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Equality building in Europe: praxis, paradoxes, and the transformative potential of gender+ training

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Abstract

The last six decades have seen measurable progress in equality policies and projects in Europe, but as existing research demonstrates, this work is characterised by paradoxes and faces significant opposition in the current sociopolitical environment. Specific investigation of the praxis of equalities work is required to adequately respond to these challenges, which I undertake in this mixed methods study on gender+ training. I present findings from 31 in-depth interviews and 208 questionnaire responses from gender trainers working in Europe. I outline the genealogy, architecture, and political economy of gender expertise in this region; and I mobilize a conceptual lexicon based on social complexity theory and gender knowledge as an analytical device to propose an original model of knowledge circulation through gender training.

I map the profiles and professional trajectories of the trainers, highlighting the relevance of the intersectional and gendered subjectivities of equality workers and the effects of epistemic hierarchies in the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges. This reveals how emancipatory and social justice oriented ethics allow trainers to navigate the paradoxes inherent in their work, and the centrality of reflexivity in this process. I detail the interrelation of theory and practice in training through feminist epistemologies, non-formal methodologies, and threshold concepts in equality promotion. This elucidates the dimensions of effective learning and the collective nature of knowledge generation and circulation. It also exposes multi-level resistances to equality initiatives and the counterstrategies that trainers employ to address these. The trainers emphasise infrastructure and exchange as next steps for gender training within the constellation of equality projects in Europe, illuminating a productive ideal/real interplay in incremental change processes.

Overall, this study offers strategies to facilitate the transformative potential of gender training and tackle opposition, insight into dynamics of knowledge circulation, and defines possible future directions in equality building.

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Definitions and abbreviations

Associazione Orlando: GRACE non-academic project partner and host institution for the Research Fellow author of this thesis.

Commissioners: the individuals, organisations, or institutions who request trainings from trainers.

EC: European Commission

EIGE: European Institute for Gender Equality

EU: European Union

Gender+ training: Throughout the text I use the term gender training to designate a gender+ understanding of training for gender equality. This is based on the requests of the trainers who took part in the research, the plus symbol indicates that their work addresses multiple intersecting inequalities across a broad range of topic areas relating to social justice and inequalities. Additionally, the use of gender+ training is consistent with existing scholarship and research in this field.

GRACE: Gender and Cultures of Equality in Europe, the research project through which this study was funded and conducted (www.graceproject.eu).

Participant: an individual who participates in gender training delivered by trainers in this research.

Praxis: the co-constructive process through which theory and practice are integrated, a process that entails reflexive practice and action directed at the transformation of oppressive structures.

Respondent: a gender trainer who answered the online questionnaire in this study.

Trainers: the educators who deliver gender trainings, in this research the term refers collectively to the trainers who were interviewed and the trainers who responded to the questionnaire.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNWTC: United Nations Women Training Centre

Workshop: educational event delivered using diverse learning methodologies, in this research the term most often refers to the training events designed and delivered by the trainers.

[…]: ellipsis to indicate words removed for clarity.

[word]: this indicates a word or a description inserted by the author for clarity based on the spoken expression of a trainer.

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Chapter 1 An introduction to training for gender equality in Europe

1.1 Introduction

Europe is a political, social, and cultural space increasingly characterised by neoconservativism, right-wing populist movements, and anti-immigration sentiment (Bornschier, 2010; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). This stands in stark contrast to the decades of feminist and women's movement activism, scholarship and mobilisation, which have catalysed gender equality initiatives and policies throughout Europe. It is compelling, and urgent, to address the consequences of this actuality for equality building. With this project, I explore the transformative potential of gender training as an equality building intervention within this environment of unequal institutional and relational systems.

Gender training represents a point of intersection, where epistemology, knowledge, and practice inter-relate (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007). In a training scenario macro-level discursive constructions of equality meet meso-level operational logistics and micro-level interpersonal dynamics. Underpinning this research is an understanding of training for gender equality as an intervention in a complex system of interrelating elements, one which consists of both material and discursive dimensions, which are guided by individual and structural dynamics within specific contexts (Walby, 2002; Walby, 2007; Walby, 2009; Verloo, 2018c). Through this research I deepen the current understanding of the theory and application of feminist and gender knowledges in gender training (Bustelo et al., 2016b). I trace the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges through the dynamics of a transnational praxis of equality work, illuminating how gender trainers negotiate the paradoxes of their work to pursue its transformative potential.

1.2 Paradox, praxis, and process

1.2.1 Paradox

Gender training is one of a constellation of interventions aimed at building gender equality, and is part of an extended genealogy of gender equality strategies and policies in Europe. In the broadest sense gender training refers to a process of knowledge development and awareness raising around gender issues between a trainer(s) and participants. The objective of the training event can range from simple knowledge presentation or informational skills building, to community mobilisation and social transformation (Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Wong et al., 2016;

Bustelo et al., 2016b). Gender training is cast as a tool with which to transfer information and knowledge about gendered inequalities in order to bring about different thinking and behaviour among participants, which will lead to social change. Despite the decontextualised wording of most definitions of gender training, it is not an independent intervention. The development of gender training is strongly linked to gender mainstreaming in the European context. Over the past six decades gender equality policies in the European Union have, broadly speaking, been accompanied by the construction of an equality architecture and development of institutionalised gender expertise. This has progressed through strategies of inclusion or equal treatment based on inclusion and numeric equality, positive action based on politics of difference, and to transformation strategies which tackle gender inequalities across existing systems and structures (Rees, 2005; Squires, 2005; Abels & Mushaben, 2012). As the key tool for the cognitive dimension of gender mainstreaming, gender training is an integral feature of this transnational equality history, a history which unfolds through the sociopolitical history of the European Union itself.

The embryonic EU, which began with the founding Treaties of the European Economic Community (EEC), implicated gender in its pursuit of democratic legitimacy from its inception. This began with the equal pay clause for men and women in the 1957 Treaty of Rome. As the Community developed—from the Single European Act in 1986 into the ever larger and more powerful European Union with the treaties of Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997), and Nice (2001) gender equality policies grew in parallel with these developments. Currently, the EU claims “to offer the most progressive gender regime in the world” and the 2009 Lisbon Treaty (TEU) formally declares "gender equality is a fundamental European value” (Abels & Mushaben, 2012: 1). Discourses of “European consciousness” and “European culture” (Shore, 2000: 1) rely on this equality narrative, which is mobilised in the service of an imagined shared European identity (MacRae, 2010; 2012; Enderstein, 2017). These claims about equality and non-discrimination as fundamental European values have also been “portrayed as a kind of moral success story” (Shore, 2000: 57) to sustain rhetorics of cultural supremacy (Rossili, 2000; Shore, 2000; Abels & Mushaben, 2012).

This instrumentalisation of gender equality is legitimising, but obscures persistent and wide-spread regimes of inequality in Europe and has led numerous scholars to argue that the feminist

project has been co-opted (Longwe, 1997; Stratigaki, 2004; Prügl, 2015; de Jong & Kimm, 2017). This depoliticisation is particularly concerning as varieties of opposition to feminist politics and projects in contemporary Europe multiply and grow in strength. This starkly juxtaposes the transformative intent and emancipatory ethics of the feminist practice of gender expertise. This tension manifests in a multitude of ways; it recurs in a variety of forms within this study, and it is well documented in existing research (Ferguson, 2015; Prügl, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Gender experts are commissioned to affect institutional change, but they are bound by institutional constraints; they possess specialised knowledge, but they are required to communicate this in short, easy to understand forms; they are asked to tackle multifaceted and complex issues in single-focus brief interventions. Discursive commitments to gender equality are ubiquitous, but equality work is underfunded and undervalued; and gender experts hold feminist principles but are bound by utility and efficiency driven governance models. Gender trainers are working against inequalities perpetuated through neoliberalism, but they are forced to employ "business case" rationales to promote equality interventions; their work and expertise is formalised and legitimised through institutional policies and strategies, while being depoliticised and reduced to tokenism within the same structures. It is through these tensions that the paradoxes of equality work manifest, in a persistent negotiation of complicity and subversion despite which feminist gender experts seek to preserve the transformative potential of their activities (Mukhopadhyay, 2017). My research documents and analyses these dynamics to better enact equality building in contemporary Europe.

1.2.2 Praxis

Given these tensions between transformatory aims and complicity in systems of inequality (Wong et al., 2016; Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016; Mukhopadhyay, 2017), I am drawn to ask, what does the praxis of training for gender equality look like? How do gender trainers manage these challenges in the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe? What is their envisioned contribution to building equality and how do they actualise the transformative potential of gender training? This study responds to these questions; I pursue an understanding of what is possible, in which situations, and according to what conditions. Through this exploration I present the key arguments of this thesis—that gender training is more than an act of transfer, it is one of circulation, and the transformative potential of gender training is a function of this dynamic.

A substantial body of evaluative literature on gender equality policies and strategies, predominantly gender mainstreaming, provides valuable insight both into what has been achieved and the factors which curtail the impact of this work (Longwe, 1997; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Pascall & Lewis, 2004; Ghodsee, 2004; Roggeband & Verloo, 2006; Kantola, 2010; Prügl, 2010; Mukhopadhyay, 2017). This research informs my work and my understanding of the development of gender expertise in Europe, but in this thesis my focus is on the space between the poles of the subversion-complicity paradox, the space where everyday praxis takes place. I understand praxis as the co-constructive process through which theory and practice are integrated, a process that entails reflexive practice and action directed at the transformation of oppressive structures (see Freire, 1970). I do not attempt to assess how closely gender trainers adhere to abstract standards of "true feminism" or "equality work". Rather I am interested in how gender trainers negotiate the tensions, the challenges, and the opportunities that this praxis brings, in a way which renders "visible the power politics that is inherent in any effort to change the world" (Prügl, 2010: 3).

1.2.3 Process

To adequately map and analyse the dynamics of the tensions and paradoxes of gender training, I draw on scholarship around gender expertise and gender training in Europe and I match this with a conceptual vocabulary that privileges the interrelation of social systems and centres inequalities as a key constituting force thereof. These concepts allow me to analyse both individual and collective actions in an understanding of the emergent nature of interrelating systems, and trace the processes of change. Concepts of social complexity theory as theorised by Walby (2002; 2007; 2009) and expanded by Verloo (2018a; 2018b; 2018c) constitute the basis of this conceptual infrastructure. Within this framework I apply an understanding of "gender knowledge" as a concept and analytical device (Cavaghan, 2010; 2017). I challenge traditional framings of gender training as an act of simple knowledge transfer and propose instead a theory of circulation wherein trainings are moments of encounter between different epistemological and ontological positions in which each individual brings and exchanges gendered knowledge. These actors subsequently continue to participate in sequences of circulation that contribute to mechanisms of change.

Consistent with the theoretical infrastructure and the critical framing of this study, feminist methodological principles have guided the design and the research process. I conducted a mixed methods study, incorporating "an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints" (Johnson et al., 2007: 84). I collected qualitative data through in-depth interviews with 31 gender trainers who currently deliver trainings in Europe. I used the analysis of this data to inform an online questionnaire focused on the professional profiles and locations of gender trainers in quantitative form. This data from 208 trainers describes how they acquire the knowledge that they use, and maps their spaces and the characteristics of their work. Consistent with the narrative nature of the central research question, the analysis is predominately qualitative. As will become evident in the following chapters, with this research I endeavour to provide an account of the trainers' experiences in their own voices, emphasising how these relate to broader systems of knowledge work and equality building projects. I propose this analysis from my own positionality as a researcher from outside Europe, looking in. In the next section, I outline the structure of the thesis and establish my argument for a redefinition of gender training as a potentially transformative act of knowledge circulation.

1.3 Trajectories and geographies, theory and practice, resistance and change: the structure of the thesis

In the following chapters I outline the conceptual framework and analyse trajectories and geographies; practice and theory; and resistance and change in the narratives of the trainers. In Chapter 2, I review existing writing and research on gender expertise with a focus on gender training in Europe. I present the key themes and questions that emerge and discuss how these inform the current study. I draw these analytical threads into the theoretical architecture that acts as a foundation for the research—key concepts from social complexity theory, the notion of gender knowledge as an analytical device, and the circulatory movement of gender and feminist knowledges. In this chapter, I emphasise the interrelation and mutual adaption of systems and dynamic mechanisms of change that constitute the environment in which gender training intervenes. In Chapter 3, I translate these themes and questions into a research design and reflect on my own positionality as a researcher from the "periphery" investigating knowledge and equality in Europe (Connell et al., 2017; Collyer et al., 2017).

In Chapter 4 on the trajectories of gender trainers I introduce the empirical material and my analysis thereof. In this chapter and the next I build a picture of who the trainers are, their trajectories, and their positionalities. I map the trainers in terms of demographics and situate them as knowledge workers, and I discuss the learning journeys and motivations of the trainers (Hountondji, 1997; Mosesdottir, 2006; Volti, 2011). I argue that the gendered and intersectional subjectivities of trainers provide insight into complex inequalities and processes of change. I also argue that personal motivations and ethics anchor practice in this field and that learning is an ongoing process for trainers. In Chapter 5, I look at the epistemic geographies of gender knowledge and how these relate to global inequalities. My analysis centres on the positionalities of the trainers and the epistemic hierarchies that influence their work and shape the circulation of knowledge and the dynamics of praxis. I identify the need for critical cartography in the production and analysis of feminist and gender knowledges and I advocate for a circulatory understanding of knowledge which facilitates counter-dominant contributions and ongoing reformulation. The themes of these two chapters—trajectories, positionalities, and geographies—recur throughout the rest of the text, and come together in the final chapter on the change effects of gender training and equality work.

In Chapter 6 I look at the relationship between practice and theory, attending to how trainers negotiate challenges and tensions in their work to facilitate transformative potential. I consider the feminist epistemological orientations of the trainers and discuss key pedagogical principles such as space, transformative learning and collaboration, experiential learning, affective engagement, and reflexive praxis for trainers and participants. In complement to these approaches, I present the threshold concepts of gender, sexuality, and intersectionality through the examples and techniques of the trainers. Here I highlight a multi-dimensional understanding of learning which involves affective, cognitive, and physical elements. I shed light on collectivity and exchange in learning, and the process of knowledge building and circulation that takes place through the interaction of participants, trainers, commissioners and the systems within which they are embedded. The multiplicity of the trainers' theoretical orientations is noteworthy, and reflects plurality within the feminist project and diversity in equality work in general. This further supports the argument for a view of knowledge in formation initiated in Chapter 4, a process through which knowledge is translated, refined, and reapplied over time in a movement of circulation.

In Chapter 7, I continue in this vein by building a typology of resistances and counterstrategies employed by the gender trainers and emphasise the reciprocity thereof. Here I assert that the documentation and analysis of resistances identifies current challenges, but also reveals what has been gained, and how. Furthermore, it is necessary to the development of efficacious counterstrategies that are contextually responsive and engaging. I continue this theme of pursuing transformative potential in the closing analysis of Chapter 8. I complete the comprehensive analysis of the practice of gender training in the European region, moving from who the trainers are and what they do to where they are going. I discuss the future steps and priorities that trainers foresee for their profession and explore the enduring tension between ideal and real, imagined transformation and actualised praxis, in gender training. I contend that the contribution to social change that the trainers envision for gender training reveals the value of analysing gender training as a contextually responsive practice of knowledge circulation. The impact of training is multi-directional; it takes place through incremental steps and moments which coalescence over an extended temporality.

In the ninth and concluding chapter of the thesis I draw these analyses together. I discuss how I have responded to the questions that guide the research, and detail my contributions to knowledge on the praxis of gender training in Europe. I reflect on the implications and significance of this work and outline a deeper understanding of the negotiation between real and ideal in training for gender equality, which leads me to propose a redefinition of the dynamic between knowledge and transformation as one of circulation. In the chapter that follows, I begin this journey with a detailed picture of scholarship pertaining to the practice of gender expertise in Europe.

Chapter 2 Gender expertise and equality building: a theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Training for gender equality is a point of convergence for theory, activism, and policy. As such, "it sheds light on the nature of the relationship between interest, desire and power" (Lazreg, 2002: 125). Here I explore this relationship as it appears in existing research and literature to identify key themes and prevailing questions. Establishing the contours of this field is not only useful to this study, but also indispensable on a broader scale because "if what constitutes gender expertise is not adequately conceptualised, gender experts face the risk of having the definition co-opted by others" (Hoard, 2015: 174). This focus on expertise is timely, given the increasingly technocratic qualities of global governance, the devastation caused by the global financial crisis and the impacts thereof on public funding, and the broader evolution of the "knowledge economy" (Kofman, 2007; Gorman & Sandefur, 2011; Saks, 2012). With this in mind, I propose a theoretical infrastructure that allows me to interpret gender training as a multi-level phenomenon and provides an analytical infrastructure through which to investigate the interrelations between praxis and power in relation to processes of social transformation.

This chapter consists of two substantial sections that establish a comprehensive and solid base from which I develop the subsequent analyses. I begin the first section with an outline of the scholarship on gender expertise and narrow this to the case of gender training. In this process, I narratively map the factors relating to the practice of gender training in Europe. I look at the institutional and organisational locations of gender experts and their collaboration, outlining the kinds of activities and actions in which they are engaged and what this entails for gender training. I add depth and perspective to this picture by discussing the role of power and knowledge in equality work, and the contested and political nature thereof. From this, I identify relationships and links between gender expertise and feminism, and I present the debate on marketisation and depoliticisation in this work.

In the second section, I outline the theoretical framework and conceptual vocabulary guiding this research. I argue for the understanding of gender knowledge as an analytical device and outline a theory of the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges through gender training. To operationalise these two concepts I present a theoretical architecture for understanding

complex inequalities and processes of social change which draws on Walby (2002; 2007; 2009; 2012) and Verloo's (2018a; 2018b; 2018c) writings on social complexity theory. I provide examples on the interrelation of social systems as these relate to the practice of gender training, arguing for the concept of episteme as system that produces and organises knowledge and truth. Finally, I draw together these conceptual pillars and predominating questions to segue into the subsequent methodological chapter.

2.2 Research on gender expertise and gender training: themes and questions

I present a review and meta-analysis of existing scholarship around the nature and practice of gender expertise and gender training in Europe. I acknowledge a literature review as a "discursive and political exercise" (do Mar Pereira, 2017: 16). This typically involves a competitive tone and the construction of a narrative of errors and inconsistencies; rather I have elected to present my analysis as a discussion that traces the genealogy and relationships of the field over time. This leads to the identification of key themes and questions, and lays the basis for a circulatory understanding of the movement of knowledge.

