectations for not having equality. Hence, participants were asked questions related to their experiences of stereotypes and expectations in society and how these have affected their opportunities.

Open questions
Even though being semi-structured, the option of adopting and having open, general questions was built into the interview schedule to make space for emerging themes. In addition, all interviews ended with an open question asking participants if there was anything they wanted to add or emphasise.

5.5.2.3 Observation
Robson (2002) argued that observations can be used as a supportive or supplementary method to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data obtained by other means. In my case, I participated at two Female Future conferences. According to Robson (2002: 314) ‘a key feature of participant observation is that the observer seeks to become some kind of member of the observed group’. During the two conferences, I participated in the events and was treated as equal to the other participants. They were a mix of presentations, networking, and group exercises. Equally important, I observed the work setting while waiting to meet the participants, the interaction they had with colleagues, and the way I as a researcher was treated. This reflexive observation is used in addition to the other data in order to get a broader understanding of the setting. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasise that the semi-structured interviews are the main focus and main source of qualitative data.

5.5.2.4 Research diary and research notes
Throughout the research process the importance of a research diary in order to reflect on thoughts, ideas and findings is crucial. For me, to take notes just after the interviews in
in order to make sure that I captured my reflections, initial thoughts, and analysis while they were still fresh has been valuable. The research diary provides data beyond what is said in the actual interviews. This is crucial in my experience, as after the digital recorder is turned off the participants quite often start talking in a more informal manner. An example is one of my participants at ministerial level, a very high profile woman, who explained after the recorder was off how she feels afraid all the time, afraid she is not good enough, which is something she did not mention while the recorder was running. In almost all the interviews the conversation we had after the recorder was turned off was very valuable. After telling me personal stories in the interview, I believe the participants felt that they could open up even more in a more friendly and relaxed manner.

Therefore, research diaries are crucial since the recorded interview does not reveal the whole process. The research diary also promoted better learning and planning through self-reflection during the research project and in some cases, due to the research diary, the interview schedule was changed and improved through critical reflections within the research notes. The idea of semi-structured interviews having the possibility of being flexible allowed me, with the use of the research diary, to improve the quality of the research process and the data collected.

5.5.2.5 Publicly available documents and quantitative data

In order to analyse the different occupational groups, influenced by Acker’s (2006b) components of inequality regime I collected occupational group data related to women’s positions within the organisations. For politics, information about the Parliament, the Government, the different committees in Parliament as well as the different political parties was manually collected (2008-2009) and analysed from official webpages. In particular, this included information about members of the Parliament, committees within the Parliament, Government and the representation in all political parties in relation to gender.

For academia, available data on the share of women professors at Norwegian universities was used. In addition, information about the heads of departments, deans and principals of the three institutions, University of Oslo, University of Bergen and NHH (the Norwegian School of Business Administration) was collected manually from
the respective webpages (2008-2009) in order to analyse gender differences in relation to hierarchical positions.

For the BODs, I had assistance from Tore Opsahl to collect the data as this is a very comprehensive and technical task. We collected a list of all the 384 public limited companies in Norway (Allmennaksjeselskap or ASA) that were available online through the Norwegian Business Register on 5th August 2009 (The Brønnøysund Register Centre, 2003-2010). Based on the list of companies, we collected all official announcements made to the register that were online. These announcements contain changes to the composition of the BODs since 1st November 1999. Since not all companies changed their boards immediately after the register started publishing the announcements online, our observation period only starts in May 2002, and extends to August 2009. The choice of starting the observation period in May 2002 is based on the trade-off between inclusiveness of companies and length of window. Of the 384 companies, 196 were incorporated after 1st November 1999. These companies are included in our dataset on the first of the following month of their incorporation. The additional 188 companies (incorporated before November 1999) changed their boards at various times. We chose to start the observation period in May 2002 as in the previous month 90 per cent of these companies had changed their board at least once. Thus, information on their board compositions was published online. The remaining 10 per cent (19 companies) were included in the dataset as soon as they changed their boards’ compositions. Companies were removed from the sample if they filed for bankruptcy or changed the nature of their organisation away from PLC. From the board compositions, we extracted a list with the names of all the directors. From this list, we excluded employee representatives as the legislation does not affect them in the same way. Since mistakes could have occurred while entering the data and people can change their name, this list was manually cleaned by studying the compositions over time and comparing the changes. For example, Alexandra Bech Gjørv has been a director of Schibsted ASA from 2001 until 2007. However, in 2001 and 2002, her name was listed as simply Alexandra Bech. Without the manual cleaning, she would have been included as two people in the dataset. To determine the sex of the directors in our dataset, we collected lists of all male and all female first names belonging to more than 200 people in Norway from Statistics Norway (Statistics Norway, 2009). We cross-referenced these two lists with the first names of the directors. However, some first names were not in either of the lists, and some first names were included in both lists. In an effort to avoid having
missing data, we conducted a web search to determine the gender of directors with these names. This data allowed me to investigate gender balance on BODs before, during and after the implementation of the gender representation law. This data is essential as comprehensive data on the effect of the gender representation law is not yet publicly available.

5.5.3 Secondary data collection
Secondary data collection consists of both national and international data, sector and policy information and the media. A wide range of national and international data is used in this thesis, including data from the WEF, UNDP and the Norwegian Government including laws and regulations. In addition, labour market reports, and reports and documents from the three different occupational groups were also reviewed to provide background for the research and to explore the issues revealed in the literature review as well as occupational group specific data and strategies. As the media is important in terms of contextual data, media debates and focuses were followed closely, especially in terms of the use of AA.

5.5.4 The data collection process for the interviews
The interviews with 66 women in senior positions form the central data source for this study. This section will reflect on the process. I contacted gatekeepers and interviewees with a standard email (see Appendices 5 and 6) explaining the research project. In all the emails sent, this section was included:

‘Circular email for use for recruitment of volunteers for study QMREC2007/23, approved by Queen Mary University of London Research Ethics Committee. This project contributes to the College’s role in conducting research, and teaching research methods. You are under no obligation to reply to this email, however if you choose to, participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time’

This is in line with the ethics requirement for Queen Mary (which was obtained 11th April, 2007). I was required to inform the women that they had the option of withdrawing from the study, but more importantly I wanted to emphasise that I had ethical approval for my thesis and that I take my role as a researcher and their role as participants very seriously.
5.5.4.1 Getting access

The process of getting access to participants has been both demanding and exciting. The process did vary between the three occupational groups as these groups have very different characteristics. I would like to emphasise that I have been fortunate to interview some extremely high profile and important women in the three occupational groups which also made the research experience challenging and time-consuming, but enjoyable.

Politics

In order to get participants from politics I went to the Parliament and Government webpages and sent emails inviting participation through the gatekeepers at these organisations. The email was sent at the beginning of August 2007 which turned out to be extremely bad timing due to the holiday season in Norway as well as it being local election year. As a consequence, August and September were extremely busy months for the politicians. Nevertheless, the feedback I got from the potential participants was better than I had anticipated and I did manage to start conducting interviews in late August 2007. In addition, I also had women asking me to contact them after the election period for potential interviews. The group of politicians is the only group where I have experienced cancellations of interviews due to national or international current affairs, but the women were positive and keen to reschedule interviews. I aimed to get women representing the majority of the political parties and from a variety of different committees. What came as a surprise for me was the positive attitude to participation in the project from women who are clearly extremely busy and I felt privileged that they took time out from their busy schedules to meet me, even some of the most important and influential politicians in today’s political environment in Norway.

Academia

The process of getting participants in academia started with contacting HR departments at the University of Oslo, University of Bergen, NHH as well as Vestfold University College and University of Agder. The process of being put in touch with people was long; nevertheless, I had a pleasant experience with all the gatekeepers who were very positive towards my research. I wanted to get contacts through gatekeepers and not contact women directly. This process was time-consuming as I emailed the HR department in July 2007 which is the holiday season, which again resulted in it taking a few months to find participants and therefore the interview process did not start until
September. The use of gatekeepers was valuable, but a snowball strategy turned out to be more effective and successful in academia especially for the most senior positions as there are few women in the most senior positions and these tend to know each other.

My MA dissertation was based on a study of women academics at the University of Oslo, so I had the option of contacting the participants for that study, women I had already been in touch with. Nevertheless, I decided not to use these contacts as I wanted to make sure that I started with no prior background knowledge of the participants. Also within academia I was surprised by the willingness to participate from women, even at the most senior levels.

**BODs**

Getting in touch with, and gaining access to women on company BODs, has been the most challenging one. The main reason for this is that these women are not all employed in specific organisations such as a university, the Parliament, or the Government, and a couple of helpful gatekeepers is not enough to get participants. The first step for me was to get in touch with The NHO (Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise) and their project Female Future where, in November 2006, I was invited to participate, observe and talk to women at their ‘Kick Off’ seminar in December 2006. The ‘Kick Off’ seminar was for approximately 200 women chosen by their companies for being highly talented. I was participating on an equal basis with the women, and it was a seminar with a mix of presentations, networking and group exercises. For me this was interesting in two ways. First, I was able to talk to a lot of women employed in middle to senior positions, some with, and some without, experience of BODs. I was not recording or taking notes while being there as I wanted the atmosphere to be natural. Even though I explained that I was not participating in the programme and was a researcher, I did not want to create a gap by taking notes as I saw the friendly and relaxed atmosphere as highly valuable as a lot of stories were shared with me. The second important factor for me was that this was a very important arena for networking and maybe getting access to participants.

I did stay in touch with NHO and the Female Future program and was also invited to participate at an event in June 2007. Once again it was a mix of presentations and networking, and again I used this event for two purposes; first to observe and talk to the women, and second to network with potential participants. In August 2007 I contacted
NHO Female Future with an invitation for women with experience from BODs to participate in my research. In addition, I used other sources in order to get in touch with women directors, such as personal contacts, a snowballing technique, and databases. Also, the participants from BODs took me by surprise in terms of their willingness to participate and to introduce me to other women.

5.5.4.2 The process of finding participants
One aspect that was carefully taken into consideration for my research was choosing participants for my study. Participants were chosen to achieve a mix of participants from the different hierarchical levels, as I see this as important for the quality and legitimacy of my research. I was aiming high; I wanted participants in senior positions, which means there are not always many to choose from. As a result my research process was long. I was very much doing the research on the participants’ premises, and it has been difficult to get several interviews on the same day as these women are extremely busy. An example here is an interviewee at ministerial level (Secretary of State) who contacted me (via her secretary) giving me two dates three months ahead to choose from as these where the only dates she could do, emphasising that if something happened, my meeting would have to be rescheduled. As a result I stayed in Norway for several months conducting interviews and the interview period lasted for approximately a year. I was living approximately three hours by bus from Oslo (where the majority of the interviews were conducted) which means that I quite often had to spend six hours on a bus for one or two interviews. I did not mind this as I was determined not to lower my ambitions regarding participants as I was convinced that to get access to some of the most influential and important women in the country has importance for the research. The travelling also gave me time to be reflexive and work on my research diary on a daily basis.

5.5.5 The participants
A central undertaking for this thesis is to get an insight into the perceptions and experiences of women in senior positions. As this thesis is using qualitative interviews from women in senior positions as a key source of data to build the analysis, it is important to acknowledge who these women are. A lot of time was spent on getting access to participants for this study, also aiming to get access to women in very senior positions which made the pool of candidates relatively small. This study was fortunate to interview a great share of women in these positions.
There are 66 participants in this study, yet four of them belong to two groups and will be presented as a member of both. 26 of the participants are politicians, 22 are academics, and 22 are directors. Several of the politicians as well as the academics are or have been directors of corporate boards, but only directors of PLC BODs are included in this category. This double categorisation applies to three academics also being directors, as well as one of the directors also having recent experience in politics (level three, Secretary of State) and is therefore included as a politician as well as a director. Each occupational group is divided into three hierarchical levels based on seniority and the different titles are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Participants’ titles and levels within the occupational groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchical level</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Academia</th>
<th>BODs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Member of Parliament (11)</td>
<td>Associate Professor (9)</td>
<td>Director on corporate boards (executive directors/ management committee)(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Member of Parliament and chair or vice chair of a committee (10)</td>
<td>Professor (3)</td>
<td>Director of a PLC BODs (non executive director)(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Secretary of state (Minister in the Government) (6)</td>
<td>Head of department, Dean, Vice Dean or Principal (10)</td>
<td>Director of two or more PLC BODs (non executive director) (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Table 5.4, the participants are from three different occupational groups and from three different levels within these occupational groups. Hence, demographic characteristics will be presented both in relation to occupational groups as well as hierarchical levels in Tables 5.5 and 5.6.
Table 5.5 Demographic characteristics of the participants according to occupational groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchical level</th>
<th>Directors</th>
<th>Politicians</th>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Directors</th>
<th>Politicians</th>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchical level</th>
<th>Directors</th>
<th>Politicians</th>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N=</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5 demonstrates how within the occupational groups there are a variety of participants from different age groups, marital status, with and without children, and from different hierarchical levels. It is apparent that of the participants, the majority, 79 per cent, are married or cohabiting. Turning the focus to the different occupational...
groups, it is apparent that of the politicians, 80 per cent are married or cohabiting, and 20 per cent are divorced or not married. For the academics, 73 per cent are married or cohabiting, while 27 per cent are divorced or not married. Of the directors 84 per cent are either married or cohabiting, while 16 per cent are divorced or not married. As many as 83 per cent of the participants have children. The average number of children among the participants is 1.73. Politicians have the highest average number of children with 1.96. For directors, the average is 1.79, while for academics the average number of children is 1.45. This might not be surprising as academics have a longer education and consequently a tendency to start having children later which was also described by some of the participants.
Table 5.6 Demographic characteristics of the participants according to hierarchical levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level One</th>
<th>Level Two</th>
<th>Level Three</th>
<th>Total N=</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turning to the hierarchical levels in Table 5.6 it is also apparent how the participants are mixed in terms of demographic characteristics. In terms of age, as expected there is some correlation between age and seniority where only one of the participants from level two or three belong to the 25–34 age group. Looking at marital status, 79 per cent of women at level one are either married or cohabiting, while 21 per cent are divorced or not married. At level two, 68 per cent are married or cohabiting, while 32 per cent are divorced or not married. At level three, 87 per cent are married or cohabiting, while 13
per cent are divorced or not married. This indicates that women at the most senior levels in this study are actually the ones most likely to be married or cohabiting. This is significant as it indicates that in the case of women in senior positions in Norway, the most senior women have not chosen one or the other, rather it illustrates that climbing to the top hierarchical positions do not stop you from having a family life as well.

Focusing on the hierarchical levels and the choice of having children or not, it is apparent that the average number of children for women at level one is 1.71, while for women at level two the average number of children is 1.53. For women at level three, the average number of children is 1.96. In particular, an important factor related to the relatively high fertility rate among the participants is that there is not a tendency for women at level three to have fewer children than women at level one, rather the opposite. In particular, of participants at level one 75 per cent have children, at level two 84 per cent have children, and at level three 91 per cent have children. This indicates that women in the most senior positions have not chosen career instead of children and family, which indicates that having children seems not to be a factor that have stopped women in this study from climbing the hierarchical ladder. Comparing the demographic data of the participants, it suggests that being at the top of the hierarchical ladder does not indicate that you are more likely to be divorced, not married, or childless; rather the opposite in this case which is interesting and will be explored further in terms of welfare strategies. The fact that Norwegian women in senior positions do have children contradicts findings from other countries, such as from the UK where Liff and Ward (2001: 26) found that both British men and women questioned whether it was possible to combine having senior positions with ‘any real family life’. In fact, Liff and Ward (2001: 31-32) paraphrased Schein’s (1973) influential finding ‘think manager, think male’ to ‘think female manager, think childless superwoman’.

As discussed in Chapter Three, a commonly held belief is that the lack of women in senior positions is due to their lack of human capital such as education and experience. Nevertheless, as illustrated in Chapter Two, Norwegian women do now, to a higher extent than men, take higher education. The fact that women have gone past men in terms of educational achievement is an indication that the human capital argument as an explanation for vertical sex segregation and the lack of women in senior positions has lost some of its value. In the three occupational groups examined, the required level of education varies. While academia requires education at PhD level, there are no formal
educational criteria for directors or politicians. Consequently, this affects the level of education within the respective groups.

Among politicians and directors, the level of education is also high. Of the politicians, 20 per cent (5) have Master’s degrees, 72 per cent (18) have Bachelor’s degrees, while eight per cent (2) do not have any formal qualifications. Only three participants, two politicians and one director have high school education only, all of them belonging to level one. Of the directors, 63 per cent (12) have either a PhD/MA/MSc/MBA, 32 per cent (6) have Bachelor’s degrees, while five per cent (1) do not have any formal qualifications. Thus, the vast majority of participants have high levels of human capital and educational power. Looking at the different hierarchical levels, women at level three have the highest levels of education. All the participants without any formal qualifications and the majority of women with Bachelor’s degrees are at levels one and two which is a strong indication of the importance of educational power for getting into the most senior positions.

5.6 THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS
This section describes in greater details the process of conducting and making use of the semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The interview process was in two phases. In phase one of my research 39 interviews were conducted between August and November 2007. With the exception of one, all the interviews were face to face interviews lasting between 40 minutes to one hour and 20 minutes. The telephone interview lasted for 43 minutes. The justification for only having one telephone interview is that I find the quality of a face-to-face interview significantly higher than a telephone interview. Nevertheless, as one of the women was only able to participate over the phone and I wanted her to participate, one interview is a telephone interview. Phase two included 27 semi-structured interviews and was conducted in the first half of 2008. This research has received a CRF grant\(^{17}\) which allowed for all the interviews to be conducted face-to-face. The justification for having the interviews in two ‘groups’ is that I wanted to make sure that all the important new themes that emerged in the first group of interviews would be included in the next phase, in order to capture the realities Norwegian women in senior positions are experiencing while still keeping the key themes and key questions. In addition, for the BODs group I wanted to make sure that some of the interviews were conducted during
the implementation period, while some were conducted after the end of the implementation period which was 1st January 2008.

All the interviews were fully transcribed by me. I had the option of contracting a professional transcribing company as transcribing is a very time consuming activity. Nevertheless, I decided not to take this option due to the confidentiality of the interviewees. As my interviewees are high profile and easily identifiable, I did not take the risk of letting others have access to the data. Names are not recorded in the interviews but as the interviewees are high profile the question asking them to ‘tell about their job’ might actually reveal their identity. As a result of the personal nature of the questions, as well as the participants’ status, I decided that the transcribing process should be under my control. In addition, I found that transcribing the data was valuable for the process of analysing data.

As stated, the interviews are all conducted in Norwegian and the analysis of the interviews was also done in Norwegian. Nevertheless, great amounts of the data have been translated into English for quotations. Some parts of the English transcriptions are then transcribed back to Norwegian, and then back to English by someone else other than me (a colleague) to ensure that the meaning after translation has not changed. The importance of back-translation in order to maintain semantic equivalence is seen as essential for international and cross-cultural research (Schaffer and Riordan, 2003). In addition, I have given participants pseudonyms and put them into relatively broad age brackets of five years. This is done to maintain the participants’ anonymity as particularly their name could remove their anonymity.

A provisional coding system was used building on the conceptual framework and key orienting concepts discussed in the literature review chapters. Orienting concepts were important for analysing and pre-coding the data in order to bring some provisional order to the wide variety of data gathered. Therefore, in line with Layder’s ideas, while some codes were pre-set and influenced by the literature review and research design including the key orienting concepts, others emerged throughout the data analysis process which fits with adaptive theory which ‘attempts to combine an emphasis on prior theoretical ideas and models which feed into and guide research while at the same time attending to the generation of theory from the ongoing analysis of data’ (Layder, 1998: 19). Important in this process was coding into different categories, both expected as well as
emerging aspects and themes. This approach to coding the data is adopted and
influenced by Layder’s (1998) adaptive theory which can be seen to bridge the gap
between grounded theory and middle-range approaches which Layder argued both had
limitations. As Layder (1998: 15) argued ‘on the one hand, the middle range approach
emphasizes the importance of formulating theoretical hypotheses in advance of the
research in order to guide the research and to give shape to any subsequent theorising
after the data has been gathered. On the other hand grounded theory emphasizes the
importance of starting the research with as little pre-formulated theory as possible in
order that it may be generated during the research itself’. Therefore, while the original
research instruments were grounded in the literature, the semi-structured interview
approach allowed ideas and concepts to emerge from the interviews.

The semi-structured in-depth interviews are analysed and coded using the software
product NVivo. I first coded into different key general codes (nodes in Nvivo) that
emerged throughout the research process. Then the different general codes were
analysed into greater details using child nodes in terms of the hierarchical tree node
process. Codes (nodes) that emerged, but did not originally fit the analysis were coded
separately as free nodes. With Nvivo all data is coded to individuals which provides the
opportunity to analyse the data also in terms of characteristics such as occupational
groups, levels, and other characteristics. Nvivo turned out to be a useful sophisticated
tool for coding and categorising the rich data. Although Nvivo can be seen as to have
limitations due to being a mechanistic way to analyse the qualitative data, the fact that I
conducted and transcribed all the interviews myself, I do not see any danger with this
tool as I was highly familiar with the material before starting coding.

5.7 REFLEXIVITY
My research process has been of a reflexive nature, and as illustrated by Barry et al.
the researchers’ own presence in the research process. This becomes necessary if we
agree that ‘as researchers, we create worlds through the questions that we ask coupled
with what we and others regard as reasonable responses to our questions. We as
researchers construct that which we claim to ‘find’’. As pointed out by Barry et al.
(1999) the end point of reflexivity is to improve the quality of the research, and they
further emphasise that by critical reflection, examination, and exploration of the
research process from different positions, we use our reflexivity to move outward to
achieve an expansion of understanding. Barry et al. (1999) had the view that usually, reflexivity in the literature is discussed as an individual activity, and the suggested methods for attaining a reflexive stance include keeping reflexive diaries, writing ourselves into field notes, recording analytical and methodological decisions in memos, and being reflexive about every decision we make.

One important factor in this research was to present the participants’ view of the world, at macro, meso, and micro level, as they experience it. Nevertheless, what I present is my interpretation of their interpretation, hence I am aware of my subjective role in the research process. Therefore, I have taken the approach of including a lot of quotes and material to make sure that I present the participants’ actual voices, and to present the reader with a sufficient amount of material in the thesis for them to be able to make their own interpretations (influenced by feminist research, e.g. (Bradley, 1999: 9).

Throughout the research process I was overwhelmed by the kindness, openness and trust of the participants in the study. To find participants was a time consuming activity, not because it was difficult to find participants, but because of their very busy schedule. My experience of the research process has been of a positive nature. I have worked very hard to get access, I have met obstacles and it has been time consuming, yet, the friendliness, support and cooperation from the participants have made the research process a very rewarding experience. To contact potential participants at the beginning of a research procedure is a scary process, yet in order to get good data, you need good people. I chose to focus on areas where there are few women in senior positions, where the pool of candidates is restricted. Hence, I was aware of the fact that there was a chance I would have to change the focus and not only target women in the most senior positions. It turned out I did not have to change my focus. Even though there are few women in the positions I targeted, I managed to get participants. I was taken by the positive responses and interest from the women I contacted. This study has an unique collection of women participating. The share of women actually employed within senior positions within politics, academia, and BODs, especially at level three is low and this study has been fortunate to interview a great share of visible and high-profile women in these positions. Especially in politics, this study has interviewed a large proportion of women in parliament and in ministerial positions. In fact, 71 per cent of the chairs or vice chairs of the parliament (when the research was conducted) participated in this study which gives it great legitimacy.
In addition to participants, gatekeepers, secretaries, bosses and security guards have been respectful, helpful and kind, more than was expected. One example is where I could wait in the ‘special’ waiting room for very important guests in one of the Norwegian ministries (which you should not be allowed to do if you are only a ‘civilian’ but the security guard let me do it anyway and brought me newspapers). Secretaries have also been nice, helpful and chatty as I sometimes had to wait for the participant. It was also very clear that secretaries, security guards and colleagues have respect for the women I interviewed. I formed this view based on how they spoke both to them and about them. It is also valuable to observe the participants interacting with other members of staff, and how all of them treat their staff very respectfully, regardless of their levels in the hierarchy. I also have a couple of participants who have emphasised the importance of good relations with their colleagues both up and down the hierarchy. Reflections on this have ‘killed’ some of the myths, such as queen bees (Bagilhole, 1994) and that women in senior positions are very self-centred, selfish, and cold, seen as necessary characteristics in order to reach the top.

An important reflection for me has been that I have met many women – participants and gatekeepers – who have been extremely positive and helpful in relation to this research. The reason for this is unclear, but I do have the impression that women in senior positions consider the paradox of vertical segregation in Norway as an important area. Yet, I also have the impression from the participants and gatekeepers that they are being supportive of me as a younger Norwegian woman doing a PhD from an English university. In fact some of the participants asked me to inform them when my viva will be as in Norway the viva is an open event and the women would like to come and listen to my defence of the thesis. The participants have shown a lot of trust in me, especially through the rather personal stories they tell; they were a lot more personal and honest than I was expecting. They also showed trust in me, such as leaving me waiting in their office by myself while they get coffee etc. It has been a bit surreal when you find yourself waiting in an office of someone you see in the media several times a week while they run out and get you coffee and then tell you personal and sometimes difficult stories from their private and professional life. On one occasion where I was interviewing a politician in parliament, she was in a hurry after the interview and instead of calling a secretary to see me out, (in accordance with the parliament’s rules) the women simply said ‘you’ve been here before and know your way around, and I trust
you so you can walk yourself out’, gave me a hug and left me. Several of the women also suggested I should make contact next time I was in Oslo to meet up for lunch or coffee.

For me, the idea of emancipation and ideas from standpoint feminism are important and have been key drivers of this thesis together with my feminist views. Interestingly, even though maybe not explicitly stating so, the idea of emancipation, standpoint feminist ideas and equality might have been important for the participants in their decision to participate in this project.

My reflexive approach also allows me to take into account social interaction and discussions I have with others related to my work. This includes conversations with family, friends, and colleagues as I see this as valuable and important regarding the general debate and understanding both young men and women have of the subject, including those from other levels of society.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the research methodology of this study. The justification and interest for the topic is described building on my own political belief and interest. My personal curiosity in the subject and the timeliness of looking at the use of AA on BODs in Norway motivated me to select this topic.

This chapter explained how the orienting concepts (feminists ideas, patriarchy, power and inequality regimes) emerging from the engagement with the literature were built into the research design. These concepts were built into the design of the interview schedule and influenced the sample construction. The sample was constructed to include women at three levels in the three occupations discussed earlier, politics, academia and board directors.

The chapter discussed how having a multilevel focus and using multiple methods enabled an examination of both objective and subjective aspects, macro, meso and micro perspectives, and the interrelationship between structure and agency. The ontological, epistemological and methodological influences were described and the research design was presented. Influenced by feminism and standpoint epistemology, a qualitative approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews was chosen as the key
strategy. Hence, the thesis set out to give voice to women at different levels of seniority in the three occupational groups in order to uncover patterns of gender inequality regimes that work to explain vertical sex segregation. In addition, the importance of analysing secondary labour market quantitative data, including occupational group characteristics, was justified in order to provide comparative contextual data. Primary data would therefore be supplemented by meso and macro level examination of objective structures, contemporary literature, national and international data, as well as policy and organisational documents (e.g. related to AA strategies).
Chapter Six

Bases and shape and degree of inequalities and the use of AA strategies in the three occupational groups

6.1 INTRODUCTION

A central undertaking for this thesis is to get an insight into the experiences of women in senior positions, in particular in relation to equality and vertical sex segregation in the labour market in three occupational groups. The objective of this chapter is to introduce to the reader the three occupational groups – politics, academia and BODs – this thesis investigates in terms of inequality and the use of equality strategies. By having a descriptive analysis of the occupational groups, the reader is introduced to, and knows, the contextual settings within the occupational groups which is important in order to understand and make use of the findings.

This chapter starts with an analysis of the gender composition and women’s situation in the three occupational groups. This is guided by Acker’s (Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a) first two components of an inequality regime; the bases, and the shape and degree of inequality. The case of Norway is put in a European and Scandinavian context which illustrates why the case of Norway is especially important and demonstrates why there is a need for a country specific investigation even though Scandinavian countries are often clustered together. Next, the occupational groups are investigated in relation to their use of AA as this was important for the choice of occupational groups to investigate. BODs will be explored in greater detail as this group is identified as having a special interest due to Norway’s unique situation with recently introducing radical strategies in the private sector (Terjesen et al., 2009).

6.2 GENDER REPRESENTATION AND ‘GENDER INEQUALITY REGIMES’

The focus now turns to gender representation in the three occupational groups. As discussed in Chapter Three, in order to investigate gender inequality regimes in Norwegian occupational groups, Acker’s (2006b) components of inequality regimes are adopted. The analysis in this chapter is structured around Acker’s first two components of inequality regime; the bases and the shape and degree of inequality. Healy (2009) described how these two components of inequality regimes are important for reflecting
patterns in wider society. Hence, this is key for understanding macro trends in relation to equality, such as described in Walby’s theory of gender regimes.

### 6.3 BASES OF INEQUALITY

Acker (2006b) argued that while the bases of inequality in organisations vary, class, gender, and race practices are often present. Acker (2006b: 443) further stated that ‘gender, as socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality, is also present in all organisations’. For this thesis sex is, as emphasised earlier, the main focus of enquiry, but this thesis does not argue that this is the only base of inequality present in the Norwegian labour market.

#### 6.3.1 Politics

Scandinavian countries are known for having a particularly high representation of women in politics. Data from the Human Development Report, (2005, 2007–2008) show that in 2005 in Sweden there was even a slight majority; 52.4 per cent of the government being women, with women having 45.3 per cent of the seats in parliament, while Norway has 44.4 per cent women in government and 38.2 per cent women in the seats in parliament. Denmark has a slightly lower women’s representation in politics with 33.3 per cent women in government and 36.9 per cent women in the parliament as was discussed in Chapter Two. Table 6.1 includes the eight highest ranked countries (as well as the UK and US included for further comparison later in the thesis) in the UNDP 2007–2008 including the GEM ranking as well as the share of women in parliaments and governments.
Table 6.1 HDR, GEM and share (per cent) of women in politics 2007–2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The representation of women in the political arena fits well with the information provided by WEF (WEF, 2005; WEF, 2008) and the UNDP (UNDP, 2007-2008; UNDP, 2009) with the assumption that Scandinavian countries are relatively equal with women well represented in public life. It comes as no surprise that the countries that to all appearances come across as the most equal ones have among the highest representation of women in the political arena. Table 6.2 shows the percentage of women in Parliament in 2005, but more interestingly, the share of women’s seats in Parliament in the mid 1970s and 1990 is included. The reason why this is valuable is that there is a considerable difference between 2005 and the mid 1970s. In the mid 1970s there was no use of AA strategies, while various strategies have been in use in the Scandinavian countries over the last few decades as will be explored further later in this chapter.
Table 6.2 Women in Scandinavian politics (per cent) 1975, 1990 and 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Approx 20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Approx 15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Approx 15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(UNDP, 2005)

The uses of AA strategies in politics vary between countries as will also be discussed later in this chapter, and it is worth emphasising that Denmark, which chose to stop the use of quotas in the mid 1990s, is the country with the lowest percentage of women in parliament, while Sweden, which has most parties with a 50:50 quota policy is also the country with the highest share of women in politics.

6.3.2 Academia

Historically, academia has been highly male dominated, both with regards to academics as well as students. In recent decades there has been a shift towards women taking higher education, more so than men as was discussed in Chapter Two. Nonetheless, this change is not necessarily visible amongst academics, especially not at the higher levels. This indicates that human capital and pipeline theories are not enough to explain the pattern of vertical sex segregation and the lack of women in senior positions within Norwegian academia.

6.3.2.1 Gender representation in Europe

Vertical sex segregation and sex discrimination are widespread in academia internationally (Konrad and Pfeffer, 1991; Husu, 2000; Knights and Richards, 2003). Nevertheless, given the high rate of women’s economic participation as well as representation in politics in Norway and Scandinavian countries, it might be reasonable to expect that there would be a comparatively high proportion of women academics and senior women academics, that is, professors (and professors with administrative
responsibilities, e.g. heads of department, deans, and principals). Whilst, according to UN Human Development Data (UNDP, 2005), women’s economic activity rate in the three countries is high: ranked as first, fourth and sixth respectively in the EU-25, turning to the proportion of academics who are women in Figure 6.1, there is a very different ranking with Sweden found at 6th place and Norway at 12th, both above the EU average, whereas the proportion of women who are academics in Denmark (at 20th place) is below the EU-25 average.

Figure 6.1 Percentage of women academics in European countries

![Bar chart showing the percentage of women academics in European countries.](image)

Healy et al. (2005). Data collated from Women in Science (WiS)

Table 6.2 shows the percentage of women professors, and the findings reveal that of the 27 European countries analysed, Norway is ranked 15th, Sweden 13th and Denmark 21st, they are all lower than the mean of the 25 EU countries.
A study by Seierstad and Healy (forthcoming) where 87 Scandinavian women were surveyed from universities in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway revealed some intriguing findings. It pointed to the gendered nature of universities in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and uncovered the invisible nature of social processes that work to disadvantage women. The study illustrated that the world of universities in the three countries tended to be a masculine one demonstrating the deeply embedded gendering of organisational processes. Nevertheless, the study also revealed significant differences between Scandinavian countries as well, with Norwegian and Swedish academics being the most open-minded as to the use of hard strategies, and with some Danish scholars
pointing out that the national and political arenas are missing the whole equality and AA debate (Seierstad and Healy, forthcoming). The above statistical indices reveal a paradox that Scandinavian countries, despite their uncontested levels of overall equality in the world, have higher levels of vertical segregation in academia than many of their European counterparts. Thus, the example of academia supports the arguments of those who point to the problem of vertical segregation in Norway and Scandinavian countries. It further questions assumptions about a positive relationship between high economic activity and women’s career advancement, or in the context of this thesis, low vertical segregation.

6.3.2.2 Gender representation in Norway, the three universities

This thesis is, as illustrated in Chapter Five, focusing on three of the most respected and influential Norwegian institutions; UIO, UIB and the NHH. Table 6.3 shows the gender distribution of seven academic institutions including the three identified for this research.
Table 6.3 Share (per cent) of women as professors at Norwegian institutions 2003–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIB</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIO</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Stavanger</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Tromso</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(DBH, 2008)

Table 6.3 clearly illustrates that when it comes to senior positions in academia, there is great imbalance between the sexes. Yet, the table also shows that there are significant differences between the institutions where the share of women at professor level at UIO is 23.1 per cent in 2007 while at NHH the share of women is only 7.7 per cent.

Several possible suggestions for the low percentage of women professors have been put forward from both the supply and demand side theories, such as barriers, the glass ceiling, the leaking pipeline, the crown prince syndrome,¹⁹ as well as self-selecting out. Thus, a qualitative approach to explore women’s views on both the reasons for this trend as well as how to potentially change the pattern of vertical sex segregation in
terms of strategies is important and will be discussed further in Chapters Seven and Eight.

6.3.3 BODs

Singh and Vinnicombe (2004:479) found that women are almost completely absent from the very senior positions in the FTSE 100 companies, and they argued that ‘male directors form an elite group at the top of the UK’s corporate world, and few women break through this glass ceiling into this elite, despite making inroads into middle management’. British women made up approximately 11 per cent of the directorships in 2007 (Sealy et al., 2008). Similar patterns are also present in the rest of Europe as well as in the US where women held approximately 14.6 per cent of board directorships in 2006 (Joy, 2009: 15). This indicates that on the BODs in large companies gender is a barrier for career advancement (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003: 349). The private sector is characterised as powerful, influential, financially important, and generally not controlled by the state. Historically, the private sector, including BODs, has been highly male dominated where men have controlled the majority of high level positions and especially those related to power. Consequently, patterns of vertical sex segregation in the private sector have been high.

Building on data from the European Professional Women’s Network (EPWN) Board Woman Monitor 2008, Table 6.3 illustrates the gender trend for BODs in eight European countries.
Figure 6.3 Share (per cent) of women on company boards in eight European countries

(EPWN, 2009)

Table 6.3 illustrates how Norway is a frontrunner for improving the share of women on BODs, but also how Sweden and Denmark had a significantly higher share of women on boards than countries such as UK, Germany and France in 2008.

6.3.3.1 Scandinavia
This section looks at characteristics of Scandinavian company boards. It is worth emphasising that this data was collected after Norway suggested the gender representation law (this will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter), which may explain why Norway has a considerably higher representation than Sweden and especially Denmark. Information from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs in 2003 described how before the law was discussed in Norway, Norway’s share of women on BODs was lower than for Sweden (The Norwegian Government, 2007).
Table 6.4 Characteristics of boards in Scandinavia 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average board size</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shareholder elected female directors (per cent)</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee elected females (per cent)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total female representation (per cent)</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Randøy et al., 2006)

Table 6.4 illustrates the proportion of women directors within the boards of listed companies on the stock exchange in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. It is clear from Table 6.4 and Table 6.5 that even though the share of women has risen from 2004 to 2007 in all three countries, the case of Norway stands out with a significantly higher share of women in 2007, after the implementation of the gender representation law.

Table 6.5 Women directors (per cent) in listed companies by stock exchange

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Copenhagen, Denmark (per cent women directors)</th>
<th>Stockholm, Sweden (per cent women directors)</th>
<th>Oslo, Norway (per cent women directors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hoel, 2009: 84)

These findings indicate that there are great variations between the Scandinavian countries. Norway stands out, having suggested and later implemented a gender representation law which puts it in the position of having the highest share of women, followed by Sweden (which considered the same approach) and then Denmark.

6.3.3.2 Norway

The BODs is the principal administrative body of a public limited company. Its members are elected at general meetings in addition to employee representatives.
Although the role of the BODs varies among Norwegian companies, there are certain common responsibilities, such as advice, control, strategy, and networks (Lervik et al., 2005). Randøy et al. (2006) found that Scandinavian BODs were surprisingly homogenous, both in terms of sex (male) and nationality, while the age distribution was more heterogeneous. They argued that the low levels of gender diversity seem puzzling given the participation of women in the workforce in these countries. This finding was confirmed in a study of all the Norwegian banks and the 200 largest companies by Grønmo and Løyning (2003). They found that the proportion of women directors had risen from 0.5 per cent in 1970 to 14.3 per cent in 2000. However, the proportion of women drops to 8.7 per cent when only considering directors who are members of multiple boards. This could be an indication of a ‘glass-ceiling’ in which women rise through organisations like men, however, only to a certain level, whereas men continue to ascend. It might also be an indication of an ‘old boys’ club’, in which men gain disproportionally from their social ties with other men than women do (Grønmo and Løyning, 2003:127). Hence, as illustrated in Table 6.6, Grønmo and Løyning (2003) found that the share of women in these powerful positions have been extremely low from 1970 to 2000. Worth emphasising is that their study does not only include PLCs, yet they give a very interesting picture of the trends in gender representation in senior positions in the private sector.

