Framing feminist policies

The case of prostitution and pornography in Sweden

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Introduction

The Swedish prostitution law can be described as a feminist success in a reluctant context. Sweden is a country in which an ideology of equality and social redistribution has been predominant. Issues like prostitution that require a recognition of women as a group, are considered difficult to pursue. In this paper I will try to explain how this policy became possible using a theory of framing.

The phenomenon of framing has attracted increasing interest in public policy research as well as in feminist research. The framing of an issue has been stressed as decisive for promoting gender equality policy. However, there is still a lack of studies explaining why framing is important and how the process of framing works. This paper will try to fill this gap.

In 1998 a new Swedish prostitution law was established prohibiting the purchase of sexual services without criminalizing the prostitute. The law is unique world-wide for the design and therefore it is even more unique in the Swedish context. Prostitution constitutes a cultural injustice, which according to the philosopher Nancy Fraser demands a politics of recognition stressing women as different. Sweden has traditionally been a country where gender equality has been closely connected to the labour market and what Fraser calls politics of redistribution stressing women as the same as men. Feminist research indicates that issues of recognition have been difficult to pursue in the Swedish context and therefore the establishment of the law is of great interest. I consider the law to be an important feminist policy that challenges the gender relation of unequal power in the cultural sphere. The law represents a standpoint of principle by the government in the gender debate.

The prostitution law becomes even more interesting compared to the case of pornography. Pornography has not been the object of corresponding political measures albeit the issue is closely related to prostitution and albeit attempts to pursue similar measures. On two different occasions actors have intended to pursue the issue from a feminist perspective with no success.

This puzzle, how it was possible to carry through a feminist measure in the issue of prostitution but not in the issue of pornography despite various attempts, is the starting point of this paper.

This paper will address two questions. First of all I am interested in solving the empirical puzzle and learn more about the factors promoting and hindering feminist policy. In order to do so I will use a theory of framing.

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2 Fraser distinguishes between politics of recognition and politics of redistribution. She states that both are necessary for gender equality but she also emphasises that the politics are potentially contradictory and that there is a risk that the politics are counterproductive. Fraser, Nancy 1995
developed by the sociologists David Snow and Robert Benford to explain how social movements mobilise support.\(^4\)

Second, by doing that I will test the fruitfulness of the theoretical framework. Can this framework, designed for another context, be transferred to the Swedish policy process and applied on gender issues in order to explain how feminist policy is carried through? Women's movements and women's policy agencies (WPA:s) will be given special importance in the analysis. It should be observed that in the Swedish policy-making process actors have large opportunities to influence the framing of an issue on the political agenda through the so-called 'remiss system'.

**Explaining feminist policy through framing**

Feminist policy or women friendly policy can be and has been defined in many different ways. My definition of feminist policy is policy that calls into question the unequal power relation between men and women.\(^5\) I consider *legislation that challenges the unequal gender relation* as a standpoint of principle on the part of the government and therefore as important. The effects of the policies are also interesting but another question.

Prostitution and pornography are important gender issues. In prostitution and pornography the unequal gender relation is manifested through the objectification and sexualisation of women. Policies that call the objectification and sexualisation of women into question are by my definition feminist policy. Feminist actors are those trying to pursue feminist proposals.

A starting point in this paper is that meanings and ideas are social productions and not to be treated as given constants. Snow and Benford refer to a frame as an 'interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses "the world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objets, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment'.\(^6\) According to Snow and Benford frames function to systematise experiences and to guide action, both individual and collective action.\(^7\) Framing is the signifying work in which actors such as organisations, media and the government engage to shape and structure meaning in order to mobilise support.\(^8\) According to Snow and Benford it is necessary to establish

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5 Amy Mazur refers to the variety of definitions of womenfriendliness used by different feminist scholars. She opts for the word 'feminist' to pinpoint policies that have the specific intent of promote women's rights and equality between the sexes. I use the term 'feminist policy' but my definition is more similar to Borhorst's definition of women friendliness referred to by Mazur. Borhorst defines women friendliness as the degree to which welfare states put into question 'patriarchal patterns of power' in society. Mazur, Amy G 2002:27


7 Snow, D. A. et al 1986:464

8 Snow, D. A, Benford, R. D. 1988
a linkage between the frame of the framing actor and the potential supporter in order to mobilise support. Some set of interests, values and beliefs needs to be congruent and complementary. A policy proposal functions as a frame of a particular issue containing a diagnosis and a prognosis of a problem. In order to explain why a certain policy solution is carried through and not an alternative one, it is important to understand how the process of framing works.

The aim of this paper is primarily theoretical. By applying a theoretical framework of framing on an empirical puzzle I will try to find the conditions that are conducive to feminist policy. If the framework has potential to increase our understanding of what promotes and hinders feminist policy, it has proven to be fruitful. Three different aspects of the framing process will be analysed.

Firstly, how have the actors engaged in the process framed the issue? Were there any framing disputes and about which aspects? I distinguish between a gendered framing attempt and feminist attempt. A gendered attempt is including the gender aspect in some way in the framing but is not necessarily challenging the gender relation in the proposed solution. A feminist attempt on the contrary includes a proposal that challenges the unequal gender relation.

Secondly, the governmental choice of framing is scrutinised. What actors did the government listen to and why?

Thirdly, the actors' strategies are focused. Which strategies did the actors use to win the government's support? Were their strategies successful?

The theoretical framework incorporates these three aspects of the framing process. So the question in this paper is if the framework is useful in this specific context. Can it increase our knowledge about how to pursue feminist policy?

An empirical puzzle in the Swedish context

Three different policy processes will be analysed in this paper. The first two concern pornography and where initiated in 1965 and 1977 respectively. In both processes feminist actors tried to pursue feminist proposals but none of the attempts succeeded. In the third case, concerning prostitution, a feminist proposal was pursued and incorporated in the governmental bill. This process was initiated in 1993. These cases are comparable in many aspects and still have different outcomes. If the theoretical framework helps us to solve the

10 Yvonne Svanström has studied prostitution in a historical perspective but as far as I know pornography has not been studied that much in a Swedish context. Svanström, Y 2004
puzzle it may be used to explain other feminist and non-feminist policy processes as well.

Prostitution and pornography are also suitable cases because they are pure gender issues. Since they do not follow party ideologies in any apparent way there are good possibilities to affect the final proposition by framing. The fact that the processes take place in different periods of time might be a problem. The empirical analyse will show if that is so.

The framing of an issue takes place simultaneously in different arenas of society. In this study however the parliamentary arena is in focus and I will only analyse the process directly preceding a governmental bill using parliamentary publications. The normal legislative process in Sweden starts with the appointment of a commission instructed to investigate a certain issue. The commission presents its findings in one or several reports circulated to the concerned parties; organisations, authorities, agencies and others. This is called the 'remiss system'. The comments from the parties are sent back to the government that has to take them into consideration before proposing a bill. The Swedish system gives large opportunities for extra-parliamentary actors to influence the governmental bill.