Writing on gender expertise includes a handful of studies on the specific topic (Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Hoard, 2015; Ferguson, 2015; do Mar Pereira, 2017) and a substantial body of writing on the implementation and evaluation of gender equality policies in Europe. The practice of gender expertise has evolved in reciprocity with gender equality strategies and policy developments, both internationally and in the European context (Mazey, 1995; 1998; Rossili, 2000; McBride & Mazur, 2010). This is evident from legislative cases for equal pay in the 1960s (Ostner, 2000; Abels & Mushaben, 2012), to positive action in the 1980s (Vallance & Davies, 1986; Mazey, 1995; Hoskyns, 1996; Richarson & Mazey, 2015); to gender mainstreaming in the 1990s (Jacquot, 2010; Abels & Mushaben, 2012); and finally to current diversity mainstreaming efforts (Squires, 2008; Woodward, 2008; Lombardo & Verloo, 2009; Kantola & Nousiainen, 2009; Krizsàn et al., 2012). 20 years of gender mainstreaming have helped to establish gender inequality as a policy problem and concretised "an international network of gender experts and a distinctive body of expertise on gender relations" (Thompson & Prügl, 2015). In this time, gender training has become a key tool in translating gender and feminist knowledge into products which are utilisable for both policy makers and practitioners. The shift to

mainstreaming from an affirmative action focus on women "began the era of gender training" (Staudt, 2018: 51). Arribas and Carrasco (2003: 7) echo the dominant discourse in gender mainstreaming stating, "awareness raising and training on gender related issues are of paramount importance for the effective implementation of mainstreaming". Here I highlight the institutional and organisational locations of gender experts, the activities that they carry out, and the different kinds of gender knowledge that they apply. Though this I introduce the debate around the relationship between gender expertise and feminism, and the key challenges that characterise the practice of gender expertise[1].

2.2.1 Institutional and organisational locations

Existing literature references the interrelationships built through a genealogy of women's and feminist activism, the evolution of feminist and gender theorising in academia, and the development of gender equality policies and equality architecture in Europe. The debates as to the nature of these interrelationships have revolved around the appropriate definition of interactions between these groups, which are typically described as triadic in structure (Mazey, 1995; Halsaa, 1998; Vargas & Wieringa, 1998; Woodward, 2003; Holli, 2008; McBride & Mazur, 2010). Halsaa (1998) suggests "strategic partnerships" to describe the co-operation between women politicians, women bureaucrats and women in the autonomous women's movement. For Vargas and Wieringa (1998: 3) the term "triangles of empowerment" is more appropriate to the dynamism of "the interplay between three sets of actors—the women's movement, feminist politicians and feminist civil servants (femocrats)". Woodward (2003) later suggests a tripartite model by using the term "velvet triangle", but categorises the three parts as "organisations of the state, of civil society and universities and consultancies" (Woodward, 2003: 84). Traditionally, as with these studies, the relationships between theory, activism, and politics have been heavily theorised, but the angle of professionalisation and professionalism in gender expertise has not.

[1] There is also a substantial body of research from the development sector on gender mainstreaming and gender equality policies, which echoes the findings foregrounded here (e.g. Reeves & Baden, 2000; Lazreg, 2002; Mukhopadhyay, 2004; Moser & Moser, 2005; Piálek, 2007; Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Parpart, 2014). However, given the regional focus of this research, in this study I focus primarily on literature pertaining to Europe.

More recently Holli (2008) suggests the more pragmatic term "women's co-operative constellations" and an accompanying research agenda to focus on the emergence and activities of these constellations and the interrelationships between "actors, allies and arenas involved in the co-operation" (Holli, 2008: 180). Mazur's (2002) comparative policy research supports this vision. In a study on feminist policy formation across 13 Western post-industrial democracies this author shows that strategic partnerships between women's movements activists, femocrats, and women politicians are indispensable in policy success[2]. Several years later Mazur and McBride (2010) further substantiated this finding in a large cross-cultural mixed methods study focusing on the nexus created by the women's movement and policy agencies of state feminism. They found that the relationships, alliances and combinations of women's movement resources, favourable policy environments, agency activities, and support from the political left are associated with policy success.

Two salient points emerge from this literature. One is the sheer diversity of sites across institutional domains in which gender expertise is being practiced: gender experts are located in a range of sites throughout the public, private, and civil society sectors, together forming a dispersed network that interrelates through cooperation and collaboration. The other is the importance of relationships and engagement between actors, such as gender trainers, working for gender equality across different sites and sectors. More in-depth understanding of these interrelationships, such as between professional and activist roles, and the collective and individual connections between gender experts, is required in order to understand how these relate to equality building projects. In this research, I provide an analysis of these interrelationships between different roles and locations within the cooperative constellations in which gender trainers act. I posit that exchange and support between these actors evidences a circulatory movement of knowledge and an iterative development of praxis.

2.2.2 Activities and actions

The variety of sites across which gender experts are working entails their involvement in a diverse range of activities, which adds the next layer to the picture of gender expertise in Europe.

[2] Here policy success is defined as women's interests being represented in both substantive and descriptive ways in pre-formulation, formulation, and post-formulation (Mazur, 2002: 38).

Specific research is scarce, but an inventory of these activities can be identified in the dense body of evaluative research on gender mainstreaming (Rees, 1998; Beveridge et al., 2000; Booth & Bennett, 2002; Moser & Moser, 2005; Stratigaki, 2005; Walby, 2005; Squires, 2005; Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2007; Prügl, 2011; Parpart, 2014; Milward et al., 2015; Clisby & Enderstein, 2017). I amalgamate this research to provide the following list: gender training, gender monitoring, gender based institutional and procedural review, generating gender disaggregated statistics, developing equality indicators, gender budgeting, conducting gender impact assessments, participating in gender studies scholarship, measurement and monitoring, implementation of policies and processes, creating awareness and engaging relevant stakeholders, gender proofing, and processes of monitoring and evaluation[3] (Arribas & Carrasco, 2003; Rees, 2005; Beveridge & Velluti, 2008; Jacquot, 2010). This list evidences the range of tasks that gender experts undertake and the different roles that they fill. I provide this rather lengthy list to illustrate that gender training is one activity within this constellation of interventions.

Two recent studies address the paucity of direct research on gender experts and provide insights into the acquisition of a specialisation in gender expertise. Thompson and Prügl (2015) conducted an online survey of international gender experts, defining their sample as individuals who were hired by intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations to work on gender related issues. They categorise gender expertise as a developing transnational social field by drawing on a Bourdiuesian framework to interpret how experts are positioned socially, and their skills, habits and capital. These authors highlight a diversity of specialisations among the surveyed international gender experts, but a large degree of overlap between working concepts and topics related to gendered inequalities. This research points to the acquisition of gender knowledge primarily through three main channels: formal education, learning on the job, and

[3] These activities can be defined (see EIGE, 2017), in a general sense, as follows: gender assessment generally entails defining policies in terms of gender related purpose; checking policies for relevance to gender; conducting gender sensitive analysis and weighing gender impact in terms of participation, access, control and social norms and values; and finally offering recommendations. Gender auditing assesses the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalised in policies, programmes, organisational structures and in organisational budgets. Gender budgeting refers to the application of gender mainstreaming in the budget process, restructuring and analysing budget from a gender perspective. Gender planning refers to project planning where gender is taken into account as a key variable; gender evaluation involves systematic assessment of the design (objectives, results pursued, activities planned) in an evaluation process from a gender perspective.

learning through activism. It also highlights a complex relationship between feminism and gender expertise. The authors conclude that "gender expertise as a loosely structured field that is functionally differentiated, shares the outlines of a common problèmatique, has a wide array of entry points, and displays the outlines of an uneven distribution of professional influence" (Thompson & Prügl, 2015: 3).

Differently from the sociological frame adopted by Thompson and Prügl (2015), Hoard (2015) approaches the question of gender expertise from a public policy perspective. Hoard (2015) combined interview data with a qualitative comparative analysis of policy debates to define gender expertise, this author then used this data to identify factors that support and hinder policy success. Hoard (2015: 22) defines a gender expert as "an individual with feminist knowledge, knowledge of the cause-and-effect relationship between policies and/or activities and gender inequalities who has been formally requested to provide services". This author concludes that the impact that gender experts exert through their services is linked to "high-level support; international importance (EU and UN support); supportive administrations, governments, and government actors (left governments and feminists in government); coalitions of support; and institutionalisation of gender equality", and it is hindered by "backlash, the economic crisis, and inadequate support" (Hoard, 2015: 120).

Although it is not the primary focus of their work, other writers focusing outside of Europe detail the experiences and perceptions of gender experts carrying out the activities relating to the implementation of equality strategies. For example, Campbell & Teghtsoonian's (2010) institutional ethnography conducted in Kyrgyzstan reveals that gender experts are expected to develop competence in the language, discourses, regulations and activities mandated by donors even if this results in a divergence from the needs of the local community. In a similar vein, drawing on interviews with employees and the analysis of World Bank policy texts, Bedford (2007: 293) illustrates that the actions and activities of gender policymakers are often mediated by an "efficiency constraint" which enforces a framing of gender equality in terms of productivity and growth. In Çağlar et al.'s (2013) collection on feminist strategies in international governance the authors outline the twin challenges of feminist strategising as a "mode of resistance" and "an instrument of power" (Çağlar et al., 2013: 6) based on different examples of activities carried out by gender experts. From this research, I interpret gender expertise as a developing

professional field characterised by a dynamic tension between productive labour tasks and transformation oriented epistemological positioning, one that is strongly mediated by institutional and contextual norms and discourses.

Collectively this scholarship shows that gender experts have diverse educational and professional backgrounds and they carry out a wide range of activities, mostly determined by their institutional affiliations. These activities take place within a complex system of public governance trends, institutional knowledge production, supranational and national polities, social movement activism, feminist theorising and transnational histories. The perceptions and experiences of gender experts and their interpretations of their work relative to the policy infrastructure, and the political economy which sustains it, require further investigation. More specific research on the educational and professional trajectories of the trainers, as well as their motivations, can offer insight into processes of professionalisation and how different activities and actors relate to one another in processes of social change. Accordingly, in the chapters that follow, I chart the trajectories of the trainers and locate them within institutional domains and systems of social relations. In doing so I confirm the challenges presented by the institutionalisation of gender expertise and discuss the consequences thereof for equality projects.

2.2.3 Gender training

As a key activity of gender experts, gender training is understood as a tool for the translation of gender and feminist knowledge into utilisable formats for policy makers and practitioners across sectors. It is most often described as an act of knowledge transfer (Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Bustelo et al., 2016b), consistent with the framing of awareness raising and training on gender related issues as "of paramount importance for the effective implementation of mainstreaming" (Arribas & Carrasco, 2003: 25). Institutional definitions of gender training provide insight into current dominant discourses in this field. The United Nations Women Training Centre (UNWTC) (2016b: 3) defines gender training as:

> a transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviours. It is a continuous and long-term process that requires political will and commitment of all parties in order to create an inclusive, aware and competent society to promote gender equality.

Referencing the above definition, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) describes gender equality training as a part of a wider set of tools, instruments and strategies. These are embedded in a long-term process aiming to equip participants with the relevant knowledge, skills and values that allow them to contribute to the effective implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy in their field, organisation, institution or country (EIGE, 2012: 2).

The many names of gender training communicate the key features of this practice: learning on gender, gender sensitivity training, sensitisation, training with a gender perspective, capacity development, capacity building, gender awareness training, awareness raising, vocational training for women and girls, gender training, gender sensitive training, skills training (Leghari & Wretbald, 2016: 9). The UNWTC proposes a typology of gender training, which illustrates these different forms. Types of training include: awareness-raising and consciousness building introduce participants to key concepts around gender and women's empowerment; knowledge enhancement training that provides in-depth information; skills trainings that equip participants with instruments, techniques, and strategies; other types of training that focus on changing attitudes and behaviours; and trainings on mobilisation for social transformation (Leghari & Wretbald, 2016). I see three key features of training reflected in these definitions: the development of knowledge around gender, the technical aspect of acquiring discrete skills and competencies, and the political aspect of promoting gender equality. These themes are reflected in writing and resources around gender training. Over the last 30 years, a substantial body of resources has emerged in the form of tools, checklists and training manuals, which focuses on methods and techniques in training (Rao et al., 1991). This is paralleled by scholarship on gender training work in the field of gender and development, which detail tools for analysis, practitioner experiences, techniques and activities, and contextually specific examples (Mackenzie, 1993; Moser, 1993; Wiliams, 1994; Bhasin, 1996; Sweetman, 1998; Smyth & March, 1998; Porter & Smyth, 1998). The UNWTC resources and virtual dialogues on key themes in gender training are particularly rich, offering insights and examples from both practitioners and academics in international scope. Academic research and writing on gender training in Europe is less abundant. I present a synthesised chronology and summary of said literature to locate this research and to provide a background for key issues and themes in this evolving field.

A formative contribution to the field of gender training has been the global sourcebook edited by Mukhopadhyay and Wong (2007) entitled "Revisiting gender training. The making and remaking of gender knowledge", which builds on the body of work introduced above. It begins with an introduction on the politics of the production and dissemination of gender knowledge, followed by reflections on gender training practices and politics in India (Dasgupta, 2007), Uganda (Ahikire, 2007), the Maghreb region (Abou-Habib, 2007) and francophone locations more generally (Vouhé, 2007). This volume discusses the relationship between professionalisation and depoliticisation and it documents the devaluing of feminist and other critical epistemologies in mainstream development. The authors explore the political positionalities of trainers and hegemonic worldviews of knowledge and knowledge production to track the movement of knowledge and power in gender equality strategies. More recently, these editors (Wong et al., 2016) have written on the professional development of gender trainers, which coincides with discussions around professionalisation in the growing transnational network of gender experts. Wong et al. (2016) emphasise the significance of reflexivity, intersectionality, and resistances in their analysis of professional development and map existing training of trainer programs. They identify a lack of understanding of training as a "political and social process as well as a consideration of the contexts of training both at a discursive level as well as at an organisational level". This analysis is the basis for the UN Women Training Centre and Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) "Professional Development Programme for Gender Trainers" run since 2017. This course facilitates a reclamation of gender training as a political feminist transformatory process through conceptual depth and clarity, feminist practices, and training skills and methods.

The Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies (QUING) project, which ran from 2006-2011, provided the first explicit focus on gender training in the European region. Within this the OPERA subproject was designed to focus on gender training as a tool for the transfer of gender knowledge (Verloo et al., 2011). OPERA ran a series of workshops, seminars, and forums to support dialogue between academics and activists regarding gender training in addition to participating in the Transatlantic Applied Research in Gender Equity Training (TARGET) (Pauly et al., 2009; Ferguson & Forest, 2011), which ran from 2007-2009. The OPERA project as a whole was aimed at developing best practices and quality markers for gender+ training and exploring the professionalisation of gender trainers as key experts carrying out the implementation of inclusive equality policies. The discussions and materials produced through this project include training curricula guidelines, quality standards, monitoring and evaluation benchmarks,

identification of best practices, and a manual for trainers. Overall, this project focused primarily on methods; however, the discussions and reflections of the project members recorded in reports include a substantial critical engagement with issues of universal standards, appropriate methodologies, the political economy of gender knowledge, and the multiplicity of resistances.

OPERA then became the departure point for a 2016 collection edited by project team members entitled “The politics of feminist knowledge transfer”. This volume provides an account of key issues: relationships and tensions between power, knowledge, and ideals of social transformation (Prügl, 2016); different forms of resistances (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016); the privatisation of funding and the marketisation of inequalities (Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016); and governmentalities in feminist knowledge transfer (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016). Illustrative of these themes, three critical case studies are provided: metaphors about knowledge circulation in the Women, Peace and Security sector (Kunz, 2016); gender training and change in a Swedish municipality (Callerstig, 2016); and structural transformation through gender training in a higher education institution in France (Albenga, 2016). The editors of this volume describe gender training as an act of “feminist knowledge transfer” where the overall goal is “a transformation in gendered power relations for more equal societies, workplaces, polices, and communities” (Bustelo et al., 2016: 3). This use of the term feminist purposefully points to an ongoing debate regarding the practice of gender expertise, which I unpack in the following sections of this chapter.

The latest contribution to the field of gender training in Europe is Ferguson’s (2018) “Gender training: a transformative tool for gender equality”. The author further develops her work from OPERA and TARGET, and draws on UNWTC publications and resources to offer her reflections from the perspective and experience as a gender expert and trainer explicitly straddling the worlds of academia and practice. Ferguson (2018) provides an outline of key critiques and challenges, evaluates the transformative potential of gender training, and advocates for feminist pedagogical principles. This author calls for training strategies that engage with privilege and privileged participants; the development of creative methodologies; and the cultivation of “transformative courage” in the practice of feminist gender training. The literature on gender training outlined in this section highlights politics surrounding knowledge translation and transfer and points to an established political economy of gender expertise in Europe. In this

research, I expand on these points, deepen the understanding of the transformative potential, and the paradoxes, of gender training, and build knowledge around the methodologies of trainers, their theoretical reference points, and how these interact in the circulation of knowledge through praxis. Beyond the locations and activities of gender, expertise existing scholarship suggests that there are several factors that inform this practice and its impact. These include relationships between knowledge, power and feminism; and depoliticisation or co-optation.

2.2.4 Knowledge and power

The professional field of gender expertise is characterised by "knowledge work" (Bustelo et al., 2016), based on specific kinds of knowledge (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Young & Scherrer, 2010a; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Gender experts employ and enact specific and specialised knowledge, experience, and skills (Berg, 1994; Standing, 2004; Wong et al., 2016) which are not available to the general public (Schudson, 2006; Collins & Evans, 2007). This specific knowledge stands in contrast to the more general "gendered" knowledge possessed by any individual in a given social context (Schwenken, 2008; Çağlar, 2008; Cavaghan, 2010). This distinction will be discussed further in the theoretical pillars, but this literature states clearly that the knowledge of gender experts is "specialised knowledge" (Berg, 1994: 168). This knowledge comes from "specialised training as well as a sophisticated understanding of gender relations" (Beveridge et al., 2000: 390) and forms part of a "field of technical expertise" (Macdonald, 1994: 16). This knowledge has been built through a transnational genealogy. Indeed, "one of the remarkable outcomes of the feminist movement of the late 20th century has been the development of specialised knowledge about gender relations and the packaging of this knowledge as expertise" (Prügl, 2013: 79). Different kinds of "gender knowledge" are developed and practiced through the different locations in which experts are active. As are visible in the professional activities of gender experts outlined above, there is the procedural knowledge of femocrats and feminist politicians who are inside institutions and therefore adept in norms, regulations and procedures relating to policymaking and legislation. There is the technical or technocratic knowledge of academics and researchers who generate research and theoretical and empirical analysis of gendered inequalities. And there is the experiential knowledge of actors embedded in women's movements and NGOs resulting from their contact with local communities and their involvement in European transnational networks (Mazey, 1995; Locher, 2003; Hoard, 2015).