Table 6.6 Share (per cent) of women directors in Norway 1970–2000

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women directors (per cent)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women directors on more than one BODS (per cent)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Grønmo and Løyning, 2003)

Table 6.6, based on data from the Norwegian Government in 2002, shows how there have been significant differences between BODs in Norway. While the share of women
is relatively high for the various boards of publicly owned enterprises this was not the case in the private sector in PLCs (ASAs).

Table 6.7 Share (per cent) of women in public and private boards in Norway 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>ASA</th>
<th>IKS</th>
<th>SÆR</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s share (per cent)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the total share of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average share (per cent</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of women in boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


When the legislation came into force and became applicable to all PLC in January 2008, most of the PLC companies in Norway had complied with the law. Table 6.8 illustrates the percentage of women on different boards as well as the percentage of women excluding employee representatives. Looking at changes within BODs for PLCs from 2003–2009, it is clear that there has been a significant increase in women.
Table 6.8 Share (per cent) of women on Norwegian BODs 2003–2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women directors on BODs (per cent)</th>
<th>Women directors on BODs (per cent) (excluding employee representatives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2005</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2006</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Seierstad and Opsahl, 2010)

Nevertheless, as can be seen from Table 6.8, a substantial increase in the proportion of women directors occurred only during the implementation period, and especially towards the end of the period. This suggests that the gender representation law has affected gender as a basis of inequality in absolute numbers, challenged the under-representation of women on PLC BODs and made the boards appear more democratic and equal. This indicates that the radical strategy of legislation was a successful tool for improving the gender balance, which could guide international policymakers. It also indicates that even though companies have complied with the law, it is evident that companies have reached their minimum target for gender representation, but the women’s share is not higher than the minimum. This could suggest that companies are simply complying with the law, and not moving towards further equality between the sexes.

This section has revealed how gender can be seen as a base of inequality within the three occupational groups and how patterns vary between occupational groups, thus
illustrating the complexity of the Norwegian labour market. This section has explored gender representation in the three occupational groups which has also revealed recent developments and different patterns.

6.4 SHAPE AND DEGREE OF INEQUALITY

The previous section established gender as a basis of inequality within politics, academia and BODs. This section explores the shape and degree of inequality based on gender, looking at the steepness and internal segregation within the occupational groups. An identified goal of AA as discussed in Chapter Four is to increase equality among specific groups. Although policymakers often see equality as merely equal representation of each group, equality is multifaceted and can be measured along many parameters. In this specific case, investigating the links and effects of AA on equality in politics, academia and BODs, there is a need for broadening understanding of equality, also looking at the shape and degree of inequality within the occupational groups.

6.4.1 Steepness

The steepness of hierarchy is one dimension of variation in the shape and degree of inequality. Acker (2006a) argued that top hierarchical class positions are almost always occupied by white men in the US and European countries. Acker (2006a) posited that the steepest hierarchies are found in traditional bureaucracies in contrast to the idealised flat organisations with team structures, in which most, or at least some, responsibilities and decision-making authority are distributed more equally among participants.

Politics, academia and BODs are not distinct organisations as such, and thus the steepness of hierarchy is difficult to analyse as organisational structures can vary between organisations. Nevertheless, this study argues that academia is especially hierarchical and bureaucratic with a steep hierarchical structure. Politics, on the other hand, is more unconventional as the hierarchy is not necessarily related to seniority and merit, yet it is bureaucratic. The group BODs is difficult to pin down. The boardroom can be classified as hierarchical as it is lead by a chair, yet it also has the characteristics of a flat team structure. Important for this thesis is to investigate who possesses the most senior positions within these occupational groups.
6.4.1.1 Politics

Looking at hierarchical positions within politics, two areas are of interest, the Presidium and the committee chair and vice chairs. In the 2005–2009 period, the Presidium was composed of six members and was chaired by the President of the Parliament. Additional members of the Presidium are the vice-president of the Parliament and the presidents and vice-presidents of the Lagting and the Odelsting. According to current practice, political parties are represented proportionately in the Parliament’s Presidium. The presidency of the Parliament is held by the Labour Party. The Presidium’s responsibilities include determining the Parliament’s order of business. Of the six members of the Presidium, only one (17 per cent) is a woman (The Norwegian parliament, 2008a). Table 6.9, describing the senior positions within the 13 different committees in Parliament, reveals that it is evident that the gender representation is a bit more skewed than the total gender representation in Parliament.22
Table 6.9 The chair and deputy chairs in the different Parliament committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committees</th>
<th>Chair Male</th>
<th>Chair Female</th>
<th>1st deputy chair Male</th>
<th>1st deputy chair Female</th>
<th>2nd deputy chair Male</th>
<th>2nd deputy chair Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Research and Church Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and the Environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Cultural Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Economic Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Care services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour and Social Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy and Public Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Norwegian Parliament, 2008b)
This indicates that the share of women chairs is lower than the total share of women members of parliament which in 2005–2009 was approximately 38 per cent.

6.4.1.2 Academia

In academia, the share of women professors is relatively low and an interesting aspect is therefore to look at academic managerial positions; principals, as well as deans and deputy deans. The three main institutions this study is investigating all have men as principals, but both the UIO and UIB do have at least one woman as pro or vice principal. The NHH, which has the lowest share of women professors of the institutions, does not have any women representatives at this level (see Appendix 12).

Looking at the positions of dean and vice dean at the UIO, two faculties – the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Education – have women deans. The other six faculties have men in these positions. Turning to dean of research, five of the eight representatives are women and of the deans of education, five are women. Thus, among the deans of research and deans of education, women are over represented (see Appendix 13).

At the UIB, one out of seven deans is a woman (Faculty of Psychology). Turning to the dean of research and dean of education there is also a clear tendency for men to dominate, with only two women as deans of research, at the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences respectively. Of the deans of education, only one woman is represented, from the Faculty of Psychology (see Appendix 14).

NHH is a smaller institution than the two others and operates with five institutes. Within the institutes, there is one woman as head of department, in the Department of Professional and Intercultural Communication. The other four heads of departments are all men (see Appendix 15).

6.4.1.3 BODs

A key aim of the gender representation law for PLCs’ BODs was the increase in influence of women. Although representation is a first step towards influence, influence cannot necessarily be derived from representation. Following Kabanoff (1991), equality goes beyond representation, and understands equality as the ability to influence. Related to the steepness of hierarchy, two aspects are of great value for this group. These are the
chair and the level of prominence (being a director on several BODs). The gender representation law has made the BODs into a relatively gender balanced group as illustrated earlier in this chapter, yet it is important to investigate other aspects of equality. An underlying motivation for the Norwegian Government in introducing the gender representation law was utility arguments, which included the business case for diversity. Specifically, the Norwegian Government argued that competence to maintain a competitive position is homogenously distributed in the population, and thus, companies should draw on roughly the same number of men and women. Although a high number of women are in paid work and women are to a greater extent than men tertiary educated, a disproportional number of men in comparison to women were on PLCs’ BODs. According to the utility argument, as the legislation brings more women onto boards, women will be seen as able to fulfil the role, and thus, companies will draw on women beyond the required representation. The gender of the chair as well as prominent directors will shed light on the steepness of the hierarchy within BODs.

The chair of the board is often seen as the most influential director on a board by being responsible for managing the board, setting its agenda, and having a close relationship with the chief executive officer. Fiss (2006: 1015) pointed out that ‘the relationship between the CEO and the board chair has been identified as a linchpin of successful corporate governance’ and that, while the chair runs the board, the CEO runs the company. Hence, both positions are extremely important for companies, yet none of the positions are affected by any gender representation laws. As only one person can hold the chair-position on a board, legislation cannot be enacted to ensure a gender balance. Therefore, the proportion of women chairs across all companies is an ideal variable for studying whether AA aimed at directors in general has removed barriers to entry for women into related positions of influence. As the legislation ensures that boards are balanced groups (Kanter, 1977), thus sex should become irrelevant, even of the chair.
Table 6.10 Share (per cent) of women as chairs on BODs 2003–2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Woman Chair on BODs (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2005</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2006</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Seierstad and Opsahl, 2010)

Table 6.10 shows that few boards are chaired by a woman. During the observation period outlined in Chapter Five, the proportion of boards led by a woman chair increased from two per cent to four per cent. However, two-thirds of this increase occurred before the implementation period (January 2006). This suggests that the law has had a marginal effect on the sex of the chair and the boards appear internally segregated. As women have not gained a substantial increase in access to the most influential position on the corporate boards in the period of the law, this might be an indication that there are still barriers for women at the organisational level as only the minimum requirements for women representation are met and men still control the top position within the boards.

While most directors generally only belong to a single board, some directors are part of multiple boards (Grønmo and Løyning, 2003, Huse et al., 2009). These directors will be referred to as ‘prominent directors’. By being prominent, directors gain access to other directors and knowledge. Grønmo and Løyning (2003) found in their qualitative study of Norwegian directors that prominent ones are more influential and their views carry more weight than others. Moreover, through interviews, they found that the directors believed that being prominent is a valuable way of acquiring knowledge and experience.

One of the main goals for the Norwegian Government (2008b) in introducing the gender representation law was to create a more equal setting between the sexes. In particular, it
focused on distributing power in the board room more equally as ‘reaching a balanced participation is a question of democracy’ (2008b). Given that prominent directors are influential, it is interesting to study the evolution of prominence as this might contradict the goal of equality. Specifically, if the maximum number of board memberships that a single director holds has greatly increased, there has been a concentration of influence. More generally, if directors have become less similar in terms of prominence, this could signal that a select group of directors have gained a high level of prominence and created an elite group. Although it is beneficial to be prominent, if this benefit is only enjoyed by a select few directors, this might decrease equality. The gender representation law has been the centre of attention for the media, both in Norway and internationally. The media has highlighted that certain women directors have attained a large number of directorships. These directors have been labelled the ‘Golden Skirts’ by newspapers like The Financial Times. If this is a wide-spread issue in Norway, it is a relatively new phenomenon as Grønmo and Løyning (2003) found that the proportion of women drops from 14.3 per cent to 8.7 per cent when only considering prominent directors in their dataset from 2000. The existence of a disproportionately large group of prominent women would be a contradiction of the Norwegian Government’s intention of creating a more equal setting with an even distribution of power. Looking at directors sitting on multiple boards, it is clear that the number of prominent directors has increased substantially during the observation period from 2002–2009. More specifically, the number of prominent directors rose from 91 to 224. Moreover, the maximum number of directorships that a single director holds has increased dramatically and the maximum number has more than doubled. To illustrate, in May 2002, one woman and two men were the most prominent directors by being members of four PLCs’ BODs each, whereas in July 2009, one woman director held nine directorships. The gender balance among prominent directors has also changed. At the beginning of the observation period, only seven of the 91 prominent directors were women, and at the end of the period, 107 women and 117 men were prominent directors. Thus, the increase in prominent directors is mainly driven by an increase in the number of women directors, which has led to a substantial change in the gender balance among prominent directors. More specifically, as described in Table 6.11, if only considering directors with at least three directorships, 61.4 per cent of them are women. When considering directors with seven or more directorships, all of them are women. This is a new trend as Grønmo and Løyning (2003), as discussed, found that the share of women dropped with prominence in their study from 2000.
Table 6.11 Share (per cent) of women as prominent directors on BODs 2002–2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Two or more</th>
<th>Three or more</th>
<th>Four or more</th>
<th>Five or more</th>
<th>Six or more</th>
<th>Seven or more</th>
<th>Eight or more</th>
<th>Nine or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2002</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2003</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2004</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2005</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2005</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2006</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>52.7</td>
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<td>58.3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>July 2009</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Seierstad and Opsahl, 2010)

**6.4.2 Internal segregation**

Acker (2006a) illustrated that some research shows that flat team structures provide professional women more equality and opportunities than hierarchical bureaucracies, but only if women ‘act as men’. Acker (2006a) referred to the work of Charles and Gruskey (2004) who argued that gender and race segregation of jobs is complex because segregation is hierarchical across jobs at different class levels of an
organisation, across jobs at the same level, and within jobs. Acker (2006b: 446) identified how occupations can be distinguished from jobs as ‘jobs and occupations may be internally segregated by both gender and race: What appears to be a reduction in segregation may only be its reconfiguration. Reconfiguration and differentiation have occurred as women have entered previously male-dominated occupations.’ She used the example that women doctors are likely to specialise in paediatrics, not surgery, which is still very male dominated. Acker further argued that this was the case she found in Swedish banks that also had ‘gender tracks’. Looking at the three occupational groups, clearly Acker’s arguments have relevance and there are various forms of ‘gender track’ within the occupational groups.

6.4.2.1 Politics

In politics, two aspects are relevant for investigating internally segregated patterns; the gender representation within the different parliamentary committees and within the different political parties both in Parliament and Government (January–April 2009).

In politics, where the total representation of women is approximately 38 per cent in Parliament, it might be surprising that within the various committees gender balance is divergent. Two of the thirteen committees have an overrepresentation of women members; the Committee on Family and Cultural Affairs, where seven of the eleven, approximately 64 per cent, of the members are women, and the Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs, where eight out of fifteen, approximately 53 per cent, are women. Four of the remaining committees have a very low representation of women; the Committee on Business and Industry having only 21 per cent women, the Committee on Defence with only 12 per cent women, the Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs with only 11 per cent women, and the Committee of Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs with only 12 per cent women.
Table 6.12 Share of women and men in the committees of Parliament 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Research and Church Affairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and the Environment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Cultural Affairs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Economic Affairs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Care Services</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour and Social Affairs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government and Public Administration</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communications</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Norwegian Parliament, 2008b)

This clearly indicates that even though the percentage of women in politics is relatively high, when it comes to the different committees men are the vast majority in the ‘high prestige’ committees related to business and finance, while women are in the majority in the ‘softer’ areas related to education and family.

In addition, a valuable aspect is related to the different political parties and their representation by sex. As illustrated in Table 6.13, the share of women in politics is relatively high at the time of analysis. Another important factor to look at is distribution...
in the different political parties. As Table 6.13 demonstrates, the share of women members of the Parliament by political party varies considerably.24

Table 6.13 Share of women in Parliament by political party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Members of Parliament</th>
<th>Women members of Parliament</th>
<th>Per cent women members of Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Labour Party (AP)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Progress Party (FRP)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Conservative Party (H)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Socialist Left Party (SV)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christian Democratic Party (KRF)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Centre Party (SP)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Liberals (V)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Norwegian Parliament, 2008b)

It is apparent from Table 6.13 that in fact the Christian Democratic Party has the highest share of women members in Parliament with 55 per cent, while the Progress Party has the lowest with 16 per cent.

The Government is formed by the party/parties that have a majority of the seats in Parliament or at least constitute a minority capable of governing. Thus, government is indirectly selected by the electorate. This means that a general election can lead to a change of Government, but not necessarily. In addition, there can be a change of government other than in connection with a general election if a situation should arise where the Government no longer has the support and trust of the Parliament.
The Government (as of October 2008) is a coalition of the three political parties; the Labour Party, Social Left Party, and Centre Party. Table 6.14 shows the gender distribution in Government as relatively balanced, and more so than in Parliament.

Table 6.14 Share of women as Secretary of State (ministerial positions) by political parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Labour Party</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Left Party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Centre Party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Norwegian Government, 2008a)

6.4.2.2 Academia

As explored earlier, the percentage of women professors in academia is relatively low, yet looking at the different departments and the share of women professors the imbalance is even more significant. As presented in Table 6.15, women have a very low percentage of professorships within Maths and Natural Sciences, with nine per cent, and in Technology, with only five per cent. In areas such as Humanities, the share of women professors is considerably higher with 28 per cent.
Table 6.15 Share (per cent) of women as professors in different faculties (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Women Professors (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths and Natural Science</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hovdhaugen et al., 2004)

This clearly indicates that also in academia, there are tendencies for men and women to be employed in different areas, with men being highly represented in the ‘hard’ sciences and women employed in the ‘softer’ fields within academia. This supports Acker’s (2006b) argument of gender tracks.

6.4.2.3 BOD

In the BODs group, there is as established earlier a relatively high percentage of women largely due to the gender representation law which will be discussed further later in this chapter. Nevertheless, women are not proportionally represented as chairs or vice chairs of boards. As the occupational group BODs is slightly different from the two other occupational groups, it is difficult to analyse boardrooms in relation to internal segregation. Instead, this section will discuss senior positions in the private sector as Norway has a two tier board system where only BODs are affected by the gender representation law.

An interesting factor related to internal segregation in the private sector and the senior positions within organisations is that women tend to be employed in positions such as HR directors, communication directors, marketing directors and in support functions, while they are absent from positions such as CEO, Director of Finance, or division leaders within companies (NHO, 2009). In an article by E24 it was argued on 23rd May 2005 that of the 50 largest Norwegian companies (stock value) 23 of them have HR directors as part of executive boards, and 78 per cent of these are women (Mørch Larsen and Amundsen, 2008). Their article also showed that of 23 directors of finance, only
one is a woman. They further argued that with gender differences comes the pay gap. The article also quoted Gunn Ovesen, a well known and respected business woman, who argued that salary is related to power and authority and that HR is a supporting position with less power than the line positions. She argued that Norway has to do something as the women who are on executive boards are normally employed in HR or communication, not positions with actual power (Mørch Larsen and Amundsen, 2008). This statement is supported by an article in DN27 18th July 2008, which shows that of the 235 CEOs of public listed companies (stock registered) only two are women (with one woman being the CEO of two companies) (Thrana, 2008). This is in line with an argument from Oakley (2000: 323) who in her research on American corporations illustrated that very few women who are in upper managerial positions have line manager experience which she claimed to be ‘a traditional prerequisite for the CEO positions’. Oakley (2000: 323) pointed to studies which illustrated how women who are in managerial positions are often employed in staff support areas such as human relations or public relations, which again supports Acker’s (2006) argument about gender tracks and indicates that this is a global trend. This highlights that in the private sector on executive boards, there is a difference between ‘male’ and ‘female’ positions where men have the most powerful positions with the highest salaries, and women have the ‘softer’ titles and positions with the lower salaries. This might indicate that quotas may be a successful tool for getting women onto BODs, yet the gendering within organisational positions related to power is maintained which is an important area for future research. The need for additional strategies to challenge this gendered pattern in the private sector is recognised by policymakers, researchers and participants as will be explored further in the thesis.

These findings indicate that in all three occupations, there are patterns of gendering within jobs, with men employed in the positions perceived as the most powerful. Nevertheless, there are differences within the occupational groups which will be developed further looking at their use of AA.

6.5 THE USE OF AA

Organisational barriers to women’s career advancement have been an important area for organisational research in recent decades (e.g. Acker, 1990; Acker, 2006a; Acker, 2006b; Cockburn, 1991; Collinson et al.; 1990, Kanter, 1977) and a variety of strategies to counteract the barriers exist globally. As illustrated in Chapters Two and Four, the
approach of equality varies between and within countries and is debated (Huse et al., 2009). In Norway AA, including both radical and liberal strategies, is considered a key national approach, yet the use of AA strategies varies between occupational groups.

6.5.1 Politics
Dahlerup (2006) illustrated that in politics, arguments from moderate/liberal as well as radical perspectives have been and are important justifications for using strategies to increase the share of women. Dahlerup (2006) pointed out that the classic liberal notion of equality was a notion of ‘equal opportunity’ or ‘competitive equality’, removing the formal barriers by, for example, giving women voting rights. This was considered sufficient; the rest was then up to the individual woman (Dahlerup, 2006). Nevertheless, following strong feminist pressure over the last few decades, as expressed for instance in the Beijing ‘Platform for Action’ of 1995, Dahlerup (2006) identified a second concept of equality, gaining relevance and support, which is more in line with the radical approach and the notion of equality of result or outcome. The argument is that real equal opportunity does not exist just because formal barriers are removed if direct discrimination and a complex pattern of hidden barriers prevent women from getting their fair share of political influence. Dahlerup (2006) described how quotas are a means towards equality of outcome. The argument is based on the understanding that equality as a goal cannot be reached by means of formal equal treatment. If obstacles exist, it is argued for compensatory measures to be introduced as a means to reach equality of result. Therefore, from this perspective which is in line with an individual justice perspective, quotas are not discrimination (against men), but compensation for structural barriers that women meet in the electoral process (Dahlerup, 2006).

Internationally, politics is an area/occupational setting where the use of AA in the form of quotas now is heavily recognised, yet with different approaches between countries and regions. In 2003, Rwanda, maybe surprisingly passed Sweden and became the number one country in the world in terms of women’s representation in parliament (Dahlerup, 2006). Rwanda is part of a new global trend to use electoral gender quotas as a ‘fast track’ to more gender balance within the political arena (Quota Project, 2006). Dahlerup (2006) described how gender balance among political representatives can be seen as important for various reasons. In an international setting, she pointed to the fact that only approximately 16 per cent of the world’s parliamentarians are women, and according to feminist movements as well as feminist theories, the lack of women in
political institutions might have serious negative consequences. This can be in relation to the political agenda, for the communication of women’s interests, and for the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Dahlerup, 2006). Moreover, the lack of women (as well other minority groups) may influence how these groups are viewed and perceived by themselves and others. Dahlerup (2006) illustrated that around 40 countries have introduced gender quotas in elections to national parliament. This has been done either by legal gender quotas mandated by the constitution as in Burkina Faso, Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda, or by electoral law as in many parts of Latin America, Belgium, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Serbia and Sudan (Dahlerup, 2006: 19–21). In addition, in more than 50 other countries, most political parties have voluntary quotas such as Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Norway where a number of political parties operate with some type of quota system. Equally important, in many other countries, only one or two parties have chosen to use quotas (Dahlerup, 2006). Nevertheless, the use of quotas in politics, as in other areas of the labour market, are often seen as controversial, as the use of quotas as a tool can make significant changes in women’s representation, thereby affecting the situation for women as well as men. Nonetheless, Dahlerup (2006) pointed to the fact that this is becoming a global trend, ranging from the perceived equal countries to the more gender traditional countries. This emphasises the global recognition of the importance of more gender balance in politics. What also makes the occupational group ‘politicians’ special and unique is the fact that they are elected by the people to represent the people. Thus, the idea of democracy is important and arguments for social justice have special significance in this area as was discussed in Chapter Four.

6.5.1.1 Scandinavia
Scandinavian politics have operated with various uses of AA, and an important factor is the countries’ different approach to strategies for gender balance at national level as shown in Table 6.16.
Table 6.16 The use of quotas in Scandinavian politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Social Left Party: 40 per cent (1975)</td>
<td>• Social Democratic Labour Party: 50 per cent (1987)</td>
<td>• Currently no use of quotas, but some political parties used to operate with quotas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Labour Party: 40 per cent (1983, now 50 per cent)</td>
<td>• Left Party: 50 per cent (1987)</td>
<td>• The Socialist Peoples Party: 40 per cent (1977-1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Christian Party: 40 per cent (1993)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The Left Socialist Party: 50 per cent (1985-party no longer exists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Liberal Party: 40 per cent initiative, not written</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Freidenvall et al., 2006) For Norway, updated data from the political parties webpages)

In Danish politics, there has been a step away from the use of voluntary quotas and currently no political parties operate with this strategy, while in both Norway and Sweden, voluntary quotas have been and are important strategies for a number of political parties. None of the Scandinavian countries operate with legal quotas in relation to gender balance in elected political bodies.

6.5.1.2 Norway

As the debate over the use of AA is on the contemporary agenda, an email was sent to the different political parties to make sure their latest strategies for equality were included if their webpages (Arbeiderpartiet, 2008; Fremskrittpartiet, 2008; Høyre, 2008; KRF, 2008; Senterpartiet, 2008; SV, 2008; Venstre, 2008) did not explain the actual and updated procedures. It is apparent that the majority of Norwegian political parties use voluntary quotas for their national level political lists. An investigation of the political parties’ websites found that the Labour Party has a 50:50 gender balance strategy. Email correspondence with the Centre Party, the Christian Party, and the Social Left Party confirms that they still operate with a minimum of 40 per cent gender balance on their party lists for election, but do not specify the process for achieving this (Kiran, 2008; Lindtveit, 2008; Torp, 2008). The Progress Party (FrP) does not operate with any gender balance, but pointed out in email correspondence (Farber, 2008) that on
political party lists for the 2004 election there was approximately 30 per cent women. Nevertheless, the share of women in the Parliament after the election was only 16 per cent, which might indicate that the women on the list were not at the top of the lists.\textsuperscript{28} The Conservative Party confirmed via email (Bjerknes, 2008) that they do not operate with a quota strategy, yet they emphasise that for the Conservative Party the core values are liberty, responsibility, and diversity. Consequently, the Conservative Party aims to have diversity on their lists. They also emphasise that the Conservative Party did have the first woman member of parliament (in 1911) as well as the first openly gay politician. Interestingly, both the Progress Party and the Conservative Party have women as chairs (or ‘chairman’ as was used in the Progress Party until 2009) as at April 2009.

Comparing the use of AA in the political parties and their share of women in the Parliament as presented in Table 6.13, it is expected that the lowest share of women is found in the Progress Party which does not have any quotas and neither does the Conservative Party, which has the second lowest representation of women. This indicates the importance of AA in order to enhance the share of women within political parties.

It is important to emphasise that the use of gender quotas in politics in Norway is at the organisational level and of a voluntary nature. Hence, rules on gender quotas in politics are not stated in the constitution. This can be seen as a paradox as there are laws for gender balance in all public committees, publicly owned enterprises (state-owned limited liability and PLCs, state-owned enterprises, companies incorporated by special legislation and inter-municipal companies) and all PLCs in the private sector. In addition, internationally, Norway (together with the other Scandinavian countries) is often referred to as a good example related to the use of AA in politics, yet, this is only based on voluntary actions from the political parties.

Networks, both formal and informal, have been perceived as important and beneficial for women getting positions. An organisational level strategy in politics is the political parties’ use of women’s groups or networks. Again, webpages were analysed and an email was sent to those political parties not stating their strategy on their webpage. The Social Left Party (Kvinnepolitisk utvalg), Centre Party (Senterkvinnene), Labour Party (Kvinnenettverket), Christian Party (KrF Kvinner), and Conservative Party
(Kvinneforum) all have women’s networks at local and/or national level. Hence, the Progress Party is the only political party that does not have any form of group or network for women.

6.5.2 Academia

In academia, the use of AA has been debated over the years. This section explores the use of AA strategies in academia, first in a Scandinavian setting, then via an analysis of the three Norwegian academic institutions; UIO, UIB, and NHH (The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, 2009; University of Bergen, 2009; University of Oslo, 2009). Data was collected from the universities January–April 2009.

6.5.2.1 Scandinavia

Table 6.17 describes Scandinavian countries’ use of equality strategies in academia. Once again, it is evident that Denmark has the lowest focus on strategies, while Norway together with Sweden have some strategies, yet of a soft nature. There is no use of radical strategies at this point as this approach has been perceived as illegal by the European Court of Justice. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that both countries previously operated with earmarking.

Table 6.17 The use of AA in Scandinavian academia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>•Some use of earmarking before illegal 2003</td>
<td>•Some use of earmarking before illegal 2003</td>
<td>•No real attempts to promote women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Moderate (Soft) quotas</td>
<td>•Moderate (soft) quotas</td>
<td>•Gender quotas not on the agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•On the agenda</td>
<td>•On the agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(University of Oslo, 2006)

6.5.2.2 Norway

The University of Oslo did for a short period (2001-2003) use radical strategies in terms of the earmarking of professorships for women to improve the gender balance. Nevertheless, this was classified illegal in 2003 by the EFTA Court of Justice and the
procedure was abandoned (Grønli, 2003). An important case for Norwegian academia is the fact that the Minister of Research and Higher Education Tora Aasland (2008) suggested, once again, introducing earmarking in academia, as she saw the need to challenge and change the laws within the EU in order to improve the level of equality in academia (Ressursbank for likestilling i forskning, 2008).

The different academic institutions have a range of strategies aimed at improving the share of women and women’s situation in academia. The Norwegian approach is now characterised by the use of liberal strategies; however the aim of equality is very much on the agenda. The different academic institutions all have strategic plans for improving the share of women, such as recruitment processes, financial support, mentor schemes and targets (see Appendices 9, 10 and 11).

6.5.3 BODs
The private sector has traditionally been an area where state intervention in relation to gender representation has been avoided. Yet, the absence of women in decision-making processes, especially on top corporate boards has become a key concern and there has been growing international interest from states, policymakers and researchers. Singh and Vinnicombe (2004) argued that this is an issue of concern as women’s talents are not being fully utilised. In addition, Huse and Solberg (2005) argued that women can and do make a valuable contribution on corporate boards, and they are therefore beneficial to boards in many ways. Corporations are critical actors in the public sphere, and as a result, directors on their boards can exert influence over society in general. This awareness has led to the identification of three stakeholder approaches to increasing women’s representation in various countries. First, the coercive approach, which supports the use of government legislation, such as the gender representation law in Norway. Second, the liberal approach assumes that organisations will voluntarily consider appointing women to corporate boards. This has been the primary attitude in the US and Canada. Third, the collaborative approach, which emphasises cooperation among various stakeholder groups, has been the main approach observed in the UK (Burke and Vinnicombe, 2008). As a consequence, while Norway, and later Spain, Netherlands, France and Iceland allow the use of quotas and gender targets on boards, it is an unlikely approach in other countries. This section will examine the use of AA strategies on BODs, first in a Scandinavian setting, then the focus turns to Norway and its use of hard strategies in the private sector.
6.5.3.1 Scandinavia

In recent years, two Scandinavian countries, Norway and Sweden, have had national debates and initiatives regarding introducing quotas in the private sector. Norway decided to introduce a gender balance law in 2003, while Sweden did not end up supporting this approach after a change in government. Nevertheless, the Swedish Government appointed a special group to report on this issue and evaluate if this should potentially be implemented in Sweden (Lundgren, 2006). Burke and Vinnicombe (2008: 3) pointed out that in Sweden legislation has been proposed with a mandatory 25 per cent participation rate for women, yet email correspondence with Nilsson (2010) pointed out that the current government has no such plans. Denmark has made no legislative attempts to increase the share of women in senior positions.

Table 6.18 The use of AA strategies on Scandinavian BODs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>•Public firms (ASA) require a gender balance of at least 40 per cent 01.01.2006 (with a two year grace period for already registered PLC BODs)</td>
<td>•Suggestion of a 40 per cent quota, but change in government led to withdrawal of law 2006 •A national discussion of quotas</td>
<td>•No law on gender balance for BODs •No initiative to legally require gender balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Burke and Vinnicombe, 2008; The Norwegian Government, 2008b)

6.5.3.2 Norway

As seen in Table 6.18, Norway stands out as having introduced what has been described as the most radical gender representation law ever. The idea of gender quotas on BODs of PLCs was proposed by the first Bondevik Government and officially suggested in June 2003 by the second Bondevik Government. It was later ratified by the Storting in December 2003 when the Minister of Trade and Industry, Ansgar Gabrielsen (Conservative Party), was one of the key supporters of the law, even though his own political party was sceptical. The law affects several types of companies and the legislation on gender representation on boards applies to all publicly owned enterprises (including state-owned limited liability and PLCs, state-owned enterprises, companies
incorporated by special legislation and inter-municipal companies) and all PLCs (ASA) in the private sector. There are no rules that have been proposed for privately owned limited liability companies (AS) because most of these companies in Norway are small family enterprises and the owners are themselves members of the board. PLCs normally have a broader spread of shares and less personal involvement in the management. Norway has approximately 205 000 limited liability companies (The Norwegian Government, 2009a).

For publicly owned companies the law came into force on 1st January 2004, with a two-year implementation period. In the case of PLCs, there was a dialogue between the Norwegian Government and the private sector where it was agreed that the amendment for a gender balance on PLC BODs would be withdrawn if the companies voluntarily complied by July 2005. However, this was not the case as the proportion of women was only 16 per cent in 2005 (The Norwegian Government, 2008b). Therefore, the law was introduced in January 2006 with a two-year implementation period ending in January 2008. Table 6.19 shows the minimum percentage of each sex that is required by law to be represented on boards of different sizes (employee representatives are not included in the law). This indicates roughly a gender balance of 40 per cent overall.

Table 6.19 The requirement for representation of both sexes on PLCs’ boards of directors by the gender representation law in Norway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Board</th>
<th>Required representation of each sex</th>
<th>Effective minimum per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9+</td>
<td>40 per cent</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Norwegian Government, 2009a)
The use of gender quotas within the private sector has been controversial. In particular, strong and conflicting opinions from the media, politics, and the private sector have challenged Norway’s image as an equal country. Although arguments were raised by the opposing side, both in politics and other areas of society, the Norwegian Government (The Norwegian Government, 2008b) argued for introducing gender representation rules based on several reasons related to justice and utility. From a justice point of view the Government argued for democracy, as equality between the sexes, a fairer society, and a more even distribution of power between the sexes were important factors for introducing the law. Additionally, several arguments along the lines of utility and the business case were used. One argument is that the legislation is important for the Norwegian economy. In particular, the demand for gender balance on company boards ensures that Norway makes use of all the human resources in the country, not just half of it. As women take higher education to a greater extent than men, it is important to use this talent and make use of their competence in terms of human capital and educational power. In addition, business case arguments related to diversity as having a positive impact on companies’ bottom lines were used (The Norwegian Government, 2008b).

6.6 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed key characteristics of the three occupational groups. In particular, it explored the case of Norway and the three occupational groups in a Scandinavian and European context, both related to gender representation as well as the use of AA. The Norwegian paradox with a high level of equality as well as a high level of vertical sex segregation is also present in the other Scandinavian countries, yet, this chapter demonstrated significant differences between Scandinavian countries when it comes to patterns of women’s employment as well as approaches to gender equality strategies. Therefore, this chapter revealed how between country differences demonstrate the limitations of typologies based on country clusters (O’Reilly, 2006) which supports the need for country specific investigations.

Building on Acker’s (2006a) theory of inequality regimes, this chapter established how gender can be seen as a base of inequality in all the occupational groups, yet how this is less visible in politics and BODs in comparison to academia. In addition, related to shape and degree of inequality, all the three occupational groups showed gendered
patterns both in relation to steepness and internal segregation which emphasises the importance of looking beyond the base component. Additionally, this chapter uncovered how the gendered patterns found in the occupational groups can be seen to correspond with their use of AA. In politics, quotas were introduced in the 1970–80s and women started climbing the ladder in the 1980s and today are present both in the Parliament and the Government in senior positions, yet not completely equal to men and with significant differences between the different political parties and between the different committees in the Parliament. In academia, the share of women professors is relatively low and the strategies in place are only of a liberal nature. On BODs in the private sector women were almost absent seven years ago, but are today represented with close to 40 per cent, due to the use of quotas. In particular, this chapter found how gender as a base as well as shape and degree of inequality varies and can conflict with each other by closer investigation. In addition, the use of AA, especially radical strategies, affects gender compositions between and within the three occupational groups. Notably, this chapter established that there is considerable divergence within the Norwegian labour market.
Chapter Seven
Equality, cultural expectations, and the influence of the welfare state at the different levels of society

7.1 INTRODUCTION
Gendering is identified as operating at different levels of society (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009) which can influence experiences of equality and patterns of occupational sex segregation in the labour market. This chapter sets out to investigate perceptions, views and experiences of equality at the different levels. Even though this thesis argues that the levels of society are interlinked, influence each other, and overlap, they are for analytical purposes separate foci of analysis. Consequently, this chapter sheds light on a variety of factors affecting equality, such as cultural expectations and the social democratic welfare approach. As a result the objectives of this chapter are to discuss participants’ views and experiences of equality in society (macro), in the occupational group (meso) and in the domestic sphere (micro). In particular, this chapter explores the existence of cultural expectations and gender stereotypes at the different levels of society as this also feeds into the experiences of equality and can shape patterns of occupational sex segregation. Furthermore, the importance of the welfare state and how the social democratic approach affects experiences at the different levels is discussed. This is of particular interest, as the social democratic welfare system in Norway and the Scandinavian countries is often referred to as successful in relation to equality.

7.2 PERCEPTIONS OF EQUALITY IN NORWEGIAN SOCIETY
Approximately nine per cent of the participants, consisting of three directors and three politicians (from the Conservative Party and Progress Party), believed Norway is completely equal. Interestingly, these are mostly from the lowest hierarchical levels. The vast share of participants did however recognise that some structures or gender barriers, visible or invisible, exist in Norwegian society. The majority of participants were very clear in their views regarding equality in Norway; it is both complex and contradictory. Nevertheless, they had the understanding that the situation in Norway is better than in most countries, but emphasised that full equality between the sexes is not yet achieved. As it is found that inequality exists in Norway, an important element is
where and how inequality occurs. One participant described how she experienced inequality to be everywhere in society and that it is therefore difficult to pin down.

We do not have equality, which starts from when we are kids. Childcare and schools have few men and there is unequal treatment. High school is a bit more gender neutral, but in the labour market there are differences and barriers. Girls become invisible and men climb the ladder. There are different expectations for men and women and there are many examples and forms of unequal treatment. I have the feeling that the managers that hire and have the power, choose men, ‘birds of a feather flock together’, and it is still like that. Discrimination, to a smaller or larger extent exists everywhere in society.

(Caroline, director, level two, age 35–44, 2 children)

This view was shared by many of the women; structures exist but they are hard to change as they are culturally embedded and difficult to locate as discrimination might be of an indirect nature. The majority of the participants argued for a difference between ‘equality on paper’ and ‘equality in practice’ in Norway and therefore, a separation between ‘formal’ and ‘real’ equal opportunity in society. The argument used is that in theory there is equality between the sexes in Norway, yet there are barriers, visible and invisible, making the experiences and practices more complex.

I think that in Norway a lot of things are put in place in order to have equality between the sexes, but there are still factors working against equality. A lot of it has to do with expectations and roles. I think people see the leader as a man; men are at the top and choose other men for the top. We also have ‘the good girl syndrome’. We women do not dare to take enough risks, sometimes you need to make a white lie and say you can do things even though you haven’t done it before, you can learn it! Men are better at jumping without a security net, women need to be better at taking risks in all aspects of life as there are so many talented women out there, and we need to make way.

(Mina, director, level three, age 45–54, 2 children)

A minority of the participants did, as illustrated, have the opinion that equality exists in Norway and they argued that nothing prevents women from having a career equal to that of men apart from choices as well as boundaries women put on themselves. This is in line with Hakim’s (1991; Hakim, 1996) arguments of an agency approach regarding choice. Nonetheless, the great majority of participants did not perceive Norwegian society to be completely gender equal and several of them had the opinion that choices women make are not free and that other factors, such as cultural expectations and gender roles in society, influence choices women make. The idea that women make choices under constrained conditions is also described in several studies (Crompton and
Feuvre, 1996; Ginn et al., 1996). The debate about free choice versus constrained choice is seen as important for women experiencing not having equality which will be critically appraised throughout this study. One participant emphasised how language also contributes to inequality in the Norwegian society; she took the Progress Party as an example and described how they have kept the term ‘Chairman’ (as of April 2008) even though the chair is actually a woman. She further argued that until the asymmetric relationship between the sexes is equalised Norway will not have equality, as power differences are also implied and embedded through language.