The process analysed in this paper begins with the instructions given by the government to an inquiry commission and ends with the governmental bill. I refer to this process as the framing process. The instructions to the commission must be given special focus since they set the limits for the framing process.

A theory of framing in a new context

In this paper a framework based on Erwin Goffman's frame analysis and developed by sociologists David Snow and Robert Benford, will be applied on a new context.11 Their framework is set out in a number of articles to explain the mobilisation of social movements in the United States. I will test if the framework is also applicable on the parliamentary arena in Sweden to explain the outcome of policy processes. I will also test the potential of the framework when applied to gender issues.

I argue that the Snow and Benford framework is generalizable to other contexts than the extra-parliamentary arena of social movements. The basic features of this framework are applicable on any context where actors are engaged in the production of meaning in order to convince a target group. I claim that the Swedish policy process and more specifically the 'remiss system' is such a context. The basic idea of the remiss system is a pluralistic

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one in which different actors have their say about a certain issue in the legislative process. The government is the target group in the process and different actors have to frame the issue in a suitable way in order to mobilise support from the government for a certain proposal. Snow and Benford explicitly mention that there are other actors than social movements and other contexts of interests in the framing processes and they encourage a widening of the studies of framing.12

The basic assumptions of the framework are a social constructivist view of social phenomenon and an actors-derived perspective on change. The framework of state feminism is compatible with these basic assumptions since it stresses the role of feminist actors in the policy process. The social constructivist assumption is compatible with the fundamental assumptions in most feminist theory. State feminism and framing theory can thus be incorporated without any fundamental conflicts.

State feminism in a broad sense refers to 'feminism from above' or a belief in feminist change via established political structures. In a more narrow understanding the concept refers to the efficiency of feminist policy actors or special state structures in advancing women's interests and achieving desired policy outcomes.13 The impact of women's movements and women's policy agencies on public policy are given special attention in the RNGS project.14

My starting point is broader than the RNGS project. My main interest is the feminist policy outcomes and not primarily the impact of women's movements and WPA:s as an intervening variable. I find it interesting to incorporate a special focus on the women's movements and WPA:s though. If not for being conducive to feminist policy it is still interesting to see which role the actors normally connected with women's issues plays in the framing process.

Three aspects of framing

In order to grasp the dynamics of the framing process I argue that three overall aspects must be addressed. Consequently I will test these three aspects to see if the framework is fruitful. First of all the different framing attempts occurring in the process must be distinguished and described to understand if there has been a struggle of meaning and about what. Second, the choice of frame of the target group must be scrutinised to understand why a certain

12 Snow, D. A. et alt 1986:478
13 Holli, Anne Maria 2003:103f
14 The Research Network on Gender, Politics and the State. "...the research project seeks to develop a systematic, cross-cultural comparative approach to the study of the impact of the women's movements and the role of state feminism in post industrial countries." Holli, Anne Maria 2003
frame resonates/gains support. Third, the possible strategies used by the actors must be analysed to stipulate if strategies are used and if they are efficient. Snow and Benford do not explicitly mention these specific aspects but they address the questions.

If the framework has a potential to increase our knowledge of the factors that hinder and promote feminist policy I consider it to be fruitful.

The framing attempts

Snow and Benford refer to the product of the framing activity as collective action frames. Three functions or characteristics are specified in their article from 1992. Firstly the frame has a *punctuating function* meaning that the frames are used to "punctuate or single out some existing social condition or aspect of life and define it as unjust, intolerable, and deserving of corrective action."15 This aspect of the frame is not enough to guide and predict the nature of collective action according to Snow and Benford. In order to be conducive some idea of causality or blame and a corresponding sense of responsibility for corrective action need to be specified. The second function of the frames is thus that they serve as *modes of attribution* both in a diagnostic and prognostic sense. "...diagnostic attribution is concerned with problem identification, whereas prognostic attribution addresses resolution."16 The third aspect of the frame is the *articulational function*. "[C]ollective action frames enable activists to articulate and align a vast array of events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and meaningful fashion." Shortly, it is a matter of how to present the information. Snow and Benford point out that what makes a frame innovative are not new ideational elements but the manner in which they are woven together and articulated by framing actors.17 The third function is thus on another level than the two former, incorporating the punctuating and attributional aspects of the frame. The articulational function is about the presentation whereas the other two aspects are about the content.18

Snow and Benford introduce the concept of master frame to incorporate the macro level. The master frame performs the same function as the collective action frames but on a larger scale. '[M]aster frames are to movement-specific collective action frames as paradigms are to finely tuned theories.'19 According to Snow and Benford actors who engage early in the

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15 1992 137
16 1992 137
18 It is probably more difficult to be strategic in one's description of for example the blame without changing the content of the frame radically. A change in the articulational function means that something is added or motivated in a better manner rather than changed completely.
19 Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. 1992:38
focusing process have an advantage over other actors in setting the master frame which limits further framing attempts.\textsuperscript{20}

In an article from 1993 Benford identifies three types of framing disputes, that may occur within a social movement. According to Benford the conflicts may occur between different actors or fractions within a movement.\textsuperscript{21} But the way I see it they can also occur between other actors engaged in whichever framing process. The first kind of framing dispute is about the problem identification, the \textit{diagnosis}. The second is about the \textit{prognosis} and the methods used. The third dispute can arise about the \textit{resonance}, which is about how to present the issue in order to gain support.\textsuperscript{22} According to Benford the disputes are "disagreements over what is, over what ought to be, and over how to present a movement's versions and visions of reality."\textsuperscript{23}

In the policy process actors do not always have a common interest in gaining support but are rather antagonists. The first two disputes can be identified in the policy process as well. The third dispute, about the articulational aspect, is also possible to identify as different articulations of the problem, but the actors do not share a common interest in winning as they do in a social movement.

The different framing attempts will be distinguished and analysed in order to answer the following questions: How have the actors that were engaged in the process framed the issue? Were there any framing disputes and about which aspects?\textsuperscript{24} Were there feminist framing attempts, or at least gendered attempts? The descriptive frame characteristics will be used to identify, describe and compare the different framing attempts and the disputes among the actors.

1) The punctuating function
2) The attributional function
3) The articulational function. Under this category I will primary focus on whether the issue is presented as a gender related issue or not.

The direct statements in the data will be analysed. What is pointed out as the problem, the cause and the solution? How is the issue presented? The instructions to the commission will be analysed in order to give an idea about the forthcoming framing possibilities. The framing of women's organisations and WPA:s will be analysed specifically.