Throughout my discussion of gender expertise and gender training I have pointed to a tangible tension between the emancipatory ethos of equality work, and the inevitable exercise of power that accompanies the notions of "expert knowledge" and "specialised knowledge" (Walby, 2005; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). Furthermore, within the field of specialised knowledge some kinds of knowledge and knowers are hegemonic, reproducing existing hierarchies within Europe, and internationally (Connell et al., 2017; Collyer et al., 2017). These hierarchies are problematic both practically and politically (Ferguson, 2015: 386), as they come to intersect with and compliment other unequal relations of power. For example, Prügl (2010) conducted an analysis of Foucauldian governmental logics in a close reading of 12 training manuals on gender in the security sector. This author identifies different end logics and techniques within these manuals, revealing complex workings of power and dynamics of epistemic authority as feminist knowledge is packaged and processed into the format of gender expertise. Expanding this theme, Davids and Eederwijk (2016) argue that gender mainstreaming has become a technique of governance as feminist knowledge and objectives have been institutionalised, intersecting with other neoliberal governmentalities that privilege the efficiency of operationality and measurement in skills, tools, assessments, and checklists. This work shows how gender trainers can be complicit in the maintenance and development of unequal power relations through the very systems that were established to tackle these inequalities to begin with. This is particularly pertinent in terms of the interplay of authority, legitimacy, and expertise in relation to plural and contextual feminist knowledges and the global political economy of knowledge production. More research on the factors that facilitate and inhibit the transfer of feminist knowledge, and how power moves within these systems, is needed (McBride & Mazur, 2010; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Hoard, 2015). In this thesis, I develop the analysis of the relationship between knowledge and power in equality projects through my analysis of epistemic hierarchies and imperialism within the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe and I relate this to global systems of knowledge production in an approach of critical cartography.

2.2.5 Feminism and gender expertise

The relationship between gender expertise and feminism is marked by a collision between neoliberal labour expediencies and aims of social transformation. The differentiation of gender knowledge and feminist knowledge, and the connections and discontinuities between them, are debated. As the work of Thompson & Prügl (2015: 16) reveals "the connection between feminism and gender expertise is complicated". Hoard (2015: 30) argues that for this reason any kind of research "attempting to examine gender expertise needs to carefully consider what

constitutes gender expertise and whether gender expertise and feminist expertise are the same, entirely different forms of knowledge, or whether feminist expertise is a subcategory of gender expertise". Both Thompson and Prügl (2015) and Hoard (2015) report that the majority of participants in their studies applied feminist principles and have feminist goals, but that these were often diluted or muted in the process of negotiation which is gender mainstreaming (Walby, 2005). Podems (2010) argues that there is a distinct difference between feminist evaluation and gender approaches to evaluation but that these are regularly confused. Gender approaches focus on identifying differences between "men" and "women", treat these as homogenous groups, and tend to use male norms as evaluation criteria. In contrast, feminist approaches challenge subordination and inequality, recognise multiplicity in gender identities, acknowledge that evaluations are value-laden, and actively value reflexivity (Podems, 2010: 8-10). However, as Podems (2010) points out, in practice the distinctions between the two are far more blurred.

For other authors, gender expertise is necessarily part of a feminist project because it aims specifically at social transformation (see Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Pauly et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Mukhopadhyay and Wong (2007: 11) describe gender training as having "feminist roots", arguing that it is a feminist project which involves feminist knowledge transfer. Bustelo et al. (2016b: 4) echo this statement, writing that "in general we consider feminist training methods to be participatory, interactive, and with the ultimate goal of transformation". This position is based on several key assumptions about the feminist practice of gender expertise. To begin with, the aim of these practices is "changing the world, fighting against social injustices and redressing unequal power relations" (Bustelo et al., 2016b: 3). This involves an understanding of gendered inequalities as "structural" and "systemic" (Walby, 2004; Prügl, 2010; Bustelo et al., 2016b); an understanding of knowledge as situated; cognisance of the plurality of feminist knowledges; and the acknowledgement of collectivity in knowledge production (Rose, 1997; Prügl, 2010; Prügl, 2013; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). The recognition of power and relations of power within the production of feminist and gender knowledges is indispensable (Prügl, 2010; Young & Scherrer, 2010b; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014; Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016; Mukhopadhyay, 2017). In this, reflexivity—understood as a critical awareness and analysis of individual positionality and social location—is recognised as fundamentally important in the practice of equality work (Rose, 1997; Adkins, 2004; Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Lombardo et al., 2009; Walby, 2009; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Mukhopadhyay, 2017; Ferguson, 2018).

I interpret these authors' classification of gender expertise as a feminist project as a statement of ideal form. In other words, a feminist practice of gender expertise that adheres closely to feminist principles and is guided by a transformation of gendered power relations is the ideal that practitioners are striving for. However, as this very same body of work elucidates, the application of these principles is a heavily contested process (Standing, 2004; Hoard, 2015; Prügl, 2016). A straight line between intentions, practice, and outcomes in the practice of gender expertise is untenable. This may be because of unreceptive policy contexts (Mazey, 1995; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2007), or rationalisation and marketisation (Perron, 2005; Squires, 2005; Outshoorn & Kantola, 2007; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Nousiainen et al., 2013; Prügl, 2015), or diverse forms of opposition (Agocs, 1997; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Roggeband & Verloo, 2006; Pauly et al., 2009; van Eerdewijk, 2014; Szelewa, 2014; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016; Popa & Krizsàn, 2018; Ahrens, 2018; Strid, 2018; Verloo, 2018b). In different activities and locations, and among different actors, gender expertise may take different forms and encounter different varieties of opposition that hinder a "feminist" implementation.

In synthesis, gender expertise is defined by specialised knowledge, and the application thereof is politically charged through its relationship to feminism (Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Lombardo & Meier, 2008; Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Prügl, 2016; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). There is a large collection of material produced by international organisations, consultants, and gender experts on content for gender trainings and an ongoing debate on what constitutes a feminist application of gender expertise (Arribas & Carrasco, 2003; Rees, 2005; Beveridge & Velluti, 2008; Jacquot, 2010). However, research explicitly focused on the methodologies that gender experts employ in their work, and the epistemological positioning of these experts, is noticeably scarce and disambiguation of the relationship between feminism and gender expertise is needed (Hoard, 2015; Wong et al., 2016). Through the data and analysis presented in this text, I explore the epistemological orientations of gender trainers, and the relationship between feminism and gender expertise that is woven through their professional trajectories, guides their ethics, and informs their methodologies. I also address the tensions that the translation of feminist politics into productive labour brings.

2.2.6 Depoliticisation, co-optation, and marketisation

The dense body of literature on the analysis and evaluation of national and transnational equality policies in Europe highlights key issues in the current practice of gender expertise. Hostile policy contexts, opposition, and the co-optation of feminism and gender expertise are dominant unifying themes across this literature. Gender experts are caught in a paradox. They have to advocate transformative gender equality awareness, but are often forced to adopt strategic framing and engage in depoliticisation in order to be hired (Mazey, 1998; Ghodsee, 2004; Pascall & Lewis, 2004; Squires, 2008; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Ferguson, 2015). For example, Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) found that a key determinant of the application of gender mainstreaming across five directorate generals in the European Commission was the ability of advocates for gender equality to frame gender mainstreaming strategically to meet with the least resistance. This requisite of gender experts needing to "get gender right" (Ferguson, 2015: 384) recurs throughout the literature. Gender experts are simultaneously insiders and outsiders, trying to change the same institutions by which they are professionally remunerated.

The institutionalisation of gender expertise entails legitimisation of the related skills and competencies, and an attached market value as well as an epistemic authority. However, many authors have argued that this has also brought about depoliticisation in practice and application (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; Perron, 2005; Lombardo & Meier, 2008; Gerhards et al., 2009; Jacquot, 2010; Kantola & Squires, 2012). Wong et al. (2016: 5) observe that, in the case of gender training, this manifests as a typical format of one-off workshop-based event, with limited scope, focused on memorisation and information transfer. For Cornwall (2016: 75), writing from a development sector perspective, this is because gender training "was for many years about frameworks and also, often, about ways of ordering the world that assigned people and things to categories rather than looking at culture, agency and relationships". Gender training has typically been "constructed, manualised and packaged" (Lazreg, 2002: 132), particularly in relation to gender mainstreaming, as "a set of skills, which can be straightforwardly delivered and reproduced" (Mukhopadhyay, 2014: 362). The result is trainings that can be conceptually stripped down and politically hollow. In Ahmed's (2012) assessment, the commissioning of training in these cases comes to stand in tokenistically for actual organisational restructuring, resulting in dynamics of co-optation.

The debate around the "co-optation of feminisms" (see Clisby & Enderstein, 2017; de Jong & Kimm, 2017), is strongly linked to the marketisation of gender expertise. Writing on the transformation of feminism with, and through, capitalism is well established (Fraser, 2009; Eisenstein, 2009; Roberts, 2012; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Prügl, 2015; Farris, 2017). Fraser (2009) and Eisenstein (2009) chart this trajectory chronologically, emphasising the seduction of feminism by capitalism and neoliberalism, and Roberts (2012) extends this historical materialist approach in an analysis of transnational business feminism. More specific to the regional focus of this research Kantola and Squires (2012) talk about "market feminism" and most recently Farris (2017) describes European varieties of "femonationalism". It is visible, for example, in the neoliberalisation of feminism in women's empowerment projects run by transnational companies. These approaches privilege competition, markets, customers and outcomes by interweaving feminism with neoliberal economic projects and ideologies (Prügl, 2015: 617). Gender experts are expected to deploy these discourses of economic efficiency, and in the process they become accountable to funders and employers rather than communities who are discriminated against (Mazey, 1995; Rossili, 2000; Pascall & Lewis, 2004; Ghodsee, 2004; Squires, 2008; Kantola & Squires, 2012).

These approaches significantly influence the work of gender experts as they grapple with the "business case" for equality and a growing practice of market feminism (Perron, 2005; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Ferguson, 2015). For example, in a case study of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)[4] in the United Kingdom (UK) Squires (2008) contrasts social justice with utility-based and market driven "diversity management" rationales for equality work. This author argues that the latter is a system that not only objectifies "difference" but also monetises the social realities of discrimination and prejudice (Squires, 2005). Ferguson (2015) provides an autobiographical reflection of how this business case for equality poses a particular dilemma for gender experts as they have to negotiate complicity and legitimacy against remuneration for their work. Ferguson (2015) highlights the challenges of strategic framing of equality issues, non-feminist gender work, the marginalisation and externalisation of gender equality activities, and

[4] The EHRC was established in 2007 to bring together equality strands in accordance with the EU push for an integrated approach to multiple inequalities (Woodward 2008; Squires 2008; Lombardo & Verloo 2009; Krizsàn et al. 2012).

the low economic value of gender expertise. This author concludes that working "as a gender expert with transformative feminist goals is indeed a messy business" (Ferguson, 2015: 393).

In practice this plays out in an escalating tension between the feminist roots and transformatory aims of gender expertise, and checkbox approaches to gender equality oriented activities such as gender training (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2016). Drawing on a rich history of research on state feminism in Europe (Mazur, 2002; Woodward, 2003; McBride & Mazur, 2010), Kantola and Squires (2012) argue that "market feminism", as opposed to state feminism, is a more apt conceptual framework in the current political and economic situation. They point to the changes in practices and priorities that have accompanied gender mainstreaming, such as gender experts' proficiency in discourses of economic efficiency and the "offloading" of state responsibilities to civil society actors (Kantola & Squires, 2012: 394).

This "utilitarian market model" (Squires, 2008: 59) of equality work is supported by the intensification of an evidence-based policy-making format, which further inculcates competition and rationales of efficiency, becoming symptomatic of the managerialist dynamics of neoliberal governance. Kantola and Nousiainen (2010: 48) state that new modes of governance, which privilege a heavy cognitive dimension of systematic knowledge dissemination (Jacobsson, 2004; Jacquot & Muller, 2007; Jacquot, 2010), have increased the discursive presence of equality through the work of gender experts while, comparatively, delivering little on a material level. As findings from the OPERA project on quality in gender+ training illustrate, marketisation has profound effects: it "not only tends to shape what gender training looks like; it also makes the tools and methodological approaches developed by trainers a competitive matter, as trainers need to sell their competences on a developing market" (Ferguson & Forest, 2011: 55). Trainers are required to make gender concepts intelligible for participants in their trainings, resulting in a reductive approach that shifts from changing attitudes towards exclusively transmitting measurable skills, whereby participants are "professionals" who simply need to apply gender knowledge according to discrete checkboxes (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007). Through this study, I explore the mechanics of the marketisation of inequalities in the practice of gender training, and the ways in which trainers leverage, counter, and subvert this rationality. The hollowing out of equality policies and strategies highlighted here is repeatedly acknowledged in the literature, but less is known about how gender experts, specifically gender trainers,

negotiate these tensions. In this research, I explore how trainers tackle depoliticisation and strive, with differing degrees of success, to balance their equality-oriented intentions with funder and commissioner compliance, and the needs of the participants in their sessions.

2.2.7 Resistances and opposition

Equality advocates routinely face high resistance and unreceptive "policy hinterlands", that is, "national political and cultural traditions, hegemonic values and the characteristics of the politico administrative systems" (Mazey, 1998: 145), which heavily influence their work. Most actors on supranational and national levels see gender mainstreaming as a procedural instrument that they have to implement, but not a resource as such (Mazey, 1998; Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2007; Woodward, 2008). Writing on the uneven development of gender mainstreaming in Europe, Rees (2005: 555) argues that there are few cases where gender mainstreaming is implemented with the principal goal of promoting gender equality; most often it is subsumed under other policy goals. Jacquot (2010: 126) observes "gender mainstreaming has become consensual. Open resistance cannot be found, but inertia and lip service are not uncommon". Gender experts continue to face institutional resistance to transformation and competition for scarce resources (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; 2007). They also face a decrease in targeted support for gendered inequalities (Ostner, 2000; Stratigaki, 2005), and the challenge of the discursive openness of gender mainstreaming (Mazey, 1998; Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Avdeyeva, 2010). Additionally, gender mainstreaming's ubiquity tends to obscure other inequalities, limiting an intersectional perspective (Mazey, 1998; Bacchi, 1999; Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Verloo & Lombardo, 2007). The recent growth of anti-gender movements in Europe further entrenches and legitimises implicit and explicit resistance against the work of gender experts (Grzebalska, 2016; Graff & Korolczuk, 2017; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Verloo, 2018a).

Resistances come in many forms, and these change over time in response to the ground gained through gender equality initiatives. As Ahmed's (2012: 8) phenomenological research on diversity work in higher education shows, diversity is often exercised as a repair narrative in the context of institutions, whereby an equality regime becomes an "inequality regime given a new form, a set of processes that maintain what is supposedly being redressed". In the case of gender training, Lombardo and Mergaert (2013) found that this resistance can be individual or

organisational, and explicit or implicit. Often this takes the form of non-action, when policy-makers and implementers abstain from gender initiatives and analysis. This non-action occurs behind an "equality mirage" created by the widespread adoption of mainstreaming language (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013: 302). This supports the observation that institutions discursively commit to gender mainstreaming while gender experts consistently face resistance at many levels (Mazey, 1995; Perron, 2005; Chiva, 2009; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013). Gender experts face the challenge of making gender equality palatable and uncontroversial, to develop messages on gender that successfully circumnavigate this resistance and appeal to institutions while promoting change within them (Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Ferguson, 2015). This raises the question of how trainers and gender experts navigate these resistances. I respond to this question by providing a typology of resistances and illustrating the reciprocity thereof with counterstrategies, thus challenging linear understandings of processes of change based on a simple transmission of knowledge. The analysis of resistances and counterstrategies is a fruitful technique for evaluating and building theories of change relating to gender training. This is lacking in existing literature (Ferguson, 2018; 2019), but it is indispensable to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of impactful equality building. This study provides theoretical and empirical biases to inform models of the transformative effect gender training.

2.3 Locating this research

This research responds to the current state of theorising on gender training in Europe that I presented in the preceding section. In meta-perspective, this writing provides a map of principal issues in the current practice of gender training, and points to several theoretical and empirical lacunae. Together these texts draw a distinction between feminist knowledge transfer, where social transformation is the aim, and simple apolitical transfer of information on gender. They highlight the power dynamics and contradictions in gender training; the importance of the contexts in which knowledge transfer takes place; the locations and positionalities from which gender training is delivered; and the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe. This collection of research points to the need for research on epistemic authority and professional ethics that highlights the dynamic between institutionalisation and transformation and explores how trainers translate theoretical concepts into practice. In this scholarship, I see a persistent duality: on the one side there are the gains won through the gender equality work to date; and on the other side are the recurring disappointments and evolving challenges that the developing field of gender expertise faces. I am interested in the space in-between this duality and the

dynamic and contested processes of equality building that play out therein. The practice of gender training takes place within this space; it is a multilevel point of interrelation of agent and structure dynamics. It is precisely because of this intersection that gender training is the focus of this study, training is an encounter between actors of the feminist project and "others whose truth commitments are structured around different premises" (Bustelo et al., 2016: xi). In gender training the complexities and tensions of equality work are amplified, as are direct practical actions to address these. Thus, this research provides richer knowledge about the dynamic and iterative nature of equality building processes.

The literature reveals a need for the investigation of what it means to practice gender expertise, and gender training specifically, across different epistemological contexts (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 13). This encompasses a focus on the nexus of theory and practice of feminist knowledge transfer, the political economy surrounding said processes, and the integration of key concepts such as intersectionality (Bustelo et al., 2016b). In-depth research on power and the political dimensions of conveying feminist knowledge in different scenarios is particularly important in the current diversity management trend as the community of gender experts expands and the application of intersectionality meets market rationality (Squires, 2008; Hoard, 2015; Prügl, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Prügl (2010; 2016) calls for more in-depth investigation of what happens to feminist knowledge in the process of translation, how certain feminist movement ideas are integrated into neoliberal rationales and logics with a close attention to "what is lost in the process and what is perhaps gained" (Prügl, 2015: 614). Analysis that is focused solely on losses is limiting and tends to overgeneralise and ignore counter trends (Funk, 2013: 179). In contrast, in this study I heed Ferguson's (2018: 95) call to focus on how "transformative courage" can be built to move gender training towards "a creative and liberating process with the potential to evoke tangible, lasting transformation across individuals and institutions towards gender equality".