7.2.1 Perceptions of inequality: experience and age

How views on equality have changed with experience in the labour market was a repeated theme described by several of the participants. This indicates that gender awareness is something that comes with experience. As argued by Acker ‘visibility varies with the position of the beholder: One privilege of the privileged is not to see their privilege’ (Acker, 2006b: 452). This might indicate that there has been little awareness of inequality before experiencing it. Consequently, the participants believed the idea of Norway being equal might still be more of an aspiration than a reality.

If you had asked me ten years ago I would have said yes. However, now, I think it depends on how you define equality and equal opportunities. It is difficult to put your finger on, but I think the differences are related to expectation and encouragement. On paper, you have equal opportunity, but in reality, parents, teachers, and colleagues are encouraging and supporting girls and boys, men and women differently. As a result, in reality, you do not have equal opportunities. (Frida, academic, level one, age 25–35, 2 children)

There are six participants under the age of 35 in this study and they all described how the idea they had while growing up differed from the reality they experienced later in the labour market when climbing the hierarchical ladder. This is in line with other studies that point to the fact that the ‘general’ understanding among young people in Scandinavia is that equality exists (Dahlerup, 2004). The participants had the understanding that young Norwegian women think equality is achieved as the ‘equality battle was won ages ago’. The view that younger women are being ‘blinded’ by the idea of equality is a factor several of the participants described as a problem for the pursuit for equality. In fact, some participants describe young Norwegian women as quite naïve when it comes to views on equality in the labour market. According to these participants, the idea among (most) young women is that equality is achieved, which these participants consider might actually work against equality. Several of the
participants proclaimed that equality is not something we got and now have; equality is something we are, should be, and must continue to be, fighting for.

As it is established that the majority of the participants did not perceive Norway as equal, their understanding and experiences of the development of equality in Norway is important. The majority took the viewpoint that there have been improvements in terms of equality between the sexes over the last ten years, but a considerable proportion of the participants had the opinion that this is going extremely slowly, and slower than natural development should indicate. This indicates the need for political strategies. None of the participants considered the situation for women to have worsened over the last decade, but a few participants did believe there have been no improvements over the last ten years.

7.3 PERCEPTIONS OF EQUALITY WITHIN THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

The contextual setting in Chapter Two identified Norway’s uncontested level of equality while still having high levels of vertical sex segregation, which was reflected in the occupational group analysis in Chapter Six. This thesis now explores perceptions of equality. A question was asked about the participants’ views of equality between the sexes in their workplaces in order to get an overall impression of equality in politics, academia and BODs. 35 per cent of the participants (12 politicians, three academics, and nine directors) reported that they experienced their workplace as having a high level of equality, while as many as 65 per cent had the impression that their workplace was not equal. Figure 7.1 illustrates each occupational group’s experiences of equality at the workplace.
It is apparent that of the three occupational groups, academics are the ones most inclined to find their workplace unequal, while politicians and directors are more likely to report equality at their workplace. Importantly, even though a large share of the politicians and directors argued that their workplace was equal, they described and emphasised that external aspects were more unequal. This accentuates the importance of investigating how the workplace is interlinked with other areas of society and the overall gender regime. In addition, the directors who argued that their workplace was not equal emphasised that this was more so in their normal jobs than in the actual boardroom setting.

Chapter Six illustrated how gender was important in regard to Acker’s (2006a) first two components of inequality regimes, the bases, and shape and degree of inequality in the occupational groups. The participants were asked to reflect on the representation by sex in their occupational groups and in the most senior positions in particular. It is apparent that the vast majority of the participants are aware of differences between men and women with respect to positions of power. In politics where women are well represented in senior positions, the participants acknowledged how their occupational group diverged from other high profile occupations, in particular in comparison to
senior positions in the private sector. The reason for this skewed picture of men and women in senior positions, on the other hand, was differently explained by the participants. Their explanations ranged from discrimination, organisational barriers, and structures also affected by cultural and social expectations, to individual choices and self-selecting out also using human capital and pipeline theories.

7.3.1 Perceptions of recognition in the workplace

Researchers have pointed to fact that workplaces tend to be defined by male work patterns whereby organisations are gendered (Collinson et al., 1990; Cockburn, 1991). It was apparent how participants from all the occupational groups were aware of inequality and different gendering practices within organisations. As the majority of the participants had the opinion that workplaces were not equal and pointed to power differences in terms of hierarchical positions, an important and related area is the participants’ views on respect and recognition in the workplace. The participants were asked if they felt that they as women have to work harder than their male counterparts in order to get recognition for achievement in the workplace. The results again question the notion of the Norwegian labour market being equal as there was a perception among the participants that women have to work harder than men to get recognised for their achievements and to get respect in general. In fact, as many as 94 per cent (62) of the participants described that they did have the feeling women have to work harder than men in order to get recognition in the workplace. The six per cent (4) claiming that women do not need to work harder than men in order to get recognition are all politicians from the Progress or Conservative parties and from level one (and are also among the participants who described Norway as equal). Furthermore, there are noteworthy differences between the occupational groups in terms of justification for this type of inequality.

The vast majority of politicians argued that also in politics women have to work harder to gain recognition and respect; yet, the politicians saw working in Parliament and Government as better organisations when it came to equality between the sexes than other areas of the labour market, especially the private sector. Several of the older politicians also described how this had improved since they joined politics. They took the viewpoint that young politicians today are more strategic, women are a bigger and more influential group, and the situation has improved. Nevertheless, they considered that there is gender imbalance related to respect and recognition:
It was worse when I started as a politician. There have been some changes. When women used to have opinions about something else other than childcare they were not taken seriously, it’s not like that today.

(Johanne, politician, level one, age 55–64, three children)

I experience that we (women) have to work harder for respect and recognition. We also have to be tough and funny. That’s how politics has become. There is a very high ‘look at me’ factor and women have to prove themselves in several arenas. It’s good to be attractive and charismatic, but you have to make sure people do not question your intelligence.

(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)

In academia, where success is very much judged by what you produce in terms of publications, the strongest views on the lack of recognition for women were found:

Yes in order to get recognition, I think that is the case. This is not only based on my experience, but observations I have made in relation to how academics view articles and research done by others. If it is clear from the beginning that if the research is done by a man, it is regarded as better quality research than if the research is done by a woman. I have personal experience where women really have to defend and justify their work and ideas to a greater extent than men have to. Recognition is subjective and difficult to measure, but I do really think that it comes easier for men.

(Frida, academic, level one, age 25–35, 2 children)

Yes it is difficult for us to get recognised and get respect. We cannot have too many weird/unique characteristics. Philosophy is a discipline with lots of distinctive ideas, also when it comes to personality. We have a lot of ‘originals’ among the male philosophers. For a woman philosopher, uniqueness is not tolerated much. A woman is a woman; a man is a philosopher and a colleague. A female colleague is very much a woman, and you have the gender stereotypes such as a gossiper, difficult and bitchy. It is easy for a woman to get labelled with these characteristics. A woman gets the ‘gender-stamp’, a man doesn’t, and he is the colleague and the philosopher. I agree with Simone De Beauvoir; the man is the universal, he just is the philosopher. A woman is a woman trying to be a philosopher. There is this asymmetry and it is very clear.

(Wenche, academic, level three, age 55–64, three children)

Similar views were found in Seierstad and Healy’s (forthcoming) study of Scandinavian academics. The participants with a background from BODs and the private sector also shared the view that women do have to work harder to get recognition and respect. However, their arguments are slightly different from the majority of the academics. These directors argued that:
It is more difficult for women in general I would argue, but it also depends on the situation. Sometimes women are seen, but in most situations women who do not ‘sell’ themselves must work harder. It is a combination of men being more strategic and selling themselves, while women do not. That’s why it is important as a leader to be aware of this. It is important that women dare to be visible. Some women do not see the ‘game’ and the ‘rules of the game’, they become unseen. You will have to dare to be a part of the ups and downs and not avoid them both.

(Turid, director, level three, age 35–44, one child)

There are some differences, but we can take control over that. In the beginning, I could have come up with brilliant ideas for the morning meeting, but we do have the domination techniques where people (men) steal your arguments and present it as theirs at the end of the meeting and that is what people remember. So now I’ve learned that if I have a good idea I make a memo and put my name on it. The idea can’t get stolen, and I will get the credit deserved. There is a lot of psychology involved.

(Karin, director, level two, age 45–54, three children)

This director had an interesting, yet slightly depressing take on the puzzle:

Yes we do have to work harder. The day we have as many stupid women as stupid men in senior positions we have equality, that day will never come.

(Jane, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

These findings support those of Drake (2002) based on a survey of 3,690 Norwegian leaders, 878 of them being women, where the majority of women leaders considered they had to work harder and better than men in order to get recognised for their achievements. Perhaps unsurprisingly the men in her study did not agree with these findings. It is apparent that in all occupational groups women described difficulties getting recognition and respect, which they perceived as both tangible and intangible interactions within the workplace. It is also apparent how women experience being held to a higher standard than their male counterparts.

7.4 PERCEPTIONS OF EQUALITY AND THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

The focus now turns to the micro level and, crucial to discussions on equality and employment, is the nature of the private sphere. Research by Bernhardt et al. (2008) found that Sweden is more egalitarian in the private sphere in comparison to Norway. Bernhardt et al. (2008) suggested that this is probably due to Sweden’s longer history of gender equality norms, which are more ‘institutionalised’ in public policies. Among the participants, there is great variation in terms of views and experiences in this setting. Equality and support at home are emphasised as essential by the participants in order to
have a good career. All the participants argued, in response to a direct question, that they had equality in their private life and that their partners provided support. Yet, for some the word ‘but’ was added when elaborating on the subject, as several participants explained how the matter is complex:

“Yes I have ‘support’ from my partner. However, if you look into the work balance at home, it is not really balanced. Even though I have a fully grown man who knows how to wash clothes, I do the majority of the domestic duties. I have encouragement in the way that my partner supports me to do what I do; he doesn’t want me to quit and stay at home. So I have support in that way, but not support as ‘I will do the dishes for you….’

(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)

Stories from the participants revealed that the majority, even though having supportive partners that ‘help out’ with the household duties, do more of the domestic duties than their partners. Several studies support the finding that women do more household tasks than men, even in dual earner families, including in Norway (Baxter, 1998; Kitterød and Vatne Pettersen, 2006). It can be argued that since even highly educated women tend to do the majority of household duties, the interface between home and work is important. In fact, the domestic division of labour is extremely resilient, so much so that the evidence suggests that the ‘the rate of change in the domestic division of labour is glacial’ (Crompton and Lyonette, 2005). Indeed in Norway, research by Kitterød and Vatne Pettersen (2006: 473) found that full-time employment for the mother does not necessarily increase the father’s contribution to any types of family-work. In fact, Kitterød and Vatne Pettersen (2006) argued that fathers with young children do still work the longest hours, while mothers to a greater extent work part-time and have the main responsibilities in relation to care and household duties. Melkas and Anker (1997) found in their study on Finland, Norway and Sweden that women perform about two-thirds of all unpaid work at home. Nevertheless, the most equal share of the domestic duties is found in families where the mother also works full-time (Kitterød and Vatne Pettersen, 2006). One of the participants highlighted how the lack of focus on equality in the private sphere from national level is problematic.

Equality in the domestic sphere is the area we are really lagging behind, not formally but in practice. When it comes to the labour market there is a lot of focus on equality between the sexes. The importance of equality in the private sphere on the other hand, receives little attention and I think many are set in the old fashioned behaviour.

(Asta, director, level one, age 45–54, two children)
Some participants explained how they have hired help in order to avoid the ‘battle’ over
domestic duties as there have been battles. An important point is that outsourcing of
domestic duties has traditionally not been a common strategy in Norway, rather the
opposite.

You have to outsource domestic duties; get a cleaner, someone to do the ironing,
etc. It is getting more and more normal and accepted in Norway, at least in my
circle of friends. You need to hire help in order to have quality time at home. Even so, I would like to emphasise, I do my own baking of cakes for the school lottery.
(Kari, director, level two, age 35–44, two children)

Even though similar points were made by several participants, worth emphasising is that
outsourcing of domestic duties does not necessary challenge gender regimes within the
domestic sphere. In fact, some participants emphasised that they take pride in doing
some of the traditional duties, such as baking cakes for the school lottery. This
emphasises the importance of cultural expectations and the fear of being seen as a ‘bad
mother’.

A considerable share of the participants illustrated differences in men’s and women’s
shares of household duties but were reluctant to refer to this as inequality. In fact, the
great majority of participants emphasised the support they have in their private life as
important for their career advancement. It has been argued that the dual-earner/dual-care
model (Crompton, 1999) and the universalisation of care (Fraser, 1997) are seen as the
best attempts to attain gender equality. Based on the views and experiences of the
participants in this study, one clear finding is that in order to have equality it is
important to choose the right partner; to find someone who supports the women’s
career, and is willing to do some, even if not half of the household duties. In fact, the
importance of equality in private life in order to be able to balance work and family was
a recurrent theme from the participants throughout the interviews. Even for the women
having equality in their private life with supportive partners, the majority of participants
emphasised that there had at times been difficult choices related to family and work. In
fact, 73 per cent (48) of the participants described how, at times difficult choices were
made between work and other aspects life.
Yes it was difficult; especially when the children were younger. I had a lot of meetings in the evenings and felt I was raising the children over the phone. It was difficult, but the children did turn out very good.
(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)

Charlotte illustrated how she has been missing out on a lot of everyday things due to her career;
You are making difficult choices everyday. It is the small things, football matches, ballet trainings, and, etc. You will miss out on some things and it is not easy.
(Charlotte, politician, level three 35–44, three children)

Some of the participants explained that they have made ‘unusual’ choices in order to make the work-life balance succeed.

Our choice is that my husband is at home. He is an old fashioned ‘housewife’ and he has been that for nine years.
(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Of the participants not experiencing any difficult choices related to work-life balance, 28 per cent (5) do not have children, 28 per cent (5) had young children before their career peaked, 17 per cent (3) emphasised the importance of a good partner taking their share of household responsibility and thereby making it easier, while 11 per cent (2) emphasised that they have managed to arrange their job so it was possible to have both family and career without making big sacrifices. The literature points to women’s different experiences, particularly with respect to their mothering role, but also the protection afforded by the welfare state model (Folbre, 1994; Sainsbury, 1999). Several of the participants illustrated the importance of welfare strategies in order to make it easier to balance family and work.

It is important to have support from the people around you, the people at home. You can’t deal with a battle at home as well. If you do have equality at home it is easier to develop and have a successful career, it is easier to take on challenges and tasks at work.
(Sonja, politician, level two, age 55–64, one child)

I do not think it has been difficult for me related to work-life balance. I have always known that I wanted a family, and I am willing to stay home a bit; it feels right to be home during the parental leave. We are lucky in Norway, we have really good systems. I feel privileged because of the system. We have childcare which gives us the possibility to have it all.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)
This supports the arguments of the importance of Norwegian welfare strategies giving the possibility of having children while still maintaining a career, or maintaining an existing career while also choosing to have children. Even though the participants argued for their job being very important it is also clear from their stories how important their families are. Once again, this does in a sense question Hakim’s (1996) arguments related to work centred, adaptive, and home centred women. The participants’ career fits into the category of work centred women, while their ideas and family commitment indicates that they are of an adaptive nature. In the case of Norway, the possibility for women to have a good career and maintaining a family life is related to the comprehensive state support which indicates the importance of contextual factors in terms of welfare approach.

7.4.1 Women, men and money: perceptions of economic power

Income and money are related to power, and Bradley (1999) referred to economic power as one on her nine forms of power. Bradley (2007:132) argued that ‘the dynamic of gender in the household is thus complex. While men tend to posses economic power through holding the main breadwinner role, their absence from the home leaves women in a dominant role as household managers and coordinators at home’. Several authors identified that the dual earner model is becoming accepted in Scandinavia (Yeandle, 1999; Bradley, 2007). Yet, even with a dual earner and breadwinner approach, the Norwegian experience of economic power, career, and equality is intricate. The participants were asked a question about views and experiences of men being comfortable with women making more money than them. Being economically independent was emphasised by several of the participants as important in order to have equality. One participant explained how her upbringing and advice she got while growing up were important for equality in her private life.

My grandmother worked and always told me the importance of being economically independent in order to be equal. That I have remembered. No matter how nice my husband is and how good our marriage is, when it comes to the financial situation, I am independent. I do not want to be economically dependent on anyone, that’s the worst; if you are economically dependent you are dependent in all ways. That is and has been crucial for me in my life and career.

(Mette, politician, level three, age 55–64, two children)
Nevertheless, how economic power is experienced in interaction with partners is more complex. In fact, 42 per cent (28) of the participants had the opinion that men are not comfortable with women making more money. 38 per cent (25) of the participants have the impression that some men are, but it is still an issue for some couples. 20 per cent (13) of the participants took the viewpoint that men are comfortable with women making more money. The following quotations give an insight into the different experiences:

No, men are not comfortable. I think it is amazing how comfortable men are with women making less money than them. Why are they not interested in that money? I find this strange. For the balance in couple’s relationship, it is clear, the woman can do everything a man does as long as it is a bit less than the man they are living with’.
(Ingunn, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

It did take some time for my husband to get used to me making more money. I think it is important for men to feel they are the breadwinners. It is ridiculous. I think it is like that for my friends as well. We have started to have children, and the gender roles and expectations are more visible than I was aware of. When we studied and were young professionals everything was equal -men, women- it didn’t matter. But with children it gets more and more visible. I guess we are taking after our parents’ generation and following the same gender roles more than I had expected, especially related to the importance of money and income.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

In addition, the participants described how expectations from others revealed traditional gender roles in society.

Comfortable…not really, they might pretend it’s OK, but I think it hurts. Friends and family think its ‘good’ that I make more money than my husband, but the way they say it, it is obvious they think it is abnormal. The wife shouldn’t really be the breadwinner…
(Mille, director, level one, age 25–34, no children)

My husband is OK with me making more money and having the most impressive career. My mother in law and mother, on the other hand, would prefer the roles to be reversed.
(Berit, academic, level one, age 45–54, two children)

Several participants emphasised that ideas of masculinity and femininity are related to income and economic power.

I think it is getting better, but I do not think everybody would be happy with being supported by the wife… I think my husband thinks it is cool that I support
him. He is a ‘macho man’, he plays football and stuff, so he likes it, and he can handle it.
(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Interestingly, Ida referred to her husband’s masculine characteristics and interests as reasons for him being OK with being supported by a woman. Similar arguments and the idea of masculinity were presented by other participants in similar situations.

I think a lot of men find it provocative with women who make more money, and it is also something the women do not mention. I think a lot of men see income as their masculine pride. I can see that in my husband. We are equals in our relationship, and he is very proud of my career. Nevertheless, he makes more money than me, and I do think he mention that a bit too often. It annoys me, and I’ve told him that on several occasions.
(Inga, academic, level three, 55–64, one child)

These viewpoints are in line with an argument from Deutsch (1999) who pointed out that even with equal participation in paid work it does not necessarily change the concept of the man as the main breadwinner and the power relations obtained from this position. Consequently, this argument has some validity in the case of Norway as the participants’ experiences that men to certain extent hold on to economic power even in relatively equal relationships. The dual breadwinner model seems to be more accepted by men if the income is still skewed in their favour. Even though the participants seem comfortable with challenging and changing the power balance in relation to economic power, some of them emphasised that women also tend to support the idea of men as the main breadwinner.

7.4.2 Women and men: perceptions of educational power
Related to equality in the domestic sphere and the relationship between women and their partners, this thesis argues that, as a contribution to the thinking of power and power relations, it is also important to focus on educational power. Human capital is seen as a resource and important for getting positions from a supply side perspective of occupational sex segregation. Hence, it is important to investigate how the case of Norway with more women taking higher education affects social interaction and the power balance in the private sphere. This study takes the viewpoint that higher education can be seen as human capital, an intellectual resource. In Bradley’s (1999) theory of power and power dimensions, education can play a part in some of the types of power, such as technical power, positional power, personal power and economic
power. For this study, in order to unpick the relationship between women and men in terms of power at different levels, focusing on education is valuable. As more women than men take higher education and the participants in this study are highly educated, some insight into how this affects private life and social interaction is central.

To position education in a historical context it is important to understand early influences in terms of choice of education. The participants were asked what or who influenced their choices for pursuing higher education. The most important influence was interest in the subject, which was emphasised by 42 per cent (28). Nonetheless, almost one fourth, 24 per cent (16), stated that family or cultural factors in terms of expectation or advice were the key influence. Next, 21 per cent (14) of the participants gave emphasis to future job opportunities as important for their choice. Eight per cent (5) explained it as a coincidence, while five per cent (3) said that their choice of education was mainly influenced by their desire to be economically independent in the future.

Figure 7.2 Influence of choice of education for participants

Unsurprisingly perhaps, academics were most inclined to identify interest in the subject as important, while directors had the highest percentage of women emphasising importance of future job opportunities. Some participants, mostly over 50, described
structural factors as affecting, consciously or unconsciously, choices made such as family expectations or cultural factors. Hence, this indicates that choices for women were more limited and gender expectations stronger when these women made their educational choices more than 30 years ago.

I was a girl, and I chose nursing. I liked working with people, and it was seen as appropriate for me.
(Runa, politician, level one, age 55–64, two children)

It was also illustrated how expectations in relation to educational choices varied for boys and girls and how parental support can be important for ‘unusual’ choices;

I had great parents that supported me. I grew up at a time in an area where women didn’t really take education. It was expensive to send youngsters away for high school. Consequently, education for women was a vast amount of money. That was what my friends experienced. However, my father told me if I finished high school, I would get a car. For me, it was without question, of course I would take higher education, what we could discuss was what grade I would get.
(Hilde, director, level two, age 45–54, no children)

In addition, the importance of being economically independent was highlighted by some of the participants as important for their choice of education which is interesting as equality in the private sphere is, by some of the participants, related to the importance of being economically independent and having economic power.

My father gave me two pieces of advice; first, you are clever; use your abilities. In addition, you must be able to support yourself financially.
(Jane, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

Turning to the contemporary setting, as patterns of vertical sex segregation exist and the participants are employed at different levels within the occupational groups, it is important to get an insight into how important they consider their job to be. In response to a direct question, 73 per cent (48) of the participants answered straight away that their job was very important. Only six per cent (4) of the participants did not feel their job was particularly important in their lives, while 21 per cent (14) replied immediately that their job was important, but family was the most important to them. Of the 73 per cent stating that their job was very important, the majority of these also emphasised the importance of family during the interview.
Turning the focus to the different occupational groups, there are relatively similar patterns between them, but with directors being most inclined to view their job as highly important. The following quotations offer an insight into the participants’ views on their jobs, which clearly illustrate how participants from all the occupational groups are passionate about their work.

My job is very important. My job is me, and I am my job!
(Beth, director, level three, age 45–54, three children)

It is very important; it is my hobby and my lifestyle!
(Charlotte, politician, level three, 35–44, three children)

It is very important; it is the meaning of life!
(Trude, academic, level two, age 55–64, no children)

Nevertheless, even though the majority see their job as important and are passionate, several perceived other aspects of life as being more important.

It is important, but not most important. Family, friends and hobbies are important. Family is at a different level, in a different league.
(Berit, academic, level one, age 45–54, two children)

It was very important, especially before I had kids. Now the ranking has changed and my job is only second.
(Turid, director, level three, age 35–44, one child)

As identified, the participants are highly dedicated to work and see their job as highly important, reflecting Heilman (1997:878) who stated that ‘there is no research evidence supportive of the commonly held idea that women managers are less committed to their careers because their primary commitment is to the family and home’. In addition, women with children are as likely to consider their job to be important as women without children. These results may be explained by the fact that the participants are highly educated women who have invested in human capital and expect to have returns of some sort on this investment. They could be Hakim’s ‘self made women’ (1991) or more likely women who had structural advantages to enable them to succeed (Devine, 1994). Part of those structural advantages will of course be the Norwegian welfare state which, in effect, co-exists with the gendered order.
Turning to the domestic sphere, in order to investigate further the importance of education and educational power, the participants were asked about their perceptions of how comfortable men are with women having higher education (and potentially higher than them). 41 per cent (27) of the participants have the opinion that men are comfortable with women having higher education, while 59 per cent (39) take the viewpoint that the majority of men are comfortable with women having more education, but you will still find some being ‘old fashioned’ and uncomfortable. None of the participants argued that all men are uncomfortable with women having higher education. Several of the participants illustrated an important factor – they have the understanding that it is OK that the woman has higher education as long as she does not make more money or have a more prestigious job. Salary and positions are visible and easily measurable and relate to Bradley’s (1999) two forms of power – economic power and positional power – which have traditionally been seen as dominated by men. As educational power is more imperceptible, it is perceived as less of an issue.

Men are more comfortable with education than salary. Education can be related to ‘the good girl’ syndrome, so education isn’t that big a deal.
(Inga, academic, level three, 55–64, one child)

Higher education is OK; I see that in my group of friends. In festive settings, it can also be ‘fun’ to have a wife that makes more money, but I think the man has to be really strong to handle a woman that makes more money and has a more impressive career.
(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, 2 children)

7.5 CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS AND GENDER STEREOTYPES
The previous section established that the participants perceived the idea of Norway being equal as more complex and contradictory that the international data on equality suggests, with the participants taking the position that different expectations for men and women underpin all levels of society. Several scholars (Heilman, 1997; Clark et al., 2003) argued that cultural factors and expectations, especially gender stereotypes are important for explaining labour market patterns in relation to occupational sex segregation and inequality. The participants followed this line of argument and the majority had an understanding that there are cultural expectations in relation to gender roles and stereotypes in Norwegian society. The majority of participants emphasised how this is strong, surprisingly strong, and described how there are barriers in the labour
market because of powerful stereotypes regarding what is seen appropriate for women and men to do.

I think one of the barriers women face is related to stereotypes we have; such as ‘women do not want responsibility or a good career’ and I think those stereotypes are taken into consideration in the procedures for hiring, women are being given characteristics and qualities they might not have.

(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

Some of the participants exemplified how challenging the stereotypes and roles is difficult as it is seen as highly abnormal.

Gender roles and expectation is very much present in Norway. In our family, we have made the choice that my husband stays at home, and looks after house and kids, that is his job. I get so many comments from other women, such as ‘you are so lucky, your husband is amazing, I saw him take the clothes out for drying’. That’s what he is supposed to do, he is at home, and they know that.

(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

The mature participants (above 55 years old) described, as earlier discussed, how cultural expectations influenced their choice of education. Several emphasised that when they decided on their career path, the choices were limited as women could only do certain things, the two areas emphasised being nursing and teaching.

My choice of education just ‘happened’. There were not that many options for girls, it’s a long time ago, and I grew up in the suburbs. My parents suggested that teaching was a wise choice for me. My sister became a nurse. Those were the choices we had.

(Johanne, politician, level one, age 55–64, three children)

Related to cultural expectations and choice, some of the participants, being a few years younger, demonstrated that to go to university was also an option, but again, certain subjects were more appropriate than others. Consequently, it is found that cultural stereotypes affect women’s education and opportunities and as a result to a degree counteract the idea of equality between the sexes. This is in line with other research (Heilman, 1997; Clark et al., 2003) pointing to cultural factors and gender stereotypes as important factors explaining patterns of occupational sex segregation. Nevertheless, among the younger participants, expectations and gendered stereotypes in terms of education were perceived as less important even though expectations and stereotypes in the labour market and family life were very much identified.
7.5.1 Cultural expectations and the juggling of family and work

Strong gender expectations in relation to family life were emphasised by a great share of the participants as important in Norway. Several of the participants drew a direct link between the lack of equal opportunities and gender roles and expectations related to motherhood being strong.

As long as we do not have an equal society there will always be more responsibilities on you as a woman. This is related to children, older parents, etc. We have to prove much more in so many different settings, we have more roles to fulfil.
(Runa, politician, level one, age 55–64, two children)

I think the idea of ‘supermum’ is something we have to change, both in society, and at a personal level. You should be able to make your own life and take different choices. I commute every week, I have small children, and I work a lot, and have lots of responsibility. I do not let it get to me when people think I’m a bad mother, I know I’m not.
(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Although Ida seemed confident of her own choices, the fact that she experienced others questioning her choices illustrates how expectations to women, especially in relation to family life is strong. The same participant described specific situations where gender roles and the idea of motherhood versus career were questioned.

One older lady approached my young daughter and asked if it was difficult to grow up without a mum present. My husband stays at home – the children have one parent home 24/7! In politics, you have three months summer vacation. When I’m home I’m there for my children. I’m not sure a mother who is at home, depressed because all she does is stay at home is a better mother. Being there all the time isn’t the same as actually knowing your children.
(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Another participant, also a well-known politician, had a similar experience where she was approached while skiing with her children on a Sunday by a lady saying ‘it is nice to see that you spend at least some Sundays with your children’. The fact that you have to justify to society that you are a good mother is a theme that is repeated among the participants. Nevertheless, the women were confident that they are good mothers even though they have careers, but they did find these stereotypes and justification to others difficult. One participant pointed out how society and institutions take it for granted that the child is the responsibility of the woman.
My friends from the university all have MA degrees, we have good jobs, and we have partners that participate in the upbringing of our children. A challenge we often discuss is sick children. When the child gets sick in childcare, they always call the mother, never the father. Even in those cases where the father delivers and picks up the children, maybe even more often than the mother, they call the woman. We do get annoyed about these things; they could call every other time or something.

(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

The fact that the participants experienced strong expectations related to motherhood might also explain why 74 per cent (49) have experienced difficult choices in their careers. Several participants emphasised that in order to challenge expectations, it is important to educate and teach the children.

It is important for mothers to teach your sons how to be good and respectful men. If you teach them to do their share at home, as well as show them how the parents share the responsibilities at home as they both have a career, I think the foundation for them treating women as equals is built.

(Jane, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

We will have to dare to choose differently and unexpectedly, not follow the stereotypes but challenge them! And this is extremely important information to pass on to children, both the boys and the girls.

(Merete, director, level one, 35–44, two children)

Some also argue in a different manner, not aiming to erase gender roles, but to challenge the view and value of them.

We do have strong gender roles in Norway, but I do not see anything wrong with that as long as we can have equality between them, which we do not have at the moment. The fact that there are different roles is not a disadvantage as long as they are seen as equal.

(Eli, politician, level two, age 45–54, two children)

7.5.2 Gender stereotypes and expectations in the workplace

Cultural expectations from society feed into other areas as well. Turning the focus to the labour market, Cockburn (1991) described how both institutional obstacles as well as cultural obstacles might affect equality. Both these forms are found in the occupational groups and the importance of cultural obstacles in terms of interaction and expectations are recognised as important reasons why women do not have equality in the workplace. Acker (2006b: 447) argued that women managers and professionals often face gendered contradictions when they attempt to use organisational power in actions similar to those
of men, which can result in women risking the label of ‘witches’ or ‘bitches’. This is also visible from participants’ stories emphasising differences in expectations as to what women should do and how they should behave. The idea of different expectations for women and men in the workplace was accentuated as problematic. Some explained how it was difficult when their behaviour did not ‘match’ what was expected and how qualities seen as positive for a man were seen as negative for a woman. Some insight is found in the following quotations.

There are these expectations and ideas how you as a woman should behave and those ideas are different from the expectations to men. Actions are interpreted different if they are done by a woman and a man, women have a handicap, they have to prove that they are good enough. Once you have proven that you are good enough a few times it gets better.
(Inga, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

I’ve experienced interesting things when there is an evaluation of the management at my workplace. I get feedback on being too rough around the edges and not good on communication and inclusion. I am 100 per cent sure that if I was a man I would have a better score. Even my boss tells me I am the one with the most focus on communication and inclusion on the team, yet all the men get a higher score. The expectations of me as a woman are different. I can’t behave as a man; the qualities are not appreciated for my style.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

There are different expectations, it is expected that we should be considerate and thoughtful. We are supposed to make it pleasant. I have to admit that I do not meet those expectations. The expectations are also different from the style of other women leaders I know.
(Aase, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

This is in line with the idea of behavioural double binds as described by Oakley (2000: 324) as a ‘behavioural norm that creates a situation where a person cannot win no matter what she does, typically double-bind for women in leadership positions is that they must be tough and authoritarian (like men) to be taken seriously, but they will be perceived as ‘bitches’ if they act too aggressively’.

A politician from level one illustrated how cultural expectations affect women’s choices as well as how stereotypes within the organisation affect women’s actual opportunities and the chances and positions they are given;

Women are met with some pre-judgements; people expect you to know a bit less! I see this in the different committees; women are expected to know things
related to children and schools, but nothing about the economy and financial issues. It is this idea that if there is a need for someone to work with ‘heavy financial issues’ all the political parties send a man. I think both society and women underestimate themselves, while men overestimate themselves. We do not believe in ourselves enough when it comes to certain areas and men do not support or believe in us either.
(Johanne, politician, level one, age 55–64, three children)

Johanne’s story is important and corresponds with recent findings from Seierstad and Healy (forthcoming) who argued that such rationalisations in effect ‘blame the women’ and form part of Collinson et al.’s (1990) vicious circles of reproduction. The different structures faced by men and women are essentially built around the male norm with women always the other, whose promotion of self is differently and negatively interpreted. In addition, the quote from Johanna relates to similar findings from Acker (2006) who described how ‘gender tracks’ might exist within organisations also related to expectations and gender stereotypes. This is also recognised by participants in all the occupational groups and corresponds with the findings from Chapter Six where there were clear tendencies for men and women to be employed in different areas within the occupational groups. Several of the participants, especially directors, explained how this might be related to the fact that men are better at selling themselves, they are more strategic and make their job seen, while women have a tendency to be more invisible, more shy and do not ‘brag’ about their own work as this is not perceived as feminine. It was emphasised how women need to challenge these stereotypes and be better at taking control over their own lives and their own careers. In addition, several of the participants pointed to the importance of stereotypes and expectations related to power and how this is perceived differently for women and men.

I think it is still the situation that power and a good career is a lot sexier in a man than in a woman.
(Kirsten, director, level two, age 45–54, two children)

The importance of having positional power and how this power was seen as sexy in a man, but un-sexy and threatening in a woman was also described by several of the participants.

7.5.3 Roles and expectations: Femininity versus feminism
Expectations of femininity and feminine behaviour were described by several of the participants. In particular, they described how women not only have to behave in certain ways, but also look a specific way. Nevertheless, there were variations between the
occupational groups, where expectations related to looks and femininity were seen as more important by the politicians and directors than by the academics.

There are stereotypes as to what men and women should do and also what they should look like. Formally, it is going in the right direction, but when it comes to body and looks I think we have taken a lot of steps back. The pressures on women related to looks have become more and more apparent. It is more important what you look like than what you say and do. I can feel it, I am 54, and I feel bad looking in the mirror, do I really have to punish my friends and colleagues by going around looking like this. It affects me, the pressure on how I should look.

(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)

We face so many expectations now, how your home should look, your family life should be, and what you should look like. I am 45 and I am self-conscious when I see magazines telling me how I should look, and what I should do to look younger. The gender roles and expectations are so important, and now, to look good, fresh, and young is what is ‘expected’ of women, it is a sign of success. I would say that the fashion magazines have damaged equality, there is even more focus on appearance, that is almost ‘women unfriendly’.

(Mina, director, level three, age 45–54, 2 children)

Oakley (2000: 325) illustrated how the balance of femininity and expectations have been problematic for women in senior positions. As argued by Oakley (2000: 325), they are expectations and challenges ‘like speaking assertively, but not too assertively, dressing like a woman, but not too feminine’. Several of the participants also described how it is expected that women should be feminine, but not a feminist.

There is an expectation that women should be womanly. That means that women shall be feminine, and that means not being a feminist. There are a lot of expectations on how a woman should behave in the workplace, and they should not be too strong. It is problematic if the woman is too strong; stronger than men in the workplace is problematic and if women are stronger in the relationship it might be problematic. To have power is sexy in a man, but men do not really find powerful women sexy.

(Charlotte, politician, level three, age 35–44, three children)

Several participants portrayed how it is not ‘cool’ to call yourself a feminist, especially not among younger women. One of the most senior politicians (from the one of the political parties not having quotas), demonstrated how some of her young colleagues see the idea of feminism and AA, such as quotas, as an insult, old fashioned and outdated. Nevertheless, she considered that ‘their view will change with time and experience’. Skjeie and Teigen (2003) pointed out that the Swedish equality debate has
a stronger discrimination discourse while in Norway this focus has received little attention. Teigen and Wangnerud (2009) also described that ideas in line with radical feminism are more present in the Swedish equality discourse than the Norwegian where ideas of liberal feminism are more prevalent. Some of the participants, self-proclaimed feminists, illustrated this point.

In Sweden it is accepted to call yourself a feminist, in Norway it is not. We never manage to make the rhetoric and the public debate as widely related to equality. The Norwegian debate is narrow and people do not relate to it, in Sweden it is accepted to call you a feminist. I think it is a problem for equality that we do not have a feminist debate.

(Synne, politician, level one, age 25–34, no children)

Norway has a tradition of strong state feminism and did once have a strong feminist movement, yet feminist groups are now limited and some of the participants argued for the need for a new feminist movement. The argument is that the feminist movement was important for getting women the right to vote and access to the labourforce, but women still do not have equality, equal access to the hierarchical levels, or equal pay. Hence, they call for a new feminist movement and renewed demand for equality.

7.5.4 Role models: The way to challenge expectations and stereotypes?
The importance of role models for challenging and potentially changing gender stereotypes and expectations in society was recognised by all the participants. In Norwegian politics, where the share of women is relatively high, several participants emphasised the importance of women as role models for their political careers. The former Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, was a very popular politician. The fact that Norway got its first woman as Prime Minister in 1981 was important for women, not only women in politics. In 1986 Brundtland appointed 44 per cent women in the cabinet which, despite numerical dominance by men, has been referred to as ‘the women’s cabinet’ and is perceived to have set the standard for governments thereafter. Several participants from academia and the private sector emphasised the importance of Gro Harlem Brundtland for them aiming for the top. Hence, role models are recognised as important by the participants, both related to choices made and for challenging and changing some of the gender stereotypes that exist at all levels.

Role models are essential. When Gro (Harlem Brundtland) became prime minister one of my colleagues, a woman, [in a non political organisation]
brought roses to all the women. It had nothing to do with politics, it had to do with the fact that that day Norway got their first woman as Prime Minister. (Vera, politician, level three, age 55–64, two children)

Gro was never alone; she had other women around her. However, she did something women leaders in other countries didn’t do, she helped other women climb the ladder as well. (Helena, politician, level two, age 55–64, two children)

Some participants even argued that because of the strong role models in politics, the view and understanding of a politician has changed. This is no longer associated with a man, while the image and discourse for academics and directors are still very much those of a man. Similarly viewpoints have been presented by Singh et al. (2001) pointing to the importance of having women in senior positions to have role models in corporations in order to motivate young talented women and to help companies to retain future talent. An important factor related to the gender representation law on BODs is the increase of women as prominent directors. This might, as a consequence, lead to a new group of visible strong women role models in the private sector in Norway, a sector than until now have lacked visible women role models.