\textsuperscript{20} Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. 1992:144
\textsuperscript{21} Benford, R. D. 1993
\textsuperscript{22} Benford, R. D. 1993: 677ff
\textsuperscript{23} ibid 1993:679
\textsuperscript{24} By dispute I refer to a descriptive difference between two framing efforts and not to an actual dispute or conflict between the actors.
Frame resonance - the government's choice of framing

Of special interest for explaining policy outcomes, is the discussion in the Snow and Benford article from 1988 about framing resonance. In order to explain why a certain framing effort is successful and another one is not, Snow and Benford identify four sets of factors that affect the mobilising potency of a movement's framing efforts and activities.25

The first set of factors is related to the core framing tasks, the first identified as the diagnosis, the second as the prognosis and the third as a rationale for action. The success of a framing effort depends on the degree to which the framing tasks or elements are robust or richly developed and interconnected.26

The framing effort is also determined by factors external to it. The second set of factors is related to the internal structure of the larger belief system or ideology with which the movement seeks to effect some form of alignment. Essential is the centrality of the values and beliefs promoted in the framing attempt. If they are of low importance in the larger belief system the mobilising potential of the framing is weakened. If the linkage of the values and beliefs in the framing effort to the larger belief system is limited or only linked to one core belief or value, the movement's framing is uncertain.27

The third set of factors affecting the success and failure of a certain framing effort is also external to the framing itself. Snow and Benford call the third set phenomenological constraints. If a framing effort is to succeed the connection and relevance to the phenomenological life-world of the target group is of great importance. There are three constraints in this set of factors, which are interrelated but analytically distinct. The first pointed out by Snow and Benford is empirical credibility, which refers to the fit between the framing and established events in the world. Shortly it is about whether the framing is testable and possible to verify or not.28

The second aspect of the phenomenological constraints is experiential commensurability. 'In an area of competing frames (..), the question arises as to what determines whether one set of claims is found to be more credible than the others. The answer depends in part on the interpretative screen through which the "evidence" is filtered.'29 One such filter pointed out as important for getting a response is the personal experience of the target group. This criterion has special implications for gender related issues. Snow and

25 Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. 1988 197ff
26 Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. 1988:199 The framing tasks do not correspond completely to the frame characteristics mentioned above even if the main features are the same. Since the concepts are developed in two different articles it is difficult to say whether Snow and Benford refer to the same aspects using different labels or whether they refer to different phenomena. However what is interesting about this criterion is the robustness and the interconnectedness of the elements of the frame.
27 ibid 205ff
28 ibid 207ff
29 ibid 208
Benford call the third aspect of the life-world criterion *narrative fidelity*. The degree to which proffered framings resonate with cultural narratives, that is, with the stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one's cultural heritage and that thus function to inform events and experiences in the immediate present.\textsuperscript{30} This criterion is difficult to test but I still think it is of importance for the fate of a framing attempt.

Snow and Benford suggest that at least one of the phenomenological criteria is a necessary condition for resonance.\textsuperscript{31}

The last set of factors mentioned as decisive for the resonance of a framing effort is *cycles of protest*. Following their earlier work Snow and Benford state '...within each historical era there are typically "one or two movements that colour the preoccupations and social change effected during the era"'.\textsuperscript{32} The character of the cycle of protest affects and sets the limit for the framing attempts. The timing of the framing actors in relation to the emergence of the cycle of protest affects their possibilities to frame the issue.\textsuperscript{33}

The framing incorporated in the bill will be analysed using the resonance criteria in order to explain why the government chose to support a certain actor and framing.

1) The degree of robustness and interconnectedness of the basic elements of the frame will be inquired. My operationalisation of robustness and interconnectedness is whether the prognosis is a logical consequence of the diagnosis of the problem. For example a logical result of an individual understanding of the cause of the problem is a solution directed to individuals and vice versa.

2) The connection between the framing and the internal structure of the belief system/ideology of the target group.

3) The relevance of the framing for the life-world of the target group.

4) The predominant cycle of protest.\textsuperscript{34}

I will attach great importance to the government's motivations in the bill. Is empirical credibility or cycles of protest stressed as important? By comparing the government's choice of framing with the alternative framing attempts in terms of these criteria I will also be able to see the difference between a successful framing and a failed one. By such comparisons I will be able to say something about the characteristics of the actor or actors as well.

\textsuperscript{30} Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D. 1988: 210
\textsuperscript{31} ibid 207ff
\textsuperscript{32} ibid 211f
\textsuperscript{33} ibid 211f
\textsuperscript{34} The myths and folktales at a certain time are difficult to distinguish from the fourth criterion, the cycle of protest predominant at a certain time. I think the cycle of protest is to be understood as a more temporal phenomenon.
Frame alignment - actors' strategies

In order to establish a link to the interpretative orientations of the target group framing actors use different strategies called frame alignment processes by Snow et al.\(^{35}\) Accordingly actors use different strategies in order to better fulfil the criteria of resonance. The first process is called frame bridging. 'By frame bridging we refer to the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem.'\(^{36}\) The second alignment process identified is frame amplification of values or beliefs. 'By frame amplification, we refer to the clarification and invigoration of an interpretative frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events.'\(^{37}\) These strategies aim at making the connection to the life-world of the target groups more convincing.

The third strategy is the frame extension. 'In effect, the movement is attempting to enlarge its adherent pool by portraying its objectives or activities as attending to or being congruent with the values and interests of potential adherents.'\(^{38}\) The frame is made more inclusive in order to resonate with more potential adherents. The frame extension is also a way of finding a linkage between the life-world of the target group and the framing actor.\(^{39}\)

The fourth strategy, frame transformation, is the most radical. When other strategies are not enough a transformation and reframing of the issue might be necessary to gain resonance.

The actor's strategies will be analysed using the frame alignment processes mentioned by Snow and Benford. The questions to answer are: Which strategies did actors use to gain the support of the government? And were their strategies successful? By comparing a specific actor's framing from one time to another something can be said about the change of frame and consequently about possible strategies.

1) Frame bridging
2) Frame amplification
3) Frame extension
4) Frame transformation

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\(^{35}\) Snow, D. A et alt 1986
\(^{36}\) ibid 467
\(^{37}\) ibid 469
\(^{38}\) ibid 472
\(^{39}\) I see frame extension as having more of a spatial extension than frame amplification. For example making the local problem national is frame extension whereas frame amplification is related to an increased and refreshed incorporation of the values and beliefs in a more abstract sense.
The legalisation on pornography - a feminist failure

Pornography reached the governmental agenda in 1965. At that time restrictions of the freedom of speech and the press were called into question. Among the restrictions was a law prohibiting descriptions offensive to the public discipline and decency, in which pornography was included. The Social democratic government decided to appoint a commission of inquiry in order to scrutinise the restrictions to the freedom of the press. The instructions stated that the starting point for the commission should be an unlimited freedom of expression. The commission report was presented to the same Social democratic government in 1969. Concerning pornographic descriptions the commission stated that the law prohibiting offensive descriptions should be abolished but that an outer limit of the allowable should be maintained. Most of the concerned parties supported the commission proposal. Some parties proposed an abolishment of the law without any limitations. Others wanted to keep the law and some warned of the negative effects of pornography on the norms of sexuality. The government chose to abolish the law without any restrictions in the government bill.40

Framing attempts

The commission instructions were relatively narrow. Restrictions to the freedom of speech and press were pointed out as a problem in principle. Furthermore the instructions stated that the law against descriptions offensive to the public discipline and decency no longer corresponded to the public opinion. Clearly the instructions try to limit further framing attempts. The instructions frame restrictions on the freedom of speech as a problem, which becomes the starting point for the commission. Pornography is not framed as a problem.41

Three conflicting framing lines can be distinguished in the framing process.