The importance of feminism in the history and practice of gender training is widely acknowledged, and a feminist positionality is stated as a prerequisite for transformation oriented praxis (Bustelo et al., 2016a; Ferguson, 2018; 2019). However, in my reading of the literature less is known about the individuals who are required to embody this positionality, and their experiences as gendered and intersectional subjects. The challenges and pressures that

lead to the depoliticisation and hollowing out of gender training are well documented, but there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of how trainers respond to this and what counterstrategies they employ. An extension of the analysis of the relationships between formalisation, technocratisation, and marketisation is necessary in order to move beyond a simple statement of co-optation or institutionalisation as "a sign of a failed feminist revolution" (Prügl, 2010: 20). Gender experts are not simply enacting a purely neoliberal vision of gender equality, they are often working to carry through the intentions of their work despite requirements to dilute, synthesise, or oversimplify. Thus, in this research I have asked, "What are the constraints *and* opportunities offered by the translation of feminist knowledges into gender expertise?" As I have explored, existing literature highlights the importance of relationships between differently located gender experts, but more clarity is needed on the quality of these interactions and the dynamics of transnational collaboration and solidarity building, especially given the plurality within feminist projects. There is a recurrent association between gender training and feminist pedagogies, but how do trainers convey theoretical and analytical concepts about power and societal change in ways that are intelligible to people who may not share their interpretative frameworks (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 13)? Furthermore, how do these theories and practices relate to the broader field of education and global systems of knowledge production? Lastly, reflexivity is a key theme in writing on gender training, gender expertise, and feminist theorising in general, but what does this really look like in practice and how does it relate to social change? These are the themes and questions that have shaped how I designed and conducted this research that has resulted in an analysis that contributes to a richer understanding of the dynamics of the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges and the mechanics of equality building.

2.4 Researching training for gender equality: a conceptual lexicon

In the preceding section, I presented a picture of the themes and questions in existing literature and located this research relative to these. I addressed the institutional and organisational locations of gender experts and the activities and actions in which they are involved. I looked at knowledge and power in gender expertise in Europe and the relationship between feminism and gender expertise, and outlined elements of depoliticisation and co-optation such as the marketisation of inequalities and forms of opposition. I narrowed the focus to the case of gender training, revealing this practice as a site at which macro-level discursive constructions of equality

meet meso-level infrastructures and micro-level interpersonal exchange. In the next section, I build a conceptual framework that responds to this multi-level phenomenon.

2.4.1 Gender knowledge as a concept

A key question in gender training is that of knowledge—how it is acquired, how it is used, and the epistemological and practical implications of different kinds of knowledge (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Young & Scherrer, 2010a; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Mukhopadhyay and Wong (2007: 14) ask, "How are feminist and other critical social theory epistemologies received by dominant epistemologies and their assumptions about truth, objectivity, the knower, what can be known and how it can be known?" Gender training is a point of encounter and exchange between these different epistemologies, as commissioners, trainers, and participants each bring their own maps of the world, and their understandings of gender, to the workshops. Gender training is not about simply transferring knowledge about gender to address a deficit in knowledge. It is about facilitating a paradigmatic shift to a critical understanding of gender among workshop participants in such a way that they are inspired to work against gendered inequalities. Indeed, as psychological studies on behaviour change illustrate, information provision alone is simply inadequate to catalyse change (see Glanz et al., 2015), least of all change that requires individuals to challenge intimate and enduring beliefs such as those surrounding gender and relations of power. Thus, to study feminist and gender knowledges in gender training, and in relation to processes of social change, a concept of plurality in gender knowledges and epistemologies is required. Here I use the concept of gender knowledge as an analytical device (Andresen & Dölling, 2005; Cavaghan, 2010; Young & Scherrer, 2010a; Cavaghan, 2017).

The gender knowledge as a concept (Cavaghan, 2010: 19) approach departs from the assumption that "every form of knowledge – be it everyday knowledge, expert knowledge and popularised knowledge – is based upon a specific, often tacit and unconscious, form of gender knowledge" (Young & Scherrer, 2010a: 9). This conceptualisation sheds light on different kinds of gender knowledge and interpretative frameworks, as well as the implications of these differences for action within the political economy of knowledge work. In this understanding, rather than gender knowledge as a specific empirical and theoretical body of work upon which only gender experts draw, gender knowledge is ubiquitous. In the broadest sense, gender knowledge refers to the "explicit and implicit representations concerning the differences

between the sexes and the relations between them, the origins and normative significance of these, the rationale and evidence underpinning them and their material form" (Cavaghan, 2017: 48). I use this approach because it allows me to track how different knowledge forms are articulated and how these relate to truth claims by different social actors.

Gender knowledge can be differently classified according to relation and provenance. Andresen and Dölling (2005: 50) distinguish between collectively held "objective" macro-level gender knowledge and "subjective" micro-level gender knowledge. Collectively held gender knowledge is common ideas about gender and gender relations, and subjectively held gender knowledge refers to an individual's knowledge of their gender and position in society (Çağlar, 2008; Cavaghan, 2010). These kinds of knowledge can further be organised into three forms: practical everyday knowledge, institutionally produced knowledge, and popular knowledge. Schwenken (2008: 773, citing Dolling, 2005: 52) describes these three levels as follows:

> tacit and unreflected everyday knowledge and knowledge of experience; knowledge and meanings generated by institutions such as religion, academia, or law; and popularised knowledge that is dispersed through media, guidebooks, and social movements, among other forces, and that often links everyday and expert knowledge.

Within this framework, each of these forms may incorporate different understandings and positions about gender, these epistemologies are interpretative frameworks according to which gender knowledge is understood and analysed. For example, schematically speaking a feminist interpretive framework may see gender as socially and relationally constructed, focusing on the dynamics of interaction between systems of power and oppression that sustain inequalities. In contrast, a religious perspective may state that gender is attached to biological sex and is God-given. Why conceptualise this macro-micro structure in terms of knowledge, instead of culture, or capital, for instance? I do this to actively centre knowledge, and the sociality of the exchange and the circulation of knowledge, that which occurs at individual and collective levels. Gender trainings do not involve a simple transmission of information, rather, they are the moments in which subjective and objective gendered knowledges are brought into conversation and contested.

The gender knowledge concept is particularly useful to study gender training because gender trainings are moments in which forms for gender knowledge are brought into contact and contested. Gender knowledge understood in this way sheds light on the dynamics of competing epistemologies as interpretative frameworks. Crucially it acknowledges gender as "always already there" as part of collective and subjective knowledge, and that gender experts are also gendered beings. This approach holds the tension between macro-level discursive constructions of gender and equality to the micro-level political struggles in different organisational and bureaucratic contexts. Gender knowledge as a concept acts as a bridge between material and discursive practices, most usefully "it extends the potential field of analysis into practice, enabling examination of micro-level processes which were previously hard to capture using discursive analysis [...] so that insights from both can be applied" (Young & Scherrer, 2010a). Through this understanding I can track the movement of gender and feminist knowledges through gender training practice, thus illuminating how these interpretive frameworks are negotiated in relation to one another.

By employing this understanding of gender knowledge, I am able to attend to the relationships between knowledge, expertise, and feminism in a variety of ways that facilitate a deeper understanding of processes of equality building (van Eerdewijk, 2014; Ahrens, 2018; Verloo, 2018a). Sociological literature suggests that experts gain authority by claiming objectivity, which requires that they distance themselves from political and financial interests (Wilensky, 1964; Schudson, 2006; Collins & Evans, 2007; Saks, 2012). In contrast, feminist scholars have criticised abstract notions of objectivity, and shed light on the production of knowledge as a process saturated with the effects of power and positionality. By treating gender knowledge as a concept, dynamics of the negotiation of epistemic status are revealed and the plurality within feminist and gender theorizing is acknowledged (Harding, 1987; Reinharz, 1992; Beasley, 1999).

Looking at gender knowledge as a concept illuminates the coexistence and interaction of different understandings of gender and feminism, it facilitates my aim to explore how gender trainers themselves make sense of the knowledge that they hold, and how they operationalise this in practice. Secondly, as argued in the analysis of the literature, the voices of gender trainers themselves need to be foregrounded in order to address the lack of documented "critical analysis of the thinking behind gender training, especially the epistemological assumptions

underlying what is and is not being trained and how training is being thought about" (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 12). The acknowledgement of different forms of gendered knowledge, their provenance and sociality, entails a recognition of the gendered and intersectional subjectivities of trainers. These are shaped by their own socialisation and histories. Lastly, by viewing gender knowledge as an analytical device the dynamic between the feminist project and opposition thereto changes from one of forceful, almost static, juxtaposition to one of interaction. By investigating this dynamic (see Verloo, 2018b), as I do in this thesis, the dynamics of counterstrategies and opportunities are rendered more transparent. This responds to a pressing need to adequately address the current landscape of neoconservativism and anti-gender movements (Szelewa, 2014; Grzebalska, 2016; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Graff & Korolczuk, 2017).

2.4.2 Gender and feminist knowledges in circulation

The gender knowledge concept that I use in this conceptual vocabulary presupposes movement, as forms of knowledge are communicated and pass between actors and social systems. As outlined in the review of the literature, "transfer" is the term most frequently used to describe this movement of knowledge in the case of gender training (Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Following my theorisation of gender trainings as moments of intersection and interaction, I argue for a more dynamic, fluid, and open understanding of how knowledge moves through gender training. My intention is not to refute the term transfer, because there are elements of knowledge transfer in gender training processes. Transfer reflects the governance aspect of gender training and gender mainstreaming. This is shown in the emphasis on manageability, measurability, and the transmission of specific skills and information (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016). Transfer is a reminder of the depoliticisation that can accompany this process of institutionalisation (Longwe, 1997; Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007). Bustelo et al. (2016b: 4) refer to gender training as a process of *feminist knowledge transfer*, where *feminist* is used to designate the political, power imbued, and contested features of gender training praxis. However, as these authors themselves acknowledge, *transfer* holds "one-dimensional connotations and the danger of creating and sanctioning hierarchies of feminist knowledges" (Bustelo et al., 2016b: 4). In my appraisal, the term transfer does not allow space for opposition or plurality—it states a unidirectionality. Transfer conveys a notion of a fixed temporality, a single instance of knowledge delivered, and presupposes an empty, dislocated space through which knowledge moves directly from an expert to a passive and neutral target. As Kunz (2016:

43) asserts, “feminist knowledges circulate in many different ways and directions, defying the simplistic, linear top-down version of the transfer scenario”.

For these reasons, I propose a redefinition of the movement of knowledge through gender training as one of circulation. By focusing on circulation I acknowledge the transnational history of knowledge production and political economy in which the trainers are embedded, and which mediates their practice. The term circulation has a long history across disciplines as the descriptor for delivery systems of processes and transfers that move “discrete objects, images, and people between defined points in space and time” (Aronczyk & Craig, 2012: 93). More recently, it has come to prominence in the field of the sociology of science and knowledge, particularly as terminology relating to the movement of concepts and ideas within international social sciences through South-North and South-South interactions (Keim et al., 2014; Collyer et al., 2017).

I use the circulation-idea (Keim, 2014: 84) from the study of the movement of scientific ideas because it is especially relevant to the practice of gender expertise even though gender training is not located in the sector of academic knowledge production. Women’s, Gender, and Feminist Studies (WGFS) as an academic discipline actively participates in the circulation of knowledge and concepts in the broader field of international social sciences, a field upon which it has exerted significant impact (Wöhrer, 2016). However, the value of my application of circulation is not merely a case of proximity; it is about the particular way in which WGFS is linked to actors and activities outside of this field. The establishment of WGFS in the European region, albeit with significant local and national diversity (see do Mar Pereira, 2017), was catalysed by feminist and women’s movement activism, and continues to share strong links with these projects and gender equality policies in Europe and internationally (Holli, 2008; Lang, 2009; Young & Scherrer, 2010a; Baksh et al., 2015).

As outlined in the review of the literature, cooperative constellations between actors located in different sites across private, public, and civil society sectors continue to constitute links and joins across which concepts and practice travel. By using the idea of circulation I centre this movement and “the historical contingency and mutation of existing notions and practices” (Raj,

2006: 20) that this brings. Furthermore, these links and interactions hold a particular transnational quality in the case of feminist and gender knowledges, where they reach past individual local contexts in a "coalescence of organisations, networks, coalitions, campaigns, analysis, advocacy and actions that politicise women's rights and gender equality issues beyond the nation-state" (Baksh & Harcourt, 2015: 5). The relations of this transnationalism are shot through with colonialities of power, and WGFS is not wholly the counter-hegemonic multi-centre discipline that we would wish (Wöhrer, 2016: 340). Thus, my use of circulation applies a recognition and analysis of these relations, a task for which "transfer" is inadequate. This is motivated by my understanding of gender trainers as actors in dynamics of circulation who are drawing on diverse knowledges, and an active disruption of assumptions around "the identities and locations of trainers within intersecting hierarchies—of gender, gender identity, sexuality, class, ethnicity, etc." (Ferguson, 2018: 18).

I do not subscribe to an exhultory rhetoric of circulation which pivots on "overcoming of boundaries and restrictions, through which all this excitement appears positive for everyone involved" (Tsing, 2000: 332). Neither do I think of circulation as a unidirectional diffusion of knowledge from the metropole to the rest of the world. Rather, I draw on Keim's (2014) proposed three variants of circulation. In reception a theory or concept is taken from somewhere else and applied by a scholar to their own work; exchange involves the "multidirectional prolongation" of reception in which the field or concept is co-developed through controversy and co-construction (Keim, 2014: 97). The third type of circulation is that of negotiating theory and practice, which involves exchange between academics and practitioners. Gender training is an example of this last configuration. This is reflected in my choice to use the word praxis to talk about gender training, which I understand as the process through which theory and practice are integrated, they are not polar opposites but co-constructive. In other words, how a concept or skill is realized. The notion of praxis incorporates an understanding of iterative knowledge development, because "theory is developed from practice and subsequently used to further develop theory. In other words, theory and practice are not binary opposites but constitutive of feminist knowledge production (Wong et al., 2016: 10). This entails a Freirean element of reflexive practice and action directed at the transformation of oppressive structures.

My conceptualisation of circulation is made up of several conjoined and interacting elements. Circulation of knowledge is a communicative act, one which is firmly located in, and mediated by, the environments where it takes place (Raj, 2006). Circulation involves a process of collective exchange and ongoing development (Kunz, 2016); knowledge is contested, rejected, and developed in power laden social, economic, and cultural spaces (Keim, 2014). Circulation is carried out by agents located in these spaces and the individual labour which produces the social product of knowledge "is also part of a collective process in which knowledge formations come into existence, are sustained, applied and transformed" (Collyer et al., 2017: 24). Over time, knowledge is subject to revision and reformulation through circulation (Collyer et al., 2017; Connell et al., 2017), both by dominant and subversive forces, although in asymmetric ways (Meyer et al., 2001; Keim, 2014). In a learning encounter through which circulation takes place, both the educator and the learner participate in constructing and developing knowledge (UNWTC, 2016a). Marx Ferree (2015: 82) explains, "learners are not 'empty mugs' awaiting new and better knowledge from the 'jug' of formal gender expertise; instead, training works best when it acknowledges its role in encouraging and supporting contestation". Each of these characteristics is exemplified in my analysis of the practice of gender training that unfolds over the following chapters—the effects of space, context, location, and dislocation; communities of practice and cooperative constellations; collective knowledge generation and iteration; movement through systems of global knowledge production and epistemic hierarchies; and the relationships between knowledge circulation and social change. In the next section, I outline the theoretical architecture through which I make sense of the movement inherent to circulation, and the multi-level nature of gender training between individual and structure.

2.4.3 Social complexity: the theoretical architecture

Given the themes and the questions detailed hitherto it is clear that the circulation of gender knowledge is a highly political and contested process and not a simple, linear transmission of facts. The conceptual framework that I apply in this project necessarily responds to this dynamism. It is certainly not the only framework which could have been used, nor is it without critique (Houchin & MacLean, 2005; Byrne & Callaghan, 2013; Verloo, 2018c), but it provides useful theoretical footholds for the issues which are central to this research and the forms and movements of knowledge. As stated, gender training can be interpreted at multiple levels simultaneously: on a macro-level there are discourses of equality strategies and policies; at a meso-level the institutional and organisational contexts in which analyses and interventions are taking place; and at a micro-level there are interpersonal interactions. The multi-level nature of

training is, of course, not a concern unique to the study of gender training, as it has been a prevailing theme within sociological analysis in the form of the relationship between structure and agency.

Here I make use of a conceptual vocabulary, including gender knowledge and circulation introduced above, to describe and analyse concurrent interactions and relationships between multiple elements of complex systems. Enumerated, these are: global gender mainstreaming policies in sociohistorical contexts; the European Union implementation thereof; the professional development of gender expertise as a field; transnational histories and local "policy hinterlands" (Mazey, 1998); funding and public governance trends; the actions of institutions, organisations, social movements, and communities; the practices of differently located individuals and their strategies in these environments; and the day to day practical and interpersonal work of tackling inequalities. These factors constitute the environment through which gender and feminist knowledges are circulating, and the transnational histories that inform this, influencing the actors and agents involved in collective exchange.

I apply a theoretical infrastructure which takes into account the simultaneous coexistence of these different levels derived from Walby's (2002; 2005; 2009; 2012) work, and the extension of her theorising presented by Verloo (2018c). My intention is not to present a definitive case for the theorising of these authors, but rather to develop an analytic lexicon of the dynamics and mechanics of the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges. In essence, gender training is about addressing inequalities to facilitate social transformation. Walby's (2002; 2005; 2009; 2012) implementation of social complexity theory foregrounds these very same concerns—the centrality of inequalities in the configuration of societies and the focal points of multiple interacting elements in the mechanics of social change. This serves my investigation of the circulatory movement of gender and feminist knowledge through interacting systems, how this influences regimes of inequality and equality, and the persistence, adaption, and change thereof. This includes the unexpected, and multiple, directions that this change may take.