7.6 THE WELFARE STATE AND EQUALITY
One objective for this study is to explore whether the generous welfare approach is actually improving equality between the sexes in Norway. Acker (2006a: 93) found that in Sweden many policies exist to facilitate the combination of parenting and paid work. She referred to the fact that parents are guaranteed a certain number of months of paid leave – with the guarantee that they will not lose their job – upon the birth or adoption of a child. In addition, parents of young children may reduce their working hours without fear of retaliation from the employer, parents with children in day-care routinely leave work to pick up their children and most do not work overtime. Acker (2006) referred to the work of the Norwegian scholar Leira (2002) who found that Scandinavian women are still much more likely than men to use family friendly measures. Consequently, their lengthy leaves and reduced working hours contribute to different career patterns for women and men and for that reason the continuance of gender inequalities (Acker, 2006a: 93). The social democratic welfare approach with long parental leave as well as good childcare coverage is acknowledged as important in Scandinavia (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006) This approach has been viewed as a successful way for women to have both the right and opportunities to
work as well as to have families. Bradley (2007:108) argued that ‘the Scandinavian solution – the provision of good universal state nursery and pre-school facilities seemed the best policy option’. Brandth and Kvande (2002: 186) revealed how the Norwegian welfare approach has multiple goals and argued that ‘beyond the intention of contributing to the welfare of young children, another aim has been to achieve gender equality by strengthening the ties of men to the family and the ties of women to working life’.

Nevertheless, Norway’s welfare approach in relation to women in the labour market is complicated. How it affects cultural expectations of men and women as well as creates and maintains gender roles and thereby affects equality and vertical sex segregation is more of a puzzle. The following sections will discuss how the different strategies – childcare, parental leave and cash-for-care – are viewed by the participants in relation to equality and gender expectations at different levels of society.

### 7.6.1 Parental support

All the participants believed that childcare is crucial for women in order for them to be able to choose both family and a career. This is also supported by the relatively high fertility (see Appendix 16) and economic activity rate in Norway. Yet, even though all the participants emphasised the importance of childcare there are different arguments in use. Some insights are found in the following quotations.

*Childcare is absolutely necessary. We have both our children there, and if we didn’t have that option, I think it would have been me who would have to prioritise them and not my career.*

(Frida, academic, level one, age 25–35, 2 children)

*It is alpha omega. Women take the largest share of domestic duties, which means that when women get children this falls into the category ‘their responsibility’. It is crucial with childcare coverage to get the women to continue work.*

(Grete, academic, level three, age 45–54, one child)

*Childcare is very important. Women feel that it is their responsibility for the children to be happy. Childcare means that you can work while at the same time you know your child is happy and in good hands.*

(Lise, politician, level one, age 55–64, two children)
It is apparent how the above participants view childcare as important as children are seen as women’s responsibility, while the next quotations focus more on the importance of childcare in terms of utility.

Childcare is important. In addition it is necessary to have a strategy of where to live. Minimum commuting time is my strategy. It has to be the shortest distance from childcare, schools and work. You can’t have a career and family if you are spending half your day in a car.
(Lisbeth, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

For me, childcare has been extremely important, because it is socially accepted to work and have a career and children. My mother used to say ‘poor Hans, Mina works so much’, not ‘poor Mina, Mina works a lot’. Childcare makes it expected as well as accepted for women to have a good career as well. But, you still get old fashioned comments from people disapproving.
(Mina, director, level three, age 45–54, 2 children)

Childcare is crucial. You just have to compare Norway to other countries, we have a high share of women in the labour market, high fertility rate in international comparison, this is much because of strategies such as childcare.
(Synne, politician, level one, age 25–34, no children)

A comparative study by Knudsen and Wærness (2001) considered attitudes to mothers’ employment in three countries, Sweden, Norway and Britain. In fact, they found that women in Norway were more positive than men about mothers’ employment, and that the younger, the better-educated and the less religious members of society are the most positive about mothers’ employment in all three countries. As for the between country variations, it was found that the Swedes are the most positive and the Norwegians the most negative. Crompton and Lyonette’s (2005) study supports Knudsen and Wærness (2001) in finding that there are large differences in age and education in Norwegian attitudes to women’s employment due to rapid changes in women’s employment and family policy. Both these studies recognised within country differences not only between country differences. Thus, the highly educated participants in this thesis were all positive towards employment, including for women with young children, but it cannot be assumed that the views of this highly educated group of women will be the view of Norwegian society generally.

Even though in agreement with the importance of childcare, the following participant, on the other hand, has an interesting, but slightly different approach, arguing that it is important to have childcare in order to get highly educated career women to still choose to have children.
It is important to have childcare in order to have children. In Norwegian society, there are so many highly educated women, so if Norwegian society wants children, they will have to provide childcare facilities. I do not think childcare is important for women’s careers, I think childcare is important in order for women to have children.
(Astrid, politician, level three, age 45–54, two children)

The fact that Norway has generous parental leave (44 or 54 weeks) is also emphasised as important by the majority of the participants. How this might affect equality and occupational sex segregation is also discussed, yet experienced as more complex. The majority of participants engaged in the debate about parental leave and who should take it, yet there were different and opposite viewpoints.

The fact that women experience long parental leave as a benefit is important. They get a proper break from the labour market to spend with their child. I think this is one of the reasons women prioritise having children, this is why we have a higher birth rate than other countries.
(Charlotte, politician, level three, age 35–44, three children)

Several participants described how long parental leave is good because it is accepted that women will take time off, and they have the opinion that, if parental leave was shorter the choice of going back to work would be more difficult.

Parental leave is long in Norway, that’s good, it means it is OK to take time off, and it is expected that you go back to work after it. If you only have three months off, I think a lot of women would quite their jobs. I was shocked how nervous I was when I got back from my parental leave; I was afraid I had been gone too long, but when I got back it was OK, it was like I never left. Even so, if you had to start from scratch, applying for jobs again I think the barrier would be huge.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

Nevertheless, there are other reasons why some participants support dividing the parental leave more, and that is to counteract discrimination of young women in the labour market because of the possibility of them having children.

With a year or more away from the labour market it is obvious that women will be the losers, and it is also not attractive to hire a woman of fertile age. If the parental leave were any longer it has to be earmarked for men, if not there is too much risk in hiring a young woman. A 28 year old woman is a lot less attractive than a 28 year old man in the labour market.
(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)
There has been a national political debate in Norway about dividing the parental leave more between the parents, and some have even suggested the Icelandic approach with dividing parental leave into three parts, one for the mother, one for the father, and one to decide for themselves. The current approach is 10 weeks earmarked for the father. The participants have mixed views on dividing parental leave more. Interestingly, for several of them the problem is not the father being more involved, but the fact that the state would then control the domestic sphere. Even though Norwegian parental leave is generous, several participants think it should be longer with more time earmarked for the father without taking time away from the mother. The majority of parental leave can be taken up by either the mother or the father. Some participants explained that in their private lives they have divided the parental leave relatively equally. The importance of men also participating when the children are young was highlighted by several participants.

My husband and I share the domestic duties between us. I think one reason why we manage to share and have an equal situation in our domestic life is that we shared the parental leave. If men are supposed to participate more at home they have to take a large share of the parental leave. If not, the shift will be too big from having an old fashioned housewife to being the working-man making dinner, washing clothes and doing half of the domestic duties. When I was home, I really became the ‘proper’ housewife – making dinner, bread, the whole package – but that changed overnight when it was my husband’s turn. That was good to experience; we did have very traditional gender roles when I was home, but when that completely changed with him at home it worked for both as well.

(Frida, academic, level 1, age 25–35, 2 children)

Frida also described how the Norwegian welfare system allows for the possibility of extra time off/shorter working days in order to have ‘breastfeeding breaks’ if going back to work while still breastfeeding. This again she argued, can make it easier for women to choose to share the parental leave with their partner. Similar points are made by authors such as Bradley (2007: 134) who emphasised that the paternity leave in Scandinavia is a good idea as this might help to counteract the traditional gendering of household duties.

A study by Brandth and Kvande (2001) found that the vast majority of Norwegian fathers use the compulsory paternity leave, yet the uptake by the father for the flexible parental leave is considerably lower. This was also found by Ellingsæter and Leira
(2006) who pointed to differences between Nordic countries with Norway lagging behind Iceland and Sweden.

Table 7.1 Fathers’ uptake (per cent) of total parental leave in Nordic countries 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Finland</th>
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(Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006: 23)

Brandth and Kvande (2002: 192-193) established how there are also class differences between fathers in terms of leave, where they found that ‘twice as many fathers with lower education compared to those with higher education do not use their leave’. This points to the importance of class where it is described how men with little education are the most content with only using the quota while ‘the higher-level functionaries group has the decidedly largest proportion of fathers who use the opportunity to share the leave with the mother’.

The meaning of parental leave was raised by several of the participants and how this is related to ‘daddy leave’ and vacation. Thus some families tend to have their own version of paternity leave which is clearly an aspect that irritated several participants.

I think there are quite a few men (and their partners) that haven’t really understood the concept of daddy leave. The idea is that the father should take care of and look after the child/children as well as the house for at least 4 weeks, but unfortunately, I see at my workplace and among friends that daddy leave is often taken together with the mother’s vacation from the previous year and is used to go to Mauritius or other exotic places. I think there is a lot of misuse of daddy leave. Daddy leave becomes a nice vacation, not dad dealing with the domestic duties. I think equality in the private sphere is easier if the father takes his share of the responsibilities from the start and if both the man and the woman have good jobs, if not women are still taking most of the parental leave and most of the domestic duties, even when she goes back to work.
(Caroline, director, level two, age 35–44, 2 children)

Another potentially problematic factor reported by several of the younger participants was the father’s workplace and employers’ (lack of) willingness to let him take a longer share of the parental leave. Cases where the man’s workplace was not happy with the
man taking a longer share of the parental leave than what is earmarked were described. Brandth and Kvande (2001) found in their study of Norwegian couples that the main reason for men not taking a larger share of the parental leave is in fact the demands of their jobs and income reduction. Nevertheless, several of the participants illustrated how it is now becoming more and more normal and accepted for men to take a longer share of the parental leave, and they are hoping this will eventually change as they believe this will help equality and opportunities including in the labour market.

Another strategy used in the Norwegian welfare approach is that of cash-for-care. Within the feminist literature, this approach has been debated. Bradley (2007: 120) pointed to second wave feminists who wanted wages for housework, while she also illustrated that other feminists reject the idea of paying women to stay at home as this would only perpetuate their exclusion from the public sphere and thus their continued social marginalisation (Bradley, 2007: 120). The latter argument is reported by the majority of the participants who are against the idea of cash-for-care. If a family chooses for one parent to stay at home, this will be the mother, and consequently, she will lag behind in the labour market. Several participants believed that it might work against women’s position in the labour market and hence is a major setback for equality. Similar arguments are presented by Norwegian feminist scholars, and Leira (2006: 42) illustrated how the cash-for-care strategy has by some been described as ‘the state’s gift to the traditional father’.

Even though some justified critiques of the social democratic welfare approach exist, it is obvious that this has influenced the fact that the share of women in the Norwegian labour market is almost that of men and that the fertility rate is also relatively high. In an international setting Norway does have a relatively high fertility rate and the fact that the participants, even in the most senior positions, choose to have children is a clear indicator of the salience of the Norwegian welfare approach. The literature points to women’s different experiences, particularly with respect to their mothering role, but also the protection afforded by the welfare state model (Folbre, 1994; Sainsbury, 1999). Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the participants as well as their personal stories indicates how this study differs from studies from other countries, such as that of Liff and Ward (2001: 32) who found that in British banks the situation is ‘think female manager, think childless superwoman’. This again emphasises the importance of the
social democratic welfare approach in giving women the opportunity to have both a career and family.

7.7 SUMMARY
This chapter investigated women’s experience of equality at different levels of society. In summary, this chapter found that equality in Norway is complex and some patriarchal structures exist at all levels of society, hence feminist theories prove useful for explaining the Norwegian paradox. This chapter established that even though the participants argued that certain patriarchal structures exist in Norway, it was clear that the opportunities for women and the power relationship between the sexes are fluid and changing. Hence, cultural expectations and stereotypes are recognised as important reasons for the lack of equality, as the participants experienced gendered expectations as to how men and women should behave. The fact that there are such strong expectations leads this study to argue that women have to a certain degree, constrained choices.

In addition, this chapter discussed how the participants’ experiences of men’s resistance to economic equality has been a valuable finding in this research, which also emphasises the importance of strong gender stereotypes related to economic power and the male main breadwinner. The analysis of women in senior positions has shown how changing this traditional gender order of economic power might be challenging as the dual earner approach seems more accepted by men if it is skewed in their favour. However the findings reveal that educational power did not challenge the gender order.

Moreover, this chapter established that the welfare approach in Norway, with the social democratic value of an egalitarian society can be seen as a success for getting almost as many women as men into the labour force and at the same time keeping fertility rates high. Nevertheless, this chapter found that there are also clear tendencies for the participants to experience the welfare state as a factor maintaining gender stereotypes, especially related to parenting. The fact that women take up most of the parental leave, and consequently become the main carer, is problematic for women balancing family and career. In particular, it was apparent how discrimination against women of childbearing age may be the price of the social democratic welfare approach in its current form. These findings support Hernes’ (1987) argument that welfare is not a synonym for power.
Consequently, this chapter found how conditions in the labour market are shaped by women’s broader socio-economic context and that patriarchal structures are resilient in the ‘most equal society’.
Chapter Eight

Gendered organisational practices and ‘gender inequality regimes’: Politics, academia and BODs

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described a lack of perceived equality at all levels of society, in particular in the labour market, but with different views and experiences among the participants. Accordingly, this chapter returns to the meso level and provides an in-depth analysis of the organisational setting and aims to enlighten the different gendering practices that operate within the occupational groups. Acker’s (Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a) components of inequality regimes provide the main framework to guide the analysis exploring the pattern of vertical sex segregation and inequality within politics, academia and BODs. Chapter Six identified how gender is an important factor both in terms of ‘bases’ and ‘shape and degree’ of inequality; this chapter investigates further gendered dynamics and practices within the three occupational groups in order to understand the underlying reasons for the findings discussed in Chapter Six. As illustrated by Acker (2006b: 442) ‘feminists have looked at the gendering of organisations and organisational practices to comprehend how inequalities between women and men continue in the face of numerous attempts to erase such inequalities’. Subsequently, this chapter explores the participants’ experiences in order to shed light on the phenomenon of vertical sex segregation and gender inequality regimes in occupational groups where there have been various attempts to erase such inequality in terms of strategies of both liberal and radical natures. In addition to Acker’s (Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a) components of inequality regimes, Collinson’s et al.’s (1990) important theory of the vicious circles of job segregation has influenced the investigation of gendered practices within organisations. Even though, as emphasised earlier, this thesis is not a case study of organisations, both Acker’s (1990, 2006a, 2006b) and Collinson et al.’s (1990) theories provide valuable ideas for investigating gendered practices and gender inequality regimes in three distinct but important occupational groups. In addition, the analysis will be supported by other feminist theories.
8.2 GENDERING PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS

Acker (2006b: 447) took the viewpoint that ‘gender and race are important in determining power differences within organisational class levels. For example, managers are not always equal. In some organisations, women managers work quietly to do the organisational housekeeping, to keep things running, while men managers rise to heroic heights to solve spectacular problems’. Similar patterns are recognised by participants in this study who perceived that there are differences between what women and men do in the workplace. They illustrated how women tend to do the invisible tasks in the organisation which are important for its functioning, but often are not recognised or are not valuable for climbing the ladder. Academics illustrated the differently valued and competing nature of tasks in academic work.

I’m sure that if you do a systematic analysis you will see that women are not positioning themselves. In addition, they also do a lot of ‘invisible work’ such as buying cakes, organizing lunches, and different admin tasks. They do more of those things that make the workplace run smoothly but do not really count for getting positions.
(Una, academic, level three, age 45–54, no children)

Women spend time on the community, making sure things run efficiently. Men do not really care about that, they sacrifice the society for their own career.
(Wenche, academic, level three, age 55–64, three children)

In particular it was apparent that the academics saw this imbalance as important for inequality in the workplace. Several factors were described. It was emphasised how students tend to take up more of their time as students seem to be less concerned about contacting women members of staff. In addition, some of the women described how being on different committees is time-consuming, but the committees need women and there are few women at the highest levels as discussed in Chapter Six. Consequently, some women have to be on several committees to fulfil the goal of representation of both sexes. Since academia is an occupation where you are judged by what you produce, the negative consequence of spending time on duties that do not count for climbing the hierarchical ladder is high. Accordingly, several found the evaluation system in academia unfair as they see it as important for good academics to spend time on students and doing administrative tasks in addition to research. Therefore, as men spend more time on their own research and outputs they produce more, which is
beneficial for their career, but might contribute less to the academic institution as a whole.

Turning to directors, at the first Female Future network event I participated at in 2006 I was talking to a woman in her late 30s. She held a senior position and was a director. She explained that her experience in the workplace is that she (as a woman) is always thinking of the best for the company, not necessarily the best for her career. She had the feeling that men are more strategic and dare to be more openly strategic regarding their own careers than women, who to a greater extent think of the organisation and are loyal to it. I found this valuable and asked all the participants what they thought of this observation. The vast majority of the participants in all occupational groups agreed that this was something they could relate to. Yet, there were differences between the occupational groups. For the politicians, there was widespread support for the statement.

I think men and women are politicians for different reasons. Some are interested in making a career; some are interested in making a difference. I think women are more motivated by the idea of making a difference, men making a career. Even so, of course, there are exceptions in both groups.
(Runa, politician, level one, age 55–64, two children)

I very much agree! Women do feel the responsibility and commitment for the organisation, they are more loyal. When I delegate tasks I always give the most important ones to women, they do it, and they do it well. It is obvious that women take on responsibilities that do not give them credit.
(Charlotte, politician, level three, age 35–44, three children)

Even though the majority of academics also agreed with the statement, several emphasised the nature of academia and how also women academic have to be self-centred as this is an occupation where you are judged by your own merit in terms of publications. Nevertheless, as already established, the academics felt women academics do more of the invisible tasks than their male counterparts.

Among the directors, the importance of being strategic and taking control over their own careers was seen as extremely important and several explained how they have changed their behaviour accordingly.

I think it is the case; unfortunately, the ‘good girl syndrome’ exists. I used to be like that (before I went on a women’s course FF); I thought they (male managers) would see how talented I was... Now I’m more active and strategic. It
was when I understood that nobody would see me if I was quiet that I started to
demand things and take up space. I am more selfish now. I think it is important
to dare to say that you want power. Power is often a negatively associated word,
especially among and for women, but that is what we want; to have influence
and make decisions. We have to admit that and make it clear; otherwise we will
never get it.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

I agree with the statement, women tend to be more ideological, it is expected of
us. However, personally I do not recognise myself in this now, I have my own
drive. I ask for things, and I guess it is not very feminine to ask for things. I have
studied maths and science and worked in highly male dominated areas; I think I
have turned into ‘a man’ in my head, but not otherwise. I do not think this is a
 genetic issue, I think it is the environment.
(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

Based on experiences of being overlooked and marginalised, several directors changed
their behaviour accordingly. This director summarises her career ‘slogan’ or rule in this
way.

Nice girls do not ask for anything, and do not get anything.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

8.3 ORGANISING PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE INEQUALITY
Organisations vary in structure and design, ranging from hierarchical bureaucratic to
flexible teamwork based organisations. In addition, the practices and processes adopted
to reach specific goals within organisations vary. Acker (2006b) described how gender
as well as class and racial inequalities can be produced and reproduced within
organisational practices and procedures. This section uncovers several areas of
organisational practices in order to reveal the importance of sex in experiences at the
occupational group level.

8.3.1 Organising the general requirements of work
Acker (2006b: 448) pointed out that work is generally organised on the image of a white
man who has no responsibilities for children and family and is totally dedicated to his
job. Therefore, the man can adapt to the needs of the organisation. Flexibility from the
employee is one important area of flexibility. Another important area of flexibility is
flexibility from the employer in terms of flexible work arrangement. This can include
how the workplace can accommodate and allow for flexibility in terms of working times
and where to work. As women tend to have more obligations outside of work than men
do, the lack of flexibility, both individual and from the employer might affect women more so than men. Consequently, flexibility, or lack of it can be important for maintaining organisational gender inequalities. It has been argued (Acker, 2006b) that flexible work arrangement is often more of an option for senior positions than for lower levels, and therefore the fact that all the participants in this study are employed in senior positions means that these women might be privileged and have greater flexibility at work than women at lower levels. In addition, the nature of the occupational groups will affect the procedures for flexible work arrangements regardless of levels.

The participants recognised the importance of flexibility, both from employees and employers. In terms of individual flexibility it is worth remembering that 83 per cent (55) of the participants have children and 79 per cent (52) are either married or cohabiting as described in Chapter Five. Interestingly, as discussed, approximately 73 per cent (48) described the occasional difficulty of balancing work and private life. In fact, by having more than one area of responsibility, they expressed feeling guilty – guilty for not being good enough at work, not being good enough at home, and guilty for not prioritising friends and hobbies as much as they wished. Some of the younger women also described how they have postponed having children in order to climb the ladder before having a family as they are aware of potential difficulties with leaving the labour market for maternity leave. In terms of flexible work arrangements and the demand for employee flexibility there were variations between the occupational groups.

8.3.1.1 Politics
Some of the participants took the position that the long summer holiday from Parliament provides a degree of flexibility from the employer as the long vacation increases the option of balancing work and family life. In addition, some politicians described how having a playroom in Parliament increases the option to balance family and work when circumstances dictate as children can visit. Others on the other hand felt that they had very little flexibility as politicians often have to be at the Parliament physically and consequently the option of working from home is limited. In addition, many politicians are not from Oslo and commute weekly meaning that they spend a lot of time away from home. Besides, it was described how informal socialising during the week, working late and meetings after normal working hours are common and a necessary part of the job indicating the need for employee flexibility. As a result, several participants with young children illustrated how this type of work is, for them,
problematic. Therefore, they at times felt left out as they cannot participate to the same
degree due to family obligations. The politicians argued that this is a bigger problem for
women with children than men with children due to different expectations and
responsibilities in terms of family life. Hence, in politics, the job demands employee
flexibility, but it is more questionable if politicians are able to have flexible work
arrangements to adapt to work and domestic responsibilities.

8.3.1.2 Academia
Academics felt that academia provides relatively high levels of flexibility in terms of
work arrangement and that there are few demands for employee flexibility, which the
academics see as an advantage of the job. Nevertheless, in this study academia is the
occupational group with the lowest average number of children as was discussed in
Chapter Six. This indicates that having flexible work arrangements might not be the
only factor that encourages women to choose to have children as well as a career.
Academic work demands a long education and this was mentioned by some of
participants as an explanation for their not having more than one or two children, rather
than lack of flexibility once in the job. This is of course quite ironic – the occupational
group with the most flexible work arrangements provides little space for women to
actually have children.

8.3.1.3 BODs
Directors regarded flexible work arrangements as important. Many of the women
employed in the private sector perceived their workplace as relatively good in terms of
providing options for flexible work arrangements.

My boss has emphasised that we do not register when we get in anymore. You
can take some mornings off and take the kids out for breakfast if you want; you
just work a bit longer in the evening. When you have the option of flexible
working hours, with the possibility of sometimes working from home, I do not
think you work any less, rather the opposite, you just adapt the work to your
family situation and vice versa.
(Jane, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

Flexibility is important, both related to place and working hours. The fact that it
should be possible to combine a senior position with family is an important
signal. At my work we are aiming to have the meetings in the middle of the day
and not very late. It should be possible to combine family life with a good
career, and with small adjustments, such as the possibility of flexi time and
scheduled meeting times, you send out the right signal.
(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)
In terms of expected flexibility from employees, the participants argued that this could at times be difficult. A potentially problematic issue mentioned by some directors is that BODs meetings are often in the evenings. Traditionally, as pointed out by Acker (2006b) men had few responsibilities for children, which made it easy for companies to have meetings after normal working hours or to make meetings more spontaneous. Several participants argued that with more women entering the higher managerial positions this tradition must be changed. Some directors described how they had been excluded from important decisions due to conversations being taken outside of the meeting room. The participants did not perceive this as changing, unless they took action themselves.

I’ve started taking initiatives for planning important meetings. I send out an email with the times that suit me, I do it so long in advance that nobody else has thought of it. People then come back to me, and I set the times that suit the majority. I do not think the others are even aware that I am controlling it, but I have learned the hard way that I can’t just wait, and I can’t just make the meeting after work, I do have other commitments.
(Lisbeth, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

Being strategic was emphasised as important for succeeding in organisations and in order to counteract the potential disadvantage of having less personal flexibility than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, the problem with decisions being taken outside normal working hours, over drinks and dinner etc. was recognised by several participants as challenging for women; this was particularly the case for women in politics and BODs who demand more employee flexibility than academia.

8.3.2 Recruitment and hiring

In an important contribution to the literature on occupational sex segregation, Collinson et al. (1990: 192) argued that even though equality policies had been important since the 1970s, there were still a substantial number of employers, many of whom actually publicly subscribed to equal opportunities, that were still ‘managing to discriminate’ on the grounds of sex through a variety of recruitment practices. By exploring the asymmetric power relations in the labour market by looking at recruitment and forms of control and resistance they showed the existence of sex discrimination in selection methods and how discrimination based on sex can be reproduced, rationalised and resisted by those in power. Bradley and Healy (2008) built on the work of Collinson et
al. (1990) and argued for also including promotion in the analysis. Informed by Acker’s
(2006a) concern with the organising processes that produce inequality, and Collinson et
al.’s (1990) vicious circles of job segregation, this study sought to understand
politicians’, academics’ and directors’ perceptions of practices for hiring and promotion.
It is apparent that by using the different components of Acker’s (2006b) and Collinson
et al.’s (1990) work to investigate politics, academia and BODs, participants’ stories
revealed that also in Norway there are vicious circles of job segregation and that
recruitment, selection, and promotion procedures are experienced as unfair within all
the occupational groups, even though having strong commitment to equality. Acker
(2006b) argued that while hiring and recruitment are processes of finding the worker
most suited for a particular position, images of appropriate gendered and racialised
bodies influence perceptions and consequently, who to hire. Expectations and
stereotypes were identified as attributes of inequality regimes in Chapter Seven. It is
therefore essential to investigate further how expectations and stereotypes affect
important organisational practices such as hiring. The participants were asked about
hiring practices. While no participants reported that hiring procedures favoured women
a number stated that they favoured men.

In all the occupational groups, women, as discussed earlier, had the feeling that they
have to work harder to get respect and recognition for their work, which correlates with
the viewpoint that men have an easier time climbing the hierarchical ladder and getting
promoted. This was especially the case in academia where women felt that their
research areas were undervalued and regarded as having less quality. Women also
emphasised how some of the announcements for positions were written with someone in
mind, suggesting that they were already excluded before the selection process even
started. The structures faced by men and women are essentially built around the male
norm with women always being the other, whose selling of self will always be
interpreted as other, regardless of competence level. This is also in line with findings
from other studies, such as Bradley and Healy (2008) who argued that the minority
group (women with an ethnic minority background in the UK) felt a sense of having to
be better to be good enough. Stereotypes and expectations have been highlighted in the
literature as significant for women’s experiences of discrimination and unequal
opportunities at the workplace (Kanter, 1977; Heilman, 1997).
Experience of stereotyping both within and outside of the three occupational groups can be seen as a key obstacle for hierarchical achievements as some patriarchal structures are still embedded in the procedures. In particular, this was evident in relation to expectations about women’s family obligations. When it comes to hiring women, especially women of childbearing age, the participants argued that discrimination often occurs.

When it comes to procedures for hiring questions are asked related to pregnancy, maternity leave, and family life. There is a lot of discrimination against women in their late 20s and 30s in the procedure for hiring. I have several friends who have experienced this.

(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Several examples of discrimination were given related to women’s reproductive capacity. It was found how women have combined work and parenting leading them to experience the double bind of the welfare system. Thus the enabling macro context clashes with the occupational group level where organising processes with respect to hiring can lead to the women’s disadvantage. This reminds those who perceive Norway and Scandinavian countries as close to a gender utopia, that women are still judged according to their potential reproductive capacity. One of the participants, a director at level two, explained how she was asked during an interview if her husband supported her application, implicitly asking if she would have to stay home with sick children etc.

As described by several of the participants, the risk of hiring a young woman was perceived higher than that of hiring a young man as she will most likely have at least one child and be away from the labour market for close to a year because the maternity leave is mostly taken by the woman. It is apparent that a great number of examples of discrimination were related to women’s reproductive capacity, which resonates with the earlier cited concerns about unintended gendered costs of welfare provision discussed in Chapter Seven. Consequently, even though the Norwegian welfare approach is seen as beneficial for women, it might in certain areas and procedures within the labour market work against women. Although discrimination based on pregnancy or questions related to pregnancy are illegal, the participants had the opinion that unequal treatment exists as there are different expectations related to work-life balance. This problematic relation between the generous parental leave, usually taken by the woman, and unequal treatment in the labour market is one of the puzzles in Norway (see also Seierstad and Healy forthcoming).
Procedures for hiring is therefore an area the participants viewed as potentially unequal, where discrimination occurs, of both a direct and indirect nature (Collinson et al., 1990). It was apparent how recruitment processes vary considerably between politics, academia and BODs. Both politics and BODs operate with a nomination procedure. Consequently, even though someone can show an interest and ask to be nominated, there are other mechanisms, which mean that individuals are to a greater extent relying on others to value their work and see their potential in order to be nominated. Neither politics or BODs operate with any requirement for formal qualifications, but directors do generally have high levels of formal qualifications, which is also apparent among the directors in this study. Both directors and politicians told stories of how in the nomination process, which was often controlled by men, women met obstacles while men did not. For politicians, most political parties operate with gender quotas, which have put a focus on women and diversity. Yet, ‘we have to find a woman now’ attitudes were for some women experienced as problematic. Others were less concerned as they saw women’s competence as crucial and quotas as a means. For directors, it is obvious that the selection processes have changed after the introduction of the gender representation law. Some of the women illustrated how men in nomination committees initially saw the task of finding competent women as difficult. One reason for this was that they did not think women were interested in ‘those kinds of jobs’. The stereotype of women not wanting to get to the top was clearly present. One director explained how an acquaintance of hers, a head of a nomination committee, told her how he was struggling so much to find women with the right competence and experience for BODs that wanted the role as a director. The woman said ‘what about me!’. The man looked surprised at her and said it hadn’t occurred to him that she would be interested. This director is a prominent director, and is both more experienced and better qualified than most men her age. Still, her ‘friend’ did not think of her as he struggled to find suitable women for the job. It was apparent how he automatically saw a director in the image of a man and his pool of candidates were therefore narrow. Similar stories were told from academia where several women actually said that they experience that people view a researcher as a man and as a woman, no matter how good you are, you have the handicap of not being a man and automatically not fitting into the expectations. These findings support the argument by Reskin (2002) that categorisation and ingroups and outgroups relate to gender and workplace practices. Nevertheless, there are differences and in politics, several participants from all occupational groups had the opinion that the image of a
politician is no longer that of a man. After 30 years with a high share of women in politics the gendered image has changed.

Hiring through social networks is also one of the ways in which gender and racial inequalities are maintained in organisations (Acker, 2006b). In fact, there was a general understanding among the participants that there is a need for more open advertising of positions and for selection based on gender and race neutral criteria of competence, rather than membership of old boys (white) networks. Acker (2006b) found that such kinds of changes in hiring practices have contributed to the increasing proportions of white women and people of colour in a variety of occupations. Similarly, AA can dramatically change the gender balance within certain occupational groups within a short period of time. As the old boys network is often argued to exist in many organisations and occupations (Kanter, 1977; Acker, 2006b), the participants were asked to reflect on the importance of networks within the occupational groups. Interestingly, there are significant differences among the occupational groups when it comes to the significance of social networks, including ‘the old boys’ network as well as other elements of hiring decisions.

8.3.2.1 Politics

In politics, the existence of the quota rule (40 or 50 per cent of each sex) applicable in most political parties is probably one of the reasons why women in politics see discrimination in the nomination process (the first step in the entry process for national politics) as less relevant in comparison to other occupational groups. Nevertheless, even with quotas, women in politics argued that there are dynamics favouring men. By implication the nomination, recruitment and selection process is working within an established gender order, illustrated in the following quotation:

Men tend to favour and support other men. Men are good at suggesting and recommending each other, and as a result men get the important positions. They speak the same language and play the same games.
(Rita, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Some of the women also illustrated how they have felt uncomfortable on occasions when men have made a point that they now ‘need’ to find a woman. This is a potential counter effect of using quotas i.e. making women feel that they are there because of their sex, not competence. Nevertheless, the presence of strong women leaders and role
models increases perceptions of fairness among politicians. Politics is an arena where Norwegians are used to seeing strong women, including as leaders of the political parties or as Prime Minister. In politics, social justice and the argument that politicians are there for the people, representing the people, and therefore, diversity is important can hold sway. This is also one of the justifications for using quotas; in order to have fair representation both sexes are needed, plus different age groups, as well as people from different parts of the country. It is accepted and legitimate, and more importantly, expected that there will be a relatively high percentage of women in most political parties. Nevertheless, an important aspect for politicians is that participants pointed to more barriers in municipal and county arenas and in political party groups than in the Parliament and Government. This suggests that gaining entry to politics is more of an issue for women than to move up.

In politics, there is an understanding among participants that male networks do exist, but have lost some of their strength in parliament and government and are weaker than in other areas of society.

Male networks exist everywhere. I also feel that men are better at supporting each other. One of my advisors (woman) said that women are very good at taking the ladder up with them after they have climbed it, not supporting other women. I think it is thought provoking and sad that this is how senior women are seen.
(Mette, politician, level three, age 55–64, two children)

I think we have a problem. The women fighting together for their rights in the 70s have not succeeded in continuing to stand together and support each other.
(Charlotte, politician, level three 35–44, three children)

Some politicians described how they experienced greater difficulty with the old boys network they encounter outside Parliament or Government than inside. This is related to both the private sector, as well as to other areas of political life such as within political parties and at the local level. The majority of politicians argue that the history of strong women in the Parliament and in Government has made the ‘old boys network’ weaker.

8.3.2.2 Academia

For women in academia, the procedure for hiring was seen as potentially unfair by the majority of participants, especially related to the announcement of new positions.
I think related to the announcement of positions, there is a lot of work to be done. I think academia has to make an effort in order to make the announcement suitable for women as well. What I mean is that you can’t have a very specialised announcement; women and men tend to have slightly different focuses and a lot of times it looks like the announcements are written with someone (a man) in mind for the job, hence, women are excluded even before the recruitment process has started.

(Inga, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

The above quotation demonstrates a common view among the participants; how the gender order in universities is reproduced through the manipulation of apparently formal systems to ensure a particular outcome. Several of the participants emphasised how hiring committees have traditionally been male dominated and the pattern of homosocial reproduction (Kanter 1977) seems particularly strong.

There should always be a minimum of one woman in hiring committees, ideally, there should be two. However, that doesn’t happen, there aren’t enough women. There are politics and informal processes everywhere; as long as there is room for men favouring men and their male culture, we will not have equality.

(Jorunn, academic, level one, age 55–64, one child)

Therefore, participants emphasised that there is a need to have women present in hiring committees as this is a way to minimise the risk of men choosing and favouring men. Other studies point to gender bias in procedures for hiring and promotions in academia. Furst (1988) found that the academic evaluation system is not gender neutral with more being expected of women than of men. Acker (2006a) acknowledged that in general the criteria of competence do not automatically translate into gender and race neutral selection decisions as competence involves judgement. Hence, the argument is that the race and gender of both the applicant and the decision-makers can affect that judgement, resulting in the judgement of white males being more competent and more suited for the job than others (women). In academia, stories from the participants support Acker’s (2006b) argument. In fact, the problem that academia values typically male research areas more highly than female is something that several of the participants discussed as they have an understanding that ‘merit’ can be biased. A similar point was made by Simpson et al. (2010: 199) in terms of the understanding of merit, pointing to the fact that ‘issues remain as to who defines merit and how some interests may be privileged over others in the process’.

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In addition, stories from women academics revealed that in academia powerful male networks are still very much alive and academics do not believe that this has changed and improved in recent years. Even though the academics have varied experiences, participants from all three institutions viewed male networks as dominant and damaging for the situation of women.

Male networks very much exist including in academia. At my previous faculty, where I was employed for 15 years, there was a group of men in senior positions’ that held meetings, discussed, and decided. I was never invited.
(Ingå, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

It is a problem. I am very lonely, and I think a lot of women leaders have the same feeling. There is an old boys network, but it is not for me. I’ve tried, but I can’t get in. There are not enough women to make a similar women’s club, and also I do not think the women want to. In the 70s women wanted to, but now I think women are rather trying to get into the men’s; they have all the power and make the decisions; all the informal politics happens there.
(Hanna, academic, level three, age 55–64, two children)

Yes it exists. There have been typical male constellations at all the workplaces I’ve been at. And for me, the entire job I do is in order to restructure and reorganise in order to destroy the traditional old boys network in academia. I think it is a wonderful feeling to see that the old leaders, the ‘Gods’ are now getting older. They have taken so much space and attention away from me and other women, and we have spent so much time trying to make it in ‘their world’. I am happy to take the power away from them. Some of them are quite aggressive when they realise they no longer are in command or have all the control. It is important for me to destroy and change these networks, when it is done I think it will be easier to be a woman academic at this university.
(Una, academic, level three, age 45–54, no children)

Clearly, in the academic setting, the importance of male networks and how these control positions and power are seen by the participants as a barrier for women to climb the ladder. These quotations also echo with Husu’s (2000) study who noted that in Finnish academia, women academics encounter the glass ceiling and subtle forms of gender discrimination including the practice of filling professorships by invitation rather than by open competition. The quotations resonate with Bagilhole and Goode (2001) who identified in British academia both how male networks and gendered practices exist, thereby questioning the idea of individual merit. In fact, they argued that women experience a different reality as ‘women are in fact different, due to men’s advantage through the thriving patriarchal system and the myth of individualism promoted through their cultural hegemony’ (Bagilhole and Goode, 2001: 175). Indeed, Bagilhole and
Goode (2001: 176) contend that in British academia ‘this ‘standard’ model is not gender neutral, but a ‘male’ model which is individualistic and involves self-promotion’. It is apparent how stories from Norwegian academics correspond with findings from other countries which indicates how academia still has patriarchal structures.

8.3.2.3 BODs
The tendency of men to favour and choose other men over women is recognised by the directors as a disadvantage and therefore a barrier for women in the private sector.