The commission represents the first framing 'group' which also includes the majority of the concerned parties. The commission frames pornography as a potential problem. Despite lack of scientific evidence the commission states that pornography might have harmful effects on social attitudes and values or even may increase sexual assaults. An abolishment of the law prohibiting descriptions offensive to the public discipline and decency was proposed while keeping an outer limit of the allowable. The commission stresses that the government should keep the possibility to intervene if the development would take a negative direction.42

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40 SOU 1969:38, prop 1970:125
41 SOU 1969:38 p 11ff
42 SOU 1969:38
The second framing line is represented in the bill. The bill explicitly refers to some of the concerned parties, the Prosecutor-General and the Authors organisation. Pornography is not framed as a problem by these actors due to the lack of scientific evidence of any harmful effects. The government argues that due to the lack of evidence no restrictions to the freedom of expression are justified. Restrictions to the freedom of speech are thus framed as a problem as in the instructions. The solution to the problem is an abolishment of the law prohibiting offensive descriptions with no exceptions.43

The third line of framing is composed by a group of concerned parties who want to keep the law. The complete framing is unfortunately not clear in the data used here. However there are two different diagnoses of the problem within this group even though the proposed solution is the same. One is represented by some of the concerned parties including among others some religious organisations. These groups are against pornography for moral reasons. The other line is represented by some extra-parliamentary groups of pornography antagonists, framing pornography as a problem. They stress that increased supply give the young a misleading attitude to sexuality and the opposite sex. Which these groups are more precisely is not clear. Judging by their diagnoses they are possibly women's organisations trying to gender the issue. It is far from clear at this point if the gendered framing attempt also was feminist by my definition, that is if it aimed at correcting the objectification and sexualisation of women. The framing was gendered though and the proposal most possibly also feminist.44

The struggle between the different framing attempts was mainly about the punctuating function. The framing actors or 'groups' do not agree about what the problem is. Restrictions of the freedom of speech or an increased supply of pornography? The value conflict is obvious. Furthermore a conflict about the attributional function is present, above all about the solutions and about who is responsible for the necessary solutions. The commission stresses the responsibility of the state whereas the bill states that it is up to the individual himself (not herself) to decide if he wants to consume pornography.

The gender aspect is not systematically included in the articulation function or in the other aspects. Accordingly, the debate is not gendered. The extra-parliamentary groups mentioned try to frame prostitution as a gender-related problem but without success.

The government's bill45

The government explicitly refers to the office of the Prosecutor-General and the Authors organisation in the framing of the issue in the bill. The elements

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43 prop 1970:125
44 prop 1970:125, konseljakt 10 april 1970 (41)
45 prop 1970:125
of the framing chosen are robust and interconnected. The abolishment of the law prohibiting descriptions offending the public decency is a logical solution if restrictions to the freedom of speech are seen as a problem, and not pornography. The alternative framings are also robust and interconnected. The commission's framing understands pornography as a potential problem and logically some kind of measure to deal with it is kept in the law. The feminist framing attempt is also interconnected. If pornography for some reason is seen as a problem it is logical to keep the law. The first resonance criterion of Snow and Benford is not fulfilled better by the framing chosen by the government than by the alternatives.

Regarding the second criterion, the relation to the belief system of the target group, I want to emphasise that the government's framing is the one most similar to the instructions given by the same government four years earlier. The value stressed in the framing chosen by the government is the individual freedom, on the supply side as well as on the demand side. Apparently this value is more central in the ideology of the government than the gender equality stressed by the alternative framing attempts. Depending on whether gender equality is a core belief of the government's belief system or not, the actors have to adjust their framing efforts to the governments belief system. Of special interest are situations when gender equality is in conflict with other core values, such as the freedom of speech in this case. From the second criterion no conclusions about the governments choice can be drawn that help to predict this particular framing choice. Individual freedom is not an obvious choice of value for a Social democratic government. Hence we can state afterwards that the individual freedom seemed to be more important than gender equality.

The relevance of the framing to the life-world of the target group seems to impact the governmental choice. The government underpins that the scientific evidence is too scarce to justify restrictions of the freedom of expression. According to this statement the lack of evidence is a reason why the government did not choose any of the alternative framing attempts. The governmental choice can be said to have a higher empirical credibility than the alternatives. The experiential commensurability is interesting. The women's representation at the time of the bill was about 15 per cent in the parliament, and the women in the cabinet were 2 out of approximately 20. In feminist research the experiences of women as a group as distinct from those of men are often highlighted. The gender of the target group, that is the government, could therefore have implications for the framing attempts, especially for feminist framing.46 This might explain why the gendered feminist attempt did not succeed. There were too little of women's experience.

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46 This has been pointed out before. A high degree of women's representation has been emphasised as important for establishing women's issues by feminist scholars. This criterion indicates the same thing. But it also points out a possible mechanism, how women's representation can be of importance for feminist policy.
represented in the government to get support for a feminist framing attempt or even a gendered attempt.

The third aspect of the life-world resonance criteria is the myths in society. I would say that the government's choice corresponds better than any other to the public trend at that time. The 70's was a time of liberation in many aspects and both the instructions and the bill state that the public opinion no longer corresponds to the law. This statement neglects the fact that the commission presents statistics showing that 45 per cent of the population are against pornography and 49 per cent in favour.47

About the fourth criterion, cycles of protest, it is stated that difficulties to interpret the law has caused an animated public debate.48 It is also stated that there are groups critical to pornography. The government, however, seems to have been convinced that there was a cycle of protest against the law.

The conclusion is that the government's choice of framing was not gendered, nor feminist. The gendered framing attempt, which was possibly also a feminist attempt, did fail. The debate in general was not gendered either. When it comes to explaining the government's choice of framing from the Snow and Benford criteria, the only criterion which the framing chosen clearly fulfils better than the alternatives is the life-world criterion. First, the framing chosen has empirical credibility, which is also stressed as important when the government justifies its choice in the bill. Second, the experiential commensurability, the few women in the cabinet, also points towards a non-gendered proposal but more than that cannot be predicted by this criterion. The impact of myths and cycles of protest is possible but not unambiguous.

**Actors' strategies**

Most possibly the actor/actors that influenced the framing of the issue in the instructions to the commission had a lot of impact on the final framing of the government. The instructions are narrowly defined and clearly limit the subsequent framing attempts. The same government was responsible for the commission instructions and for the bill.

The frame transformation attempts made by the external groups, which try to frame pornography as an actual problem, fails. The government does not frame pornography as a problem. It is also interesting that no women's organisations were among the parties. Why? Because they were not invited or because they were not interested?