Walby's (2004; 2009) interpretation of social complexity theory follows from her analysis that traditional sociological thought has neglected the significance and centrality of social

inequalities in the making of society. As this scholar explains, in order to understand intersecting inequalities it is necessary to theorise the "ontological depth of each set of social relations" while also theorising "more fully the relationship between systems of social relations and how they affect each other together with the dynamics of social change" (Walby, 2007: 454). I distil the basic assertions of this theory as follows. There are two kinds of systems, domains and regimes. Domains refer to the set of institutions in an area, termed institutional domain, these are the polity (states, nations, organised religions, hegemons, and emerging global institutions), economy (marketised activities, domestic labour, and state welfare), violence (power exercised by interconnected individuals, groups, and states–military, criminal justice system, interpersonal violence), and civil society (civic engagement, culture, sexuality, and education). Regimes refer to sets of social relations, examples of regimes of inequality are gender, class, and race and these are multiple and coexisting within and across domains.

The distinction between regimes of inequality and domains renders visible how complex relationships between social relations occur across different sets of institutions. Each system has as its environment all the other systems, meaning that they are coexisting and contemporaneous in their relations each to the other (Walby, 2009: 65). Systems are overlapping, but they are not necessarily nested, they are not reducible to one another, and they do not saturate the territory in which they are located. These systems mutually adapt and co-evolve but they may have different spatial and temporal reach. In the interrelation of domains and regimes, there is competition, contestation, and cooperation (Walby, 2009: 43). Drawing on biologist Kauffman's (1993; 1995) writings on coevolution, Walby (2009: 59) explains that the coevolution refers to the relationships between social systems, resulting from mutual interactions and mutual effects in which they hold "unequal power to alter the rules of their global environment". This understanding of social systems is particularly appropriate to this research because of the idea of emergence, which captures the multi-level nature of training and reduces structure-agency tension by linking individual, structure, and system in coexistence. It is across these links that knowledge circulates. Emergence refers to how different levels are constituted in relation to one another: individual elements on a lower level collectively come to constitute a higher level. In other words, emergence is the "way in which social systems emerge from the multiple actions of individuals, but are not reducible to them", the concept of emergence links "a focus on human reflexivity to social systems" (Walby, 2009: 74).

Specifically relevant to this research is the concept of a project that is "a set of processes and practices in civil society that creates new meanings and social goals, on a range of rhetorical and material resources" (Walby, 2011: 6). Regimes of inequality have projects linked to them that are working to reduce this inequality (Verloo, 2018c: 42). A project can occur in any time or space, it is characterised by fluidity and dynamism, and it is driven forward by certain groups or individuals attempting social change. In these terms, feminism is a project working for gender equality and there is a great deal of diversity and plurality within this (Walby, 2007). Projects are typically located in the domain of civil society but they have “counterparts” in policy, government and legislature (such as equal opportunities measures). Gender training is an action of the feminist project and its counterparts. Resistance against the change proposed by projects can take the form of oppositional projects themselves (Verloo, 2018c), for instance the anti-gender movements that are a feature of this research.

I value this view because systematic interrelatedness is a constant, but the nature of the interconnections and interactions is not presupposed. This eliminates a fixed hierarchy of systems and allows space for mutual impact and reciprocity between systems (Walby, 2007; 2009). Processes of change in these interrelating systems take place through interaction, as opposed to one-way impact, because each system constitutes the environment in which the other systems reside. As outlined in the previous section on circulation, it is through these interactions that knowledge moves through domains and comes to constitute regimes of social relations. Tipping points, feedback loops, and path dependency are important mechanisms of change relative to co-evolvement (Walby, 2007; Walby, 2009; Verloo, 2018c). The speed of change may be gradual and incremental or may occur in the form of saltations, fast and unexpected jumps. *Tipping points* refer to moments where gradual and incremental change in a phenomenon build up to a clear and substantial shift in the nature of the phenomenon, a moment of irreversibility. *Feedback loops*, positive or negative, describe how changes in one factor in turn affect other factors. A negative feedback loop refers to a dynamic where change in one factor is met with a counterbalance in another, which stagnates or reduces change in the system. A positive feedback loop is one where one change in a system is reinforced by another, making the probability of change higher or stronger (Walby, 2009: 85-86). As Verloo (2018c) articulates it, the value of this concept is that it allows us to see the relationships between projects, their oppositions, and social change. In this understanding, change is a concatenation of interrelated events in interconnected systems occurring at different rates. However, some changes have enduring consequences, a dynamic encapsulated in the concept of *path*

dependency. Path dependency, a concept widely used in social sciences, refers to the fact that "the order in which things happen affect how they happen; the trajectory of change up to a certain point constrains the trajectory after that point" (Kay, 2005: 535). This is useful in order to talk about how history may narrow the possible future trajectories of a system such that it is later difficult to deviate from this path.

To illustrate the theoretical architecture and conceptual vocabulary outlined above I propose the following schematic example. In Italy, the Catholic Church pre-dates the state and it is not nested within the Italian state, neither in terms of its influence nor in its spatial reach. The regime of gender inequality across these two domains interacts with other regimes of inequality such as class, ethnicity and age, but is not reducible to any one of these. For instance, neither the Catholic Church nor the Italian state polity saturate the territory in terms of reproductive rights; rather, they cooperate and conflict with one another – abortion is legal in Italy but healthcare professionals can register as "conscientious objectors," which is the refusal to comply with this law on religious, ethical, or ideological grounds (see Vazquez, 2018). Here both the polities of the state and organised religion are exercising authority, overlapping and coexisting, in regimes of gender relations and intimacy. Coevolution of these polities can be seen in the interactions of the polities of the supranational EU, the Italian state, and the organised religion of the Catholic Church as they mutually adapt to one another. Building on equal treatment and positive action policies, the UN Women's Conferences of the 1990s legitimised the use of the term "gender" and gave rise to policies such as gender mainstreaming, resulting from the actions and activism of the transnational feminist project (Nagar & Swarr, 2010; Baksh & Harcourt, 2015). This led to the adoption of gender mainstreaming in the EU (Jacquot, 2010; Bego, 2015), which represents a tipping point in gender equality policy whereby the state adoption rates of the international norm led to its broad acceptance (see Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). In Italy, gender equality legislation and norms such as gender mainstreaming were adopted following pressure to comply with European directives (see Guadagnini & Donà, 2007). However, the Catholic Church's response to the Beijing Platform for Action was the initiation of anti-gender campaigns to renaturalise the concept of gender (Garbagnoli, 2016; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). Given the strong presence of the Vatican in Italian politics, Italy was one of the first countries in which a powerful movement against "gender ideology", fronted by the *Sentinelle in Piedi* (Standing Sentinels) and supported by a wide range of Catholic groups and conservative political actors, established political prominence.

The demonstrations and actions of these groups have subsequently succeeded in blocking legal and social reforms on reproductive health and LGBTQ+ rights. Right-wing populist politicians mobilise the anti-gender discourse to rile against "ideological colonisation" by a secular, capitalist, pro-equality EU identity as the Catholic Church collaborates to maintain its institutional authority "concerning the sexual order and a powerful supplier of services to Italian families" (Garbagnoli, 2016: 190). In the domain of education, the current "*crociata 'anti-gender'*" (anti-gender crusade) (Biemmi & Satta, 2017: v) has resulted in vitriolic public reprisal of teachers and calls to oppose corruptive "gender ideology" in schools (Ottaviano & Mentasti, 2017). In turn, this strongly negatively affects the work of gender trainers who work in educational contexts, examples of which I will evidence in the following chapters. This case elucidates dynamics of interrelation, mutual adaptivity and co-evolution between social systems, and how equality projects are constituted by oppositional politics in an ongoing process of change, which may play out in multiple directions.

2.4.4 Gender training and the episteme

Within this theoretical architecture gender training is located at the intersection of different domains. The domain of civil society includes several social spheres (civic engagement, culture, sexuality, and education). As my review of the literature and the sections on gender knowledge and circulation show, there are multiple forms of knowledge created and circulated by powerful sets of institutions. These are institutions across which complex regimes of inequality play out. This knowledge gives shape to and interacts with concepts of gender and gender relations in all domains, and it is an integral part of gender inequality regimes across micro, meso, and macro dimensions of social life. In affective terms, this is the stuff with which individuals build meanings and lives. Therefore, I see the understanding of the episteme as a distinct domain as analytically fruitful for this research specifically.

I am in agreement with Verloo's (2018c) proposed revision and extension of Walby's (2004; 2009) domains, which locates civic engagement, linking citizenship and democracy, in the polity and adds two domains to the model: cathexis and episteme. Cathexis is the domain where biopolitics are most visible, and families and interpersonal relationships are influenced, it is the system through which bodies and relationships are shaped in terms of reproduction, sexuality and

kinship (Verloo, 2018c: 40). The episteme is the "system that produces and organises knowledge and truth, located strongly in social fields such as religion, education, media and research" (Verloo, 2018a: 22). Using the gender knowledge concept, this refers to institutionally produced knowledge but also popularised knowledge disseminated by media. Change in this domain is strongly linked to change in polity, economy, and violence. It is in the system of episteme that truth and knowledge are claimed by powerful sets of institutions such as those of religion, sciences and education, and media. In the case of the feminist project these institutions are involved in the consolidation of feminist politics through the legitimation of feminist theory and research but they also provide channels to propose and disseminate "oppositional gender 'truths'" (Verloo, 2018a: 22) as outlined in the example just above. The conceptualisation of episteme as a separate domain facilitates a more detailed view of the circulation of gender knowledge as it moves through and within domains and relates to regimes of inequality. Actions within this domain, such as is the case of WFGS in universities, are part of the everyday "ongoingness" (do Mar Pereira, 2017: 38) of the negotiation of epistemic status and paths of circulation.

Gender training takes place in the borders, overlaps, and interrelations between the episteme and other domains, it is a point where material and discursive features of domains interact in mutual adaption. Consider, for example, trainings on gender mainstreaming in sets of institutions within the polity, or work force participation and diversity management initiatives in the economy, or awareness raising on reproductive rights and families in the domain of cathexis, or trainings on peace and security in the institutions of the domain of violence. In each of these contexts, training is a mechanism for the circulation of knowledge and truth claims that represents, in part, the theoretical content of academic gender studies within the episteme, but also the discursive and material features of the feminist project, as well as actions of more dispersed communities like transnational networks of women's organisations. The interrelation and coevolution of domains and regimes over time is exemplified in how gender training circulates knowledge, and provides insights into processes of social change.

2.5 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have outlined the key points of reference for this research, both empirical and theoretical. I have argued that my study of the practice of gender training is significant and

valuable as a means to provide insight into processes of change in complex systems. Furthermore, these insights are not only essential to understanding equality building more broadly, but responding adequately to this European and global sociopolitical moment. The first section provided an account of the research on gender expertise, following four key thematic areas. I discussed the institutional and organisational location of gender experts in Europe; I emphasised the diversity of locations and the cooperation between these actors, and thus the significance of community in the professional practice of gender expertise. An assessment of the activities and practices of gender experts revealed cross-sectoral and international work, varied professional development trajectories, and a complex relationship between feminism and gender expertise in practice.

I narrowed the focus to gender training and outlined the development of scholarship around gender training in Europe over time. This revealed the scarcity of this research and emphasised the relationship between feminism and gender expertise. I identified the need for an explicit focus on resistances to develop counterstrategies and solidarity in the face of current anti-gender movements and varieties of opposition to feminist politics. A review of existing scholarship revealed knowledge as a defining feature of gender expertise, different types of gender knowledge, and a reiteration of the contested relationship between feminism and gender knowledge. These themes begin to point to a series of paradoxes in the practice of gender expertise, which become transparent through an analysis of the central challenges in the practice of gender expertise. Here I presented the debate about the co-optation of feminism and gender expertise and the issue of policy hinterlands and resistances. This map of the literature on gender expertise forms the backdrop for research specifically investigating gender training. Overall, this review established the need for more in-depth research in gender training, which tackles questions around the trajectories and epistemological orientation of gender trainers, the dynamics between feminism and gender expertise, and expands our understanding of how practitioners negotiate the paradoxes of their work in processes of equality building aimed at social transformation.

I proposed a tripartite theoretical architecture and conceptual vocabulary, which is sufficiently elastic to account for the interrelation of macro-meso-micro levels in gender training, while centring social inequalities, and providing sufficient explanatory power in terms of processes of

change. Firstly, within this framework the theorisation of gender knowledge as an analytical device reflects that any given system takes the other systems as its environment. This results in a ubiquity of gender knowledge in different forms as these develop across institutional domains and through regimes of social relations that co-evolve over time. Thus, gender training is an intervention in this complex system, one that incorporates both discursive and material elements and is influenced by individual actors and structural dynamics. Secondly, I describe the movement of feminist and gender knowledges through complex systems as one of circulation. My utilisation of circulation incorporates an understanding of gender trainings as moments of intersection and interaction, where the environment in which they take place mediates this dynamic. I pointed to the potential for opposition, plurality, and extended temporality that circulation acknowledges, and the dynamics of collective exchange, iteration, and reformulation that a circulatory view of knowledge reveals. Lastly, the lexicon of concepts of social complexity as proposed by Walby (2002; 2005; 2007; 2009) and expanded by Verloo (2018a; 2018b; 2018c) offers a way to visualise and understand change within social systems, the kind of change which gender training attempts to catalyse. In this section, I laid out the theoretical vocabulary that scaffolds my analysis. In order to investigate gender training as an intervention of circulation in complex interrelating social systems—one which takes place through the interplay of actor and structure dynamics and in its material and discursive dimensions—I propose a mixed methods study based on feminist methodological principles outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 Researching equality work: methodologies and methods

3.1 Introduction

Equality work is complex and contested, it requires knowledge, skill, and a substantial amount of commitment. To persevere, often in hostile systems and structures populated by resistant and defensive individuals, while also continuing to cultivate the requisite vulnerability which is integral to reflective practice. It is a "messy business" (Ferguson, 2015: 380). This research focuses on the dynamics of this work and the individuals that carry it out, in other words those who participate in the feminist project and its counterparts in different domains (Verloo, 2018b). The aim is to deepen knowledge around gender training in the European region, and gain insight into the actor and structure based dynamics and material and discursive dimensions of transformational projects. The methodology and research design follows the themes and questions of gender equality work as identified in the previous chapter, and my own insights gained from participation in the European gender training community. This research is exploratory in nature, directly investigates the practices and experiences of gender+ trainers, and is focused on the European region where "gender equality" plays a central role in the mythology of European Union cultural identity (MacRae, 2012; Enderstein, 2017). Through this research, I provide a narrative map of the locations, collaborations, and actions of gender+ trainers in the European space, putting individual trajectories and strategies of knowledge circulation into conversation with broader transnational processes of coevolution between social systems. In this chapter, I outline the central research question, the aims and objectives of the research, and the ethical considerations that have guided the process. I lay out the design, methodologies, and methods that I applied by specifying the sample, data collection, collation, and analysis processes and I discuss the strengths and limitations of this research. Lastly, I provide a statement of reflexivity regarding my relationship to this research and the choices that were made throughout this process.

3.2 What is training for gender equality?

This is an ethnographic account of a training I attended delivered by Tracy (Scotland)[5]. This in-depth description provides insight into what gender equality training is and details the kinds of activities, content, and methodologies that might be used. I share this workshop because in my

[5] This is a pseudonym.

evaluation it was well designed and expertly delivered and as such it provides a narrative reference point for the conceptual framework and the chapters of analysis that follow.

It is a cold, clear morning in Edinburgh and the sun is shining onto the road through small slits between the buildings as I approach the training venue. Apprehensive and curious, I look out for Tracy. In our calls she communicated infectious passion for her work, and she has organised for me to join her workshop today. In person she is kind, complimenting her passion with playfulness, knowledgeable and approachable. She welcomes me and we go up the stairs to the training room.

As you enter, the large room desks and chairs are arranged in a seminar format, with large, high-up windows along the right wall. I help Tracy set up the computer and the projector for the videos she will share with us, we rearrange the desks into two clumps as the workshop participants begin to arrive. They are from organisations supported by a large Scottish fund manager which provides investment and capacity development, today I am told that most of the organisations represented are delivering services directly to women. The training is about intersectional identities, how to carry out intersectional work, how to integrate intersectionality into services and how to assess this integration. As people walk in they pick up name badges and materials, an outline of the day, a feedback form, presentation print outs for accessibility, and a manual on including intersectional identities in service provision. Each participant finds a seat. We are ready to start.

Tracy introduces herself and her organisation and welcomes the participants to the day. It is a small group, around 12 people, mostly women. She outlines the timetable and explains that part of her intersectional identity are her mobility issues, and that we might see her sit or lie down in the breaks. Participants quietly nod as she frames the space, describing the content and aims and asking them to contribute their expectations, which we will return to at the end. Tracy divides us into two groups and gives us two sets of laminated cards each, one set contains single words, and in the other there are several sentences on each card. We have to discuss the cards and pair each definition with its description. The discussions grow louder as each new word brings a previous decision into debate, on some words we are all in clear agreement, on others we discuss at length. After about 15 minutes Tracy calls us together, and we share our experiences. We learn

that terminology changes over time, and so do identities, that labels and descriptors can be acts of subversion or reclamation, and that gentle inquiry is the best strategy for finding out how others identify.

We move from paper to real life, by watching a film produced by Tracy's organisation where people describe how they live their intersectional identities and how this impacts their access to services. These voices are strong, their diverse viewpoints and vivid descriptions bring intersectional identity to life. They are poignant and confronting, and their challenges are tangible because we have all accessed medical services, transport, or visited religious spaces at some point. We discuss the common themes and issues between the stories, and think about the consequences of when intersectionality is ignored. After the film, our heads full of examples and testimonies, we go back into our groups and relax into more fluid discussion as we learn the rhythm of our interaction and exchange our views and experiences.

Tracy guides us into an exercise where we have to differentiate between single-strand, multi-strand, and intersectional work in a list of examples like: "partnership work between equality organisations on hate crime"; "a research report into the needs of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees"; "a service provides BSL interpreters for their counselling services"; "a women's organisation works in partnership with trans community groups to be more trans inclusive"; and many others. Through these examples and subsequent discussion we become more familiar with what intersectional work looks like, and how it is different from multi-strand work. For many of us it is revelatory.

During lunch we talk and exchange stories about where we are from and the kinds of work that we do. Through exchange we learn that intersectionality has become a funder buzzword, but that its implementation is seldom practically supported by organisations, and that although each person embodies an intersectional subjectivity in interrelation with others the consequences of these identities can be starkly different. Tracy continues to make us feel comfortable, engaged, and at ease by making sure that each person's dietary needs are met and that they are sure of the timetable and access to restrooms and facilities.