I see a tendency that people in the position of hiring are reproducing themselves. That it is easier for men to make it, especially in the private sector is without doubt. I think this is discrimination, if it is mindful or not doesn’t matter, it is discrimination.
(Karin, director, level two, age 45–54, three children)

One participant, the only woman director of the executive board consisting of all the heads of various departments, described how she did not have the ‘director’ title, but the ‘head of’ title instead, which she considered lower in terms of hierarchy and status. Male counterparts, with similar positions, salary and responsibilities, had more prestigious titles, hence the discourse in terms of titles used was perceived as gendered.
The participant was certain this had to do with the fact that she is a woman and her position is devalued as she is not ‘one of the boys’. Consequently, as the procedure for hiring and promotions is experienced as potentially unequal this is an important area in which to challenge gender inequality regimes. Among the directors, the importance of powerful male networks was emphasised as having been extremely important in hiring procedures, especially related to BODs. The procedures for BODs are more informal than hiring for other jobs and the nomination committees have until now been highly male dominated.

I have a feeling you have to know someone in the nomination committee in order to get nominated. I would like to be on more boards, but it is not that easy, you have to know the ones controlling the processes. I haven’t been very active, I have flagged that I am interested, and I have the right experience and competence. I think it is in these situations the male networks are controlling; they choose the ones they know.
(Lisbeth, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

There is an old boys network, and I meet them in a professional setting all the time. I guess we are all like that; when we want to have fun and for people to trust, we choose people similar to ourselves. In the old boys network there are a
lot of similar men; same social background, same sexuality, education and work experience. I’m sure they have a nice time, because they do choose each other, it stays within their network. They are nice people, but they exist, and it makes it difficult to get in if you do not fit their criteria.
(Beth, director, level three, age 45–54, three children)

Nevertheless, in relation to BODs it is apparent how the new gender representation law has forced a change in procedures for finding directors; at the very least, it has forced hiring committees to increase their pools of candidates by identifying women, which has resulted in a change in nomination procedures and pools of directors. Therefore, it is expected that the pattern and tendencies of homosocial reproduction (Kanter, 1977) will have to change as the companies are obliged by law to have a gender balance of a minimum of 40 per cent of each sex. As identified in Chapter Six, companies have complied with the law and BODs do now have a minimum of 40 per cent of each sex. It is too early to predict how, if at all, this will affect other areas of the private sector. Even though several of the participants believed that the ‘old boys network’ exists, it is argued that it is getting weaker than it used to be.

The old boy’s network exists, but it is changing, and it is going in the right direction. In relation to the quota law, people have different opinions, but on directors it looks like it has some value. Women are becoming more and more visible, and also respected. The old boys network is getting less power, but it will take time. I guess quotas are unfortunate, but are needed. When we do not need quotas anymore, the old boys network will be dead, and we will have equality.
(Camilla, director, level one, age 45–54, no children)

Interestingly, some of the participants considered that the ‘old boys network’ will get weaker as they reckoned it exists parallel to ‘educational or university networks’ (such as from the elite business school NHH in Norway). Hence, some described how the ‘old boys’ network might be replaced with educational institution specific networks and as more women have entered this traditionally male dominated powerful institution in great numbers, the dynamics of powerful networks in the private sector will change as it is argued that women are part of the new powerful educational networks.

Nevertheless, even though there are some differences between the occupational groups, the puzzle emerged that women do not have the same strong network as men, and are not as supportive and helpful in creating an equivalent women’s network. These findings are in line with Kanter’s (1977) study which argued that homosocial
reproduction was problematic as it indirectly disadvantages women due to male networks and homosocial reproduction. Similarly, Heilman (1997: 881) argued that sex discrimination indirectly exists in selection processes ‘when the job in question is male sex-typed (and therefore a perceived lack of fit exists), women with identical credentials as male counterparts have been shown to be judged less qualified, are less likely to be hired and, if they are hired, are compensated less generously’. This is important in terms of more professional networks being introduced in the private sector as a result of the gender representation law and in politics where women’s networks are in place in all but one political party.

8.3.4 Wage setting practices and supervisory relations
Experiences related to differences between women and men in terms of wages and promotion are often similar to those of hiring and promotion. In fact, Heilman (1997: 881) stated that ‘sex bias also has been demonstrated in decisions about pay raises, promotions, employee utilization and training opportunities’. Heilman (1997) further argued that this discriminatory treatment can be traced to two sources: sex bias in performance and sex bias in causal explanations of women’s success. In addition, Acker (2006b: 450) argued that ‘gender and race affect assumptions about skill, responsibility, and a fair wage for job and workers, helping to produce wage differences’. As there is a pay gap in Norway (see Chapter Two), this is an important area for further investigation.

Several participants in this study felt that there are tendencies for men’s work, competence, and efforts to be overrated, and women’s to be undervalued. In addition there was a view that men are better at negotiating salaries. Several of the women emphasised how it is not perceived as a good feminine characteristic to ask for more money, and hence, they do not tend to do it. Acker (2006b) took the position that wage setting is often a bureaucratic organisational process, integrated into the process of creating a hierarchy. Many different wage setting systems exist and many of them produce gender and race differences in pay. According to Acker (2006b: 451) gender-based evaluations may be embedded, even in the most egalitarian-appearing systems.

Wage details and pay gaps were originally not main focuses in this thesis, thus a question on earnings was not raised. Nevertheless, several participants emphasised the importance of pay and how this affects the workplace and equality. As an example, in
politics at the national level, the salary for members of both the Parliament and Government is standardised and not negotiable (The Norwegian Parliament, 2008c). Several politicians described how the fact that they all have the same salary led them to experience the Storting as a relatively equal place to work. In academia, several of the participants explained that they used to have the impression that wages were relatively standardised and hence they did not think that individual negotiations were important. This was until they realised that their salary was considerably lower than some of their male colleagues within the same salary band. In the private sector the gender pay gap is a recognised problem for equality which was also discussed among the participants. In fact, an article published in 2009 by Aftenposten, a well respected newspaper, illustrated that the pay gap between men and women in managerial positions is considerably higher than the average pay gap in Norway (Gimmestad, 2009). Therefore, several directors emphasised the importance of women taking greater control over their own salary by becoming better at negotiation. Quite a few directors stated that the ‘nice girl syndrome’ does not get them anywhere. Some participants suspected that they are making less money than their male counterparts. Hence, narrowing the pay gap is an important factor for improving equality in the private sector. In addition, it was described how bonuses and other benefits are important aspects of pay, especially for the private sector. Some differences between men and women related to bonuses and benefits were also described.

I have experienced, in relation to getting a new company car, that I as a woman was expected to have a cheaper car than my male counterparts. Two of my male colleagues at the same level as me changed their cars, and then when I was about to do the same the CEO asked if this was really necessary. It was expected that I should be happy with a typical ‘city car’, but the men, the breadwinners, should have the big cars. I refused, it was symbolic, at the same level we should have the same rules, and the cars should be equally expensive.

(Asta, director, level one, age 45–54, two children)

The importance of having an equal distribution of economic power within the occupational groups was emphasised by the majority of participants in all the occupational groups as this is a clear, measurable direct link of equality.

8.3.5 Informal interactions while ‘doing the job’
Informal procedures in terms of interactions at the workplace has been described by several authors as potentially gendered. Acker (2006b) pointed out that white men may devalue and exclude white women by not listening to them in meetings, by not inviting
them to join a group going out for a drink after work, or by not seeking their opinions on workplace problems. Kanter (1977) also pointed to the importance of male homosociality at work as a way of keeping women in their place. Bradley (2007: 103) referred to a variety of actions, such as different kinds of male bonding, which continue to facilitate the marginalisation of women colleagues, such as discussion of sports, socialising in pubs and visits with clients to lap-dancing clubs. In addition, Bradley (2007) pointed out how older men in powerful positions mentor young men, helping them to get promoted earlier than women. Having established that the participants did not perceive that there was complete equality at their workplace, a direct question related to experiences of unequal treatment was asked. Several of the participants had experienced being excluded from social settings where important decisions often take place. In particular, some directors described how being the only woman, even if you do your best not to be excluded, you are in fact excluded, such as in the situation described by this director.

We had this management day. First we had an informal meeting, and then we went into the swimming pool. We had fun, and I swam faster than them all! However, then they went into the sauna with their beers to relax. Before dinner the decisions were made, and I wasn’t there.
(Asta, director, level one, age 45–54, two children)

Numerous participants believed that men tend to go out for a drink after work more often and socialise more in an informal setting than women. Some emphasised that it is not that they are directly excluded, but they are not invited either. In relation to informal interaction while doing the job, several of the participants gave examples of how they have experienced feeling devalued and not being listened to. They emphasised that there are some domination techniques in use. Some insight is found in the following quotations:

I have experienced on several occasions comments like ‘you are so cute when you are angry’. I’m quite sure the male chairs of committees in parliament do not get comments like that.
(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)

I was the advisor to the prime ministerial candidate for my political party and I was sitting with him and a candidate of another political party and his male advisor waiting for a TV debate to start. The host of the show comes and shakes hands and introduces himself to the three men, not to me. I am the advisor of a prime ministerial candidate, but was still ignored! I have spoken to the man (host of TV show) at a later occasion where I told him we had met before, and how it
was. The man was shocked, embarrassed and apologised several times, he couldn’t even remember. Hopefully, he will not make that mistake again.  
(Rita, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

We discuss financial problems and management strategies. Men take up a lot of space; they ‘show’ their intelligence and competence. At the same time they hug me. They hug me when I come and hug me when I leave; I’m not used to those mechanisms. I am used to deciding for myself who I shall hug. I am reminded and set back in time, I shall listen and I shall be hugged. The boards I have been on have been highly male dominated, only one or two women. You are allowed to be there if you are their protégé, but you are not allowed to be there if you have an opinion.  
(Una, academic, level three, age 45–54, no children)

As the above quotations demonstrate, there are several processes in the organisational setting that produce inequality. Some participants explained how discrimination and unequal treatment have many forms and can also be related to sexual remarks.  

Yes, we have all kinds of discrimination here; sexual harassment, ignoring, and devaluing due to being a woman.  
(Una, academic, level three, age 45–54, no children)

I have several experiences of unequal treatment here. When we were decorating my office the CEO said that I had to put something in front of the desk so my legs were hidden...  
(Asta, director, level one, age 45–54, two children)

Suppression techniques such as making women invisible, downplaying their efforts and undervaluing their work is, from the participants’ stories, found to still be an important aspect of the labour market. This indicates that there is still a need for changing the culture of discrimination and unequal treatment in Norway.

8.4 THE VISIBILITY OF INEQUALITIES

The visibility of inequality is defined as the degree of awareness of inequalities, which can vary between organisations (Acker, 2006b: 452). She pointed to the fact that lack of awareness can be intentional or unintentional, and used the example that men tend not to see their gender privilege, while whites tend not to see their race privilege; similarly, ruling class members tend not to see their class privileges. Hence, people in dominant groups usually see inequality as something else, not something that exists where they are.
As I only spoke to women, who in most cases represent the minority, findings on this aspect are limited. Nevertheless, stories from the participants revealed some insights into this component. Among academics, there was a clear difference between the understandings of inequality held by women working in departments with a high proportion of women and those where there were few women. While some women working in departments with a relatively high proportion of women had little knowledge that there are few women professors in Norway, women working in departments with a low proportion of women were more aware of the lack of women in academic hierarchies, of gender inequality in the labour market, and in society in general. This is interesting as it indicated that when women belong to gender balanced groups or are in a majority, they seem not to perceive gender inequality as an issue and consequently seem unaware of the potential barriers other women within their occupation face. The argument that those in a position of privilege will not recognise their own privilege nor understand others’ inequalities (Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a) has some resonance among some of the academics in this study.

There are similar findings among the directors. Conversations with women while participating at the FF event revealed some valuable viewpoints. I talked to a couple of women who had their own small companies with their partners, one of them alongside working as a high school teacher. The women asked what my research was about, and I explained that it had to do with vertical sex segregation and women’s experiences and views related to equality and AA. The two women made it clear that they did not really see the point of this type of research as they had never experienced inequality, and it was not something today’s women were interested in at all according to them. AA strategies were also something these women considered to be wrong as they supported ‘merit not quotas’. These women were at a lower level than the participants in this study, none of them with any experience as directors or from senior positions in large organisations. The fact that they had the opinion that inequality does not exist, is outdated and not relevant, is important. These women were not in typical positions for experiencing inequality as they did not have particularly prestigious careers. This again indicates that visibility of inequality is related to experience and knowledge. Women that either do not experience inequality, or do not have friends who have experienced inequality, saw a study of gender, equality and AA as a waste of time, while the participants in this study, women at significantly higher levels, in powerful positions as well as with networks of other powerful women, were more aware that inequalities
might exist in organisations, even in ‘gender equal’ Norway. Related to this finding is the issue presented earlier where some participants raised their concerns in relation to the younger generation having the idea of Norway being equal, including in the workplace and therefore did not care much about this issue.

8.5 THE LEGITIMACY OF INEQUALITIES

The legitimacy of inequalities might differ between organisations. Acker (2006b) argued that while some organisations, such as cooperatives, professional organisations, or voluntary organisations with democratic goals, may find inequality illegitimate and try to minimise it, in other organisations, such as rigid bureaucracies, inequalities are highly legitimate. In addition, the legitimacy of inequality is also influenced by political and economic conditions (Acker, 2006b: 453). As described in Chapter Two, Norway is perceived to be a relatively equal country, at the top of the international ranking. There are also initiatives to address inequality in the labour market both at national and organisational levels. Of the occupational groups in this study, clearly politics is the occupation where inequality has the lowest legitimacy. In most political parties there is a tradition of focusing on equality with the aim of achieving greater gender balance. In addition, politicians have introduced the use of radical strategies in some areas of the labour market in order to minimise the legitimacy of inequality in other areas as well.

Acker (2006b: 453) stated that in spite of antidiscrimination and AA laws, gender and race inequalities persist in work organisations. These inequalities are often legitimated through arguments that naturalise inequality. For example, some employers still see women as more suited to childcare and less suited to demanding careers than men. The fact that gender stereotypes and expectations related to having children and maintaining a prestigious career have resulted in some difficulties is highlighted by the participants. Several described how barriers inside organisations manifest themselves once women become mothers. Paradoxically, the welfare benefits offered by the Scandinavian system, seen as fundamental to women’s participation in the labour market may in the context of masculine workplace cultures work against women’s opportunities.

My experience, and I think a lot of women share this experience, is that things change at the workplace when you get pregnant. People start treating you differently, and you are left behind on the hierarchical ladder. You get ‘a stamp’ and it is difficult to get rid of this. They think that they can just ‘park/leave/forget’ me since I have a child, but they are wrong, I still want the career!
As long as women continue to take the vast majority of the parental leave, young parents will be treated differently based on their sex.

(Ellen, director, level three, age 25–34, three children)

Acker (2006b: 454) further pointed out that ‘high visibility and low legitimacy of inequality may enhance the possibilities for change. Social movements may contribute to both high visibility and low legitimacy while agitating for change towards greater equality’. A particularly valuable factor in the case of Norway is the gender representation law regarding companies’ BODs. Originally, it was suggested that the private sector could avoid the law being enforced by voluntarily increasing the share of women. This did not happen and the law came into force. This is an example of how there was low legitimacy of inequality related to gender on BODs. The fact that the Norwegian Government is again considering the possibility of radical strategies in academia indicates that in academia there might also be a shift towards lower legitimacy of inequality and consequently national strategies aiming to challenge this. However, as this study has uncovered, there are, even in organisations with low legitimacy of inequality at occupational group level, various gendered practices and thus, it is important not to view AA initiatives as a panacea.

8.6 SUMMARY

This chapter returns to the occupational groups and has been organised according to Acker’s (Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a) remaining components of inequality regimes and provided an in-depth analysis of organisational practices in the three occupational groups. It is however evident that these components are mutually constituted and have been separated for analytical purposes.

This chapter demonstrates that Acker’s (Acker, 2006b; Acker, 2006a) concepts of inequality regimes and Collinson et al.’s (1990) theory of the vicious circle of job segregation are useful analytical tools for looking at gendered practices within and between occupational groups. In particular, this chapter found that there are a variety of gendering processes within all the occupational groups that affect women’s situation in the labour market.

This chapter revealed how specific components of inequality regimes are more important than others in maintaining inequality within the occupational groups.
Particularly, it was apparent how the components ‘organising processes that produce inequality’ and in particular ‘recruitment and hiring’ were perceived as essential for maintaining inequality regimes in all the occupational groups. This was predominately apparent in relation to how gendered stereotypes and expectations in senior positions in Norway were mainly organised around the idea and image of man. Above all, recruitment and hiring were perceived as problematic in terms of discrimination, especially of women of childbearing age.

This chapter also pointed to differences between the three groups. While politics is perceived as the most equal occupational group, academia is experienced as the most unequal. Interestingly, politics is the occupational group with the longest and the most comprehensive use of AA, including radical strategies, while academia only operates with liberal strategies and has the most traditional hierarchical structure. BODs seem now to be somewhere in the middle, yet the directors argued that there is greater inequality in the private sector outside of the BODs. This indicates that gaining entry to BODs is the hardest stage; once there women tend not to experience gendered practices in terms of discrimination and harassment. Consequently, this thesis has highlighted that all the groups experience some kind of gender inequality regime, and that organisations still manage to discriminate, yet there are significant differences between, as well as within, the occupational groups which are also related to the historical share of women, the organisational structure, and use of AA.
Chapter Nine

The use and experience of affirmative action in politics, academia and BODs

9.1 INTRODUCTION

As illustrated in Chapters Four and Six there is, both in Norway and internationally, a focus on equality and on improving women’s position in the labour market with initiatives ranging from none to radical approaches. Chapter Six described the use of AA in the occupational groups this study investigates. While politics has operated with voluntary quotas on the majority of political parties’ lists for approximately 30 years, the use of legal gender representation regulation has only recently been introduced on BODs. In academia currently, only liberal and enabling strategies are in place, although there is a national and organisational focus on equality with politicians again looking at the possibility of introducing radical strategies such as earmarking. Building on the components of Acker’s (2006b) inequality regimes, Chapters Six and Eight demonstrated that gender inequality regimes exist in politics, academia and BODs where established patterns were found where women appear to some extent disadvantaged in comparison with men, yet where the use of AA affects the share of women as well as their experiences of equality. Hence, this chapter intends to explore further the experiences and effects of AA on equality and vertical sex segregation in the labour market and the three occupational groups in particular.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, Collinson et al. (1990:192) argued that their study from the UK found that ‘despite anti-discrimination legislation in the mid-1970s, a substantial number of employers, many of whom publicly subscribe to equal opportunities, are still ‘managing to discriminate’ on the grounds of sex through a variety of recruitment practices’. Several authors, such as Acker (2006a) and Chang (2000) set out AA as a potential ‘solution’ to the problem of inequality, yet, as argued by Acker (2006b), attempts to progress equality in organisations, such as AA to change inequality regimes often fail. As a result, there is a need to explore how specific inequality regimes are constituted and function, as well as the use of AA as this may
help to understand these failures, as well as learn from the cases in which there was a success (Acker, 2006a: 11). This study draws on these arguments in its investigation into gender inequality regimes and the use of AA. In particular, it takes the position that it is important to scrutinise the experiences of women affected by AA working in different types of occupational group. With this approach, this chapter aims to identify, from women’s viewpoints, the value of the different strategies as well as arguments objecting to or supporting them. Accordingly, this chapter starts by identifying general attitudes towards the use of AA organised in terms of radical, liberal and enabling approaches. Next, it investigates the arguments participants use for supporting or objecting to AA framed by the debate of justice and utility. The contextual level is portrayed as important for this thesis and the media is influential in affecting national debates and viewpoints. Therefore, the participants’ reflections on the media in relation to AA are also considered. Chapter Four identified that there are differences between strategies in areas of the labour market related to national involvement. Therefore, participants’ views on organisational or state level involvement in terms of AA will be uncovered. The chapter then turns to the participants’ experiences of AA at their workplace followed by their reflections on how, if at all, AA has affected their opportunities. As the use of quotas on BODs makes Norway an especially important case, this chapter discusses views from all the participants regarding the use of radical strategies in the private sector as this has traditionally, both in Norway and internationally, been an area with little state involvement.

9.2 ATTITUDES TO THE USE OF AA

As discussed in Chapter Four, equality strategies are complex and a variety of approaches exist. The participants were asked whether they considered it to be important to have strategies aiming to improve equality between the sexes in the Norwegian labour market. All the participants but two (both politicians at level one from the Conservative Party and Progress Party), acknowledged the importance of focusing on equality and claimed to support some strategies. Nevertheless, the justification and strategies supported varied both between and within occupational groups. In Chapter Four, the different forms of AA were separated into radical, liberal and enabling strategies and the following analysis will follow this structure.
9.2.1 Radical strategies

Radical (or hard) strategies are, according to Taylor-Carter et al. (1995), characterised by the underrepresented group being granted an employment opportunity as long as the minority group meets minimum qualifications for the job. Examples of radical strategies are minimum representation and quotas as well as earmarking of positions. Perhaps surprisingly, a large group of the participants, the majority in all the occupational groups, supported the use of radical strategies. The key reason the participants used in their justifications and support of radical strategies is that there is not a level playing field, there are not equal opportunities for men and women. Hence, participants took the position that the use of strategies can counteract inequality and thereby create greater equality which was the key line of justification used regardless of whether they argued from a justice or utility perspective.

9.2.1.1 Politics

In politics, where the use of voluntary quotas at the organisational level is in place in the majority of political parties, it was apparent that the vast majority (except four politicians from the Conservative Party and Progress Party) are in favour of using quotas in politics. In addition, they are supportive of potentially using quotas in other areas of the labour market with great gender imbalance.

I am a great supporter of quotas. The reason is men are already preferred just for the power of being men! That is the most important argument. Men are being chosen for the power of having the name Hans or Per and not Anna. The only way to change this pattern is to have two lists of candidates, where women are competing against women and men are competing against men. When you get the five best women and the five best men you have solved the problem. Instead the realities we often see today are, you have the five best men, four average men, and one excellent woman. The ones afraid of quotas are the ‘mediocre men’, the best men will still be chosen and they know that. The argument that ‘with quotas you will lose the best’ shows you have absolutely no insight into the types of discrimination that exist nowadays.

(Rita, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Maybe surprisingly, of the participants from the political parties that do not have gender quotas, the women who are most positive about the use of quotas are those at level two and three (committee chair or Secretary of State), the most senior women. This indicates that climbing the ladder, these women might have experienced that unequal treatment occurs and based on experience, they see the value of AA even though it is not supported by their political party. In addition, several participants emphasised that
quotas do not only apply to women and that in some settings quotas might be important in order to get more men into specific areas as well. Overall, the politicians from political parties using quotas have good experiences with this approach and did not see it as problematic. The politicians who referred to negative comments about quotas referred to this as being outside the remit of their political party, or even outside the political arena.

9.2.1.2 Academia

Only liberal strategies are now in use in academia where individuals should be judged by personal merit in terms of research and publications in order to get positions, which in theory should be a linear procedure. Nevertheless, the participants questioned whether liberal strategies can actually work if there is a subjective judgement involved. The participants saw it as problematic that women ‘disappear’ from academia and the concept of the ‘leaking pipeline’ was alluded to by several of them.

We do have the ‘law’ saying that if equally qualified, choose the minority sex applicant. Nevertheless, everybody can avoid that law and that is what’s being done here; it is ‘business as usual’.
(Trude, academic, level two, age 55–64, no children)

Acker (2006a) expressed the opinion that the criteria of ‘competence’ do not automatically translate into gender and race neutral selections. This thesis recognises that there is a subjective element in hiring procedures in academia and consequently, as judgement of competence is not neutral, this might be unfair and gendered, as described by several participants.

There is different treatment of men and women in academia, but not necessarily only because of their sex. Men and women tend to have different focuses in their work, and the male focus tends to be over evaluated while the female is under evaluated. Consequently, men who choose the one perceived as most qualified go for the man. It does not relate to quality, but to interest and focus. That is also a reason why women lose.
(Guro, academic, level three, age 35–44, two children)

Subsequently, the majority of academics in this study (77 per cent, 17) support the use of radical strategies at certain levels in academia and would welcome the use of quotas or earmarking of positions. Nevertheless, the participants are also aware of the potential dangers with the use of these strategies.
I am a bit torn; on the one hand, it will take hundreds of years to get gender balance in academia, subsequently you do need some changes; business as usual will not change the pattern. Therefore, there is a need for specific strategies. On the other hand, it might be problematic for women who are in a position because of quotas or earmarking. I am very happy I have not been in that situation; I got my positions in an open competition. It is a dilemma, but I think strategies are necessary.

(Grete, academic, level three, age 45–54, one child)

This indicates that among the participants, the academic institutions, and the national level, the need to consider strategies for changing the under representation of women in senior positions in academia is recognised.

9.2.1.3 BODs

Support for radical strategies, perhaps unsurprisingly as they have been beneficial, is strong among the directors. Only two participants were absolutely against the use of quotas in the private sector; both these participants were from level one, employed in senior managerial positions with experience from executive boards, yet not currently directors of a BODs for a PLC. In general, the directors supported the use of radical strategies by taking the viewpoint that there are enough qualified women, which is the opposite of what the main critics of the strategies claim. Further, the participants argued that up until now women have been unwillingly excluded, as a result there is a need for change to create equality.

I am very much in favour of quotas. The reason is that I have seen that it works in politics, and I have seen that it works in the private sector. I think men just need to experience working with competent women. I have experienced that they get surprised that we are more than qualified, but they admit they were wrong. Women are effective and they deliver, men see that. I do not think it will take many years with the quota rule before choosing women should be natural.

(Kari, director, level two, age 35–44, two children)

An important finding is that among the directors there was a strong tendency for their views on quotas to have changed after the introduction of the gender representation law. Several described how they were originally sceptical, yet as they have seen that it works, that competent women get opportunities and merit is not questioned, they are now supportive. In addition, several emphasised how they in principle do not support governmental strategies interfering with the private sector, but see it as necessary and successful in this case. Nevertheless, even though they are positive about the use of quotas on BODs, the directors recognised that for other positions in the private sector
quotas might not be the right option. Consequently, the support for quotas is limited to specific positions and areas and is not automatically seen as a transferable strategy into other areas of the private sector. In addition, several of the directors emphasised that they have experienced that talented men are relatively supportive of the use of quotas on BODs. The fact that their male counterparts have become aware of the benefits with the law is seen as important for the women as it also made the support for quotas more legitimate.

The new law will not affect the best men at all; they will still have the opportunities. What the law does is to ‘squeeze’ out the mediocre men in order to exchange them with excellent women. The way I see it, the good men are not afraid of the law, but the average men are; average will no longer be good enough for men either.

(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

The fact that being mediocre is no longer enough for a man is not something the directors were concerned about. In addition, they had the impression that talented men are not concerned about trading mediocre men for talented women. In particular, several directors emphasised how there has been more focus on quality and talent for all directors after the introduction of the law, which is perceived as beneficial both for directors and companies in general.

9.2.1.4 Radical strategies – the importance of experience and age

An important finding, in addition to the fact that the great majority of the participants are in favour of the use of radical strategies, is how a number described how their views have changed with experience and age.

Just after I finished my degree, I thought that the share of women in senior positions would automatically rise due to more women taking higher education and being extremely competent. Their presence in education and in the labour market would force a revolution and I saw gender quotas as an insult to a 25 year old university graduate. However, the reality in the labour market is different than you expect. I see women, just some years older (like 40+) who are in mid-senior positions being very positive about the use of equality strategies. They have a more balanced view; they have experienced and seen things that make them aware of the need for strategies to get more women into senior positions, to get their fair chance.

(Mille, director, level one, age 25–34, no children)

The quote illustrates how young women tended to argue along the lines of human capital and pipeline theories to explain vertical sex segregation, but the reality they
experience in the labour market is that there is more of a leaking pipeline and they then see the need for strategies to counteract this. This is also in line with findings from Chapter Seven where it was reported that views on equality also changed with experience.

9.2.1.5 Quotas in politics, is there still a need?
The need for women as role models was emphasised as an important reason calling for radical strategies by participants from all occupational groups. In politics the use of AA has resulted in strong women role models, which is emphasised as an important factor accounting for the high share of women in politics. In addition, for women in academia and BODs the fact that politics has produced strong and visible women role models was emphasised as important.

The share of women in politics at the national level is, as illustrated in Chapter Six, high. Despite this success, there was little support to stop the use of quotas in politics among the participants. In fact, only one participant (from the political parties operating with quotas) felt it was no longer necessary.

No, we can’t remove quotas, it is not integrated yet. I’m not sure it will ever be. We are still choosing average men over excellent women, claiming we have equality.

(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)

If you take quotas away the gender balance will disappear. Men will always think that women are a bit less competent. It is important to have quotas, especially at the senior level.

(Charlotte, politician, level three, age 35–44, three children)

Even after 30 years with quotas and a high share of women in politics, the participants did not believe that the high share of women would be maintained if quotas were to be removed. This illustrates how Norwegian women see gendered practices and potential patriarchal structures as being embedded, especially in relation to positions of power even though this occupational group can be seen as a balanced group (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988).

9.2.2 Liberal strategies
According to Taylor-Carter (1995), liberal strategies are built on the idea that as long as the minority and majority applicant are equally qualified the minority group member is
granted the opportunity. It is in line with positive action and equality of opportunity. Wrench (2005: 82) described how positive action can mean ‘making an extra effort to encourage groups that might not normally apply’ for specific positions.

The majority of the participants took the viewpoint that liberal strategies are good in theory, but that in practice, they might not be all that useful as they can be easily avoided. In addition, several participants took the perspective that different occupations have different functions in a country, and thereby, different approaches to gender balance are needed and suitable. One participant supported radical strategies in politics, but liberal strategies in the private sector and academia stating that:

Very radical strategies I am not sure I like. I think it would be tough not to have the legitimacy in being the best person for the job. In politics, I think quotas are good and necessary, they are there to represent the people. In the private sector, I think if equally qualified go for the minority sex, but never sacrifice quality. (Berit, academic, level one, age 45–54, two children)

Nevertheless, that line of argument is disputed by several other participants as they take the perspective that if you think that radical strategies (e.g. quotas) sacrifice quality, you take the viewpoint that women are less competent than men.

It’s amazing how many that actually think that the quality will go down in academia with the use of quotas and women coming in and up, including women. I think we will have to introduce it just to prove them wrong; the quality will not go down with the use of quotas and more women in academia. To believe this statement you have to believe men in general are smarter and more competent than women, which is something we all know is not really the case. (Ingunn, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

9.2.3 Enabling strategies
In addition to the use of radical and liberal strategies, the participants saw the need for a variety of enabling strategies, strategies facilitating women that do not fit into the liberal-radical divide. Some strategies suggested are occupation specific while other strategies are recognised as important and necessary by participants from all the occupational groups. In particular, the value of management focusing and working to improve inclusion and diversity was emphasised by participants in all the occupational groups and seen as important for improving equality; hence the need for diversity management was recognised.
One of the key areas emphasised by participants as an important reason for Norway not being equal and having occupational sex segregation is that of expectations and strong gender stereotypes in society, the labour market, and family life. Consequently, attitude shaping campaigns were alluded to as an essential strategy to challenge these stereotypes. Strategies such as getting young people into gender atypical jobs and education were seen as imperative. In addition, specific equality promoting strategies, such as extra points for entry into certain educational areas in order to challenge imbalance was recognised as a means of getting women into typically male dominated subjects as well as getting men into women dominated subjects. Nevertheless, this strategy can also, in some forms, have the characteristics of a radical strategy and is controversial.

In academia, the share of women at professor level is low and the need for occupation specific enabling strategies was recognised by the majority of the participants. Financial rewards for departments that hire more women were suggested by several participants as an effective strategy.

Financial rewards have been highly debated, but I think it is a fear tool. I do not think you will hire anyone just so the department will get 100,000 NOK (£10,000), that is ridiculous. However, at the same time it is an incentive to look for and encourage excellent and qualified women to apply. I do not think academia has been good enough to find women. Not only do we encourage qualified women to apply, we actually consider them and look for qualities and experiences instead of just focusing on what they DO NOT have. I think there has been a tendency not to focus on women applicants, purely because we know men, their environment and colleagues better, and we value their focus more. However, I think, with the incentive of financial reward the focus is now on women; the competent women that exist but have been overlooked ‘
(Wenche, academic, level three, age 55–64, three children)

The idea of encouraging with financial rewards is important, yet as some participants argued, it is key to make sure the financial reward is not so high that a token is hired in order to get the financial reward without getting the best suited person. In addition, several academics were positive towards strategies reducing the amount of teaching for women in order to give them more time for research and to focus on publications. The participants described, as discussed in Chapter Eight, how there are differences between men and women when it comes to teaching and supervising, which are perceived to be time-consuming activities. As this might work against women it underlines the need for enabling strategies.
At my faculty, which is highly male dominated, we have money earmarked for things such as supporting women, so they do not have to teach and can focus more on their research. I really wanted to do this, but this year there wasn’t enough money... I like this tool; it is very concrete and effective.

(Frida, academic, level 1, age 25–35, 2 children)

To ‘buy’ women out of teaching is better than earmarking of positions. Instead of ‘helping’ women to get positions, you are supporting women to get the right and necessary competences that no one can question later.

(Trude, academic, level two, age 55–64, no children)

As a result, women strongly support strategies such as less teaching or sabbaticals in order to work on publications. In this case, women will get the qualifications without their competence being questioned and hence avoid the debate about merit. Another strategy mentioned by quite a few academics is for the organisations to have broader announcements of new positions to make sure that women are not excluded before the hiring procedure even starts. As identified in Chapter Eight, some academics experienced that in some cases it seemed like positions were made with particular people in mind, often men that work on similar subjects. Hence, the procedure for hiring and promotion are areas academics experienced as unequal as the pool of candidates is somehow restricted by the announcement of positions. Hence, they saw the need for changing this type of organisational barrier with strategies.

9.3 ARGUMENTS USED IN THE EQUALITY DEBATE, BENEFITS AND DANGERS

Chapter Four demonstrated how a variety of arguments supporting or objecting to the use of AA exist and this study argues for analysing arguments in a utility-justice framework. Skjeie and Teigen (2003) described how the equality debate in Norway has recently changed with the main arguments and focus shifting from justice to focusing on women as a resource and thereby utility arguments and the business case for equality. The increased use of the business case for equality is key in the managing diversity approach which has become increasingly popular globally (Wrench, 2005). This has also been visible in relation to the introduction of the gender representation law on BODs where the Norwegian Government used a variety of utility, in addition to justice, arguments for introducing the strategy.

The participants were asked to reflect on the arguments they personally believed were important to back up their views of AA. As Figure 9.1 demonstrates, there are some
variations between occupational groups. Overall, while 42 per cent (28) of participants argued simply along the lines of utility and 42 per cent (28) used a mix of utility and justice arguments, only 16 per cent (10) justified their reasoning purely in relation to justice.

Figure 9.1 Arguments used by participants for supporting the use of AA divided by occupational group

The next sections will portray further both the arguments used in defence of AA and the differences between occupational groups.

9.3.1 Justice

A minority of participants (16 per cent) used only justice arguments for supporting the use of radical strategies. In addition, there was some variation between arguments used related to social and individual justice. This politician from level two viewed social justice as essential taking the position that:

I believe diversity is a good thing, I do not think the focus should be on maximizing the potential for the sake of the business. I think it is fair to divide the power between the sexes; in the public, private, and in politics, it’s about justice.
(Linda, politician, level two, age 45–54, 2 children)
The following academic is also using social justice arguments due to seeing utility as problematic as it is often linked to profit:

I am definitely arguing along the line of justice. I think it is fair, and I think the business case is problematic in that it sets criteria for results. So are you supposed to kick women out if it is not more profitable? I think that it is problematic and unfair to have different rules for women and men. Consequently, justice is the only way to argue for AA, why shouldn’t women be included?
(Inga, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

Earlier, this study identified that the vast majority of participants believed that women have to work harder than men in order to achieve and that women are very often seen as a bit less competent just for being a woman. References were made to the idea of always being ‘the other’, the ‘second sex’ (Beauvoir, 1953). Along these lines, several participants showed support for individual justice arguments in terms of prevention/compensation. In particular, some participants emphasised that there is a need to give women preference in selection processes as this counteracts the tendencies which have been identified where women are judged as a bit less competent than they actually deserve according to their qualifications. As a result, AA helps to correct the institutionalised or unconscious discrimination and gendering practices that exist within organisations, and thereby promotes integration as a democratic value.

The debate tends to focus on the fact that radical strategies are ‘helping’ the weak and under-qualified, that is wrong; what we want is to help the best that have been overlooked, which will then be good for business. On the other hand, the justice argument is very valid; we want a dynamic culture with equal opportunity. At the university, I had mainly male professors, some very, very good, but also quite a few mediocre men. I do not really understand the fair of potentially getting one or two mediocre women; it wouldn’t change too much, certainly not ruin anything.
(Liv, academic, level three, age 65–74, three children)

There are occupational group differences related to the use of justice arguments. In order to support the use of radical strategies in politics, social justice arguments were repeatedly used. The gender balancing/parity argument, with the idea that women should be represented equally with men in areas of power and influence (such as that described by (Hernes, 1987; Dahlerup, 2006)), might have particular resonance in politics as it is an area where democracy and the idea of representing society and the people is crucial. In addition, characteristics related to sex as well as other factors such as geography and age are regarded as important for getting diversity in the political
arena. Therefore, it can be argued that the social justice argument is to a certain extent more embedded in the occupational culture of the other two occupational groups. In academia and BODs, individual justice arguments seem to have stronger support, especially related to the fact that women have the impression that they are often judged as less competent, hence prevention/compensation arguments have greater support amongst the participants from those occupational groups.

### 9.3.2 Utility

The great majority of the participants used utility arguments, either as the key defence or mixed with justice arguments for supporting AA. Several participants drew on resource arguments – there will be organisational advantage gained from integrating women – which is also found in other studies (Helgesen, 1990) and from the Norwegian Government (The Norwegian Government, 2008b). An important argument is that the total talent within the population is evenly spread between men and women. Consequently, the total potential is not utilised by excluding women. Therefore, human capital arguments were emphasised as important; several participants believed that having few women in high status positions implies that the talent potential is not fully utilised. As more women than men take higher education in Norway, human capital arguments had wide support among the participants. In addition, an important claim made by several participants was related to the idea that, because of gender differences in attitudes, experiences, and interests, more women in male dominated areas will contribute to new perspectives and ways of solving problems, which will result in higher productivity and a better working environment. The following quotations illustrate views related to utility:

> I think it is great that women now have the opportunity. It is not that there are not enough qualified women; it’s that they didn’t get a chance. There is a need for quotas. If you only use 50 per cent of the populations potential you can’t get the best. It goes without saying it is bad for the economy, it’s bad for business. (Jane, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

> The business case is the only valuable argument; it would be irresponsible to implement this law, unless you believe more women will be beneficial. (Britt, academic, level one, age 55–64, two children)

Again there are some differences between the occupational groups regarding the arguments in use. The politicians tended to use interest arguments, where the defence of AA is that women have different experiences (biologically or socially constructed) and
interests that ought to be represented. These were also found by Dahlerup (2002) as commonly used arguments for introducing quotas in politics globally. Several politicians emphasised that women and men may have partly conflicting interests and as a result men cannot represent women completely. Consequently, the representation of women’s interests was seen as particularly compelling in politics where women should be given preference in order to create gender balance in the political arena in order to mirror society. The directors on the other hand, perhaps predictably, were those most likely to value arguments related to utility from a human capital viewpoint, emphasising how it is good for companies’ bottom lines to include women. Nevertheless, even though directors used utility arguments, they did as illustrated earlier in this chapter, value radical strategies, not only initiatives of a weaker or voluntary nature such as often found in diversity management approaches focusing on the business case for diversity (Wrench, 2005).