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47 SOU 1969:38 p 55f
48 SOU 1969:38 p 11f
Violent pornography is prohibited - a second failure

In 1977 a non-socialist government appointed a commission to prepare a new constitutional legislation regarding the freedom of expression. The commission was also instructed to inquire how restrictions on the freedom of expression were to be dealt with. The commission should reflect upon a possible necessary extension of the legislation regarding pornographic and violent descriptions. The latter issue is the focus of this analysis.

In 1983 the final report was handed over to the social democratic government. The final report stated that violent descriptions on films had been proven to have harmful effects whereas the effects of pornography were considered unproved and therefore no measures were justified. The commission proposed a prohibition against extreme violence in films, including violent pornography. The prohibition is defined as a crime against the freedom of expression. The circulation of the report among concerned parties shows that many parties support the commission's proposal. There are a few parties that propose a more far-reaching prohibition including all pornographic descriptions. Few parties at all commented on pornography.

After the circulation of the commission report a debate in society started and many women's organisations and feminist groups criticised pornography for objectifying women. A third proposal was formulated proposing a prohibition against all violent pornography. The governmental bill, posed in 1987, chose the middle way. Referring to the women's organisations the government bill proposes a prohibition against all violent pornographic descriptions, films and photos.49

Framing attempts

The commission instructions define the assignment regarding pornography quite broadly. The importance of the freedom of expression is stated but an extension of the prohibition against pornography should also be considered.50 The instructions do not limit the subsequent framing attempts. Like in the former process the framing attempts can be divided in three 'groups' or lines.

The commission's framing represents the first 'group'. The framing is actively supported by some of the concerned parties. Pornography is framed as a potential problem but since there is no scientific evidence of its harmful effects the commission argues that no legislation is justified. If pornography would have negative effects, influence through public opinion would be the best method, according to the commission. The measure proposed regarding pornography is a prohibition on violent pornography in films, which is

49 SOU 1983:70, prop 1986/87: 151, Ds Ju 1985:4
50 SOU 1983:70 p 341ff
included in the legislation against extreme violence. Violence is framed as a problem and violent pornography is accordingly a kind of violence. However, pornography as such is not framed as a problem. Very few of the concerned parties mentioned pornography. Hence, I assume that a majority of them indirectly support the commission proposal.51

The second 'group' is constituted by a number of concerned parties and extra-parliamentary organisations. Among the concerned parties are the Social democratic women's organisation and an organisation for housewives. The extra-parliamentary groups are women's groups and groups against pornography.52 This 'group' frames pornography as a problem because pornography describes sexuality in a false way, because of its manifestation of discrimination of women and because it constitutes prejudice and expresses contempt of women. Furthermore pornographic illustrations are described as a training in the attitudes behind prostitution, rape and women battering. The solution presented in this frame is a prohibition against pornographic illustrations. This framing attempt presents the issue as a gender-related issue. I interpret this proposal as feminist. Notice that the framing is concerned about pornographic illustrations of a certain kind. All sexual illustrations are not the issue here, but rather the humiliating illustrations.53

The third framing attempt is represented by groups and organisations engaged after the circulation of the report, among them the political women's organisations. This is the framing chosen by the government. Interestingly this framing attempt is not represented among the concerned parties. The diagnostic framing is almost the same as in the former group but the prognostic framing is not. In the governmental bill pornography is framed as a problem because it discriminates women, giving a false image of the sexual relation between men and women and obstructing the work for gender equality. The solution proposed is a prohibition on all violent pornography, on film as well as in photos. Other kinds of pornography are said to be better dealt with through public opinion.54 Pornography is thus framed as a problem of its own and gender related by these groups as well as in the second framing attempt. The proposed solution is not feminist though.

The disputes between the framing groups are firstly about the punctuating function. Is pornography a problem in need of solution? Secondly, there is a dispute about the attributional function, the diagnosis and the prognosis of the problem. Most salient is the conflict about the prognosis. Different solutions are proposed by the three framing attempts and there are also differences in opinion about whether the state or the public is responsible for necessary measures.

51 SOU 1983:70, Ds Ju 1985:4
52 prop 1986/87:151
53 prop 1986/87:151, Ds Ju 1985:4
54 prop 1986/87:151
The articulational aspect is interesting. In the framing of the commission freedom of speech is presented as more important than pornography. Pornography is not connected to gender equality. In the other two framing attempts the gender aspect is predominant. Pornography is described as a gender related issue. Two of the framing attempts are accordingly gendered.

The government's bill\textsuperscript{55}

The responsible minister states that the framing of the groups engaged after the circulation of the report has been of importance for the bill. He emphasises that he attaches great significance to the common point of view stressed by the political women's organisations.\textsuperscript{56}

Regarding the first criterion of Snow and Benford, the \textit{robustness and interconnectedness} of the elements of the framing, I do not find the framing in the bill very robust. The diagnosis of the problem, pornography, is more far-reaching than the prognosis. Pornography is described as being humiliating to women and an intermediary of a false relation between men and women and of sexuality. The solution presented is legislation against violent pornography. The government stresses violent pornography to be the worst kind of humiliating pornography.\textsuperscript{57} The legislation is thus aimed at preventing the humiliating character of pornography and not the violence as such. Accordingly I find the solution less far-reaching than the diagnosis. As in the framing of group two a solution prohibiting all kinds of humiliating pornography would be a more logic consequence given that pornography is diagnosed as a serious problem.

The framing of the first group is also logic. Pornography is not framed as problem and thus no solution is needed. The first criterion does not explain the government's choice.

With regard to the second criterion, the \textit{resonance with the belief system} of the government, it can be said that the government chose the middle way. In contrast to the former framing process gender equality seems to have been an important value that resonated with the belief system of the government. The vulnerability of framing attempts with a weak link to the larger belief system might be of importance in this case. Even if gender equality is a core belief of the government it might not be sufficient to connect to only one of the core beliefs.\textsuperscript{58} There were however two framing efforts stating gender equality so this criterion alone cannot explain the government's choice.

As in the former process the third criterion, the \textit{relevance of the framing to the life-world} of the government, is interesting. The framing in the

\textsuperscript{55} prop 1986/87:151
\textsuperscript{56} prop 1986/87:151 p 102f
\textsuperscript{57} prop 1986/87: 151 p 101f
\textsuperscript{58} ibid 205ff
governmental bill is not *empirically credible* in its diagnosis of the problem. There is no scientific 'evidence' about the influences and harmful effects of pornography. The solution in the bill is however empirically credible, directed toward violence. Science has proven violence harmful to the consumers. What is interesting is that the government argues for the prohibition on violent pornography because of its negative consequences on gender equality. Consequences that actually have not been proven. Still this criterion might explain why the government did not choose the framing of the second group proposing the prohibition of all pornography. Without empirical credibility an absolute prohibition is a very strong measure. However it is still a fact that the most empirically credible framing is the commission's which the government did not choose. The framing of the commission states that pornography is not a problem since there is no scientific evidence. This part of the set of life-world factors alone apparently cannot alone explain the government's choice.