The second part of the day begins with actionable skills. Tracy presents a model for the inclusion of intersectional identities and intersectional thinking in service provision by taking us through seven key principles. The first is to use a person-centred approach which avoids assumptions, asks questions without value judgements, and is flexible to the needs of the individual. She highlights the importance of increasing knowledge and understanding through diversity training and emphasises patient questioning and honesty about gaps in your knowledge; this is supported through consultation and collaboration between organisations and communities and active commitments to increasing accessibility and tackling discrimination. Tracy explains the importance of positive representation and how to render inclusive practices visible, concluding with guidance on how to integrate intersectionality into our organisations' systems. At each step Tracy draws in references to our previous discussions and provides concrete examples of the principles as applied in different organisations. By this point we are feeling a lot more confident about intersectionality, what it is, and what it looks like in practice.

To deepen our learning further Tracy provides us with case studies, the experiences of individuals seeking services in the fields of health, safety, education, and housing. We work together in pairs around the room, with large sheets of paper. The names of our case studies run across the top of the page, and outlines of a body fill the whole space of the page. We read the stories and discuss them with our partners in a sort of hushed uneasiness, they are unsettling and emotively charged. Tracy asks us to identify two aspects in each story and write them onto the page, the feelings experienced by the individuals in the case study, to go inside the body outline, and the actions of organisations or structures to go outside the body. To conclude the exercise we bring the papers together and hang them up next to one another on the wall opposite the windows. As the light shines in on the papers, Tracy guides us through an exploration of the unifying themes in the posters—feelings of fear, anxiety, isolation, and confusion; experiences of violence meeting with misguided and inadequate responses by public services and organisations. Reflecting on this, we talk about what could have been done better to support the people in the case studies, and what this means for our work.

We sit down and Tracy invites us to write any questions we might still have on post-its which she then gathers into a pile and reads out to us. Together as a group, with her input, we talk through the different ways to tackle the questions presented. The responses are informed and confident,

as we seek to apply the insights from the day. In closing, Tracy invites us to revisit the expectations we set at the beginning. There is a sense of happy completion, as we realise that we have explored almost all the topics we wanted to explore, and are equipped with concrete guidelines for integrating intersectionality in our various organisations. Tracy closes the workshop, thanking us for our participation, wishing us well, and encourages us to get in contact if we need advice or find ourselves struggling.

I spent the remainder of the special sunny day with Tracy, exchanging stories about training and equality work. I learnt how the training I had attended was situated in terms of Tracy's organisation and the broader local and transnational "equalities sector" as she calls it; and I learnt about how these broader structures have intertwined over time with her own trajectory and gendered and intersectional identity. I saw how these dynamics converge in the material space of gender trainings together with the interpersonal and group dynamics of the session. Clearest in my memory is the impression of all these different dynamics and dimensions interlinking in an everyday practice of training, illuminating how knowledge circulates between participants and trainers. I became acutely aware of the incremental process of this equality work.

3.3 Research questions, aims, and objectives

The purpose of this exploratory mixed methods study is to examine the praxis of training for gender equality in the European region and how this relates to equality building and processes of social transformation. The objectives are to explore the emergent interaction of macro-level discursive constructions of gender equality and the political economy of gender knowledge and expertise in Europe, with meso-level operational logistics and organisational contexts, and micro-level constraints and opportunities of practice. This involves an attention to visions and concepts of gender equality, how these are shaped and deployed on the level of individual actors and the overarching structures, and the material and discursive dimensions thereof. I provide an account of the factors that influence training for gender equality, how these relate to ongoing processes of social change in co-evolving systems, and how these insights might expand and refine the understanding of equality work.

The central question of this research is: How do gender trainers circulate gender and feminist knowledges in the European region through their work? I frame this question through the aim of exploring gender training in terms of transformative equality building within Europe. It is typical for mixed methods research to contain two research questions, qualitative and quantitative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). However, in this case, the research is exploratory in nature and predominately qualitative both in terms of the research questions and in terms of how my analysis evolved over the course of the research. Following this central question, I was interested in developing a map of the professional profiles and trajectories of the trainers, which involved questions relating to the practice of gender expertise and the development of this professional repertoire. What are the demographics of the trainers? How did they acquire their knowledge and skills? What are the motivations that guide their work? To critically explore the circulatory dynamics of feminist and gender knowledges I pursued questions about the relationship between theory and practice, key concepts, common methodologies, and learning processes. I was interested in the epistemic hierarchies and power relations experienced by the trainers, and how they negotiate borders and different cultural contexts within Europe and internationally. I explored the resistances that trainers encounter, how they interpret oppositional politics, and the strategies that they use to counter these. Throughout I was guided by the question of how the trainers facilitate and enhance the transformative potential of gender training, and how this relates to equality building in contemporary European and global sociopolitical contexts.

3.4 Feminist methodology, mixed methods design, and qualitative thinking

The aims and questions of this research necessitate an epistemological and methodological approach which incorporates an understanding of the plurality within the feminist project and gender equality work as an intervention within a complex system of interacting elements (Walby, 2004; Pascall & Lewis, 2004). Consequently, I have applied a feminist methodological approach. This has facilitated a consideration of how different epistemologies and positionalities interact within gender training scenarios. At its best gender training catalyses individual behaviour change through awareness building and participatory knowledge creation, a process in which the trainer acts as a facilitator. Gender training is about traversing the worlds of theory and practice as the trainer seeks to convey complex ideas about inequalities and power and inspire enduring commitment to personal and structural change among workshop participants. Often these participants are not “necessarily accustomed or inclined to think in these ways”

(Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 13). I see an intriguing parallel between this description of the purpose of gender training and feminist thinking in research methodology which entails "taking steps from the 'margins to the center' while eliminating boundaries that privilege dominant forms of knowledge building, boundaries that mark who can be a knower and what can be known" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 3). A feminist methodological approach has allowed me to capture different dimensions of the learning process that the trainers describe because this perspective directs attention to critical interpretations of power, knowledge and positionality at each stage of the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Leckenby & Hesse-Biber, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2014). This perspective has also encouraged me to acknowledge my own positionality and that of trainers I spoke to and surveyed, to foreground an understanding of gender experts as gendered and intersectional subjects, and has honed my acuity in terms of transnational knowledge production and circulation. Lastly, through this perspective I have seen the value of reflexive praxis in the imaginings and actualisations of equality work (Cooper, 2013).

I align the values and choices in research by combining a feminist methodological approach with a mixed methods design, key to both the quality of research, and its potential application (Shannon-Baker, 2015: 3). In this research I wanted to capture two dimensions: one was the locations and practices of gender trainers in Europe, the other was the trainers' own accounts of their trajectories, practices, strategies, and their roles in the translation and circulation of gender knowledge. A mixed methods design was the most appropriate to investigate both these aspects, which I applied following a pragmatist approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study according to a "question-driven philosophy" (Heyvaert et al., 2013: 303). As Johnson et al. (2007: 112) describe it, mixed methods research is, "an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints". On a theoretical level, the epistemological underpinnings of a pragmatist stance in mixed methods research philosophy (Leckenby & Hesse-Biber, 2007) are closely aligned with the feminist ethos of this study, which incorporates the understanding of situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) and an interpretivist ontology which is "generative and open, seeking richer, better and deeper understanding" (Greene, 2007: 20). On a practical level, mixed methods research (MMR) offers flexibility, dialogue and complementarity (Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007; Morgan, 2007). Through the combination of in-depth interviews and an online questionnaire I brought together quantitative and qualitative data from trainers working across sectors and countries to create a comprehensive picture of points of convergence and points of divergence.

I followed an exploratory sequential design, involving a first phase of qualitative data collection through in-depth semi-structured interviews followed by a quantitative data collection phase through an online questionnaire. The second phase was based on analysis of data and findings from the first phase. Given that, as argued in the conceptual framing of this work, gender training represents a multi-level intervention in a complex system of interrelating parts, I wanted to illuminate the interrelations between individual and collective actors and structures, as well as their material and discursive features, in equality building processes. Thus, I approached mixed methods by "qualitative thinking" which involves thinking creatively, seeking to transcend the micro-macro schism, and developing logics of qualitative explanation (Mason, 2006: 12). This means conducting research in such a way that captures a picture of how "social (and multi-dimensional) lives are lived, experienced and enacted simultaneously on macro and micro scales". In this research this approach is visible in linkages in the analysis between the map of gender trainers in Europe and the substance of their praxis.

In the first phase, I collected qualitative data through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the aim of exploring the epistemological and methodological practices of gender trainers and their ideas about change, resistance, and professionalisation. Themes emerging from the analysis of these interviews served as the basis, together with findings from existing research on gender expertise, for the design of the online questionnaire. The quantitative part of the study was designed to serve a mapping function around central themes from the interview narratives, to describe how gender trainers acquire the knowledge that they use, and how they apply this knowledge in their gender training work. Accordingly, the questionnaire included items on the demographics, locations, institutional affiliations, professional profiles, activities, and logistics of gender training in Europe.

3.5 In conversation with gender trainers

3.5.1 Methods and tools

I selected methods appropriate to carry out this Europe-wide research. It was conducted primarily online, through Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies and an online questionnaire application. This is not a "new" way of doing research, in fact a vast number of studies illustrate the widespread use of internet technologies in social science research (Hesse-

Biber & Leavy, 2006). However, I consider the methods I chose to employ in this research as emergent not because they are novel, but because they are at the edge of different ways of thinking about theory, data, and knowledge. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: xi) write of emergent methods as a "logical conclusion to paradigm shifts, major developments in theory, and new conceptions of knowledge and the knowledge-building process". These kinds of methods are a response to changes in knowledge construction and dissemination, and given the incrementally digital forms that these processes take, the use of internet technologies was a fitting choice for conducting the research.

Gender trainers working in Europe are geographically dispersed and highly mobile, by using VoIP I was able to access and speak to the individuals in this sample in a way that reflects their professional practice. Trainers most often work in international teams and thus conduct much of their planning and training design through VoIP and cloud platforms, with some of the trainers even delivering trainings online. It is telling that while only one of the 31 participants did not have a VoIP account, many expressed their familiarity with the software. The use of this technology also foregrounded the practical aspects of knowledge building and exchange enabled through internet connectivity. First, the trainers consistently use online resources in their work and engage in self-directed study on equality related issues through the internet. Secondly, many of the trainers are members of online European trainer databases as freelance trainers. This significant online component of the gender+ training profession forges online pathways of feminist and gender knowledge production and application, a theme that I explore through the following chapters.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews in this research because these offer a unique possibility for "texturing", facilitated by a structure that "creates openings for a narrative to unfold, while also including questions informed by theory" (Galletta, 2013: 2). Methodological scholarship has generally argued against the use of telephone or VoIP interviews because these kinds of interviews do not provide the opportunity for building rapport and contextual analysis that face-to-face encounters may offer (Shuy, 2003). However, in reality there is greater nuance to how the lack of visual cues influences the interaction in practice (Irvine et al., 2013: 88). In this research, although I used video and internet-based visual technologies, several of the interviews were conducted only with voice due to internet quality and connectivity. Interestingly, I found

that the “data loss or distortion” (see Novick, 2008: 395) typically associated with non-face-to-face research encounters was not detrimental to the interaction, nor to data collection. I attribute this in part to the facility that the interviewed trainers have with the use of VoIP technologies, and to the use of the semi-structured format. Furthermore, the temporal boundedness offered by this kind of interview was appreciated by the trainers, who were often reluctant to take time out of work to talk about work. The semi-structured interview protocol was developed according to areas of focus identified in existing scholarship on gender expertise in Europe introduced in the proceeding chapter (see Appendix A). The interviews averaged between one and one and a half hours in duration and the majority were conducted in English with the exception of two which took place in Italian and which I have translated here. The interviews consisted of six questions and sub-questions centring on professional trajectories, training practice, challenges and resistances, processes of change, and motivations. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed to provide points of focus for the questionnaire design and development.

I used an online questionnaire because of the geographically dispersed sample and the fact that the European trainer community is constituted through platforms, forums, databases, and resource centres, which are all hosted online. The use of an online questionnaire allowed me to collect a large amount of data in an expedited time frame (Lefever et al., 2007). The survey was active for respondents for a period of four months (September 2017 - December 2017). Using this method I was able to implement several important aspects of a feminist methodological approach. First, I chose to use the questionnaire building tool 1Ka, which is developed by the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and thus located outside of technological monopolies. Secondly, I hosted the questionnaire on the server of Associazione Orlando, my employer in the GRACE project, which allowed increased security and control over the collected data as well as a dedicated webpage that facilitated sharing amongst the European trainer community. The online questionnaire method also allowed for straightforward transposition of data into analysis programs, in this case Microsoft Excel.

The questionnaire was developed through the combination of data from in-depth interviews and existing literature, it was piloted (n=15), and iteratively refined through feedback from pilot respondents before dissemination amongst the sample of gender trainers. The questionnaire

contained 41 questions in total (see Appendix B), and took on average eight minutes to complete. It was divided into three sections themed: professional skills development and areas of work, training logistics and practice, and demographic information. In total the questionnaire included four open-ended questions and 12 sub-questions with the possibility for narrative response. The remaining questions were multiple choice questions, closed-ended questions, Likert-type scales and rank order questions.

3.5.2 Interviewed trainers and questionnaire respondents

The first phase of data collection began in January 2017. Before this interview phase I carried out informational interviews with six scholars and practitioners who highlighted the key issues in their work on gender equality in Europe. Insights from these conversations informed the development of my interview questions and facilitated connections with some trainers in the sample. The sample of trainers, both interviewed and surveyed, consisted of individuals who have been formally requested to deliver training for gender equality services in countries in the European region within the last two years. For the purpose of this research, gender trainings were considered to be activities which, broadly speaking, can be categorised as "a tool, strategy, and means to effect individual and collective transformation towards gender equality by raising awareness and encouraging learning, knowledge-building and skills development. It helps women and men to understand the role gender plays and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for advancing gender equality in their daily lives and work" (UNWTC, 2016b: 3). A summary of the samples is provided in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 Summary of trainer samples.

Sample	**Number**	**Age range**	**Gender Identification**	**Countries of residence**
Interviewed trainers	31	27-66	diverse gender descriptions: 4 "female/woman": 23 "male/man": 4	Europe: 30 outside Europe: 1
Questionnaire respondents	208 (119 full, 89 partial)	19-67	diverse gender descriptions: 13.27% "female/woman": 69.91% "male/man": 16.81%	Europe: 96% outside Europe: (4%)

For the first phase of in-depth semi-structured interviews I applied a purposive sampling strategy (Birch, 1998; Creswell, 2003; Flick, 2014; Smith, 2015), sampling to identify representative cases

of trainers practising gender training in Europe. The 31 interviewed trainers were contacted through scholars writing on gender equality policy and gender expertise in Europe and the GRACE project consortium network. I also used online trainer databases such as the European Institute for Gender Equality gender trainers' database, as well as the SALTO-YOUTH[6] trainers database and the Council of Europe Trainers Pool[7] where gender was listed as an area of specialisation on trainer profiles. As the research progressed, snowball sampling was used. There were 31 interviewed trainers, with an age range of between 27-66 years (at the time of interview), 30 live in over 15 different European countries and one resides outside of Europe. In terms of gender, this sample identified 4 as non-binary, 23 as female/woman, and 4 as male/man.

In the online questionnaire purposive sampling was used. Invitations were emailed to individuals and organisations on the EIGE trainers database and the questionnaire was publicly advertised to online communities of gender experts. Namely, through the AtGender (European Gender Studies Association) newsletter and mailing list; through the SALTO-Youth event notification system and emailing list; through a dedicated email to the members of the EIGE trainers' database; on the GENPORT Forum[8]; and through the mailing list and social media pages of ATRIA[9] and the social media of Associazione Orlando and GRACE. Overall, 1031 people accessed the questionnaire, resulting in 208 total valid questionnaires, 119 completed and 89 partially completed. The questionnaire respondents, all of whom deliver trainings in Europe, reside in 28 countries in Europe, and six countries outside of Europe. The age range for this sample is 19-67 years and 13% of the sample gave a range of non-binary identifications. The rest of the sample identified 70% as female/woman and 17% as male/man, of which a tenth (10%) of these respondents queried or qualified their gender descriptions.

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[6] SALTO-YOUTH is a network of six Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field that provides non-formal learning resources for youth workers and youth leaders (https://www.salto-youth.net/about/). The trainers' database consists of 2500 members, to whom the invitation was sent through liaison with the coordinator of the database.

[7] The Trainers Pool is a group of trainers and educational consultants that work with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Membership to the pool is based on selection criteria and evaluation and is periodically revised (https://trainers-youthapplications.coe.int/).

[8] GENPORT is a community sourced Internet Portal on gender and science.

[9] ATRIA is the Institute on gender equality and women's history, it is a public library and research institute based in the Netherlands that houses the collection of the International Archives for the Women's Movement.

From this point on, the terms “interviewed trainers” or “interviewees” will be used in cases where I refer specifically to the trainers who took part in the semi-structured interviews and the term “respondents” will be used to refer to the participants who responded to the questionnaire. The term “trainers” will be used to refer to the combined sample, unless otherwise indicated. For clarity, the terms "participant" and "workshop participant" will be used to talk about the individuals who attend gender trainings run by the trainers.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for this project was obtained through the University of Hull Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Ethical Review Board in accordance with University Code of Practice and the Faculty Ethics Procedures. All of the interviewed trainers gave informed consent for their participation in the research, including signing consent forms either in physical or digital format. The trainers who replied to the online questionnaire gave their consent electronically at the beginning of the questionnaire. In both cases I have chosen to use appropriate pseudonyms for the trainers, their contributions remain confidential, and identifying details such as the names of organisations or events have been omitted or generalised. The trainers of both samples will be given access to the writing and reports that will emerge from this research.

3.7 Analysis of the dynamics and dimensions of gender training

The data from the interviews, over 48 hours in total, was analysed according to a thematic analysis strategy. This analysis involved the identification of central themes, both common and contrasting, that emerged from the interviews with the trainers. In this analysis I took an organic approach to coding and theme development, following a process of familiarisation with the data through re-listening to the interviews, re-reading the transcripts, creating visual representations of the content, coding patterns and features of the data, mapping these patterns across narratives and stories, and iteratively defining and reviewing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2018). Nvivo qualitative data analysis software was used for the different phases of this analysis.

There was a temporal overlap between the final interviews and the development of the questionnaire, given the timeline of the project and the fact that interviewee recruitment took longer than anticipated. The themes I Identified from the interviews were then used to inform areas of focus in the questionnaire, followed by more in-depth revision and mapping of themes. The analysis of the data from the questionnaire was twofold: descriptive statistics for the numerical data were calculated, and I conducted thematic analysis of the open-ended questions. These different analyses were integrated through a final stage of collective analysis and during the process of write-up. This integration strategy was one of complementarity appropriate to the stated purpose of the study, which involves "combining to detail a more significant whole" (Bazeley & Kemp, 2012: 58) and "qualitative thinking" (Mason, 2006). Thus, throughout the ensuing text I have presented a dialogue between different themes and findings to provide an integrated picture of training for gender equality in Europe which maps the locations and activities of gender trainers and deepens the understanding of practices of equality building.