9.3.3 Mixed arguments
The complex discussion of meritocracy, sameness versus difference, and the debate of special contribution is identified in several studies and is also important in terms of AA and justifications in use among the participants. Simpson et al. (2010) found how women make sense of their experiences in the workplace where they identified the tension related to the ‘sameness’ ‘difference’ discourse. Their study established that women leaders in Australia emphasised the importance of meritocracy which emphasise the similarity between women and men while in addition valued the discourse of women’s special contribution emphasising the differences between women and men. Simpson et al. (2010) found that the contradictions of the two discourses are mediated through the notion of choice which allowed their participants to maintain some faith with the idea of merit and equality while at the same time trying to make sense of the contradictions they experience on a day to day basis.

In this study, it was apparent how, for the participants in all the occupational groups, meritocracy and the idea of having the best person for the job was essential. In addition, the participants took the viewpoint that women can make a special contribution. This might explain why such a high share as 42 per cent (28) of the participants supported the use of radical strategies using arguments both related to justice and utility. They made sense of the contradictions they experienced in terms of inequality and barriers,
while at the same time valuing and not questioning merit. As the following quotations illustrate, mixing the arguments is perceived as a way to overcome barriers:

I think both arguments related to justice and utility are relevant and connected. It’s important to have a mix of backgrounds in order to get the best. In addition, it’s important to change the discrimination and exclusion of women that exist. (Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

Arguments related to justice and utility are both valid. However, it’s amazing how many question the business case. It seems like in some settings people are really worried about the quality going down with women coming in, even women. More women will not result in lack of quality! That argument doesn’t hold in academia! (Ingunn, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

I strongly support the business case and argue for utilising potential. We have to take advantage of the human resources we have. In addition, a bonus is that it is important to prevent and change the generations of creating structures and cultures favouring men. (Turid, director, level three, age 35–44, one child)

As Figure 9.1 indicates, the majority of the directors valued utility arguments in order to justify the use of radical AA, while the majority of the politicians used either utility or a mix of arguments. The academics clearly leaned towards using a mix of arguments for supporting AA. In addition, as described, some participants used different arguments for different occupations. It is especially in politics at the national level that the participants saw advantages with social justice using the gender balancing/parity argument which stresses that women should be represented equally to men in areas with power and influence. In academia and BODs on the other hand individual justice and utility arguments had more prominence. Both politicians and academics valued the argument that women have a special contribution to make, both in terms of experience and focus, which is beneficial for organisations. While merit is important for operating with AA, the rhetoric among politicians and academics, and the importance of ‘difference’, have more salience. Among the directors it is clear how the ‘sameness’ perspective is more important where the reason for AA on BODs is merit and getting the most competent person for the job regardless of sex, hence they see the need to find and locate talented women.
9.3.4 Arguments used against AA

Although the vast majority of participants supported the use of AA, even radical strategies, several of were aware of potential dangers with the use of AA and the backlash it might cause. Therefore, some arguments used against AA are described.

From the individual justice viewpoint, one counter argument is the principle of non-discrimination/equal treatment and is related to the danger of reverse discrimination which people might argue against from a moral principle (Fullinwider, 1980; Bergmann, 1996). Another argument related to social justice that several of the participants found potentially problematic is the possibility of negative effects of AA built on the idea that too much time and energy are spent debating AA which again can increase negative attitudes towards both the use of AA, as well as towards the groups it is intended to favour (as described by Young, 1990). Even though utility arguments for supporting AA were highly popular among the participants, several of them were also aware and worried about the potential problems with using only utility and human capital arguments. The key problem is that if performance does not improve, AA will lose its value. The participants took the viewpoint that these are important arguments and often relevant in debates, but even though they considered them to have some value, arguments for supporting AA are considered more compelling.

9.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDIA: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATES

The media is a key influence on contemporary issues and national and international debates affecting the contextual setting. The introduction of the gender representation law in Norway was debated within national and international media receiving strong and diverse views. As put by Richard Bernstein in the International Herald Tribune 12th January 2006 ‘Norway’s leftist government put into effect one of the more radical attempts to achieve sexual equality’. The Norwegian businessman Trygve Hegnar, editor and owner of a business daily and a business weekly, and a leading and visible opponent of the new law, claimed that ‘90 per cent of ‘business-men’ are against the law, and most of the people in favour of it are politicians’ (Bernstein, 2006).

As described, some of the arguments used in the AA debate are related to the fact that there is a possibility that AA may actually have a negative effect for women as too much time and energy are spent on debating it. A question was asked relating to
participants’ experience of the coverage of AA in the media over the last few years, especially in relation to the introduction of the gender representation law for BODs. Several participants emphasised how they would like a more constructive debate as they felt that the media is more interested in ‘the extremes’ with silly issues and arguments raised either by ‘hard core’ feminists or conservative, old fashioned and outdated ‘business-men’. Consequently, these views affect the public and the comments women get. This again might result in creating negative attitudes towards those whom the strategies were actually designed to favour. In addition, several of the participants described how they have been approached in an unpleasant manner by journalists. The fact that the media, and in particular women journalists, was questioning the directors’ competence was described by several participants as uncomfortable.

What annoys me with the media is that they are focusing more on the fact that I am a woman than the fact that I am doing a good job! I do not reply to journalists asking questions like ‘how did you, being a woman, manage to do that.
(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

Attitudes and views such as ‘you got it because you are a woman’, I have only heard from journalists, never in the boardroom, or in the political arena. It has never been an issue there. On one of the boards, we are even more women than men. The typical approach and views I get from journalists are ‘you were asked to be a director because you are a woman and because of the law’. When they say things like that I yell at them. I also explain that I have the highest economical education you can take in Norway; six years. I have been a member of the Parliament for more than 10 years, and I have been a member of the Government. I do not know any men who have that kind of experience and background, and certainly none of the men on the BODs can match my experience. The journalists tend to get embarrassed after being confronted, and I tell them that it is an embarrassment that they as women can ask such a question and make such assumptions. On the other hand, they are sent by some male editor to ask those questions, and they are too stupid to see that they are being used. It is maybe surprising that it is women that are reducing women to incompetent tokens without even looking at their CVs. The journalists are young, maybe around 30, and I think, wow, those views at your age… The views are maybe common by women who have not fought the battles yet, women that haven’t climbed the ladder. Someone said that women are women’s worst enemy. I think some women are naive, they do not see they are being used. The three journalists I’ve experienced this with have been too stupid to see that there is a man who sent them out to ask these questions. I think women have to be aware and make sure they are not being used; you have to be able to think for yourself. I think all women have a responsibility to be a feminist; to think of your own opportunities, your mother’s opportunities, and your daughter’s opportunities.
(Lisbeth, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)
Lisbeth’s quote is telling as she justified her abilities in terms of educational as well as positional power, yet this is not acknowledged by others. Nevertheless, it has been interesting to see how articles in the media have changed after the end of the implementation period, and after seeing that it was possible to find both qualified and competent women changed. There are fewer ‘extreme’ articles making fun of the law and women, and the merit of women directors is no longer questioned. Another theme that emerged in the interviews was how views and language in relation to AA in the media varied depending on whether AA was discussed for men or women.

I think it should be a focus on the debate in the media related to the use of quotas and the difference in the discourse related to men and women. When discussing quotas in childcare or at schools targeting men, the focus is highly on the importance of good male role models. When the focus is on management positions and women, the focus and discourse are shifted to competence and the question of women have the right competence. This is a very important topic; the quota debate for women is problematic while the quota debate for men is fantastic. For women, the competence question is raised; this is not an issue when the debate is related to men.

(Inga, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

9.5 AA: STATE OR ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL?

Equality strategies can be introduced at national or organisational level. There are no clear guidelines on where AA should come from to be most successful; voluntarily from organisational level or compulsorily from governmental level. By giving the responsibility to organisations in terms of voluntary efforts there might in theory be more legitimacy for AA. Nevertheless, whether this voluntary practice will change the pattern of occupational sex segregation is debated. Having established that the majority of participants were in favour of AA and radical strategies, and argued along the lines of utility, their views on where equality strategies should come from are important for further analysis; if it is enough for organisations to acknowledge the benefits of choosing women, or if strategies should come from state level. Maybe surprisingly considering the fact that, globally, diversity management has taken over from equality policies and AA in terms of strategies for promoting equality (Miller, 1996), only 11 per cent (7) of the participants took the position that it is enough to have strategies at the organisational level. A factor worth highlighting is that the majority of them belong to level one, the least powerful and influential positions. 41 per cent (27) of the participants argued that most important is for the state to take action, while 48 per cent (32) of the participants saw the need for both organisations and the state being involved
and having strategies for better gender balance and equality. Looking at the occupational groups there are some variations.

Figure 9.2 Participants’ views on AA from organisational or state level divided by occupational group

It might be surprising that the participants most supportive of the state controlling the use of AA are academics and directors, while politicians form the group most inclined to argue for a mix of organisational and state level strategies. Considering the fact that such a large group of academics support the use of AA from state level, this is a clear indication that they experience that the liberal and enabling strategies in place at organisational level today are not enough, which again supports the arguments for a new focus on academia in terms of AA. The quotations below give an insight into the justification from participants:

Both. Everybody has to be on board in order for changes to happen. It will never happen from organisational level.
(Karin, director, level two, age 45–54, three children)

It has to come from the state, if not it will take too long. However, it is hard being a woman and knowing people might question your skills. On the other hand, it is up to you to prove that you are good enough. It is a way to fight for changes.
(Mille, director, level one, age 25–34, no children)
An important lesson learned from BODs is that the option the Government gave the private sector to voluntarily increase the share of women was not successful. Hence, in the private sector, there was a need for state-controlled compulsory strategies to make the change. Participants were key beneficiaries of state intervention on BODs, and even though the vast majority of participants valued strategies from governmental level, quite a few acknowledged that despite the fact that they supported strategies from state level, they did fundamentally see this as problematic as they did not ideologically support the state in forcing laws onto private owners and organisations. This indicates that just having an organisational focus is not enough as the participants pointed to the need for more national involvement for improving equality even though essentially not supporting too much state involvement and regulation.

9.6 STRATEGIES AT THE WORKPLACE: AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCE
Chapter Six identified that a variety of AA strategies exist at the participants’ workplaces. At the beginning of this chapter, participants revealed strong support for AA. This section turns the focus to participants’ experiences of the actual strategies at their workplaces. As illustrated earlier, the occupational group BODs consist of women mainly employed in the private sector where there are no common AA strategies apart from the gender representation law on BODs for PLCs. Consequently, their experiences will also reflect on organisations in the private sector in addition to the boardroom setting. This is highly valuable as it gives insights into an area which is known for having little focus on AA, especially from the national level.

The majority of participants were employed in organisations which had strategies for equality and they were also aware of these strategies. They experienced these as useful, even though, interestingly, none of the participants thought they had a perfect system. Strategies in place described as positive were radical strategies, in particular quota, enabling strategies, such as good HR strategies, playrooms for children at the workplace, flexi time, training and women’s courses, and to a smaller extent liberal strategies.

A large group, mainly consisting of directors and academics emphasised that related to equality and the use of AA, the difference between theory and practice is significant in terms of strategies in place. Almost half of the academics claimed that their workplace had some strategies, but only in theory.
Yes we have some sort of strategies somewhere, at the bottom of a drawer or something. On paper we have a strategy for equality, but in reality it’s dead. (Berit, academic, level one, age 45–54, two children)

The university has a strategy, but I do not think the people ‘up there’ know how it is to be sent out in a tiny boat all by yourself, and that’s the reality. Strategies come and are put in force at the top, but they have no idea what is going on in the different departments, it has to be followed up. (Jorunn, academic, level one, age 55–64, one child)

This indicates that strategies of a liberal or enabling nature have a tendency to be forgotten as there are no incentives to actually see them through. Evidently, all the directors were aware of the gender balance representation law for BODs, nevertheless, ten of them claimed that their daily workplace had no strategies for equality. Importantly, some of the directors emphasised that even though their organisations did not have any AA, there is now an expectation that organisations should identify talented women. This is more evident after the introduction of the gender representation law and the national focus on the lack of women in senior positions. Several of the participants, especially the most senior directors, illustrated how it is important for companies to get women into the most senior managerial positions. They argued that these days, with the introduction of quotas on BODs, it is the politically correct thing to do. Nationally, there is a focus on the lack of women in senior positions, and companies will get bad publicity if they are portrayed as too homogeneous within managerial positions. Hence the influence of stakeholders, such as government, employees and consumers in corporate social responsibility terms, is important for companies given the dominant discourse of equality in Norway. This is an important observation, yet it is too early to draw any conclusions about whether the gender balance law on BODs will have a domino effect and get more women into senior positions in other areas of the private sector.

9.6.1 Awareness of strategies

Among the politicians there was a high level of awareness of the strategies that exist at the organisational level. Politics is also where radical strategies have been in place for the longest. The use of AA in academia discussed in Chapter Six found that all the three academic institutions – UIO, University of Bergen, and NHH – have comprehensive strategies with clear goals of more equality and gender balance. Nevertheless,
academics’ awareness of strategies at organisational level is low. This clearly indicates that these institutions have not succeeded in communicating the clearly stated goals related to equality to their employees. Hence, strategies exist in theory, but not in practice. All the directors were aware of the new law regarding gender balance on BODs. Yet, there was a tendency for participants to be unaware either of other strategies in the private sector, or that organisations in the private sector had little focus on equality and diversity. This thesis has not focused on equality policies among the different organisations in the private sector the participants belong to as this was not feasible or important for this study. However, such a study would be valuable, especially in relation to the effects of the new gender representation law for BODs. The next sections will discuss how participants perceive AA in terms of importance for them getting opportunities.

9.6.2 Effects of strategies

In politics, where quotas have been a natural part of organisational procedures for decades, the participants tended not to consider quotas to have affected their opportunities significantly.

For me, quotas have not been important. We need a mix of men and women, we need a mix of younger and older people, and we need people from various parts of the country. I have been lucky ‘fitting’ several of the criteria; I was what was needed. But gender quotas are not something I see as important for my career at all.
(Ida, politician, level one, age 35–44, three children)

This quote indicates how in politics, the use of quotas is quite well integrated into the system. Few women saw their sex as particularly influential in terms of opportunities. If they did, it was mentioned how their sex, as well as age and geography, was equally important for nominations. This is relevant in terms of the contrast to their support for continuing to use of AA in politics. One the one hand, quotas seem well integrated, on the other, the women do, as earlier discussed, not support stopping with the use of AA.

In academia, only liberal strategies are currently in place, yet as illustrated in Chapter Six, radical strategies have been in use and are being considered for introduction once again. Interestingly, several of the participants from academia were very aware of the importance of their sex as well as their qualifications for getting positions. This is
mostly related to participants from level three, professors with high administrative responsibilities such as heads of department and deans.

I knew I would get the job I applied for. It was six applicants, five men and me. At that time there was no woman as head of department at this University. I was competent, and there was no way they could ignore me. If I was a man and would get the job, I would just get the job. But I am a woman that got the job, partly because I am a woman. You just have to live with it I guess. I do not really care, but it is annoying sometimes.

(Wenche, academic, level three, age 55–64, three children)

Another academic from level three described her experience of getting promoted when UIO operated with earmarking.

I got promoted on ‘women’s quotas’. Shortly after UIO had this idea, they made a ranking list of men and a ranking list of women. I was on the ‘women’s list’ and I got promoted to professor because I was a woman. In my department I didn’t experience this as difficult, as they knew I was competent. But someone wrote an article about it, how problematic this was as the men’s list clearly was better that the women’s list. I was ranked as number four or five on the women’s list and my husband was ranked first on the men’s list. Then I understood that that was absolutely nothing to be afraid of and I just saw it as comical. It had to do with subjectivity, not with quality or merit.

(Ingunn, academic, level three, age 55–64, one child)

The participants from academia that were previously affected by earmarking or liberal strategies did not see this as problematic as they considered themselves to be qualified for the job and saw qualifications and merit as the reason for their position and strategies as an opportunity to be seen, a tool for real equal opportunity.

The directors at level two and three were unsurprisingly very aware that the new gender representation law had given them opportunities, opportunities they did not have a few years ago.

Of course I know that the gender law has given me an opportunity, but I will still have to prove that I am good enough. I hope that other women see it as an opportunity as well. I have women, experienced women, who say ‘I do not want to get a position because of quotas’. But even Gro Harlem Brundtland says she would not be where she is today if it wasn’t for quotas in politics when she was young. I do not understand why we (women) have to be so sensitive about it; you get an opportunity, if you do not deliver you are out. The only way to view quotas is as an opportunity.

(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)
I agree that that it is not nice to think that you are only there because you are a woman and they had to find someone. But on the other hand, I would never be a member of a BOD if I didn’t feel I was competent and qualified for it. I know that my background is very good and right for the boards I sit on, better than most of the men’s. But I do think that if it wasn’t for the law they wouldn’t have looked outside their group. The way I see it, I have the background and the qualifications, the law gives me an opportunity to demonstrate that I am more than good enough. I do not believe that I would have been considered for these boards before the law. But now, a nice thing is that I have been asked to be a director on boards for companies not affected by the law. Consequently, they have noticed that I am good; they do not need to have me, they would like to have me.

(Aase, director, level three, age 35–44, two children)

Importantly, several described how after becoming a director on one board they had been approached by other companies, also companies not affected by the gender representation law both nationally and internationally. This clearly indicates how important the gender representation law has been for these women who are undoubtedly competent. By being made ‘visible’ they got new opportunities without a law ‘making’ companies choose them.

9.7 THE GENDER REPRESENTATION LAW ON BODs

As the gender representation law on BODs is newly introduced, very little research in this area exists. As shown in Chapter Six, the companies did in general comply with the gender representation law, even though it was widely debated before introduction. Given that the participants earlier in this chapter were identified as being supportive of radical strategies in certain settings, it is appropriate to elaborate on participants’ views in terms of the use of radical strategies on BODs as the law has been seen as highly controversial and has been widely debated.

As many as 64 per cent (42) of the participants stated that they have been, and are, very much in favour of the use of quotas on BODs. Interestingly, 26 per cent (17) of the participants claimed to have changed their views from sceptical to positive towards the law after its introduction. While originally being sceptical, after seeing the results and the opportunities of the new law, their views changed. 10 per cent (7) of the participants were negative towards the use of quotas on company boards. Looking at the occupational groups, there are again some differences.
It is apparent that both participants from politics and academia have been, and are to a large extent, supportive of the use of quotas in the private sector. For directors, it is valuable to note that the women affected by the gender representation law were sceptical to a greater extent than the other participants. Nevertheless, after having seen the benefits of the approach they changed their views accordingly. In addition, several of the participants emphasised the paradox of having a conservative, not social democratic minister, eventually introducing the strategy but also argued that this gave it legitimacy from a business perspective:

I applaud the use of quotas on company boards. We have formal equality and we have had that for quite a while now. If equality came naturally we should have it by now, we do not. When it comes to powerful positions, especially in the private sector, the progress has been standing still. It is a paradox that it was a minister from the Conservative Party who implemented this. We should thank Ansgar Gabrielsen, without this we would still be standing still. This proposal has legitimized the use of AA also in the private sector, a sector that the politicians have avoided. But he went right to the source. If/when important people in the private sector support this and changes will happen also outside of the BODs, we will take a big step in the direction of equality.

(Asta, director, level one, age 45–54, two children)
In addition, the participants portrayed the law as having resulted in a new focus on quality and qualifications in the boardroom for all directors:

Before the quota law there was less focus on qualifications and skills, it was more that the men who were retiring or started to step down started being directors on BODs. It was automatic. But now, after the quota law there is a lot of focus on qualification. It is true, there have been fewer women with the right qualifications in the private sector, we were excluded, but there are quite a few of us now! It is obvious that this law has been extremely important for me and the opportunities I now have. I have thanked AG for that on several occasions. Due to this law we now have more diversity on company boards and ‘the old boy’s network’ has had to look elsewhere and ‘see’ women, and that is good, there are so many extremely talented women getting their chance now and I think the quality in BODs is greater.

(Ingerid, director, level three, age 45–54, two children)

This study found that the vast majority of participants supported the use of quotas for BODs. As the women directors are competent, few of the arguments related to lack of human capital as was visible in the national debate before the introduction of quotas had been justified. Rather, some of the participants argued the opposite, stating that new competences have entered boardrooms, which have also been visible in the public debate. Even though participants have had positive experiences of the gender representation law, the directors in particular hoped the strategy will be unnecessary in the future as they thought it was negative for women to have these types of laws in general.

9.8 SUMMARY

This chapter turned the focus to the use of AA and how AA affects experiences in terms of equality and thereby gender inequality regimes in the occupational groups. Firstly, this chapter demonstrated that the great majority of the 66 participants supported the use of AA, including radical strategies. To rationalise the use of AA, the business case and utilising the potential in society was recognised as a very important factor for justifying radical strategies. In addition, it was described how there is not a level playing-field, hence strategies can counteract this phenomenon. In addition, social justice arguments were seen as especially valid in the political sphere as politicians are elected by the people to represent the people. Thus, the idea of democracy is important and arguments for social justice were perceived as particularly salient in this area. Even though there was generally strong support for utility arguments for introducing AA, the participants felt state involvement was necessary in relation to implementation of strategies,
especially those of a radical nature such as earmarking and quotas. Liberal organisational strategies on the other hand were not in practice seen as useful and initiatives from organisational level were also seen as easily avoidable.

This chapter also revealed how the understanding of the way AA has affected participants’ opportunities varies between the occupational groups. While the politicians did not see gender quotas as important for their getting positions, the directors were very aware of the gender representation law’s importance for their positions which was also the case for the academics at level three. It is worth highlighting that none of the participants experienced this as problematic as they strongly believed in their own competence and merit and saw strategies more as an opportunity to show that they are qualified. In addition, participants from all the occupational groups were, in general, supportive of the use of quotas on BODs, which has been debated within Norway and is seen as a controversial reform. Maybe surprisingly, the most sceptical of the gender representation law were women at level one, the least powerful positions. Therefore, based on stories from the participants, this thesis argues that AA, including radical strategies such as quotas, is a successful way to break the glass ceiling in these occupational groups. This is supported by the fact that gender inequality regimes are weaker in the occupational groups using radical strategies. Nevertheless, the support for radical strategies is both country and occupation specific and great care needs to be taken when designing strategies.
Chapter 10
Concluding discussion

10.1 INTRODUCTION
This thesis has sought to contribute to the literature on vertical sex segregation and the use of political strategies to counteract vertical sex segregation. The broad endeavour of this research was to explore the case of Norway with respect to three occupational groups in greater detail. Examining global data on gender equality, it is evident that equality between the sexes is not achieved anywhere (WEF, 2008; UNDP, 2009; WEF, 2010). Yet, the data show great differences between countries and regions and suggest that Norway and the Scandinavian countries are getting closer and leading the way towards a gender equal society. Pertinently, this pattern is underpinned in the Norwegian public policy approach with women friendly policies, a supportive welfare regime and AA. Moreover economic activity rate and the gender pay gap demonstrate that the sex differences are narrower in Norway than most countries. However, this thesis has also identified the paradox that despite greater equality on some measures, vertical sex segregation persists. Therefore, the broad aim of this thesis has been to examine the patterns of equality, vertical sex segregation, and use of equality strategies in Norway in the occupational groups of politics, academia and BODs. Above all, this thesis aims to answer the main research question: what factors are important in explaining the lack of women in senior positions in gender equal Norway?

Several objectives were identified for this study in order to shed light on the paradox of vertical sex segregation in Norway. In particular this thesis aspires to uncover the Norwegian paradox by taking a multi-dimensional multi-method approach influenced by Layder (1993) focusing on different levels of society – macro, meso, and micro – and investigating gendered patterns and social interaction in these settings. By situating the case of Norway at a contextual level in terms of equality and occupational sex segregation, this thesis sets out to investigate trends of equality and political strategies, also positioning Norway in a Scandinavian and international setting. In particular, this study sought to explore and understand national strategies, predominantly welfare regimes and AA, and in what ways these affect and influence patterns of occupational sex segregation and women’s position in the labour market and the domestic sphere. As the social democratic welfare approach and AA are often highlighted as key for
Norway’s high ranking on equality it is important to understand how these reinforce cultural expectations and stereotypes. The labour market is a key setting for this research and the thesis aspires to uncover differences and similarities between the three occupational groups. Both ‘gender inequality regimes’ and the effects and experience of AA within politics, academia and BODs are therefore investigated in order to identify how AA functions and is experienced by women and how this again feeds into the experience of equality at different levels. Finally, this thesis intended to demonstrate the importance of interlinking the macro, meso and micro levels in order to reveal the patterns of equality and occupational sex segregation and explore how both structural factors and individual agency can be used to understand the Norwegian case. From this flows a list of research questions; What factors are important in explaining the lack of women in senior positions in gender equal Norway?; In what way do gender inequality regimes operate in three Norwegian occupational groups?; How does the Norwegian welfare state and national history affect women’s situation in the labour market?; and finally; How do different forms of AA, from liberal to radical, work to challenge inequalities?

This concluding chapter demonstrates how the aim and objectives have been met by discussing in greater detail the contribution of the thesis to existing research and literature by combining the findings from the four analysis chapters. The conclusion is divided into two main parts. The first and most important part presents the key findings of the thesis and the contribution it makes. This study contributes to the literature on equality and occupational sex segregation and to that on political strategies in terms of AA and welfare. The contribution section is divided into three – (i) theoretical and empirical, (ii) methodological, (iii) policy implications. The second part of the chapter includes reflections on limitations and possible future research directions as well as final comments.

Before turning to the findings of the thesis, a short summary of the issues raised by the contextual and literature review chapters that provided the broader context for the study is presented. Chapter One outlined the focus of enquiry, demonstrating the consequences of occupational sex segregation as well as the justification for this research. In particular, Chapter One presented the aim, research questions and objectives. Chapter Two presented statistical evidence to demonstrate that Norway is
ranked among the most equal countries globally. In addition, segregation trends in the labour market as well as the political arena were discussed. This evidence pointed to the paradox of the longstanding existence of occupational sex segregation in Norway. Historical data revealed that in both the labour market and the political arena, there was a shift in the second part of the 20th century, especially after 1970, during which women become more visible in public life. This coincided with the expansion of the welfare state. Yet, the analysis of the contemporary setting in the Norwegian labour market also showed a surprisingly strong pattern of both horizontal and vertical sex segregation. In addition and importantly, Norwegian political strategies in terms of both welfare and equality approaches were discussed. The historical account provided insight into the persistent trend of women’s struggle to get into the most senior and powerful positions, and how forms and patterns vary over time and between occupations. This indicated the importance of feminist and suffrage organisations that emerged in the late 19th century, political strategies of different natures, in particular the social democratic welfare approach in addition to individual and collective agency for challenging occupational sex segregation. Chapter Two described how welfare strategies are especially important for women as the Norwegian welfare approach is a key underpinning macro strategy. In particular, it was discussed how welfare strategies are especially important for women’s situation in the labour market, yet it also emphasised how this can be complex. Hence, the need for a qualitative investigation into women’s experiences was acknowledged. The data presented in Chapter Two revealed that even in the most equal countries in the world, occupational sex segregation remains resilient. Hence theoretical approaches aiming to explain occupational sex segregation were discussed in Chapter Three. The groups of theories were divided into economic and non-economic looking at both supply and demand side explanations. Chapter Three argued that non-economic and feminist theories are the most useful for this thesis. For the occupational group level investigation, Acker’s (2006a, 2006b) theory of inequality regimes was positioned as the key analytical framework for investigating the three occupational groups and their gendered practices and patterns.

Following from the arguments in Chapters Two and Three stating that one successful way to challenge occupational sex segregation is through the use of political strategies (Chang, 2000; Acker, 2006b), an investigation of the literature on equality strategies was presented in Chapter Four. Different approaches to equality – liberal, radical and liberal progressive – were discussed. In particular, a justification for AA as the focus of
enquiry was outlined. Arguments used in the equality debate – justice and utility – were discussed and the different kinds of strategies in use were outlined. Finally, Chapter Four delineated the historical and contemporary use of AA in Norway in relation to the three occupational groups at the centre of this study.

In Chapter Five, the methodology was presented. Following from the contextual and literature review chapters, the methodology chapter argued for taking a multilevel approach informed by feminist ideas and ideals. Having a multilevel focus and using multiple methods enabled an examination of both objective and subjective aspects, macro, meso and micro perspectives, and the interrelationship between structure and agency. The ontological, epistemological and methodological influences were described and the research design was presented. Influenced by feminism and standpoint epistemology, a qualitative approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews as the key strategy was chosen. Hence, the thesis set out to give voice to senior women in the three occupational groups in order to uncover patterns of gender inequality regimes that help explain vertical sex segregation. In addition, the importance of analysing quantitative data, including occupational group characteristics, ensured comparative contextual data. In addition, primary methods were supplemented by meso and macro level examination of objective structures, contemporary literature, national and international data, as well as policy and organisational documents (e.g. related to AA strategies). The analysis in the chapter was strengthened by exploring the hierarchical levels within the three occupational groups in order to unpack the diversity of experiences according to seniority. This methodological approach makes an original contribution to the literature on occupational sex segregation, equality and equality strategies by providing deepening understanding.

10.2 THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS
This section outlines the discussion of the main theoretical and empirical contributions. As previously discussed, over the last few years Norway has continually been ranked amongst the most equal countries globally on international equality rankings. Consequently, descriptive macro level data provides considerable evidence that Norway is a one of the most equal countries in the world. Yet, upon closer scrutiny it is apparent how in areas of the Norwegian labour market, vertical segregation remains resilient with men dominating the upper levels of organisational hierarchies. This study explores this paradox with respect to women in politics, academia, and BODs. Blackburn et al.
(2000) asserted that only the vertical dimension of segregation measures inequality; while contested, their assertion implies the need for greater understanding of the processes leading to vertical segregation in male dominated occupations also focusing on different levels of society. The theoretical and empirical contribution discussion is organised around the main and three sub research questions for this thesis.

10.2.1 What factors are important for explaining the lack of women in senior positions in gender equal Norway?

The key endeavour for this thesis is to enrich the understanding of the complexity of gender relations in Norway by investigating the Norwegian paradox and the main research question is ‘what factors are important for explaining the lack of women in senior positions in gender equal Norway?’

An important starting point in order to understand the persistent trend of vertical sex segregation in Norway is women’s view on equality. This thesis chose to have a multilevel approach investigating gendering process and equality at different levels. Dickens (2007) pointed to the importance of both the domestic sphere and the wider context (including social policy and political context) in influencing equality in employment. In fact, Dickens (2007, 485) took the position that ‘drawing boundaries around the workplace (or the labour market) is problematic for understanding and affecting what happens in employment relations, and this is obviously so in terms of discrimination and disadvantage’. This thesis reflected these points by taking a multilevel approach to the investigation and by doing so found that gendered, expectations and stereotypes exist and are creating an unequal setting, not by women’s choice but by structural means. In fact, this thesis found, maybe surprisingly, that the participants’ perceptions and experiences of equality in Norway were fairly similar to those of women in countries perceived as less equal. In effect, the majority of participants did not perceive society or their workplace to be equal; in addition, quite a few of the participants described how gender regimes also exist in the domestic sphere supporting the idea of a Norwegian paradox. Consequently, this thesis established that patriarchal structures persist at all levels of society, yet, the analysis rejects the deterministic viewpoint often found in classic definitions of patriarchy. Different types of gendered dimensions of power (Bradley, 1999) are identified at all levels of society, but their character is fluid and subject to change.
This study found that Norwegian women do still make choices under constrained conditions which is affecting their experiences at all levels of society which is in line with feminist theories (Clark et al, 2003; Alvesson and Due Billing 1997; Bradley, 1996). Hence, human capital theories (Becker, 1964; Mincer and Polachek, 1974), preference theories (Hakim, 1991; Hakim, 1996; Hakim, 2002), labour market segmentation theories (Doeringer and Piore: 1971) or statistical discrimination theories (Becker, 1971) alone cannot be used to explain occupational sex segregation, which is also results from expectations and stereotypes in wider society which affect individual choices both directly and indirectly, such that women’s choices can be seen as constrained. Consequently, the lack of women at senior levels cannot be explained simply by taking an agency approach since structural barriers, direct and indirect, are preventing women from reaching the top.

This thesis demonstrates that it is apparent that gendered cultural factors, expectations and stereotypes seem remarkably persistent in Norway. This indicates that wider structural factors remain important as it seems people in general often live a life that is expected of them, not actively or consciously wanted by them. In particular, gendered expectations in relation to family life and motherhood were emphasised as important and affecting women’s experiences at all levels of society. Thus, some of the arguments in Hakim’s (1996) preference theory are questioned and the thesis has identified how the idea of free choice is flawed. Hakim (2000: 3) described the five contextual developments – the contraceptive revolution, the equal opportunity revolution, the expansion of white collar occupations, the creation of jobs for secondary earners, and the increasing importance of attitudes, values, and personal preferences in the lifestyle choices of prosperous, liberal modern societies – which illustrate how women have more choices than formerly. Although this thesis consent with Hakim in that the situation for women has improved, to exclude feminist theories and the importance of patriarchal structures and the complexity of inequality regimes, gender stereotyping and sex discrimination is, in the case of Norway, naïve and mistaken. Hence, this thesis strongly point to the importance of not taking international rakings as absolute truths as a variety of regimes, dynamics, strategies and settings affects Norwegian women’s chance of succeeding in the organisational hierarchies and thereby is important for explaining the lack of women in senior positions as will be discussed further through the sub questions for this investigation.
10.2.2 In what way do gender inequality regimes operate in three Norwegian occupational groups?

One of the objectives of this study was to undertake a close investigation of the meso level by looking at different settings in the labour market as it has been revealed how most studies of occupational sex segregation in Norway have focused on quantitative macro trends (Teigen, 2006). In the context of three very different labour market sectors, politics, academia and BODs, this thesis offers valuable insight into the interconnected themes of equality and gender inequality regimes. Based on qualitative data from women in senior positions it has identified unique insights into the most senior positions in three important occupational groups. Acker (2006a) argued that all organisations can have inequality regimes, even the ones with clear egalitarian goals. From the organisational level analysis, using Acker’s (2006b) components of inequality regimes as an analytical device, it is clear that the three occupational groups investigated have elements of gender inequality regimes even though Chapter Six demonstrated how they all have egalitarian goals and strategies promoting equality. Consequently, this thesis argues that gendered practices are to a certain degree embedded in organisational dynamics, yet to what extent varies between and within the three occupational groups. In particular, this thesis revealed the complexity that exists in the way gender inequality regimes are produced and reproduced. Moreover, of particular importance, the thesis demonstrates that these differences are clearly influenced by the occupational groups’ use of AA, history, as well as the nature of the groups themselves. Acker’s (2006a) components of inequality regime appears to have the same analytical weight, but this thesis concurs with Healy et al’s (2011) findings that some components might be more important than others in the processes of reproducing inequalities and that this can vary between organisations.

This thesis found that gender as ‘bases’ of inequality varies considerably between the occupational groups. Gender as a bases of inequality applies to the three occupational groups as men dominate numerically and hold the power resources. Nevertheless, while the gender gap has closed to some extent in both politics and BODs, the same is not the case in academia. In fact, despite Norway’s generally uncontested levels of overall equality in global rankings it has higher levels of vertical segregation in academia than many of its European counterparts. When considering the proportion of women professors in each country, findings reveal, as discussed in Chapter Six, that of the 27 European countries analysed, Norway is ranked 15th which is lower than the mean of the
Despite its social democratic welfare model, Norway is below the EU mean in women’s achievements in academia which further questions assumptions about a positive relationship between high economic activity and women’s career advancement. With respect to BODs, while this thesis found that the minimum representation level of the gender representation law has been met and the BODs have met the 40 per cent representation, the share of women has not increased above the minimum requirement. This might indicate that homosocial reproduction does still occur when there are no guidelines, which also corresponds with participants’ stories from other areas of the private sector.

This thesis give emphasis to the importance of looking beyond gender as ‘bases’ of inequality as equality is multi-faced and can be measured and understood along many parameters. This is visible in Acker’s (2006a) second component of inequality regime. In terms of ‘shape and degree’ of inequality all the occupational groups demonstrates the complexity of gender relations within the occupational groups yielding the importance of looking beyond the overall gender representation by investigating factors such as steepness and internal segregation.

National politics does not have a traditional hierarchical structure where seniority is achieved through experience. Instead it is organised around election results for the political parties, which means that there is no straight career path or bureaucratic way to climb the hierarchical ladder. While the total representation of women in the Parliament is 38 per cent, a closer investigation shows more gender differences. Both in the Presidium and chair of committees’ women are not represented to the same extent than men, or as the overall gender representation would indicate. In terms of internal segregation in politics, it is apparent how men and women are differently represented within the committees. While women are overrepresented in two committees, the Committee on Family and Cultural Affairs, and the Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs, men dominate committees such as the Committee on Business and Industry, Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Committee of Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs, and Committee of defence. Thus the thesis points to traditional internal segregation and gender tracks where men are found in the ‘hard’ committees while women are found in the perceived ‘soft’ ones.
Academia can be seen as having a hierarchal, bureaucratic structure. In academia, none of the institutions investigated has women represented at the most senior position as principals and at the next level as deans, men also dominate the senior levels of the Norwegian universities. Academia has, as already established, few women at professorial level. In terms of internal segregation it is also apparent how there are also gendered patterns. Very few women, less than ten per cent, are professors in Maths and Natural sciences and Technology, while 28 per cent of professors in Humanities are women. This also supports Acker’s (2006b) arguments of gender tracks and internal segregation.

The structures of BODs are very much in line with a relatively flat team structure, yet, with a chair. Although women are highly represented on BODs, women are not represented at the highest level within boards as chair. In addition, the study of BODs identified how a group of prominent women directors has emerged. Consequently, this thesis argues that the high share of women as prominent directors is a relatively new phenomenon that has emerged as a result of the introduction of the gender representation law. Nevertheless, an important factor is that BODs are only one area of the private sector, and there have been few changes in the private sector as a whole in terms of women’s representation in senior positions. In fact, the private sector is highly gendered in terms of areas of responsibilities. While women are overrepresented within HR and communication, men hold the positions as CEOs.