About the *experiential commensurability* it can be said that the women's representation in government has increased to 5 women as against approximately 17 men, in the parliament women's representation is around 30 per cent. It is worth mentioning that Anita Gradin was a member of the government at this time and she had also started a working group, which criticised pornography and stressed the importance of a prohibition on violent pornography. The governmental bill explicitly refers to Gradin's working group. Gradin's presence could therefore have been a decisive factor to the government's choice. The lack of more women in the government might explain the failure of the feminist framing effort while the presence of some women made it impossible to reject the gender aspect completely and consequently the middle way was chosen. About the *myths and folktales* in society it can only be stated that the times of liberty that characterised the 60's and 70's had passed and pornography was no longer impossible to criticise. I would say that various aspects of the life-world criterion appear to be important to explain the government's choice. Alone they might not suffice however.

The *cycle of protest* criterion seems to have had impact on the government's choice. Outside the parliament there was apparently a protest against pornography growing strong during the beginning of the 1980's. Manifestations, debates and boycotts are mentioned. This criterion does not at this point explain the government's choice between the second and the third framing effort, both criticising pornography.

The conclusion is that in this framing process the governmental choice does not fulfil all the Snow and Benford resonance criteria better than the other framing efforts do. Both the alternative framings are more interconnected than the one chosen, for example. Perhaps a combination of

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59 prop 1986/87: 151 p 100
Various factors can explain the governmental choice of framing: the empirical credibility in combination with the belief system of the government, the experiential commensurability and the fact that the political women's organisations formed a coalition. Gender equality seems to have been an important value in the belief system of the government and it corresponds to the experiential commensurability of a number of women in government. Pornography was framed by a large number of women's organisations and feminist groups as a gender related problem but there existed no empirical evidence of its harmful effects.

The government cannot choose the framing of the commission without renouncing gender equality being an important value in their ideology and corresponding with the experiences of the women in the government, especially Gradin. At the same time the lack of empirical evidence of harmful effects of pornography makes an absolute prohibition of pornography difficult. The chosen framing is the middle way corresponding to the ideology of the government and the experiences of the women in government by incorporating the gender aspect and at the same time the criterion of empirical credibility is fulfilled.

The fact that all the political women's organisations formed a coalition is most certainly also part of the explanation since the government itself states this fact as important.

Actors' strategies

The commission does not frame pornography as a problem. The second and the third framing group do frame pornography as a problem and finally the governmental bill as well. The strategy of frame transformation was apparently successful in the diagnostic aspect. The strategies used to influence the choice of prognostic framing in the bill are interesting. Apparently the coalition of political women's organisations was important for the governments choice. In order to form such a coalition framing strategies most certainly were used to find agreement. Probably some kind of frame extension or frame amplification is necessary to unite different political organisations.

Another interesting detail is the fact that the framing chosen by the government is not represented by any of the concerned parties after the circulation of the commission report. However, the feminist framing is. The Social democratic women's organisation was present in the group of concerned parties framing pornography as in need of an absolute prohibition. Later the Social democratic women's organisation joined a coalition with other political women's organisations supporting the middle way. Perhaps the social democratic women's organisation was acting strategically reframing the feminist framing into a more modest middle way in order to form a coalition and get the government's support. No WPA:s were involved in the process.
Prostitution - a successful case of feminist framing

In 1993 a non-socialist government appointed a commission to inquire prostitution. The final report was finished in 1995 and presented to a social democratic government. The commission recommended a criminalization of both sides of the prostitution, both the prostitute and the client. The majority of the concerned parties rejected the proposal and one third of them proposed a criminalization exclusively of the client. During the commission inquiry the issue raised a debate in the parliament and various motions were posed regarding prostitution. All the political women's organisations except the conservatives joined in a motion proposing a criminalization of the client. In the media prostitution was also object to debate. In 1998 the government posed a bill proposing a criminalization of the client.60

The framing attempts

The instructions to the commission of 1993 were quite broad when it comes to solutions but limited in problem description. The instructions state that prostitution is a serious gender related issue and that men's behaviour is one important cause to the problem. Criminalization is mentioned as a possible solution. One might say that the instructions are gendered, prostitution is seen as a gender related problem already at this point.61

As in the other cases the framing attempts can be divided in three 'groups'. The first group is represented by the framing in the commission's report supported by a few concerned parties. Prostitution is framed as a serious problem in need of harsh measures. The responsibility of prostitution is framed as shared by both parties. The solution proposed is a criminalization of both parties in the prostitution.62

The second framing attempt is represented by expert Ragnar Götestam and supported by several concerned parties. Götestam states in an additional statement to the commission report that he agrees with the diagnosis of the problem made by the commission but he find the solution inefficient. He is thus against any criminalization.63

The additional statement by expert Birgitta Ekström represents the third framing effort. One of the concerned parties that supports this framing is a women's policy agency JämO, some other women's organisations and feminist organisations. The political women's organisations supported this framing of prostitution in a joint motion and the government chose later on to incorporate this framing effort in the bill. Prostitution is framed as a problem

61 SOU 1995:15 p 251
62 SOU 1995:15, Sammanställning av remissyttranden Dnr S97/8122/IFO
63 ibid
caused by men using vulnerable women. The proposed solution is a criminalization of the client, the men exclusively.\textsuperscript{64} A gender perspective is present. I would say that this is a feminist policy proposal because the unequal power relation between men and women is acknowledged and the solution marks a standpoint; the objectification of women is called into question, women should not be for sale.

The disputes between the framing efforts seem to have concerned the \textit{attributional function}, the \textit{diagnosis} and the \textit{prognosis} of prostitution. Are both parties or the clients exclusively responsible of prostitution and should both parties, the client or none of them be criminalized are aspects of disputes between the framing groups.

With regard to the \textit{articulational function} we can conclude that prostitution is framed as a gender related issue by all parties involved and no dispute arose about this aspect.

\textit{The government's bill}\textsuperscript{65}

The government chose to frame the issue according to the framing represented by expert Birgitta Ekström, proposing a criminalization of the prostitute's client exclusively.

The first \textit{resonance} criterion of \textit{robustness and interconnectedness} is fulfilled by the framing chosen by the government. The elements of the framing effort are interconnected. Prostitution is framed as a problem in need of action. Men are described as the cause of the problem, the state as responsible for measures and a criminalization of the client is the proposed solution which is a logic consequence of the diagnosis. The framing effort represented by the commission is however as interconnected as the framing chosen by the government. Both parties in the prostitution are described as responsible of its existence, and the solution is thus logic, a criminalization including both parties. The first criterion can not explain why the framing of the expert Ekström gained resonance.