3.8 Reflective appraisal of the research

Conducting research is about making a series of choices. These choices then form and shape the data, analyses, and conclusions (Reinharz, 1992; Leckenby & Hesse-Biber, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2014). In reflecting upon the research process, analysis, and findings, I highlight two factors that have shaped, or perhaps limited, the findings in a significant way: the use of English in the interviews and the questionnaire, and the timing of different methods.

I chose to conduct the interviews in English on the basis of the diversity of the sample and the pre-established Euro-mobility of the trainers (Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Bustelo et al., 2016b), who conduct many of their trainings in English. However, English is not the native language of the majority of the trainers. Thus, as several trainers noted, although they often work in English and are most comfortable with gender related terms in English, communicating in this language does not offer them the conceptual and affective fluidity that they would experience when speaking in their own native language. Language choice also potentially affected sampling and data collection, resulting in less locally specific data. Through the interviews, analysis, and interaction with the trainer community it became apparent to me that in addition to trainers working on the European level, there were also trainers working at local levels who could not respond to the requests for interviews or to complete questionnaire because they felt they could

not speak English well enough. Furthermore, by conducting the research in English, I have participated in the replication of Anglophone hegemony in gender expertise in Europe, thus supporting epistemic hierarchies that I discuss in the course of this thesis. This is aggravated by a research dissemination process that I am conducting primarily in English. Important details about local communities of gender trainers and the context-specific challenges that they face may have been elided. However, overall the broad geographical range of the study provides a picture of gender training at a transnational European level as negotiated in a broader global political economy of gender knowledge. Future research might expand on the findings presented here to focus on more locally specific contexts and questions in relation to larger Europe-wide themes and trends that I have raised. More locally specific research would add clarity and depth to the understanding of dynamics of the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges.

As I consider the analysis and findings collectively, I realise that the time frame in which the mixed methods design was carried out may have impacted the content and design of the questionnaire. Due to constraints of time and resources, the interviews and analysis thereof was not entirely completed at the point of the design of the questionnaire, and the questionnaire was circulated for four months. This may have influenced the questions that were posed, as discussed regarding ethnicity in chapter four, and thus the data that was collected for analysis. This limitation might have been minimised by an earlier start to the empirical phase of the research, a reflection which is relevant for mixed methods research generally, but specifically in terms of Europe-wide samples.

3.9 Critical cartography and reflexivity

In carrying out this study on knowledge, I have systematically attended to the process of knowledge production and the choices therein. I have cultivated a reflexive research practice consonant with the feminist methodological approach. I see this reflexivity as one of the foundational concepts of feminist inquiry (Launius & Hassel, 2014), it is about "the ways in which one may affect and be affected" (Cole & Masny, 2012: 1). A process of reflexivity is "focused on the self and ongoing intersubjectivities. It recognises mutual shaping, reciprocality and bi-directionality, and that interaction is context-dependent and context renewing" (Mann, 2016: 28). Thus, to me it is artificial to attempt to enclose reflexive insights in one section where

reflexivity is explicitly outlined; rather, this should be read as the beginning of a process that weaves through each of the following chapters.

As a white South African working in Europe my identity carries a lot of significance, for myself, and those who encounter me. To white Europeans I am a symbol of things they would rather forget, and for other Africans I am a symbol of something that cannot and should not be forgotten. It is an identity of simultaneous displacement and placement, and a constant reminder of borders and power. It is not a coincidence that this research bears this tension, a study about the dynamics of building equality in Europe. I am concerned with claims of Eurocentrism and civilizational supremacy in European cultural identity based on commitments to gender equality, but also with the diversity within the European Union and the valuable work of the feminist project, which responds to global regimes of inequality. Perhaps it is my own positionality and intersectional identity that highlights the themes of mobility, borders, power relations, and contested processes of change in the stories of the trainers. My movements and journeys have led me to a transnational understanding of feminism and gender, and the materiality of my own border crossing has brought me to engage in a practice of critical cartography in my analysis of the movement of knowledge. It is, in short, a sustained attention to "relations and processes across borders as opposed to the ahistorical and bounded notions of local, national, and global" (Desai, 2015: 117). The analyses presented here are guided by this principle and a vision of transnational histories and global systems of knowledge production.

My work as a researcher and as a trainer has undoubtedly impacted my choice of the "case" of gender training as the focus for this research. I have done work as a trainer in South Africa, where this is called facilitation, and around Europe. Moreover, although the material conditions and contexts may differ from place to place, I have experienced, as many of the trainers here state, that training sits between academia and activism, between theory and practice, between governance and transformation. My experience has allowed me to access the communities of trainers who participated in this research and to understand their stories, but it has also changed my own training practice as I have integrated lessons and insights from the trainers. This process has influenced how I understand my own location and action within the political economy of "equality work" and global systems of knowledge production, and the relationships between learning, affect, and change. In the following chapters I further substantiate the value of

reflexive practice as this appears in the narratives of the trainers themselves, specifically in relation to the dynamics between feminism, gender expertise, and transformation.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have located and outlined the research process in this study of the translation and circulation of gender and feminist knowledges in Europe. I stepped into a gender training workshop, sketching a picture of the interrelation of discursive and material features as this plays out in practice, the relationships between different actors and structures, and the intersections of different social systems. This example formed a vivid backdrop for the research questions, feminist methodological principles, and mixed method design that I applied in this study. From this I presented the tools and methods employed in the research, establishing the suitability of in-depth interviews and an online questionnaire to the aims and objectives of the study, and outlined the samples of trainers active in the European region who I worked with in this research. I completed the research timeline with a description of the techniques and processes of data analysis.

I looked back over the full research process and the steps taken to fulfil the purpose of expanding the understanding of the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges through the case of gender training in Europe. The mixed methods design and internet technology data collection methods have allowed me to provide a detailed topography, revealing patterns, key debates, areas of contention, regional differences, and potential relationships and strategies. The data from in-depth interviews and an integrative, qualitative, approach to analysis have resulted in a richly detailed study of gender training praxis, contributing significant and actionable insights about processes of equality building. I pointed to the potential limitations of the research in terms of language and sequencing and I chronicled my own reflexive practice and commitment to critical cartography in knowledge production and gender training praxis. Overall, I have provided an account of the practical and temporal arc of this research and anchored the analyses that follow in terms of current practices of gender training in Europe and the connection thereof with the broader feminist project and processes of equality building. Accordingly, in the fourth and following chapter I begin with the professional trajectories and motivations of the trainers.

Chapter 4 Gender trainers in Europe: topography and trajectories

I think the gender training is for me like a…how do you say this in English? It's where different points get together […] *like an intersection where you can unite different thinkings and different experiences. So for me, coming what I said now, feminist anthropology and all these questioning, and then maybe the other signs also that I had, my lesbian coming out, I don't know. And then, later, I have a trans partner, all these also personal, how I say, trajectories.*

It was always also accompanied [by] *my feminist reading and from my critical thinking, of course, and this critical gender perspective. It's of course then, how to say, delivered also or seen in the trainings because I worked hard, I do not believe so in this female, male—I don't know, distinction* […] *So, yes, and I think we should, or it's important to make it open, to not hide, to say, "Okay, this is my background. This is what I believe in. And you can now see what to do with it".*

Nova (43, Germany)

4.1 Introduction

The personal and professional trajectories of gender trainers offer a snapshot of the state of this occupational group, composed of gendered and intersectional subjects, and embedded in the current sociohistorical moment. These trajectories carry the history of development of the political economy of gender expertise in Europe and internationally, and reflect current themes of equality work which are interwoven with the lives of the trainers as Nova shares. In this chapter, I investigate the demographic composition of the trainer group and document sites of activity and distribution across sectors. I track trajectories of knowledge acquisition and skills development, and the roles of activism and the trainer community therein. Throughout this analysis I point out how the trainers are situated in a global context of shifting patterns of work and professionalisation. This process involves a discussion of how the trainers perceive their journeys from a state of "not knowing" to the state of being classified as a "knower", through

this I bring to light the dynamism of personal lived experience and professional practice. I argue for acknowledgement of the gendered and intersectional subjectivities of those who carry out equality work as key to understanding the interrelation of actor and structure dynamics therein. I suggest that the ways in which the trainers acquired their skills, knowledge, and ethical principles communicates a circulatory movement of gender and feminist knowledges that is ongoing. The chapter concludes with a section on the motivations and values shared by the trainers, illustrating how these anchor their practice, a theme which weaves throughout the following chapters. Overall, in this chapter I show how a collective interpretation of individual trajectories, positionalities, and motivations of the trainers reflects the dynamics of the political economy of gender expertise in Europe, and lays the ground for the analysis in the next chapter on epistemic geographies.

4.2 Building a topography: trainer characteristics

The demographic information presented here derives from two samples of trainers: the interviewed trainers and the respondents to the online questionnaire. In aggregation, they represent 43 countries of birth and 38 countries of residence, the ages 19-67, 12 different gender identifications and many differently described occupations. The tabulated form of this information can be seen in Appendix C for the interviewed trainers; for the respondents the information is represented here in synthesis. What emerges is a map of diversities and commonalities, constituted by several layers of data and analysis.

4.2.1 Place of birth, residence, and mobility

The trainers emphasised their geographic locations in relation to their work. They speak about their work across countries within Europe and internationally and their professional development through this, in contrast to existing research where organisational and institutional affiliation are most prominent (Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015). In simple terms, this information provides an overview of where these gender trainers are living and where they come from. With the samples combined, 95% of the 154 trainers in this research

reside in Europe. Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Austria, France, Spain, Portugal and Greece[10] (in descending order) are the most common countries of birth (accounting for just over half (51%) of the trainers). The rest of the trainers come from 25 other European countries and five non-European countries. In terms of current residence, the most represented countries are – Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France, United Kingdom, Italy and Spain[11]. In the sample of interviewed trainers exactly half reside in a country different from their birth, with a fifth (22%) born outside Europe. Among respondents one third (32%) live in a different country from that of their birth, with just over a tenth (11%) born outside Europe. Together this data shows that the majority of the participants were born in Europe and continue to reside in Europe. However, the trainers are highly mobile within this geographic region, as they move often in the course of their professional development and frequently work outside their countries of residence.

This geographic distribution of trainers cannot be said to accurately mirror the distribution of gender trainers within Europe given the non-probability sampling strategy. However, I see the different countries of birth and residence as contextual factors which frame the perceptions and experiences of the trainers and the respondents. The mobility of gender trainers represented here is significant because it reflects the movement of knowledge and norms of practice (Meyer et al., 2001; Ackers, 2005). The high Europe-internal mobility establishes gender trainers as subjects who traverse epistemic, political, and economic domains. The significant presence of trainers who are not from Europe originally means that they are integrating this perspective in their practice, something which I explore in-depth in the next chapter.

4.2.2 Age

Overall, the range of ages of the interviewed trainers and respondents are quite similar, with notable a wide dispersion across ages (see Figure 4.1). The mean age of the respondents is 40[12] and about half of respondents fall between the ages of 30 and 47. The interviewed trainer sample[13] mean age is similar at 42, and half fall between the ages of 32 and 48. In the combined

[10] n=154, Netherlands (8%), Germany (8%), Italy (8%), Austria (7%), France (6%), Spain (5%), Portugal (5%), Greece (3%).
[11] n=154, Netherlands (12%), Germany (9%), Austria (8%), France (7%), UK (6%), Italy (6%), Spain (5%).
[12] n=106
[13] n=31

sample, see Figure 4.1, ages range from 19-67, the mean is 39, the most common age (mode) is 40, and 50% of trainers fall between the ages of 30 and 46. The broad range of ages may be attributed to the adoption of gender mainstreaming as the principle policy approach in Europe and internationally since 1995, which has led to an exponential growth in the number of gender experts (Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015). Furthermore, the wide dispersion of ages of gender trainers shows that although the profession is still in a phase of stabilisation, there are professionals of all ages within this occupational group. This supports the observation that although gender mainstreaming has seen exponential diffusion and institutional support following the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, this was in fact one stage of the decades long development of gender knowledge, activism and expertise in Europe and internationally (Mazey, 1995; Rees, 2005; Abels & Mushaben, 2012; Hoard, 2015). Gender experts working now are part of a long and evolving history of the feminist project and associated activities in other domains. Oksana (42, France) elaborates, "*When I started, I think it was about 20 years ago, so I can tell you some history about that whole thing, we had either researchers or people who were active in work in non-formal education*". Similarly, to several other trainers, Oksana explains her own trajectory in relation to how the profession developed over time. Thus, I propose that the professional trajectories in this research should be read as part of the process of the institutionalisation of gender expertise over the past six decades in Europe and internationally. As the literature on gender experts in different locations evidences (Vargas & Wieringa, 1998; Woodward, 2003; Holli, 2008), institutionalisation is shaped through the interrelation of the different domains in which the trainers are located.

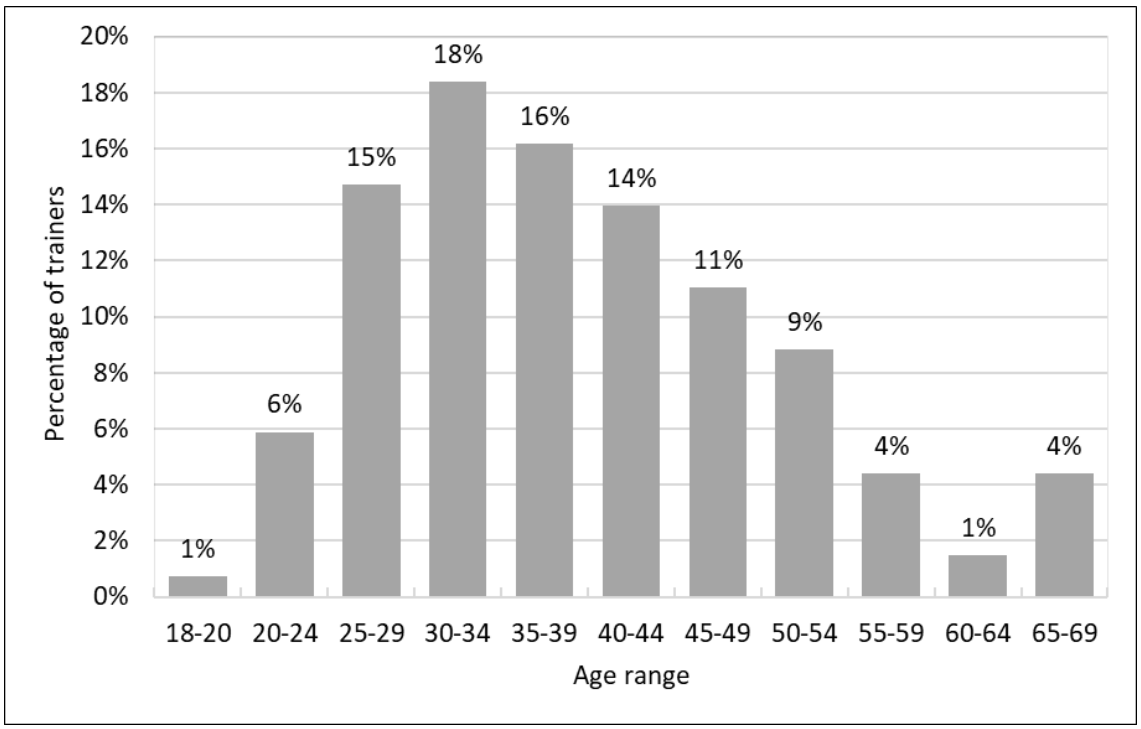

Figure 4.1 Age distribution
This figure illustrates the percentage of trainers (n=137) in each age bracket in five year increments.

4.2.3 Gender

The next descriptive layer is that of gender identification. The majority of the trainers[14] identify as women, three quarters in fact, but responses to the question of "How do you identify in terms of gender?" were mixed (see Table 4.1). For many of the interviewed trainers, and for a large number of the respondents, their description of how they identify in terms of gender was qualified with an explanation of how they evaluate this same identification–with misgivings. In these cases, gender was interpreted as an almost "forced" descriptor. In the interviews the trainers [15] communicated ambiguity about sharing a description of their gender identity, signalled by pauses and verbal expressions of ambivalence such as "mmm" and "um", followed by qualifications of fluidity and temporality such as that of Nova (43, Germany) who muses, "maybe *queer female*" and Tomas (32, Poland) who observes, "*male is how I feel* right now"[16].

Table 4.1 Summary of trainer gender identification

[14] Combined sample for gender n=144.
[15] n=31
[16] Italics my emphasis.

Sample	Diverse gender descriptions[17]	"female/woman"	"male/man"
Interviewees	12.90%	74.09%	12.90%
Respondents	13.27%	69.91%	16.81%
Combined	13.19%	70.83%	15.97%

In the questionnaire mixed feelings were less pronounced over the larger sample; however, in total roughly a quarter (22%) of respondents[18] gave more than single binary word descriptions. For example, two of the respondents who describe themselves as female/woman qualify this by writing "*I don't think gender is an identity. I am a woman even though I wouldn't mind having a "penis" sometimes, especially at court*" and "*I am a woman because this is how the world treats me. I cannot identify out of oppression*". Of those who use the descriptors man/male, one respondent explains their identity as relational by writing, "*I'm a man responsible for woman and children*", and another describes what they intend, "*I identify as a man, but in my own way (I do not want to conform to certain macho ideal type masculinities)*".

Another significant aspect of some of the responses to the question of gender identification is the choice to include a descriptor of sexuality, with three of the interviewed trainers and three of the respondents referring to their sexuality within their description of gender. This underlines the fact that gender trainers and gender experts are gendered beings, and interpret themselves as such, a fact which is often elided in the writing on equality work. I see this as an indication of a high degree of self-awareness among the participants involved in this study regarding their perception of themselves. This critical reflexivity is coherent with the strong emphasis on self-reflection within gender training practice generally. Critiques of gender identity or mentions of sexuality are not only significant in terms of trainers' private lives and personal stories. These also offer a view of how gender and sexuality regimes play out through the institutional formations of cathexis in relation to domains of polity and economy through the practice of equality work, a dynamic which I elaborate on in this chapter and the next.