The analysis of Acker’s (2006b) first two components established the importance of investigating beyond the overall gender representation as this thesis propose that ‘shape and degree’ can conflict with ‘bases’ yielding the need for a closer investigation.

Organising processes that produce inequality are also important in maintaining inequality within organisations. Participants in this thesis described how gendering practices and processes often take place within organisations which can produce and reproduce inequality. It is often the case that women tend to do the invisible tasks in the organisation which are important to keep things running, but often are not recognised or are not valuable for climbing the ladder (Acker 2006b447). This again might affect women’s chances for climbing the hierarchy as less visible tasks tend not to be valued. The vast majority of the participants shared the opinion that men are more strategic, thinking more of own career, while women think of the best for the organisation.
Looking closer at the dynamics that exists within organisations, there are a variety of organising processes that produces inequality. As Acker (2006b:448) pointed out, work has generally been organised on the image of a white man who has no responsibility for family or children and thereby is and can be totally dedicated to his job. While the composition of the labour market has changed, with women and men participating in almost equal numbers in Norway, some positions still demand flexibility from employees making it difficult to balance family life and career. Even in a country where high quality and affordable childcare is widely available, it was a repeated theme from the participants that at times difficult to balance family life and career. This is an area which the interviewees saw as a greater obstacle for them than for their partners or male colleagues, regardless of levels. In addition, there were differences by both occupational group and level in terms of employer flexibility with respect to the option of working from home, coming in late etc., i.e. strategies which make it easier to combine family life and career. Interestingly, academia is the occupational group with the most flexibility, yet it is the occupational group with the lowest fertility rate among the participants. This indicates that having flexible work arrangements might not be the only factor that encourages women to combine children and career. Academic work demands a long education and this was mentioned by some of participants as an explanation for their not having more than one or two children, rather than lack of flexibility once in the job. This is of course quite ironic – the occupational group with the most flexible work arrangements provides little space for women to actually have children. In addition, academic work is also international; to succeed, reputations need to be made both nationally and internationally. The social processes involved in getting work recognised and read often takes place at international conferences. Yet these in themselves may also be a barrier to career progression (Seierstad and Healy, forthcoming). As Gustafson (2006: 513) argued with respect to Sweden, ‘the relationship between work-related travel and family obligations involves both individual adaptation and structural factors, such as a gender-segregated labour market and ‘gender typing’ of travel as a predominantly male activity, all of which reflect traditional gender and family role expectations’.

While hiring and recruitment are processes of finding the worker most suited for a particular position, it is often the case that images of appropriate gendered and racialised bodies influence perceptions and consequently who to hire (Acker, 2006b).
Expectations and stereotypes were identified as important explanations for inequalities in Norway, hence, it was necessary to investigate further how women perceived expectations and stereotypes to affect important organisational practices such as hiring. While no participant reported that hiring procedures favoured women a number stated that they favoured men. In particular, in all the occupational groups, women, as discussed earlier, had the feeling that they had to work harder to get respect and recognition for their work, which correlates with the viewpoint that men have an easier time climbing the hierarchical ladder and getting promoted. In addition, the importance of social networks and the old boys’ club was mentioned by participants in all the occupational groups.

In Norwegian politics it is noticeable how Acker’s (2006b) component of recruitment and hiring has been important. Yet this was more so in terms of gaining entry to politics than climbing the ladder. Although the political arena at the national level is experienced as relatively equal, some of the participants argued that the local and municipal political arenas are more gendered and difficult to enter, especially climbing the hierarchy where male networks and the ‘old boys club’ are seen as important. This indicate that entry level to politics is more problematic that climbing the ladder at national level. One of the participants described that it is easier to be young and talented in the national political arena than in the regional. She experienced feeling somewhat excluded and not taken seriously by some of the more senior male politicians in the municipal arena until she was nominated for Parliament. After the nomination, one of the men said to her ‘if I knew you were such an important little girl, I would have made an effort to get to know you’. The fact that local politics is seen as a ‘nice and appropriate’ hobby for senior men who are past their peak in the labour market is, by some women, experienced as problematic as the old boys’ club is moved from the labour market to politics.

In Norwegian academia, it is apparent how recruitment and hiring is seen as particularly important for maintaining inequalities. Women academics described being undervalued and overlooked in terms of research areas and, as a consequence, announcement of positions often excludes them. It is apparent that the participants shared the view that there might be some navigation of potential applicants to certain positions reflecting stereotyping based on sex. This is also found in other studies, such as that of Charles and Grusky (2004: 22) who pointed to a cultural value of male primacy. Academia is
organised around the idea of a traditional, conventional, hierarchical, bureaucratic structure which was also described by the participants in this study. Senior positions are received after climbing the ladder and, according to the participants, ‘who you know,’ the ‘old boys network,’ and the area of research all play a part in this process. Based on the stories from participants this seems to be present and legitimate in Norwegian academia, more so than in politics and BODs which might seem contradictory as academia is perceived as more standardised in terms of career paths. In addition, the lack of women on hiring committees was seen as important in maintaining inequality through social and professional networks. The thesis confirmed the importance of ‘ingroups’ and ‘outgroups’ and homosocial reproduction was described as important for the persistence of gender inequality regimes. Academics reported that a key problem in academia is related to the pool from which candidates are chosen as women feel excluded before getting into the actual recruitment process due to narrow and biased announcements of positions; this underlines the importance of focusing on this stage. It is necessary to emphasise that, even though there is a strong trend for academics to point to the gendered nature of academic life, there are also some differences between departments and universities. Consequently, this study yields the need for reconsidering radical AA in academia as a means to greater equality. The data in this study is revealing as it points to the resilience of the gender order in universities and uncovers the invisible nature of social processes that work to disadvantage women (Collinson et al., 1990; Acker, 2006a). In particular, this thesis found that universities in Norway tend to be a masculine world demonstrating the deeply embedded gendering of organisational processes (Acker, 1990) and gender tracks (Acker, 2006a) which are particularly damaging in terms of recruitment.

Directors can be seen as an unconventional part of the organisation as they are separated from the organisation and employed as specialists. Nevertheless, the recruitment process was, until the gender representation law was introduced, highly gender biased. The relatively equal team structure of a BOD is important for women’s experience of this setting as more equal. In fact, the directors described how the recruitment procedure of getting into BODs has been more gendered than the actual boardroom setting. This thesis suggests that the gender representation law has successfully challenged the under-representation of women on BODs and made them more democratic and equal. This is also supported by stories from the participants who revealed how they only became sought after as directors after the law was introduced; they became visible as the pool of
potential candidates increased. It is worth emphasising that, as several participants highlighted, even though they were ‘invisible’ until the law was introduced, they are highly qualified to be directors and believe that their presence on BODs is beneficial. This thesis found that male power networks are still present, both on BODs and in the private sector; hence, recruitment processes remain important for maintaining inequality. Interestingly, even though a new ‘elite’ of women has emerged, stories from the participants do not indicate that this has resulted in an ‘old girls’ club’, nor that it was sought.

In terms of wage and supervisory practices within organisations, gendered patterns were identified, yet with differences between the occupational groups. One important finding is that experience of equality is very much linked with equal salary, economic power in Bradley’s (1999) terms. In politics, the most equal of the occupational groups, the fact that salaries in Parliament are standardised is emphasised as important for the experience of equality, as everyone is ‘worth’ the same. This underlines the significance of equal pay and equal distribution of economic power at the organisational level. Both in academia and BODs, wage and economic power was highlighted as important for maintaining inequality for women, factors which are also mirrored in the national pay gap.

The ‘visibility of inequality’ is another of the components of Acker’s (2006b: 452) theory which is defined as the degree of awareness of inequalities, which can vary between organisations. Interestingly, this thesis has pointed to the lack of visibility of inequality in society in general which can be seen as problematic. Nevertheless, there has been a renewed focus on the lack of women in senior positions over the last years, in particular in the private sector and on BODs in relation to the gender representation law which has increased visibility of inequality and thereby highlighted the need for change which has increased awareness of inequalities in the Norwegian labour market.

In addition, it is apparent how the ‘legitimacy of inequalities’ might differ between organisations. Acker (2006b) argued that while some organisations, such as cooperatives, professional organisations, or voluntary organisations with democratic goals, may find inequality illegitimate and try to minimise it, in other organisations, such as rigid bureaucracies, inequalities are legitimated in the organisational structures. Of the three occupational groups, the lowest legitimacy of inequalities is found in
politics which is unsurprisingly as the occupational group is based on the idea of democracy, while the occupational groups with the highest legitimacy for inequality is academia. Interestingly, in the Norwegian society it seems to be low legitimacy of inequality which is in line with the countries proud idea of equality. Hence, the reason for inequality is more likely to be related to low visibility and unawareness than legitimacy. Acker (2006b: 454) further pointed out that ‘high visibility and low legitimacy of inequality may enhance the possibilities for change. Social movements may contribute to both high visibility and low legitimacy while agitating for change towards greater equality’. A particularly valuable factor in the case of Norway is the gender representation law regarding companies’ BODs which has highlighted the high visibility and low legitimacy of inequality.

This thesis found how it is evident that Acker’s (2006b) theory of inequality regimes is a valuable approach for unpicking gendering with occupational groups, yet the analysis also established how some components are more important that others. As Acker (2006b:455) pointed out, while inequality regimes can be challenged and changed, change is difficult and efforts often fails. This thesis argues that Norwegian politics can be described as a well established internally successful gender inequality regime that nevertheless needs the support of quotas. Moreover, it is a need to continue to work for equality in local, municipal, and political party organisations as well as other areas of society. Academia on the other hand can be characterised as a traditionally male dominated, old fashioned hierarchical gender inequality regime, with an urgent need for a change in the embedded culture. In particular, the need for more AA, potentially of a radical nature, is acknowledged. Finally, the occupational group BODs can be characterised as a less entrenched inequality regime inside the boardroom setting as it is apparent how the gender inequality regime there is perceived as weaker than in other areas of the private sector. Yet, the need remains to improve and change the more traditional structures in the private sector as a whole in order to adjust the embedded culture and to challenge the stereotypes within the sector.

10.2.4 How does the Norwegian welfare state and national history affect women’s situation in the labour market?

In exploring the contextual setting in Norway as well as trends in terms of equality and occupational sex segregation, the welfare state is crucial. This thesis argues that in the case of Norway there is a clash between the uses of AA, aiming to increase the share of
women in senior positions, versus the employment consequences for women of the social democratic welfare approach. Hence, on one hand the Government is imposing strategies to get women into senior positions, but at the same time, they are not aiming to get men to do more of the domestic duties.

This thesis found that policies on childcare and parental leave, as well as cash support, affects women’s situation in society, in the labour market, and in the domestic sphere, though in different ways. In particular, this thesis suggests that the welfare approach, which has focused on the mother as the main carer, has the unintended consequence of limiting women’s development opportunities. As an example, it was reported by the participants that the likelihood of young women taking parental leave is used to favour the appointment of men. As a result, regardless of the perceived ‘women friendly policies’, the political, socio-economic and domestic context surrounding women’s reproductive capacity continues to form the basis of women’s inequality, which has also been identified in other recent studies of Scandinavia (Seierstad and Healy, forthcoming). Consequently, whereas the welfare state supports economic activity for women, it does not challenge or change the organising processes that reproduce inequalities. Even though the Scandinavian welfare model is more beneficial for women compared to other countries’ approaches, the partial and gendered nature of the welfare state model comes to the fore. Where women express a ‘choice’, these ‘choices’ are severely constrained as the notion of ‘choice’ is spurious, in that these decisions are made within very real constraints, constraints not faced in the same way by men. Even though Norwegian families have a ‘choice’ over who should take parental leave and Norwegian companies have a ‘choice’ of finding the best suited candidates there seems to be a very resilient pattern of gender roles at all levels of society. It is worth emphasising that this thesis is not in any way suggesting that macro enabling policies should be deserted, rather it indicates the need for a greater critical engagement with inequalities at the organisational level as well as in the domestic sphere in order to challenge gender regimes within families as these influence areas of the labour market (a similar conclusion emerged from an earlier study on academia in Denmark, Sweden and Norway (Seierstad and Healy forthcoming)). From the contextual analysis in Chapter Two, the importance of public sector jobs for women as a direct result of the social democratic welfare approach moving some of the ‘family responsibilities’ to the state is strong. Progress in terms of childcare in Norway is, and has been, extremely important for improving equality and giving women the option to have a career and a
family. In addition, strengthening the fathers’ role in terms of parental leave is important. From an equality point of view, cash-for-care policy may lead to an enhancement of the gender order rather than challenge it.

This thesis takes the viewpoint that the role of the welfare state on women’s situation in society and in the labour market is complex. Hernes (1987) discussed the case of Scandinavia by arguing that ‘the assertion that welfare states empower women is not uncontroversial. There is a general agreement that the material welfare of women and children is increasingly dependent on public policies. However, there is no consensus as to the implication this might have for the political power of women, or whether and how welfare and power are related to each other, if at all’. She further pointed to the paradox that to many spectators the Scandinavian state represents the modern welfare state in its archetypical form. Hernes (1987:31) described that while feminists from other countries often look upon Scandinavian women with a certain mixture of envy and aspiration, it is clear that a closer examination reveals patterns of under-representation, discrimination and subordination alike to those found elsewhere. As a result, Hernes (1987:31) emphasised the important point that ‘welfare is not synonymous with power and with the ability to shape and influence one’s own status’. This argument, even though it is more than 20 years old, remains. It is apparent that there are dilemmas faced by women seeking to pursue a career and family life, dilemmas not faced in the same way by men. This thesis reveals how inequality regimes conspire to limit women’s aspirations or ensure that women pay a higher price for success than do men. Thus deterministic accounts of the impact of the welfare model need to be tempered with insights into the reality of inequalities in organisations. Thus the interrelationship of the macro social and political context with experiences at the organisational and occupational level reveals between and within country similarities and differences. Hence, this thesis found that the apparently favourable welfare model may act to the detriment of women’s career development. A critical interpretation of women’s experiences in the context of the gendered nature of organisations suggests that patriarchal systems will always attribute women’s reproductive capacity negatively. The consequence will be that regardless of whether or not a country has ‘women friendly policies’, the social and familial context of women’s reproductive capacity will form the basis of discrimination, but its form will differ according to the macro context (see also Seierstad and Healy forthcoming).
10.2.5 How do different forms of AA, from liberal to radical, work to challenge inequalities?

The use of strategies to get more women into senior positions is a timely concern (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003; Dahlerup, 2006; Burke and Vinnicombe, 2008; Terjesen et al., 2009). Several countries are now looking into introducing radical strategies in the private sector, the political arena, and other areas of the labour market. As a result, the findings from this study have important implications. Chapter Six identified how the use of AA in Norwegian politics, academia and BODs affects gender representation in the respective areas. It is apparent and unsurprising that the highest share of women is found in politics and that the share of women on BODs has peaked since 2006 (following the introduction of the gender representation law). In academia where there are currently no radical strategies in use the share of women professors has remained low. Consistent with data discussed in Chapter Six on the shape of inequality looking at the gender representation within the three occupational groups, the reported experience of equality is also highest within politics, followed by BODs and academia.

The support for AA is strong among participants in all groups and consequently, this thesis takes the position that AA, in particular quotas, is a successful way of challenging vertical sex segregation. Maybe surprisingly, the most sceptical of the participants about the gender representation law were women at level one, the least powerful positions. This might indicate that gendered barriers are more profound the higher up the career ladder you are as the most senior women are the ones most inclined to see the need for AA and the more likely you are to have experienced discrimination. In addition, women at level one tend to be younger and may not have yet met the gender constraints faced by their older counterparts. Therefore for them the belief in the Norwegian equality project has not been shaken. Consequently, based on stories from the participants, this thesis argues that AA, including radical strategies such as quotas, is a successful way to break the glass ceiling in these occupational groups. This is also supported by the analysis of the different occupational groups and the fact that gender inequality regimes are weaker in the occupational groups using radical strategies. Nevertheless, the support for radical strategies is both country and occupation specific and great care needs to be taken when designing strategies. Consequently, this thesis revealed a new paradox may exist as women express preference for radical AA despite a context that has prioritised this form of action.
Authors, such as Kanter (1977) and Dahl erup (1988), described how when women (or other minority groups) reach a certain percentage, their group characteristics become less relevant as the group is balanced. This thesis does to a certain extent support the idea of a critical mass as the findings established that more equality is experienced in more gender balanced groups. Heilman (1997:882) argued that ‘when a woman’s sex is distinctive and noticeable, sex is highly likely to be singled out as the critical inferential point about what she is like’. Furthermore, Heilman, (1997) building on the work of Kanter (1977), argued that when women are numerically scarce, there is no challenge to the stereotypic judgement as people are not presented with the natural variations among women. In fact, as Heilman (1997:882) argued ‘since there rarely is a high concentration of women at upper management levels, the salience of sex is likely to be quite high, providing an impetus for stereotypic thinking’. As illustrated in Chapter Six, there are, in all the occupational groups, more men than women employed in top positions, yet with significant differences between the occupational groups. The problem of having few women in senior positions means that gender stereotypes are not challenged (Heilman, 1997: 882). In fact, key reasons described by the participants in this study for not having equality in Norway are gender stereotypes, symbols, images and expectations. At the occupational group level, it is clear from their stories that some form of gendered stereotypes and images exist within all the occupational groups. In particular, this was more evident in organisations with fewer women as the image of a man in a senior position has not been challenged. This was also a key finding in Kanter’s (1977) influential study where she portrayed how the image of a successful CEO or leader is masculine. Based on the interviews with participants, this thesis revealed how it is apparent that gender stereotyping and images of men and masculinity seem less present for politicians than for academics and directors.

In addition, a notable finding in this thesis related to the use of AA relates to the participants’ views on how it has affected their opportunities, if at all. In politics, where quotas have been in place for approximately 30 years, the politicians did not perceive quotas as important for their progress. Directors on the other hand acknowledged the importance of the gender representation law for their opportunities. Yet it is worth emphasising that they did not see AA as undermining their credibility, as they clearly believed in their own merit and saw the law more as a tool to get the chance to prove that they are highly competent. This indicates that experiences of the effects of quotas
might change over time. Politicians believed that looking for the most talented women as well as men has become embedded in the culture. Paradoxically, the thesis demonstrates that while politicians, while claimed not to see quotas as important for their own positions, neither they did not see it as an option to abandon the use of this strategy, indicating that the fear of falling back to ‘old sins’ was apparent. This is important in relation to arguments about tokenism and critical mass raised by several authors (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988; Raaum, 2005). Therefore this thesis finds that in politics, even though women as a group have approximately 40 per cent of the seats in the Parliament, they still see the need for keeping quotas as they do not see gender balance as natural and embedded

Looking at the justifications used by participants for the strong support of AA, it was apparent that the majority of participants supported utility or a mix of utility and justice arguments. Similarly, Norwegian authors, such as Skjeie and Teigen (2005) described how this is also the case in the Norwegian public discourse on AA. In particular, business case arguments were important justifications for the Norwegian Government introducing the gender representation law for BODs. Yet, there are dangers from an equality and feminist perspective for relying too heavily on utility arguments. Hence, this thesis supports the point made by Noon (2007: 781) for also keeping the social justice argument as it can be dangerous only to focus on utility. As argued by Noon (2007: 781) ‘the business case might rest upon this by providing an additional economic rationale, but in the absence of a rationale (or a rationale that might argue against equality initiatives) the moral base remains firm. The argument for the moral case based on the human rights of all employees and job seekers must not be abandoned for the current fashion of diversity and the business case’.

Singh and Vinnicombe (2003) argued that the absence of women in decision-making roles is an increasingly important topic in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, and that the lack of women at the most senior levels within corporations and on top corporate boards is a worldwide phenomenon, which again is an indication that gender is a barrier to women’s career advancement (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003: 349). The directors in this study stand out as particularly valuable focus of study as BODs have been in a period of great transition in recent years due to the gender representation law. Norway is the first country in the world to introduce quotas in the private sector. Other countries, such as the Netherlands, Spain, France and Iceland now allow the use of similar strategies for
BODs in the private sector as well, and other countries, including the UK, are discussing this option. Hence, this thesis has, by analysing changes within the compositions of BODs as well as by interviewing women directors, taken an important first step in researching this highly contemporary and important area. In addition, internationally there is a strong focus on equality in politics and there is a global trend of using quotas both of a legal and voluntary nature (Dahlerup, 2006). While voluntary quotas have been an important strategy in Norway over the last 30 years, there are no formal requirements for gender balance in the Norwegian Parliament or Government. This can be seen as a paradox considering Norway’s position on equality and being an AA strategy-friendly country with quotas and gender representation guidelines in place in certain areas of the labour market.

10.2.6 Summary theoretical and empirical contribution

To conclude the empirical and theoretical contribution section and return to the main research question, it is apparent that there are a variety of factors important for explaining the lack of women in senior positions in Norway. Cross-national research, such as that of Hofstede (2001) pointed to strong cross-cultural differences between countries. Based on his ideas, it could be argued that Norway with its feminine values, egalitarian ideas and low power distance, should be more prone to change the pattern of occupational sex segregation than masculine countries and countries with high power distance, yet it is apparent from the analysis how this takes time and Norway still has a gender regime where women’s opportunities and experiences differ from men’s. Hence, the more equal society that characterises Scandinavian countries can be seen as partial and contingent on gendered models of organisation; so much so that women are forced to make constrained ‘choices’ between home and work (Seierstad and Healy, forthcoming). The structure and agency debate is a central concern in social science research. As discussed, rationalisations for the persistence of vertical segregation are debated, ranging from whether women’s position is a result of their preferences (Hakim, 1991; Hakim, 1996; Hakim, 2002) or whether choices are made under constraining conditions (Crompton and Le Feuvre, 1996; Ginn et al., 1996; Healy, 1999). Lewis and Simpson (2010: 167) took the position that ‘for choice to be the explanation for women’s continued location at the lower to middle echelons of organizations while their male colleagues move further upwards, would require clear demonstration that organisation structures, policies and procedures are neutral’. Yet, as Lewis and Simpson (2010: 167) pointed out after reviewing a set of papers from a variety of countries
looking at organisational procedure with a gendered lens, ‘organizations and the people who run them are not impartial and that women’s choices occur in circumstances not of their choosing.’ This thesis reveals that the occupational group level analysis concurs with the argument presented by Lewis and Simpson (2010) and this thesis demonstrates how, in Norwegian organisations, women still make constrained choices and that organisational structures, policies and procedures are not gender neutral. Thus, the example of politics, academia and BODs supports the arguments of those who point to the gendered gap in power and status in Scandinavian countries (Hernes, 1987).

Consequently, the lack of women at senior levels cannot be explained by agency theories since structural barriers, direct and indirect, stand in the way of women. Hence, this thesis lends some support to these critiques as it demonstrates that women perceive their workplace to be unequal. Some have experienced sex discrimination and the vast majority believe they have to work harder than men to achieve a similar level of success. In other words, the women are ambitious, but nevertheless believe that they face disproportionate constraints. It is apparent that structural changes at macro and meso levels have created ‘new conditions’ which arguably can be seen as favourable for women to move into and up within all the occupational groups. Women are seen as agents, not bound by a static patriarchal structure. This research has identified how women can, both collectively and individually, change structures and power relations. Nevertheless, gendered expectations and stereotypes are still very much in place and women still make choices under constrained conditions even though privileged in comparison with women in most other countries. The welfare state protection accommodates a balance between career and home, and remains important in how it shapes some career decisions for many women, thereby constraining the available choices. It is worth highlighting that this becomes more visible in work and family life rather than in terms of educational life and among youths. This study concurs with Bradley (1999:21) who took the position that gender (together with class) ‘must be seen as both social constructs and sets of ‘lived relations’’. The importance of agency and the possibility to change structures are important and this study seeks to avoid a deterministic outlook, rather, it emphasises the importance of agency and political strategies in order to continue to improve equality in Norway. As Bradley (1999: 11) emphasised referring to an important statement from Walby (1997: 1) ‘the patterns of inequality between women and men have changed….but in complex ways, not simply for better or worse’. In the case of Norway, this thesis finds that change, even though
patterns of inequality between men and women are complex, has actually happened for the better. In particular, the national focus on equality, the renewed focus on the use of radical AA as well as the focus on welfare strategies has improved equality between the sexes. Yet, this thesis demonstrates that despite positive changes and an international recognition of equality, the realities of inequalities are resilient in Norway.

10.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

This thesis makes a contribution to gender research in terms of its methodological approach. Influenced by Layder’s (1993) approach with different research elements and their interrelationship, this thesis adopted an in-depth multi layered analysis. This approach provides comprehensive information in relation to vertical sex segregation, gender equality and equality strategies at different levels in Norway. This is an area where the majority of research has been at the macro level and trends of a quantitative nature and the multi-method approach of this thesis fulfil an identified gap in terms of methodological approach (Teigen, 2006; Terjesen et al., 2009). Moreover, few studies are showing the interrelationship between different levels of society whilst also focusing on different occupational groups, hence this thesis makes an original contribution in this respect. In particular, the qualitative in-depth interviews discover women’s experiences in the context of patriarchical structures in society, in the organisational setting and at the micro level. Influenced by feminist ideas and standpoint epistemology, the qualitative in-depth interviews of participants at the most senior levels in three occupational groups provide insights and give voice to women’s experiences and views.

This method seeks to understand women’s lived realities through their stories from thereby contributing to the literature on women in senior positions and the experiences they have. The thesis does not aim to generalise, as the numbers interviewed in an absolute sense are relatively small, however it is worth emphasising that at these levels in these occupational groups in Norway there are in fact very few women. Hence, this thesis includes interviews with a relatively high proportion of the women in the most senior positions which again provides originality and rigour to the study. Even though qualitative data in terms of semi-structured interviews can be a time consuming activity, especially when the pool of eligible candidates is small, it is clear how mixing quantitative contextual data with qualitative data provides unique insight into the interrelationship of the macro-micro dualism. Moreover, the thesis underlines the importance of a meaningful research aim which encourages the participation and
cooperation of leading interviewees, with many demands on their time. Finally, this thesis has shown how the belief and pride in equality characteristic of Norwegians, can blind one to persistent gendered hierarchies and gendered practices; hence, the methodological approach of a multi-level approach yields new insights.

10.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS
As illustrated in Section 10.2 (theoretical contributions), political strategies related to AA and the social democratic welfare approach are not necessarily heading in the same direction. Consequently, this thesis has important policy implications both in relation to the use of AA and welfare strategies. This thesis found that Norway is a relatively traditional country in relation to views and expectations of what is appropriate for men and women which affects patterns of vertical sex segregation. Political strategies for challenging these are important as choices made are still being experienced as constrained to a certain extent due to gender expectations and stereotypes.

10.4.1 Policy implications for the use of AA
This thesis provides strong evidence-based support for the use of AA for improving equality in the labour market. In particular, in the case of Norway this research supports the continued use of radical strategies as well as potentially introducing radical strategies in other areas of the labour market in order to achieve greater equality and maximise utility. It is found that the use of radical strategies such as quotas has been successful in politics as well as on BODs. In addition, views among the academic interviewees revealed that the majority are open to the idea of using radical strategies in academia which indicates the need to rethink strategies in this occupational group and which points to the weakness of voluntary liberal approaches. In the case of politics, it is apparent that there is great support for quotas. Nevertheless, only voluntary quotas are in place and this thesis argues that it could be useful to introduce compulsory gender representation guidelines in the political arena as well. As politicians are introducing guidelines in other areas of society they should follow their own example otherwise it can be seen as an inconsistency. In the case of Norwegian BODs this research found that the gender representation law has successfully challenged the under-representation of women on BODs and made them appear more democratic and equal. This is a signal that the radical hiring strategy of legislation was a successful tool for improving the gender balance. However, while it is found that the minimum representation level has been met, the share of women has not increased further and women are not represented
at the highest level within the boards where the share of woman chairs has been low and stable after the initial implementation period. In addition, this thesis revealed important unintended consequences of the gender representation law which might be seen as counter effects. Being on multiple boards (i.e. being prominent) is highly beneficial to directors as they gain exposure to knowledge from a greater variety of companies than others. In turn, this could allow them to make more informed and better decisions than others. Findings show that the maximum number of boards that a single director is part of has increased considerably. In fact, this number doubled during the observation period (2002–2009). Interestingly, women are the ones with most directorships which can be seen as a new elite, ‘the golden skirts’ (Seierstad and Opsahl, 2011). Hence, one of the aims of the Government in introducing this law – to get more women into these positions for democratic reasons – seems unfulfilled as a small share of women get undue influence. In terms of the analysis of the introduction of the gender representation law, policy-makers can benefit from this study in multiple ways. By putting a focus on the effects of the gender representation law, they can learn from its design and implementation. For example, the implementation represented a major and sudden intervention in the selection of board members. If the law had been implemented in incremental steps (e.g. slowly increasing the required gender balance from the current level to a target aim over a 10-year period), a group of extremely prominent directors might not have been created. In addition, an option would be a cap on the number of boards a director could be on. In turn, by considering these aspects, policy-makers might be able to devise AA policies that increase equality across a range of parameters. This is vital due to the impact that these policies have on both individuals and wider society.

Globally there is now a focus on introducing strategies to increase the share of women. This thesis found that it is extremely important to have strategies to get more women into senior positions and specific occupations as there are strong patterns of occupational sex segregation in the labour market globally, and gender inequality and discrimination are present in labour markets. Nevertheless, it is important to look at the contextual setting in respective countries to make sure strategies are appropriate. In the case of Norway, quotas (voluntary) are in use in the majority of political parties and have been for the last 30 years. In addition, the country has quotas in areas of the public sector and is a social democratic welfare state with strong national focus on equality, and a national political approach built on the idea of egalitarianism. Hence, the
historical and contextual setting is conducive to the use of AA and arguments from the justice perspective are identified as important. It is worth emphasising that even though this thesis strongly supports the use of radical strategies in the three occupational groups investigated, it does not argue that radical strategies are always the most suitable approach. Other countries can learn from the Norwegian case and it can be used as an example in terms of introducing similar strategies. Despite having some unintended consequences, the thesis has revealed that AA strategies, both in politics and BODs, yield benefits and have resulted in women having greater visibility in public life and improved overall equality, and have maximised more of the human resources and capital that exist in the country.

10.4.2 Policy implications for welfare strategies

One important characteristic of a country is its choice of political strategies in terms of welfare. This research has identified the importance of the social democratic welfare approach for Norwegian women being present in the labour market on almost equal terms as men. Yet, horizontal and vertical sex segregation exist and this thesis has pointed to expectations, stereotypes and domestic responsibilities as important factors for inequality which in turn have policy implications.

In Norway, part of parental leave is earmarked for the father, yet as discussed, the total uptake of parental leave by fathers is relatively low. Even though the majority of parental leave can be distributed between the parents, the mother tends to take up the majority of it. Hence, this thesis argues that it could be preferable to divide parental leave more equally between the parents to encourage men to take an equal share of responsibilities. This is important for several reasons and in several settings. First, at the micro level it might create greater equality in the domestic sphere. Second, at the meso level, it has an effect on the labour market setting in terms of a change in the potential costs for companies in hiring young women compared to young men, and therefore counteracts discrimination in hiring which has been identified as present and problematic in terms of equality at the occupational group level. Third, at a macro level, by making it more common for women to take shorter parental leave and men to take longer, it will potentially change gender expectations and gendered stereotypes in society. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that this thesis did not find much support for dividing parental leave into two, as this would result in a lack of flexibility. Instead, as described by several participants, this thesis argues that dividing parental leave into
three, one part earmarked for the mother, one part earmarked for the father, and one part where the family can decide themselves, in line with the Icelandic strategy, could be a step in a more equal direction.

In addition, this thesis found strong support for the argument that financial support in relation to parental leave should be linked to the income of the parent that takes the leave. As the current system is based on the income of the mother in terms of financial support, this can result in families having an economic disadvantage when the father takes up more leave if there is a pay gap between the partners (as in Norway there is an identified pay gap between men and women in terms of pay at national level). Hence, in order to gain acceptance for a more divided parental leave, a restructuring of financial guidelines is necessary. In addition, there is a goal for the present Government to have full childcare provision. This thesis clearly identifies this need as childcare provision is seen as key for having both a good career and children. This is also an important goal for the Government and a need for policies to strengthen this is recognised.34

Finally, this thesis suggests abandoning the use of cash support as the majority of participants saw this as a setback in terms of gender equality which might strengthen patterns of occupational sex segregation. It is argued how Norway’s welfare approach is good in terms of giving women a relatively greater choice of having family and work life than in other democratic welfare countries, and with small adjustments, the welfare strategies can further improve equality between men and women at different levels.

10.5 LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND FINAL COMMENTS

This study recognises some shortcomings and limitations. Due to time and financial constraints the study includes interviews with 66 women employed in senior positions within three occupational groups. This number could be higher if circumstances permitted. There are inevitably fewer interviewees per occupation, but the richness that emerges from a consideration of three occupations offsets this potential limitation. In addition, as earlier discussed, the actual number of women employed at the most senior levels within the three occupational groups are low and this thesis has been fortunate to interview a high proportion of the women employed in these positions, particularly in politics and BODs.
This thesis has identified several interesting areas for future research. In particular, while one objective of this thesis has been to give voice to women, another relevant area for future research could be to research into men’s experiences as well in order to analyse which experiences are gender specific.

In addition, as described by Acker (Acker, 2006a; Acker, 2006b), intersectionality has become increasingly important. While the focus of this research was restricted to sex, AA, and occupational sex segregation, it does not argue that sex is the only relevant focus of analysis. In fact, with a broader approach looking at all levels within organisations, not only the most senior levels, other factors such as race, class, sexuality and age would be insightful. Nevertheless, due to the restrictions in terms of levels, AA and the small pool of potential candidates, sex was the focus. An intersectional approach could be a way of developing this project in future research.

Furthermore, this thesis argues that there is strong support for radical strategies which might be specific to the Norwegian context and the occupational groups in this research. Subsequently, valuable areas for future research could be other areas of the Norwegian labour market or comparative analysis between countries. One fascinating option would be to compare Scandinavian countries as they are often clustered together, but do have significant differences as found in the study by Seierstad and Healy (forthcoming). Other valuable areas would be a comparison of Norway with other countries beyond Scandinavia especially in terms of the use of AA in areas of the labour marked.

In politics, the need for more research, especially of an international comparative nature is needed. As highlighted, the use of quotas is on the agenda (Dahlerup, 2006) both in traditional AA friendly countries, but also in countries with little history of using AA which makes this an important area for future research. In particular, countries can learn from the case of Norway where voluntarily quotas have been in place for decades. In addition, more research into academia would be valuable as this thesis found, based on stories from academics, that there is a need for further strategies for improving equality and the share of women in the most senior positions. In the case of the newly introduced gender representation law on private sector BODs there is a need for more research in terms of the effects and consequences of this law in several areas of society. An imperative focus for future research will be to look at gender representation on executive boards within Norwegian PLCs as these are not currently affected by the law.
In addition, future research can investigate the effect of the gender representation law in terms of gender inequality regimes in the private sector in general. Moreover, a new qualitative study into women’s directors’ experiences after some years could also add a longitudinal dimension to this study.

Internationally, the Norwegian use of radical strategies in the private sector has received attention. Countries such as Iceland, Netherlands, France and Spain have introduced similar gender representation strategies on corporate boards and other countries, such as UK, Belgium, Italy and Germany are debating what approaches to take. As other countries are following Norway’s path of gender regulations on BODs, both more lessons from Norway as well as international comparative studies are essential areas for future research. Until recently, the leading approach to equality in Europe has been of a liberal nature and countries such as UK have traditionally been sceptical to the use of radical strategies (Noon 2010). Nevertheless, as put forward by Noon (2010:737) ‘it is difficult to see how radical change might occur without greater state intervention’. Over the last couple of years, the lack of women in senior positions in politics as well as other areas of the labour market has received attention from international organisations such as EU, national policymakers in most developed countries, media, and academics. This thesis supports the argument suggested by Noon (2010:737) that there is a need to rethink the use of radical strategies and the mainstream positive discrimination debate as the current status quo appears to have taken the position that ‘disadvantaged groups should continue to remain patient for decades to come while they wait for the free market to sort out the injustice they suffer’. The academic as well as political debates globally have newly highlighted the need for and opened the possibility of taking more radical steps in the labour market for ‘disadvantaged’ groups such as women. This has been especially visible over the last few years in terms of women on corporate boards. The lessons learned from Norway found in this thesis provide valuable information and findings. In particular, this thesis has demonstrated how some of the key criticisms of using radical strategies have been unjustified which give way to the use of these types of strategies to change imbalance and improve equality in the labour market, both from a justice and business point of view. As a result, further use of radical strategies and the effects of this will be important areas for future research both of national and international dimensions.
To conclude, a central finding in this thesis is that the participants’ views and stories revealed that the perception of equality in the general population in Norway, including women, might hinder the actual pursuit of equality. Hence, the thesis points to the danger of taking the international rankings presented as absolute ‘truth’ as Norway’s belief and pride in being the most equal country in the world might have ‘blinded’ it, preventing the goal of equality between the sexes at all levels being reached. Being the most equal country in the world does not mean that complete gender equality exists. In particular, this study has revealed that there are versions of inequality in the labour market and different gender inequality regimes exist even in occupational groups with clear equality goals and strategies. The study found resilience of gender inequality regimes in the Norwegian labour market. Part of this resilience is related to the political context as this is central for expectations and stereotypes. Matlary (2001) took the viewpoint that today’s young Norwegian women are not feminists; they take equality for granted and expect to have children, career, and a man who does half of the housework and takes equal responsibility for the children. Yet, there is still a long way to go before Norway will see this gender utopia. As illustrated, in Norway there are few women in senior positions in the private sector, and a lot of ‘double work’ for women – women still doing the majority of the domestic work, even when in dual career relationships. This underlined the importance of rethinking the feminist agenda. Even though Norwegian women are privileged compared to women in other countries and regions, equality in terms of opportunities, outcome and condition (Miller, 1996) is not yet achieved. In addition, it is also important to acknowledge the business case for equality as utilising the human capital available in a country is central for growth and innovation. A long term agenda focusing on challenging the gendered stereotypes that exist is therefore key. It is disappointing that the ‘most equal’ region still has far to go in its quest for gender equality. Nevertheless, despite its flaws, the use of AA and welfare strategies in Norway is yielding benefits and resulting in women having greater visibility in public life. This has been particularly so in politics but also in terms of BODs and the private sector. As this thesis argues, the pattern of occupational sex segregation, equality and equality strategies is an ongoing, fluid and dynamic changing process; consequently, there is a need for further studies.