The second criterion, concerning the \textit{correspondence between the framing and the belief system} or ideology of the government, is interesting. The framing chosen by the government frames prostitution in a confrontational, radical feminist manner. Men are blamed as the cause of a gender injustice whereas women are described as victims. Traditionally, a less confrontational gender perspective emphasising the importance of co-operation between men and women in order to improve gender equality has been predominant in Sweden. The framing by the commission, stressing both parties' responsibility, corresponds better to this perspective than the government's choice, but it did not succeed. If the government's choice can be seen as a

\textsuperscript{64} SOU 1995:15, Sammanställning av remissyttranden Dnr S97/8122/IFO, motion 1996/97:Ju 718
\textsuperscript{65} prop 1986/87:151
change in the government's belief system regarding gender equality, or if the framing was chosen because of other factors, despite its confrontational gender perspective is a question for further analysis.

Regarding the third set of resonance factors, the degree of resonance between the framing and the life-world of the government, we can assess the framing as empirically credible. The framing of the bill is based on scientific results from the commission report. In the former cases analysed, the empirical credibility or lack of it, has become an issue of conflict between the different framing actors. In this case, all framing efforts are based on the same scientific results interpreted in different manners. All framing efforts can thus be said to fulfil the claim of empirical credibility, and there is no dispute among the actors in which the argument of empirical credibility or lack of it, is used.

The experiential commensurability is interesting in this case. The representation in the cabinet at the time of the bill is more or less gender equal. In the parliament, there are just above 40 per cent women. This factor has changed over time and might contribute to explain why the feminist policy change became possible. A high percentage of women in the cabinet should, according to the criterion, be a condition favourable to pursuing feminist policy but obviously it does not explain it all. The third life-world criterion, correspondence between the framing and myths in society, cannot at this point explain the government's choice. The framing of prostitution as a problem is correspondent to a Swedish context though. In other countries prostitution is not a self-evident problem but frequently framed as a profession. Prostitution is however framed as a problem by all actors involved in the framing process. Therefore, this criterion does not explain the choice of the government. The life-world criterion can help explain the government's choice of framing but it cannot give the whole explanation.

The last criterion, the protest cycle in society, is also interesting. There seems to have been strong support in society of the criminalization of the purchase of sexual services at the time of the bill. Political and non-political women's organisations and WPA:s all framed the issue in the same way, supporting the criminalization of the client.

The conclusion is that the government's choice of framing in this case cannot be easily explained from the Snow and Benford criteria. The alternative framings fulfil some of the criteria equally well as the framing chosen. The interconnectedness, the experiential commensurability, the empirical credibility, which have proven to be important before, and the predominant cycle of protest, can to some extent explain the government's choice of framing. Firstly, the framing is interconnected and empirically credible. Even if these factors are not unique for the chosen framing effort, they might still be a prerequisite. Secondly, adding the criterion of experiential commensurability and of the cycle of protest the framing of the
government fulfils the resonance criteria better than the alternative framing efforts. Thirdly, the importance of the coalition formed by the women's organisations should not be neglected. This is a factor that has proven to be important in the former cases.

**Actors' strategies**

If we focus on the group of actors that did frame the issue in the form that was chosen by the government it can be concluded that all the political women's organisations except one, many extra-parliamentary women's organisations and JämO, a women's policy agency, are all found in the same framing group. The fact that all these actors supported the same framing was probably of great importance for the government's choice of framing.

Interesting and perhaps of even greater importance was the coalition of the political women's organisations. These actors actually co-ordinated their efforts in a common motion. Considering the different ideologies of the parties uniting them in a common motion takes quite an effort. In order to manage this I would say that quite an amplified and extended frame is necessary. It is interesting to compare the framing by Ekström made in the additional statement in the commission report of 1995 with the framing in the motion of 1997. The framing in the motion expresses the same basic understanding but the language is not as confrontational as in the additional statement. In Ekström's framing men are blamed for the prostitution several times. In the motion men are not explicitly made responsible for prostitution even if it is stated that men more often find the phenomenon acceptable than women do. The frame is actually more inclusive in the motion than in the framing by Ekström. If this is a result of a strategic framing alignment process or not is hard to tell. But the use of frame extension and frame amplification by some of the leading feminist actors must be further analysed. For example who initiated the commonly written motion? JämO, the only WPA present, does not seem to be a leading actor. The framing of JämO is very cautious.

**Conclusion**

**The fruitfulness of the theoretical framework**

Three gender related policy processes have been compared in order to learn more about the factors that promote and hinder feminist policy. A theory of framing developed by Snow and Benford has been used in the analysis in order to test its fruitfulness when it comes to explain feminist policy.
In the first case analysed, pornography was legalised, the alternative feminist proposal failed and the framing process in general was not gendered. When it comes to explaining the government's choice of framing the only criterion that the framing chosen clearly fulfils better than the alternatives, is the life-world criterion. The framing chosen has empirical credibility, which is stressed as important when the government justifies its choice. The experiential commensurability is also in favour of a non-gendered proposal since very few women are in the cabinet at the time.

In the second case violent pornography is prohibited. The feminist proposal struggling for a prohibition on humiliating pornography in general failed. In this framing process the government's choice does not fulfil all the Snow and Benford resonance criteria better than the other framing efforts do. Perhaps a combination of various factors can explain the government's choice of framing. The demand for empirical credibility, in combination with the fact that gender equality was important in the belief system of the government, made the government choose the middle way, a gendered but not feminist proposal. Also the experiential commensurability of the few women in the cabinet and the fact that the political women's organisations formed a coalition in favour of the middle way were probably influential factors.

In the last case the purchase of sexual services was prohibited. The legislation is a feminist policy challenging the gendered power relation in the sexual/cultural sphere. As in the previous cases a combination of factors seems to explain the government's choice among the alternative framing efforts. The criterion of interconnectedness and empirical credibility was fulfilled by all framing efforts but might still have been a prerequisite of the success. The combination of a high percentage of women in cabinet: the experiential commensurability, and a predominant cycle of protest supporting the framing proposing a criminalisation of the client, can together explain the government's choice of framing. A coalition formed by practically all the political women's organisations favouring this particular framing was probably also influential.

The three aspects of the theoretical framework analysed in this paper; the framing attempts, the government's choice and the actors' strategies have proven fruitful in the context of Swedish gender policy processes. The aspects are possible to operationalise in a meaningful manner and the framework has helped us to better understand the outcomes of the policy processes analysed, even if a full explanation is not possible without using more actor-based material. In my opinion the aspects are all essential to understand the dynamics of the policy process and together they give a comprehensive picture of the framing process. Consequently the aspects would be crucial in finding the factors that hinder and promote feminist policy. Some conclusions can be drawn on a general level.
Firstly, framing is an important element in the policy process. The government does not choose the commission proposal in any of the analysed cases which implies that there exist real possibilities to influence the government's choice. Thus there really exists a framing process. In all the cases it is possible to distinguish alternative framing efforts, at least three different framing 'groups' in each process. The framing of the commission instructions seems to function as a master frame for the framing process and therefore the establishing of the instructions is crucial. Another interesting finding is that the arenas outside the parliament also seem important during the framing process. The media and other extra-parliamentary actors are as important for the final framing as the concerned parties invited to participate. The actors seem to be acting strategically in the framing process but again this needs to be further verified by actor-based data.

Secondly, some patterns regarding the government's choice of framing in gender issues can be distinguished on the basis of the resonance criteria even if the outcomes are a result of a complex combination of factors. In two cases the choice seems to have been affected by women's organisations forming a coalition to pursue a common proposal. In the process of the prohibition on violent pornography the government explicitly refers to the coalition of women's political organisations. In the prostitution case political women's organisations join in a common motion and their framing is supported by WPA:s and other feminist groups. Even if there is no direct reference to these organisations in the government's argument it seems likely that the joint line had an impact on the government's choice. In the case of legalisation of pornography no coalition was formed around any proposal.

What is really interesting about this finding is that the Snow and Benford framework is applicable on different levels. Their framework is set out to explain mobilisation. I argue that the government's choice of framing is a kind of mobilisation. In order to pursue a policy proposal you need to mobilise the government. A way of mobilising the government is the formation of coalitions, which in itself is a mobilisation on a lower level. This is thus another mechanism influencing the government.

Another criterion with impact on the government's choice seems to be the life-world criterion of empirical credibility. All the successful framing attempts have fulfilled this criterion. In the legalisation of pornography, in which the government's choice was not explained by the formation of a coalition, the importance to fulfil the life-world criterion seems to contribute to an explanation.

An interesting correlation between the proportion of women in the cabinet and the outcomes of the processes implies that the experiential commensurability might be of importance. In the case of legalisation of pornography there were very few women in the cabinet and the attempt to gender the framing and to pursue a feminist proposal failed. In the process on
prohibition of violent pornography, the percentage of women had increased. Still the feminist proposal failed but at least the proposal chosen by the government was gendered. In the process of criminalization of the prostitute's client, which is a feminist policy, the women's representation in the cabinet was 50 per cent. I want to emphasise that this is a correlation, which not necessarily implies causality. However the experience of women and consequently the representation of women, might be a contributing factor to feminist policy, if not a decisive one.

The interconnectedness criterion might be a prerequisite to succeed but does not distinguish as a special feature of the successful framings. It is fulfilled by most framing efforts.

The belief system criterion is difficult to evaluate. Out of the chosen framings and the governments motivation one can conclude which values are important to the government, but this criterion does not help to predict the government's choice.

The protest cycle predominant in society is obviously important. At least in the two later processes there was a protest cycle in society that might have influenced the government's decision in some way. This factor is important for the same reason as the coalition formation indicating that mobilisation on yet another level is important for the mobilisation of the government.

The most important implication of these conclusions is that framing can be used to mobilise the government directly but also to mobilise a coalition or larger groups in order to mobilise the government indirectly. The framework of framing is applicable on different levels. Thus there are different mechanisms that seem to explain the government's choice.

**Explaining feminist policy**

The conclusions so far concern the government's choice of framing more generally. But what explains feminist policy? Why did the feminist proposals fail in two processes and succeed in one? Which factors are promoting and hindering feminist policy?

Besides testing the fruitfulness of a theoretical framework the aim of this study was to explain feminist policy. Some conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, it is a prerequisite of feminist policy that the issue is framed as a gender problem in need of a solution. In both the pornography cases the feminist proposal failed and in both cases the struggle in the framing process was primarily about whether pornography is a problem or not. The actors trying to pursue a feminist framing of pornography did not manage to convince the government that pornography is a problem of gender inequality in need of a feminist solution. The conflict of value between pornography and
freedom of speech was lost in both processes. In the successful case however, prostitution was recognised at an early point as a gendered problem and the struggle was about other aspects such as the cause of the problem and the solution.

Secondly, a factor which seems important in pursuing feminist policy is the formation of coalitions between women's organisations, especially between political women's organisations. In the successful case almost all feminist groups and women's organisations were united along the same framing which gained the government's support. The political women's organisations even co-ordinated their activities in a commonly written motion. In the case of prohibition on violent pornography, the failure of the feminist proposal can be explained by the fact that a coalition of political women's organisations was formed to support an alternative solution, the prohibition on violent pornography. In a situation with two framing attempts, each supported by a different grouping of women's organisations and feminist groups, the government chose to listen to the coalition of political women's organisations. In the first case no coalition was formed.

This is a factor of special importance for recognition issues, such as prostitution and pornography, which do not follow the political ideologies. In gender issues of a distributional kind a coalition between different political ideologies is much more difficult since left-right ideologies divide the parties. Traditional political ideology cannot explain any patterns in these framing processes. No framing attempts are clearly based on the left-right ideologies. This is as I mentioned above a prerequisite of feminist coalition building.

The ideology of the party in government posing the bill cannot explain the success and failure of feminist policy either. All the bills studied were posed by social democratic governments.

Thirdly, the empirical credibility is important for feminist policy. In the case of a successful feminist policy the proposal is empirically credible to a high degree. There exists scientific evidence to support the understanding of the problem. In the processes in which the feminist proposals fail the feminist framing alternatives do not present any scientific evidence supporting their framing and are therefore considered as lacking of empirical credibility.

Fourthly, the presence of women in the cabinet might be a contributing factor in pursuing feminist policy. The proportion of women in the cabinet does correlate with the findings.

The conclusions presented in this section indicate which factors hinder and promote feminist policy. The results are based on scarce data and need to be further tested. Most important, however, is that these findings show the potentiality of the framework.

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66 The prohibition of violent pornography is directed first and foremost to the problem of violence and not of pornography. The unwillingness to prohibit pornography indicates that the freedom of expression is more important.
In relation to other feminist research we can observe that coalitions of women's groupings do not have the characteristics of strength and power normally stressed as important in order to gain support. In other feminist studies such as Amy Mazur's cross-national study of feminist policy, the importance of allies in order to pursue feminist policy is stated. Mazur stresses the importance of sympathetic non-feminist allies in key decision-making positions. 67 This kind of allies or coalitions do not seem to promote feminist policy in my cases. One explanation might be that the presence of women in the cabinet and parliament at the time of the feminist policy is so high that no non-feminist allies are needed. This might also be the reason for the modest role that WPA:s seem to play in pursuing feminist policies in the analysed processes.

Apparently these processes work in quite another way than the assumptions made by the RNGS theory. Women's organisations seem to have influence and to be of importance for the establishment of feminist policies but the WPA:s do not seem to work as an intermediary.

This analysis is a first attempt to test if the theory of Snow and Benford can be applied to explain what hinders and promotes feminist policy. I have shown that the theory has a potential to do that and have presented some preliminary results that need to be tested on more cases. I am convinced that this framework can learn us more about the different mechanisms at work in policy processes in general and the establishment of feminist policy in particular.

67 Mazur, A G 2002:177
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