In sum, this thesis contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the complexity of gender relations in Norway. In particular, it contributes to literature on vertical sex
segregation in the labour market and emphasises the importance of using political strategies such as welfare and AA strategies to improve equality between the sexes. As these topics are currently on the agenda in academic as well as policy debates nationally and internationally, this thesis adds to the contemporary debates and a variety of lessons can be learned from the case of Norway.
References


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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: THE ACT RELATING TO GENDER EQUALITY

Ministry of children and equality

Title of the Act amended by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 38 (in force from 1 July 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 527).

Section 1. (The purpose of the Act)
This Act shall promote gender equality and aims in particular at improving the position of women.
Women and men shall be given equal opportunities in education, employment and cultural and professional advancement.
Amended by the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535).

Section 1a. (Duty to promote gender equality)
Public authorities shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote gender equality in all sectors of society.
Employers shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote gender equality within their enterprise. Employee and employer organizations shall have a corresponding duty to make such efforts in their spheres of activity.
Enterprises that are subject to a statutory duty to prepare an annual report shall in the said report give an account of the actual state of affairs as regards gender equality in the enterprise. An account shall also be given of measures that have been implemented and measures that are planned to be implemented in order to promote gender equality and to prevent differential treatment in contravention of this Act.
Public authorities and public enterprises that are not obliged to prepare an annual report shall give a corresponding account in their annual budget.
The provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act shall apply in connection with the enforcement of the third and fourth paragraphs.
Added by the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 except for the third to fifth paragraphs which came into force on 1 January 2003, pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535), amended by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 40 (in force from 1 January 2006 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 528).
Section 1b. (Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)


Added by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 38 (in force from 1 July 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 527).

Section 2. (The scope of the Act)

This Act shall apply to all areas, except for the internal affairs of religious communities. With regard to family life and purely personal matters, this Act shall not be enforced by the bodies mentioned in section 9 of this Act.

In special cases the King may prescribe that all or part of the Act shall not apply to certain specific areas. Before such a decision is made, the opinion of the Board (cf. section 10) shall be obtained.

The Ministry will issue regulations regarding the application of the Act in the case of posted employees, cf. section 1-7 of the Working Environment Act.

Amended by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 40 (in force from 1 January 2006 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 528) and the Act of 17 June 2005 No. 62 (in force from 1 January 2006 pursuant to the Decree of 17 June 2005 No. 609).

Section 3. (General clause)

Direct or indirect differential treatment of women and men is not permitted.

The term ‘direct differential treatment’ shall mean actions that
1. discriminate between women and men because they are of different sexes,
2. place a woman in a worse position than that in which she otherwise would have been because of pregnancy or childbirth, or place a woman or a man in a worse position than that in which the person concerned otherwise would have been because of her or his exercise of rights to take leave of absence that are reserved for one of the sexes.

The term ‘indirect differential treatment’ shall mean any apparently gender-neutral action that in fact has the effect of placing one of the sexes in a worse position than the other.
In certain cases, however, indirect differential treatment is permitted if the action has an objective purpose that is independent of gender, and the means that is chosen is suitable, necessary and is not a disproportionate intervention in relation to the said purpose.

It is not permitted to make use of reprisals against any person who has submitted a complaint regarding a breach of provisions of this Act, or who has stated that a complaint may be submitted. This shall not apply if the complainant has acted with gross negligence. The first and second sentences shall apply correspondingly to witnesses.

It is not permitted to give instructions regarding acts that are in contravention of provisions of this Act. Such instructions shall be regarded as differential treatment.

It is not permitted to be an accessory to a breach of provisions of this Act.

Amended by the Act of 30 June 1995 No. 43 (in force from 1 August 1995), the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535) and the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 38 (in force from 1 July 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 527).

Section 3a. (Affirmative action in favour of one of the sexes)

Different treatment that promotes gender equality in conformity with the purpose of this Act is not a contravention of section 3. The same applies to special rights and rules regarding measures that are intended to protect women in connection with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

The King may prescribe further provisions as to which types of different treatment are permitted in pursuance of this Act, including provisions regarding affirmative action in favour of men in connection with the education and care of children.

Added by the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535).

Section 4. (Gender equality in connection with employment, etc.)

A job vacancy must not be advertised as being restricted to one sex only unless there is an obvious reason for doing so. Nor must the advertisement give the impression that the employer expects or prefers one of the sexes for the position.

In connection with the employment, promotion, dismissal or lay-off of employees, no difference must be made between women and men in contravention of section 3.

A job seeker who has not obtained an advertised position may demand that the employer state in writing the education, experience and other clearly demonstrable
Section 5. (Equal pay for work of equal value)
Women and men in the same enterprise shall have equal pay for the same work or work of equal value. The pay shall be fixed in the same way for women and men regardless of sex.

The right to equal pay for the same work or work of equal value shall apply regardless of whether such work is connected with different trades or professions or whether the pay is regulated by different collective wage agreements.

Whether the work is of equal value shall be determined after an overall assessment in which importance is attached to the expertise that is necessary to perform the work and other relevant factors, such as effort, responsibility and working conditions.

The term ‘pay’ shall mean ordinary remuneration for work as well as all other supplements or advantages or other benefits provided by the employer.

The King may by regulations prescribe further rules for what is to be considered the same enterprise in the state and municipal sector.

Section 6. (Equal right to education)
Women and men have an equal right to education.

Employers shall treat women and men equally as regards training, further education and leave of absence in connection with education, etc.

Section 7. (Teaching aids)
In schools and other educational institutions the teaching aids used shall be based on gender equality.
**Section 8. (Associations)**

An association shall be open to women and men on equal terms when
1. membership of the association is of significance for the individual member’s opportunities for work or professional advancement, or
2. the object of the association is essentially to contribute to the solution of general social problems.

The provisions of the first paragraph shall not apply to associations where the main object is to promote the special interests of one of the sexes.

**Section 8a. (Gender-based harassment and sexual harassment)**

Gender-based harassment and sexual harassment are not permitted. Such harassment is considered to be differential treatment in contravention of section 3.

The term ‘gender-based harassment’ shall mean unwelcome conduct that is related to a person’s gender and that has the effect or purpose of offending another person’s dignity.

The term ‘sexual harassment’ shall mean unwelcome sexual attention that is offensive to the object of such attention.

The employer and management of organizations or educational institutions shall be responsible for preventing and seeking to preclude the occurrence of harassment in contravention of provisions of this Act within their sphere of responsibility.

The provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act shall apply in connection with the enforcement of the prohibition against gender-based harassment in the first paragraph and the provision in the third paragraph.

The prohibition against sexual harassment shall be enforced by the courts of law.

Added by the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535), amended by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 38 (in force from 1 July 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 527) and the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 40 (in force from 1 January 2006 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 528).

**Section 9. (Enforcement of the Act)**

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal shall monitor and contribute to the implementation of this Act, cf. the Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act, except for section 17 and the limitations set out in sections 1a and 8a.
Added by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 40 (in force from 1 January 2006 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 528), former section 9 was repealed.

Sections 10-15.
(Repealed by the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 40 (in force from 1 January 2006 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 528).)

Section 16. (Burden of proof)
If there are circumstances that give reason to believe that there has been direct or indirect differential treatment in contravention of the provisions of this Act, such differential treatment shall be assumed to have taken place unless the person responsible proves on a balance of probabilities that such differential treatment nonetheless did not take place.
The first paragraph shall apply correspondingly when a person claims to have been subjected to an act of reprisal in contravention of section 3, fifth paragraph.
Amended by the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535) and the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 38 (in force from 1 July 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 527).

Section 17. (Liability for damages)
Any job seeker or employee who has been subjected to treatment in contravention of provisions of this Act by an employer or a person acting on the latter’s behalf may demand compensation and redress regardless of the fault of the employer. Compensation shall be fixed at the amount that is reasonable, having regard to the financial loss, the situation of the employer and the employee or job seeker and all other circumstances. Redress shall be fixed at the amount that the court finds reasonable, having regard to the relationship of the parties and all other circumstances.
In all other respects, the general rules regarding liability for damages in the event of wilful or negligent contravention of the provisions of this Act shall apply.
Amended by the Act of 14 June 2002 No. 21 (in force from 1 July 2002 pursuant to the Decree of 14 June 2002 No. 535) and the Act of 10 June 2005 No. 38 (in force from 1 July 2005 pursuant to the Decree of 10 June 2005 No. 527).

Sections 18-19.
Section 20. (The geographical extent of the Act)
This Act shall apply in Norway, on Svalbard and on board Norwegian vessels and aircraft in areas that are not subject to the sovereign right of any state. The Act shall also apply to activities on installations and devices on the Norwegian part of the Continental Shelf.
The King may make exceptions to the provisions of the first paragraph and make supplementary provisions regarding the extent of the Act. Before such a decision is made, the opinion of the Board of Appeals shall be obtained.

Section 21. (Representation of both sexes in all public committees, etc.)
When a public body appoints or elects committees, governing boards, councils, boards, etc. each sex shall be represented as follows:
1. If the committee has two or three members, both sexes shall be represented.
2. If the committee has four or five members, each sex shall be represented by at least two members.
3. If the committee has six to eight members, each sex shall be represented by at least three members.
4. If the committee has nine members, each sex shall be represented by at least four members, and if the committee has a greater number of members, each sex shall be represented by at least 40 per cent of the members.
5. The provisions of nos. 1-4 shall apply correspondingly to the election of deputy members.

Exceptions may be made from the provisions of the first paragraph if there are special circumstances that make it obviously unreasonable to demand that the requirements be fulfilled.
The provisions of this section shall not apply to committees, etc. which pursuant to statute shall consist only of members from directly elected assemblies.
The provisions of the Local Government Act shall apply to committees, etc. elected by publicly elected bodies in municipalities and counties.
The King will make provisions regarding enforcement and reporting and may make supplementary provisions pursuant to this section.

Section 22. (Commencement, etc.)

1. This Act shall come into force from the date decided by the King.

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Amended by the Act of 12 June 1981 No. 59 (formerly section 21).

(The Norwegian Government, 2005)
APPENDIX 2 : REPRESENTATION OF BOTH SEXES ON COMPANY BOARDS

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Background

1. In December 2003 the Norwegian Parliament passed an amendment to the Public Limited Companies Act with reference to Ot.prp. nr. 97 (2002-2003), stating that public limited companies establishing a demand for gender balance in the companies’ boards. The legislation was adopted by a large majority of the Parliament, only one party voted against.

2. By doing so, Norway was the first country in the world to demand gender balance within the boards of public limited companies.

3. According to an agreement between the previous Government and the private business sector, the rules applying to private companies should not come into effect if the desired gender representation was achieved voluntarily by 1 July 2005. A survey carried out by Statistics Norway, showed that by 1 July 2005 Norway had 519 public limited companies in the private sector. Only 68 (13,1 per cent) of these companies fulfilled all the demands laid down by the law. 16 per cent of the board members were women.

4. The rules applying to state-owned companies entered into force on 1 January 2004, and the rules regarding privately owned public limited companies entered into force 1. January 2006. There was a normal transitional period of two years from 1 January 2006 for companies registered prior to that date. This means that the public limited companies had to comply with the rules before 1. January 2008. Companies that were not registered by 1 January 2006, had to fulfil the demands to be registered.

Present situation - public limited companies

1. Today approximately 40 percent of the board members in public companies are women

2. No public limited company has been dissolved on account of the gender balance rules so far
3. In April 2008 it was clear that none of the public limited companies would be dissolved.

4. A Press Release from the Brønnøysund Register Centre dated 22 February 2008, states that 12 public limited companies will receive a second 4 weeks notice with public announcement.

5. You may find the press release (only in Norwegian) and the list of companies here.

6. Numbers from Statistics Norway, shows that by February 19th 2008, 39 per cent of the board representatives in public limited companies, were women. 93 per cent of the 459 public limited companies fulfilled the requirements on representation of both sexes laid down in the Public Limited Companies Act.

7. In January 2008, 77 public limited companies had failed to comply with the gender representation rules. These companies have received a letter from the Brønnøysund Register Centre, giving them 4 weeks notice to comply with the rules. The deadline for these companies was in the middle of February.

8. If the companies fail to fulfil the demands within the time limit, the notice will be reiterated by public announcement and the companies will be given a second 4 weeks notice to comply with the rules. After this, the case will be submitted to the court, who will dissolve the company.

**Why gender representation rules?**

1. Reaching a balanced participation is a question of democracy.

2. The Government regards the legislation on women in boards as an important step towards equality between the sexes, a fairer society and a more even distribution of power, and as an important factor in the creation of wealth in society.

3. The legislation will secure women’s influence in decision making processes of great importance for the economy in the society.

4. This legislation is also important for the Norwegian economy.

5. In Norway, there are a high number of women in paid work, and Norwegian women are also highly educated. For several years, more women then men have finished a higher education. Almost 65 per cent of the students at universities and university colleges are women. 50 per cent of the law school graduates are women, so are 40 per cent of the MBA-graduates, approximately 70 per cent of the graduates from the Veterinary College, the School of dental surgery and the...
psychology graduates. Almost 60 per cent of Medical School graduates are women. Despite the fact that an increasing number of women has finished a higher education, the number of women on company board remained small.

6. The Government takes seriously that half the competence that companies need to maintain position in international competition is found among women. The problem was not that Norwegian women were not qualified. The problem was to recruit highly qualified women to board positions and make use of their competence. This legislation make men in leading positions see and experience that women also can do the job.

7. The demand for gender balance in company boards also secures that we make use of all the human resources in our country, not just half of it.

8. Some surveys also indicate that diversity has a positive impact on the companies’ bottom line. Recruiting more women to the boards will increase the diversity, and thereby influence on the bottom line.

What companies are affected?

1. The legislation on representation of both sexes in boards implies for all publicly owned enterprises (state-owned limited liability and public limited companies, state-owned enterprises, companies incorporated by special legislation and inter-municipal companies) and all public limited companies in the private sector. There are approximately 450 public limited companies in Norway.

2. No rules have been proposed for privately owned limited liability companies because most of these companies in Norway are small family enterprises and the owners are themselves members of the board. Public limited companies normally have a broader spread of shares and less personal involvement in the management. Norway has approximately 200,000 limited liability companies.

3. A new law regarding co-operatives has been effective as from January 1st 2008. According to this legislation, co-operatives with more than 1000 members are obliged to have a representation of both sexes in their boards. There are approximately 4000 co-operatives in Norway.

4. The Local Government Act is amended, and rules on representation of both sexes in boards of private limited companies where municipalities own 2/3 or more of the shares is now implied. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development is responsible for this Act. The amendments entered into force January 1st 2010 with a 2-years transitional period.
5. Recruiting women
6. To make women’s competence more visible, different databases have been developed. In these databases, women who are interested in being a member of a board can register, and companies that are looking for someone to a board, can look for qualified women.
7. You may find links to the databases here

What does the law say?
1. The requirement of the gender representation law is that both sexes shall be represented on company boards as follows:
2. If the board has two or three members, both sexes must be represented
3. If the board has four or five members, each sex shall be represented by at least two representatives
4. If the board has six to eight members, each sex shall be represented by at least three representatives
5. If the board has nine members, each sex shall be represented by at least four representatives, and if the board has more than nine members, each sex must make up at least 40 per cent of the representatives.
6. These rules also apply to the election of alternates.
7. There are special requirements for employee representatives:
8. Where two or more board members are elected from among the employees, both sexes must be represented. This also applies to alternates.
9. This rule will not be applicable in companies where one of the genders represents less than twenty per cent of the total number of employees on the date of the election.
10. The rules regarding representation of both sexes is to be applied separately to employee-elected and shareholder-elected representatives in order to ensure independent election processes.

Enforcement
1. No new laws regarding enforcement have been passed.
2. Company legislation already provides for the enforcement of the rules regarding the composition of the board. The rules regarding gender representation will have a natural place in these provisions. This requirement will be enforced through the normal control routines followed by the Brønnøysund Register
Centre ([www.brreg.no](http://www.brreg.no)). Under these rules, the Brønnøysund Register Centre will refuse to register a company board, if its composition does not meet the statutory requirements, just as it refuses registration if the chief executive officer or auditor does not fulfil the legal conditions. A company which does not have a board that fulfils the statutory requirements may be dissolved by order of the court.

3. Dissolution has been a part of the legal system since 1977, in almost 30 years. Experience shows that most companies where discrepancies are pointed out, correct these in due time. Therefore, it is unlikely that any companies will be dissolved by the court on account of the gender representation rule.

According to the Public Limited Companies Act, the Ministry of Trade and Industry may decide that a forced dissolution shall not be executed because of ‘substantial public interests’. In such cases, the company will have to pay a compulsory fine until the conditions are in accordance with the law. This regulation applies to different situations such as requirements regarding the board of directors, the general manager, the auditor and the annual accounts.

(The Norwegian Government, 2008b)
APPENDIX 3: POLITICAL SYSTEM IN NORWAY

Central government
According to the Constitution, which was adopted in 1814, Norway is a monarchy in which the power is divided between three branches: a legislative branch, the Parliament; an executive branch, the Government; and a judicial branch, the courts. The share of women in the Parliament and Government in the 2005–2009 period is, as illustrated, relatively high with 38.2 per cent in the Parliament and 44.4 per cent in the Government (The Norwegian Parliament, 2009a).

County government
Findings from the Equality and Discrimination Ombud report on equality 2007 show that in the 19 County Governments, there are 42 per cent female members, while 33 per cent of county 35 mayors are women. (Gangås, 2008; The Norwegian Parliament, 2009b)

Municipal government
Findings from the Equality and Discrimination Ombud report on equality 2007 show that in the Municipal Government, in the 431 municipalities, there are 36 per cent female members, yet only 17 per cent of mayors are women. (Gangås, 2008; The Norwegian Parliament, 2009b)
APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form
* Please complete this form after reading the Information Sheet

Occupational Sex Segregation –
The Paradox of the Scandinavian Countries

Research Ethics Ref: QMREC2007/23,
Principal Investigator: Cathrine Seierstad

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. Please fill out the following blanks.
If you do have any questions please contact the researcher.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, and without being affected in any way.

I agree to the tape-recording of the interview between myself and the researcher

I agree to take part in the above study

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Vertical sex segregation, equality, and equality strategies-
The paradoxes and paths of the Norwegian labour market

Introduction
This letter is to invite you to participate in this PhD project. The themes for the project are vertical sex segregation, equality, and equality strategies. Before agreeing on taking part in this study or not it is crucial that you understand what participation involves. If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher

Purpose and description of study
The focus of my research is gender in senior positions. My research explores sex segregation in the labour market, investigating the existing paradox in the situation for women in the workforce in the Scandinavian countries. These countries are considered the most equal countries in the world; however, there is strong segregation in the labour-force, both horizontally and vertically. My main focus is on vertical segregation in Norway and my interest for enquiry is; why the glass ceiling is so strongly present in these social democratic countries.
This project seek to explore the lived experiences and views of women with high human capital, either employed in academia, as a politician at national level, or as a board member in a public limited company. The participants experience and views on areas such as ambition, motivation, networking, discrimination, affirmative action and gender roles will be explored.

Data collection
You have to be a woman and either a politician at national level, an academic or a board member to participate. Participants will be interviewed, preferably face to face with the length no longer than 60 minutes.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
The information collected will be kept strictly confidential, and your responses will not be unidentifiable to anyone outside the research team. All published and unpublished reports will disguise the identity of individuals. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information already given will be withdrawn.

I am very grateful for your help. With many thanks,

Best wishes,
Cathrine Seierstad
Researcher
Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity
School of Business and Management
Deltaker Informasjon

Likestilling og det kjønnsdelte arbeidsmarkedet:
Paradokset i de Skandinaviske landene.

Equality and Occupational sex segregation:
the paradox of the Scandinavian countries

Introduksjon
Du er inviteret til å delta i et doktorgradprosjekt. Temaet er ledelse, likestilling og det kjønnsdelte arbeidsmarkedet i Skandinavia. Før du avgjør om du vil delta er det viktig at du er klar over hva en deltagelse vil innebære. Du kan kontakte forskeren hvis noe er uklart og/eller du trenger mer informasjon.

Hensikt og beskrivelse av studie
Doktoravhandlingen vil inneholde en makro analyse av de skandinaviske landene, samt intervjuer av kvinner ansatt i områdene politikk (nasjonalt nivå), akademikere (senior nivå), samt styremedlemmer. De skandinaviske landene har meget høy andel av kvinner i arbeidslivet og er rangert som de mest likestilte i verden. Allikevel har Skandinavia en veldig kjønnsdelt arbeidsstyrke, både horisontalt og vertikalt. Målet med denne studien er å illustrere det paradokset som eksisterer i det skandinaviske arbeidsmarkedet. Dette prosjektet ønsker å belyse erfaringer fra kvinnelige akademikere, politikere og kvinner som har styreverv.

Data
Inklusjons kriterier: kvinne, og enten akademiker, politikker eller styremedlem. Prosedyre: Deltagere vil bli intervjuet, helst personlig eller over telefon med lengde fra 30-60 minutter.
Forsker (PhD stipendiat)
Cathrine Seierstad
Email: c.seierstad@qmul.ac.uk
Tlf: 99698136/00447727698192

Veiledere
Prof. Geraldine Healy and Dr Gill Kirton

**Konfidensialitet og anonymitet.**
Informasjon vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og svar kan ikke bli identifisert av andre enn forskerteamet. All publisert og upublisert materiale vil beskytte individuelle identitet. Dersom du velger å trekke deg fra prosjektet, vil all data bli trukket tilbake.
## APPENDIX 7: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEET

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Biographical information</th>
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APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Vertical sex segregation, equality, and equality strategies-
The paradoxes and paths of the Norwegian labour market

My name is Cathrine Seierstad and I am a researcher in the Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity, at the School of Business and Management, Queen Mary, University of London.

My work is centred on gender and work, and the purpose of my study is:

First, to investigate the patterns of occupational sex segregation, equality, and affirmative action policies in the Norway. Second, explore the views and experiences of Norwegian women employed in areas affected by affirmative action policies, and, third, suggest recommendation for improvements, derive policy implications.

Thank you very much for taking part in the interview. I am extremely grateful. Please be assured that this interview is in complete confidence. At no time will your name be used in any of the analysis.

Interview will cover the following broad areas:

Job, workplace and organisation
Ambition, motivation and influence for career
Networking
Equality and equal opportunity
Discrimination and unequal treatment
Gender and work
Welfare state
Society, culture, and gender roles
Equality strategies
Personal characteristics
First I would like you to fill out the biographical information sheet (see appendix), and the consent form if not already done (see appendix)

1 Job

Q. 1.1 May I start by asking you to describe your current position and workplace?

Probe:
What led you to become a…?

Work tasks
Length of employment
Previous jobs
Gender balance at work (sector, organisation, area)

Politicians:
In your political party, in the Parliament/ Government, your department/ area

Academics:
Gender balance at university, at faculty, and department

Directors:
Gender balance in boards

Q. 1.2 What were the reasons you decided to get into this field?

Probe:
Education
Family
Career opportunity
Financial reason

Q. 1.3 Tell me about any periods you might have taken of work?
Probe:
Parental leave
Sabbatical year
Part-time work due to family responsibilities

If yes, effect on job progression

Q.1.4 Have you made any difficult choices in your career between career and other aspect of your life?

Probe:
Family
Friends
Social life

If yes, the feeling of guilt

2 Ambitions

Q.2.1 How important is your job to you?

Probe
Home centred/ work centred/both

Q.2.2 Do you have anyone who has been a key influence or support in your professional life?

Probe
Mentor
Friends
Family
Husband

Q.2.3 Can you describe your thoughts regarding your job progressions?
Probe: Satisfied
Plans for future
Professional goal
Power
Openness of goals

Q.2.4 How did promotions/ nominations happen?

Probe:
You active
Strategic
Encouraged by others to apply

Q.2.5 This statement is from a woman I interviewed for a previous study, to what extent do you agree with her, if any?

‘I am very good at doing what is best for my company, not what is best for me. I think men are better at being strategic, they dare to be strategic’

Probe:
Relate to you
Other women/men you know

3 Networks

3.1 What are the most dominant networks at your workplace?

Probe:
Formal/ informal

Politicians:
In Politics in general
Parliament/Government
Your committee
Differences national/local
International
Other

Academics:
Your University/faculty/department
International
Discipline based network
Other

Directors:
Your workplace,
As a board member

Q.3.2 What kinds of networks are you part of?

Q.3.3 Have you ever experienced to be excluded from, or chosen to exclude yourself from any networks?

Probe:
Old men’s club
Your response

Q.3.4 How important do you consider networking to be?

Probe:
Do you consider yourself good at networking?

4 Equality and equal opportunity

Q.4.1 What are your views regarding equal opportunities in the Norwegian labour market?
Probe:
General
Your workplace
Formal and ‘real’ equal opportunity
Development last decade
Personal experience

Q.4.2 What’s your observations regarding equality between the sexes at your workplace?

Q.4.3 Are men and women equally represented in senior/powerful positions at your workplace?

Q.4.4 What’s your reflections regarding equality in your private life?

Probe:
Partner
Household duties
Domestic division of labour
Support/ encouragement
Parental leave

5 Discrimination and unequal treatment

Q.5.1 Can you think of any aspects in today’s society where you might experience unequal treatment because of your sex?

Probe:
Work setting

Q.5.2 Have you ever experienced unequal treatment that you expect might be due to your sex?
Q.5.3 Do you have examples of others that have experienced unequal treatment due to their sex?

Q.5.4 What is your reflections on the procedure of hiring/nominating?

Q.5.5 Are you under the impression that women have to work harder than men to get recognised for their achievement, or the opposite?

Q.5.6 Can you think of any barriers women face in the labour market that men will not face?

Q.5.7 Can you think of any practices or actions that exist at your workplace that might maintain or challenge gender inequalities?

6 Gender and work
6.1 How would you describe yourself as a worker?

Probe:
Strengths
Weaknesses

6.2 Have you noticed any differences (characteristics, work patterns) between men and women in the workplace?

Probe:

Politicians:
Time spent on the public
Time spent preparing speeches
Time spent on media

Academics:
Time spent on students
Time spent preparing for lectures
Administrative tasks

Directors:
Preparation to meetings
Speaking time in meetings
Interruptions in meetings

Q. 6.3 How do you think gender balance is affecting the workplace?

Probe:
Atmosphere,
Quality
Personal experience
Q.6.4 Due to the new law regarding gender balance in public limited companies there has been a lot of debate in the media regarding the use of gender quotas, how are you experiencing this debate?

Probe:
Who they interview
Focus

7 Welfare

7.1 How important do you consider welfare strategies to be in order to get women into the labour market as well as into senior positions?

Probe:
Kindergarten coverage
Parental leave
Opposite; welfare working against women

7.2 How important have welfare strategies been for your career?

7.3 Is there anything that you think should be reconsidered regarding Norway’s welfare approach?

Probe:
Maternal-Parental division (daddy leave)

8 Society, culture, and gender roles

Q.8.1 What is your views of traditional gender roles in the Norwegian society?

Probe:
Does it still exists
Your work life
In your private life
Domestic duties
Support from partner to career

If yes, in what ways

Q.8.2 Are you under the impression that men are comfortable with women making more money than they are?

Probe:
Your private life, partner
Friends
Family

Q.8.3 Women are now taking more higher education than men; do you have the impression that men are comfortable with women having more education than them?

Probe:
Your private life, partner
Friends
Family

Q.8.4 You have a good career, and might by others be considered as successful. Have you had any feedback on being a successful women?

Probe:
Positive
Negative

Q.8.5 Norway has a very segregated labour market, what do you think is the main factor why men and women have so different career patterns?

9 Equality strategies

9.1 There has been a lot of focus on different equality strategies in order to get more women into senior positions. What are your thoughts on this?
9.2 What do you think might be the benefits or danger with the use of gender quotas

Probe:
Different strategies

9.3 Does your organisation have any plans or initiatives in order to get more women into senior positions?

Probe:
Training
Mentor
Flexi time

9.4 Can you think of any initiatives that you think would be useful?

9.5 Do you think that laws and/or initiatives to get more women into senior positions should come from organisational or state level?

Probe:
Pro and cons

9.6 What are the importance (if any) of ‘visible’ role models (symbolic)?

Probe:
For your choices

9.7 Do we need ‘tokens’ in order to break the barriers?

For academics:
9.8 The numbers of women in senior positions (professors) in academia are low, lower than the mean of the EU countries. A moderate gender law exist, is this enough or do you think more radical steps is needed in academia as well?

Probe:
Do comments like’ she got it because she is a woman’ exist in academia?
Your personal experience

For politicians:
9.9 The numbers of women in politics have risen considerably the last 25 years after gender quotas were introduced (in most political parties). What’s your experience of the use of gender quotas?

Probe:
Do we still need it?
Should it be higher (some political parties 50 per cent, majority 40 per cent)
Is gender balance a natural part in politics, or can you get comments like ‘she got because she is a woman
Your experience

For Directors:
9.10 A new law was introduced in 2006 with a two year implementing period ending the 1st of January 2008, forcing companies to have a gender balance of at least 40 per cent of each sex on company boards. How have you experienced this period?

Probe:
Treated difference in board meetings
By outsiders
Questioning your reasons for being a board member

10 Personal characteristics

10.1 Can you describe three of the characteristics, (strengths or qualities) you possess that are important for the job you do as well as important for getting you where you are?
10.2 Apart from the three characteristics, what other factors have been important for your career?

10.3 Before we finish, is it anything you would like to add, anything you consider important in relation to gender and vertical segregation in the Norwegian labour market that was not covered in this interview?
APPENDIX 9: EQUALITY STRATEGIES AT UIO

The University of Oslo (UIO)

The UIO has approximately 4600 employees and 30 000 students. The Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007–2009 at the UIO states that:

‘Gender equality is a strategic concern for the UIO. …Gender equality also has an impact on the quality of the University’s activities and on its legitimacy in society as the country’s foremost institution for research, education and the dissemination of knowledge.’

Strategies mentioned in the Plan for Gender Equality 2007–2009 at the UIO are:

• Legal and administrative guidelines for announcing lecturing and research posts
• Recruitment processes
• Mentors
• Financial support and incentives
• Locally adapted equality strategies
• Equality competent management
• External and internal focus

(University of Oslo, 2007)
APPENDIX 10: EQUALITY STRATEGIES AT UIB

The University of Bergen (UIB)
The UIB has approximately 3200 employees and 14 500 students.
The action plan for gender equality at the UIB states that:

‘UIB is a workplace with a traditional gender division of labour; men dominate the highest positions in research, academic leadership and administration. In addition, the gender distribution is very uneven between subject areas and disciplines. We wish to change this. We are determined to make this university a front-runner in the area of gender equality and we are working to achieve significant results’

Some of the strategies that are mentioned in UIB’s action plan for gender equality 2007-2009:

- The allocation of incentive funds to the academic environment when women are appointed to academic positions
- Recruitment boosting measures, such as qualifications grants or extra research terms
- Start up packages
- National and international mentor schemes
- Management development
- Network building
- Knowledge building and information

Their goal for gender representation is to have 50 per cent women of all new employed staff
(Univeristy of Bergen, 2007)
APPENDIX 11: EQUALITY STRATEGIES AT NHH

The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH)

NHH has approximately 350 employees, 200 of which are employed in academic positions. NHH has approximately 2700 students at various levels.

The action plan for gender equality at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) states that:

‘The present gender balance is a strategic challenge. The heads of department are responsible for integrating this work into the department’s work and ensuring support for it among academic staff, and for the goals being attained within their subject areas during the planning period. In other respects, tasks and responsibility will follow the school’s organisation, and they are a management responsibility at all levels.

A variety of potential strategies for NHH are mentioned in the action plan such as:

- Active recruitment
- Appointment of women to research assistant positions.
- Earmarking of temporary researcher positions
- Taking conscious steps to develop academic milieus in order to recruit and retain women (positions, support, recognition, increasing visibility).
- Mentoring scheme for women in recruitment positions.
- Start-up packages for women
- Taking steps to facilitate further skills development

Local allocation of funds for measures for women.

(The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, 2008)
APPENDIX 12: SENIOR POSITIONS AT THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Principal, pro principal and vice principal at UIO, UIB and NHH

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<th>Principal</th>
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APPENDIX 13: SENIOR POSITIONS AT UIO

Dean, dean of research and dean of education at the different faculties at UIO

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<th>Dean of education</th>
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### APPENDIX 14: SENIOR POSITIONS AT UIB

Dean, dean of research and dean of education at the different faculties at UIB

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### APPENDIX 15: SENIOR POSITIONS AT NHH

Heads of departments at NHH

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<th>Head of department</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Man</th>
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# APPENDIX 16. FERTILITY RATES

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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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(United Nations, 2005) * Total fertility rate estimates the total number of children a girl will bear if her child-bearing follows the current fertility patterns and she lives through her entire child-bearing years. Total fertility rate is estimated by the Population Division
of the United Nations Secretariat using the latest available demographic data from
countries and given as a five-year averages.
Footnotes

1 My understanding of sex and gender is in line with the work of Bradley (1999, 2007). Bradley takes the position that gender is something different from either biological sex or sexuality and the subsequent discussion is grounded in this distinction. Bradley paraphrases de Beauvoir: ‘one is born with a body that is immediately ascribed a male or female identity (usually on the basis of fairly unambiguous physiological evidence, the possession of a penis or a vagina), but one becomes a man or a woman through social interactions with a set of cultural understandings about femininity and masculinity’ (2007:21). Bradley (1999:22) identified how she views the concept of gender as ‘relations between ‘men’ and ‘women’, that is, the way we divide society’s members into two (or more) biologically-distinguished sexes and allocate them different social roles and attributes’. Hence, I will refer to sex in terms of segregation based on biological differences, while gender is used to include more cultural meanings and understandings. Nevertheless, when discussing the work of others and specific laws, I will use the terminology used by the author.

2 The Scandinavian countries include Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The Nordic countries are the Scandinavian countries plus Finland and Iceland.

3 The Norwegian equality strategy approach is referred to as affirmative action (AA). The justification for using AA is discussed in Chapter Four.

4 This thesis will refer to politics, academia and boards of directors (BODs) as occupational groups, even though they are not all considered occupations. The participants from the occupational groups are politicians, academics and directors. ‘Directors’ refers to members of boards of directors on public limited companies as these are affected by the gender representation law.

5 A discussion of the concept of equality is presented in Chapter Four.

6 1. Economic participation and opportunity – outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment; 2. Educational attainment – outcomes on access to basic and higher level education; 3. Political empowerment – outcomes on representation in decision-making structures; 4. Health.

7 Note: GDI = female economic activity rate, gender-related development index, GEM = gender empowerment measure. GEM also measures gender inequality, but in economic and political spheres of activity. It is made up of two dimensions. First, economic participation and decision making are measured by the percentage of female administrators and managers, and professional and technical workers; and second, political participation and decision making are measured by the percentage of seats held in parliament.
Saldo 2008 is a report on the account of equality and discrimination in Norway by the Norwegian Equality and anti-discrimination Ombudsman (Gangås, B). The report looks at areas such as education and research, the labour market, power and influence, violence, and living conditions.

This includes part-time workers (per cent) of the workforce, 15–64 years of age.

The analysis of vertical sex segregation in senior positions in the private sector illustrates the context in which corporate boards operate. Hence BODs will be the focus of analysis in exploring senior positions in the private sector.

Acker does operate with some differences between her article and book (both 2006) in terms of components of inequality regimes. My analytical framework is based on the components from the article *Inequality regimes – Gender, Class and Race in Organizations*.

The two committees not having participants in this study will not be identified due to the importance of anonymity; as the number of women in some committees is very small, there is a possibility that they could be identified if the committees were revealed.


The Brønnøysund Register Centre is a government body under the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry, and consists of several different national computerised registers. These registers contain information and key data about such matters as:

- Liabilities and titles in mortgaged movable property
- Almost 400 000 business enterprises
- More than 2 300 000 annual accounts and auditor's reports of limited companies
- Bankruptcies and compulsory liquidations
- Approximately 230 000 marriage settlements

Statistics Norway is a database with publicly available data from and about Norway.

In this table the participants belonging to more than one category are put in the group they have as their current fulltime job. For the group ‘Directors’ only 19 are included in this table, yet for the analysis 22 of the participants are members of company boards and will be analysed. For the group ‘Politicians’ 25 are included here, yet one more participant is included in the analysis as she was a member of the previous...
Government and is currently a board member of several company boards and thus categorised as a board member for this table.

17 Academic Trust Funds Committee awarded a grant from University of London Scholarship Fund on 21 January 2008.

18 The leaking pipeline metaphor is often used to describe the factors that contribute to the funnelling of women academics at different stages of their working life (White 2004) – why women ‘disappear’ and do not climb the hierarchical ladder.

19 Crown prince syndrome refers to the idea that some men are chosen at an early stage and are lifted to important positions.

20 Survey methodology for EPWN 2008: The survey was carried out by Egon Zehnder International using data provided by BoardEx which is based on publicly available information. It focuses on the 300 largest companies in Europe by market capitalisation and is sorted based on the worldwide headquarters home country. The top European companies were based on the FTSEurofirst 300 Index. In addition, for all countries, at least six companies were included to make sure the data is significant. EPWN (2009). “European Professional Women’s Network: Company boards Europe.” http://www.europeanpwn.net/index.php?article_id=561. Retrieved 05.12.2009.

21 ASA: PLC in the private sector
IKS: Inter-municipal companies
SÆR: Companies incorporated by special legislation
AS: State-owned limited liability and PLC
SF: State owned enterprises.


23 In Norway, the common term for prominent directors is ‘Styregrossist’, which is gender neutral.

24 The exact gender distribution 2008–2009 is slightly different from the election in 2005, where the female representation was 37.9, as a number of those that were elected are presently serving as Government ministers and their seats therefore are filled by alternates, that may or may not be of the same sex. In addition there might be other reasons for absence and other people filling in.

25 The data from Table 6.15 is from 2003. There is, however, little indication that there has been considerable change over recent years and the tendency presented is adequate.

26 E24 is, together with DN, among the most respected of financial newspapers in Norway.
27 DN, Dagens Næringsliv is one of the leading Norwegian financial newspapers

28 The Progress Party, FrP, is the only political party in Norway which has no gender representation initiatives or women’s network/groups. Nevertheless, the Party has been very helpful to this thesis, both with participants and information, and was in fact the first political party to reply to me.

29 From 1997 to 3 March 2000 Bondevik’s first government was a coalition cabinet consisting of the Christian Democratic Party, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. For the second Bondevik government, the coalition from 2001–2005 consisted of the Christian Democratic Party, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party.

30 Special rules exist for the employee representatives depending on the gender representation within the respective organisation.

31 In 2009 the Progress Party changed the title of their leader from Chairman to Chair.

32 In Norway income and tax for all citizens are publicly available information. You can search for names on the internet and their details will be available. In theory people can therefore compare their salaries with their colleagues.

34 Since the interviews, childcare provision has improved and the Norwegian Government do now offer full childcare provision to parents.

35 Oslo is classified as both a county and a municipality, but does not have a separate County Government.