[17] These have been counted together for the purpose of synthesis, but do not represent one category, the terms included: gender fuck, trans, feminine, ambiguous and unproblematic, flexible cis-gender, trans man, andoriin, masculine, non-binary, and gender queer.
[18] n=113

4.2.4 Ethnic and racial identification

Information on the ethnic and racial identification of the interviewed trainers was collected, but it was not collected in the case of the respondents. Half of the interviewed trainers described themselves as white, often followed by the descriptor of their country of citizenship, but this was an identification that was problematic for many of them (see Appendix C). As Lea (40, Netherlands) puts it, "*I feel white but I'm not comfortable feeling white*", some even found the question offensive, like Isabel (35, France) who states, "*No, in France it is forbidden. So I am French".* In fact, it was based on this pushback, combined with the consistent use of nationality as a descriptor, that I excluded this question from the questionnaire. In analysing the data together, I have concluded that a specific question on the ethnic or racial identification of the respondents should have in fact been included in the questionnaire.

The ways in which the trainers describe their ethnic or racial identification reveals a reflexive understanding of their positionalities. Alice (40, Italy) describes herself as a "*white European, a person of Italian nationality and cultural heritage*" and Eleni (28, Hungary) who is from Cyprus comments, "*Asia and Europe so I don't know. It really depends. It's relational and contextual I think"*. The trainers frame their identifications in relation to the contexts in which they carry out their practice, as they move between institutional domains and regimes of social relations these can change or be interpreted differently. Generally, the trainers' responses to the question of identification, as similarly illustrated with gender, evidence a critical engagement therewith and an emphasis on social relationality. In Chapter 5, I expand this analysis of trainer positionalities, identities, and practice within the landscape of the European political economy of gender knowledge. The locations and mobility, age range, gender identification, and ethnic and racial identification of the trainers should be understood within the context of the labour market and knowledge economy. To develop this understanding further, in the following section I look more closely at the activities that trainers engage in and their remuneration.

4.3 Sites of professional activity and remuneration

The next layer of detail in this picture is the sectorial and organisational locations and remuneration of the trainers. Similarly, to the gender experts in Thompson and Prügl's (2015) study, the trainers come together in "a loosely structured field that is functionally

differentiated", meaning that they are found across sectors and involved in different activities. The trainers describe this diversity as a necessary means both to engage with as many different actors as possible, and financially sustain their practice. Gender training was not the single source of work for any of the interviewed trainers. For example, Marie (32, Spain) works as a consultant and a trainer; Julia (31, Italy) works as an educational consultant and delivers trainings across a variety of topics; Paola (45, Germany) works as a project manager and as a trainer; Tomas (32, Poland) works as a trainer, is a martial arts instructor, and is involved in theatre productions; Meike (47, Austria) is a coach, trainer, and lecturer; Sam (57, Netherlands) works as a gender and development consultant and trainer; Nova (43, Germany) is a freelance journalist and a trainer; Germaine (41, UK) is a comedian, improviser, designer, artist, writer, speaker and education researcher.

Given the range of jobs that the interviewed trainers do, in the questionnaire I was interested in what percentage of respondents' total work gender training represents. The responses show a large variation in the percentage of work that training represents[19], corroborating the finding from the interviews that for many of the trainers, training is only one aspect of their work. In other words, training is one task among those that make up their job (Dutton et al., 2013: 281). Over half of the respondents (56%) indicate that gender training represents less than 30% of their work, and for the majority of the respondents training represents between 19% and 50% of their work. On average training represents 36% of the work of these respondents, and 30% is the most commonly reported percentage.

The other kinds of activities that gender trainers are involved in are, in large part, a function of their organisational affiliation and the sector in which they are working (see Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015). Thus, when asked to describe their jobs in an open question format, the respondents give an expectedly varied response. Gender trainers are not only carrying out a range of activities, they also often have more than one job (see Figure 4.2). Three fifths (61%)

[19] For the dataset for this question n=84 with $\bar{x}$=36.4% and s=25.67. This standard deviation points to a wide range across respondents, with a range of 98%, from 2% to 100%. The mode (or most common value) is 20% and the median (or central value) is 30%.

of the respondents[20] have one job, with the remaining two fifths (39%) mentioning more than one job. 4% of the respondents report being unemployed, although as the other data would suggest, these trainers may be involved in activism and in delivering trainings for free.

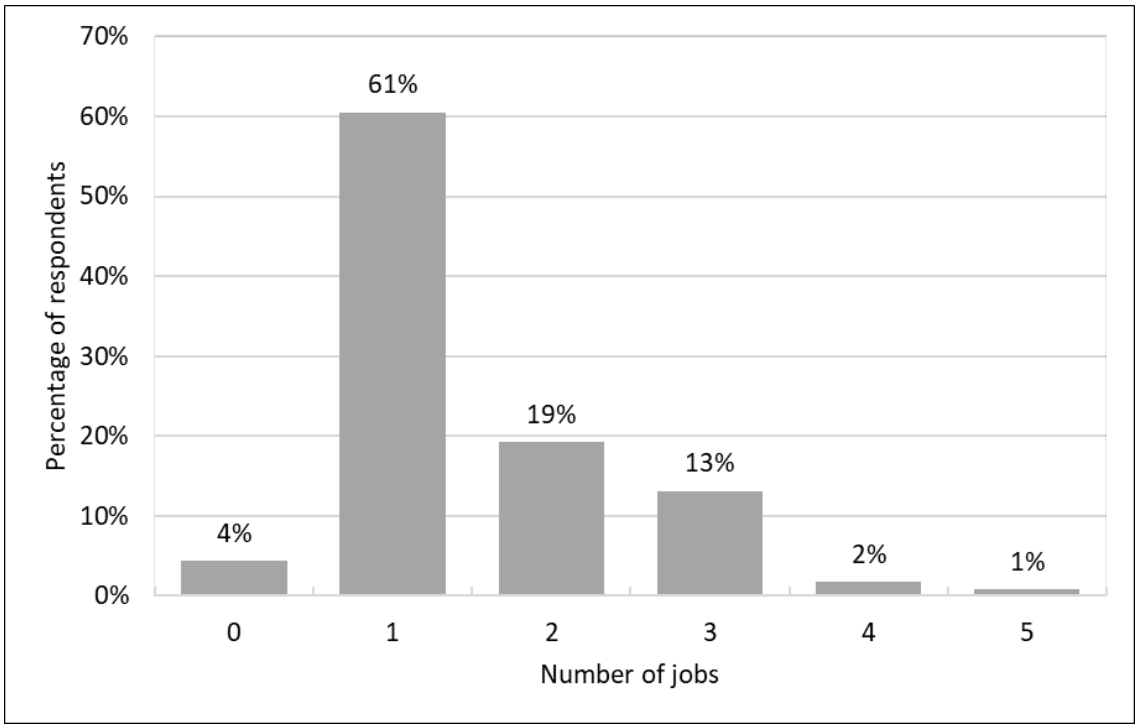

Figure 4.2 Number of jobs
This figure shows the number of jobs that respondents (n=114) hold simultaneously.

The range of descriptions[21] that the respondents supply for their jobs include, in descending order: role in academia (19%); trainer (15%); role in gender equality architecture (most often government institutions) (11%); civil society (most frequently in the role of project manager) (9%); student (13%); psychologist (5%); teacher (4%); and consultant (4%). Of the total number of respondents, around a tenth (11%) say that they work as freelancers across numerous contexts depending on who they are commissioned by.

This data shows the sites in which gender trainers are concentrated. For example, by collapsing all categories relating to education a quarter (26%) of the participants work within this category.

[20] n=114
[21] r=171

This sample is located primarily in sites of education, gender equality architecture, and civil society. The distribution of respondents across different sectors, which can be seen in Figure 4.3, adds further complexity to this picture. The difference between number of responses (175) and respondents (119) indicates there is considerable overlap between sectors. Just over a third (37%) of respondents work across more than one sector, a quarter (28%) work over two sectors, and a tenth (9%) report working in private, public, and civil society sectors. The most common sectors in the responses are public sector with over half (59%) of the respondents, and civil society with just under half (47%)[22]. This is attributable to the precarious nature of gender training work that was communicated by the interviewees, who are often involved in a variety of activities in order to draw income from a constellation of sources. Given their distribution across sectors and engagement in a wide range of professional activities gender trainers are in constant movement between domains.

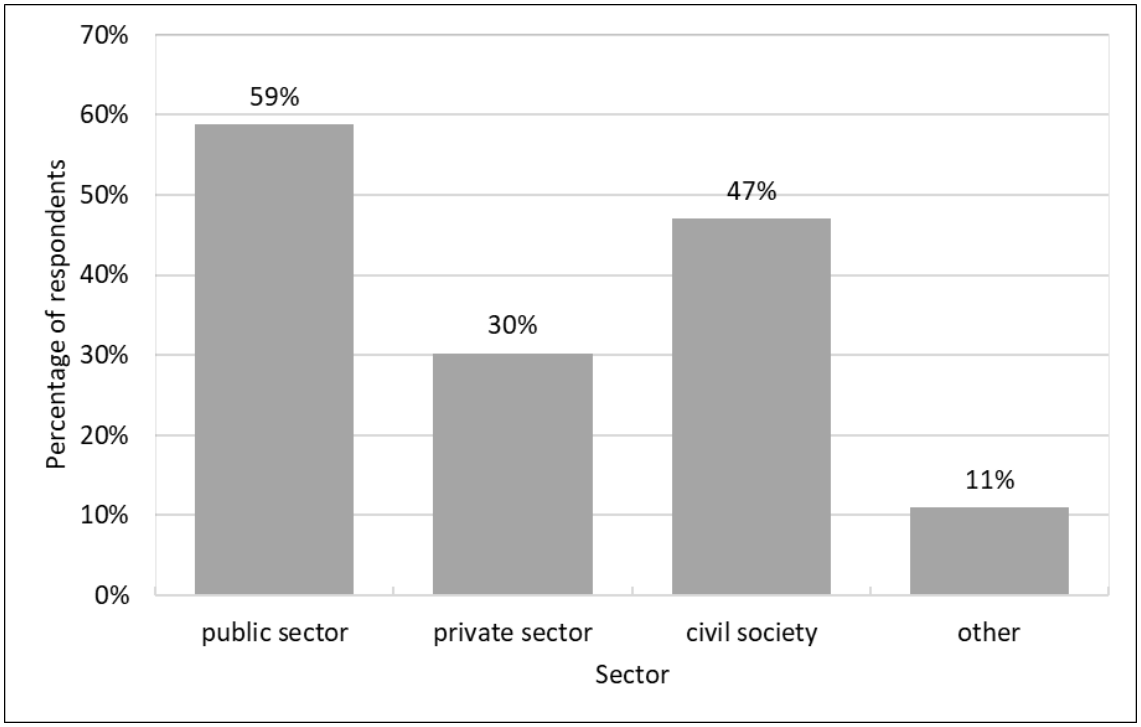

Figure 4.3 Distribution by sector
This figure illustrates the percentage of respondents (n=119) who work in public, private, and civil society sectors.

[22] Roughly half (57%) of the trainers work in a single sector, of these half (54%) are in the public sector, a quarter (28%) exclusively in civil society, and a fifth (19%) in private only. Of the other half (43%) a quarter of respondents (24%) work both in public and private, and about a quarter (24%) work both civil society and public, lastly the smallest percentage (16%) work across private and civil society.

The cross-sectoral and multi-activity involvement of trainers illustrates movement across different domains. I have chosen to include the details of this inventory here to evidence this movement, trace dynamics of circulation, and illustrate the different fields of knowledge that the trainers might draw on in their work. I posit that it is through this movement that the trainers engage in a reformulation and revision of knowledge and skills over time. They circulate this knowledge through different institutional locations, in service of different activities, and in collaboration with other actors. The idea of gender training as a point of intersection is further demonstrated by how this intervention is remunerated (see Figure 4.4). The vast majority of respondents (82%)[23] receive monetary compensation for their trainings. Just over half (52%) indicate that they receive payment for their trainings as part of their work in the organisations by which they are employed. Just less than half (45%) report that trainings are paid part of their self-employed work. A third of the respondents (32%) deliver trainings for free with no monetary compensation.

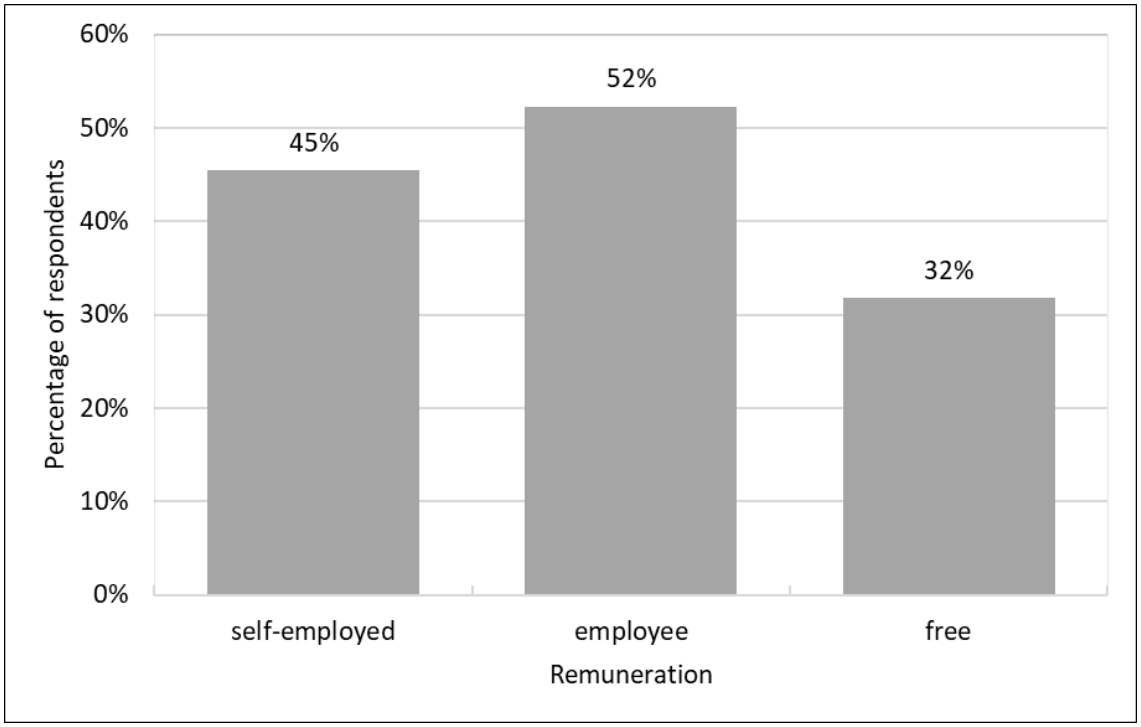

Figure 4.4 Remuneration for trainings
This figure shows in what capacity, and whether, respondents (n=88) are paid for their trainings.

[23] n=88

Payment for individual trainings varies. Overall, respondents report the average rate of payment per training at 67.59 euro (see Figure 4.5), but there is a marked and inconsistent variation between the amounts indicated by the respondents[24] as can be seen in the graph. Research that is more nationally specific would be necessary to identify whether this variation is due to intercountry differences in income and cost of living, or other variables such as national equality legacies (Van der Vleuten, 2012; Krizsàn et al., 2012).

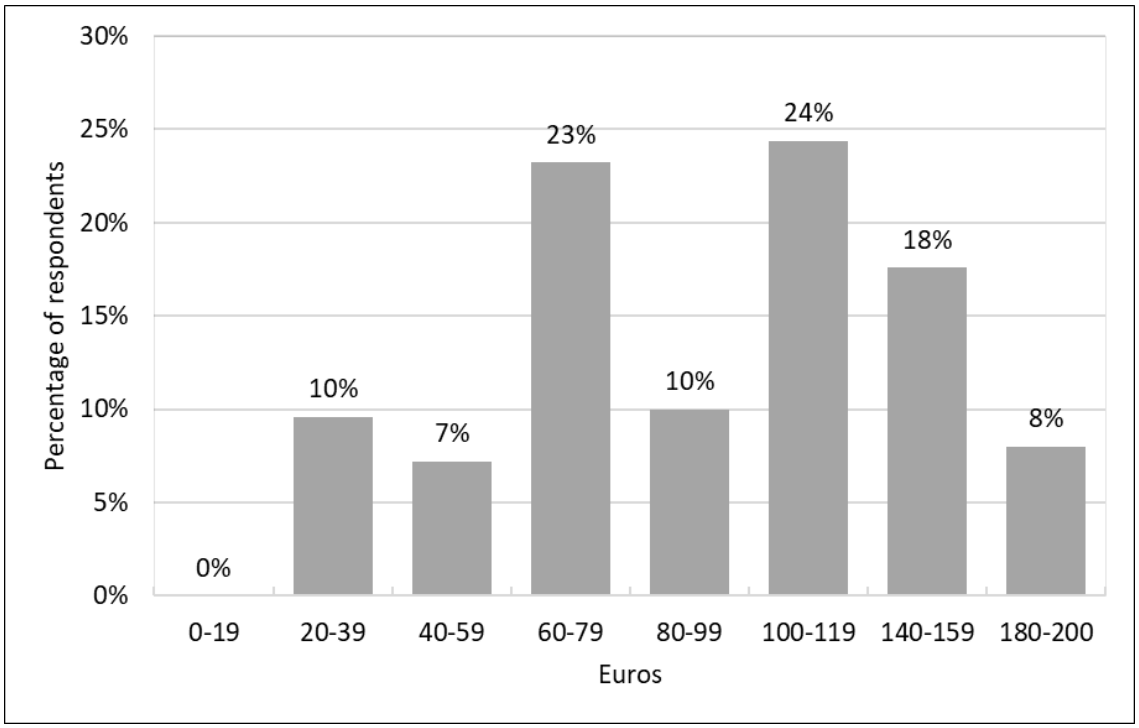

Figure 4.5 Average hourly wage
This figure shows the average hourly pay that respondents (n=36) recieve for delivering trainings in twenty euro increments.

A similar dynamic of a broad and diverse range of payment is visible in terms of gross annual income (Figure 4.6). The average gross annual income in euros[25] is 25907.35, with the bulk of

[24] For this dataset n=36, with $\bar{x}$ =67.59 and s=44.47. This standard deviation points to a broad spread of average pay for trainings. The range is 200 (from 0-200), with an interquartile range of 25, where the first quartile is 35 and the third quartile is 60, meaning that the majority of payments for training fall between these two amounts. The mode (most common payment) is 100, while the median (central value) is 60.
[25] For this dataset n=99, with outliers removed $\bar{x}$=25907.35 and s=17236.74. This is a high standard deviation, which indicates that there is a wide range in respondents' income. The range is 89800 (200-

the respondents reporting that they earn between 15000 and 32000 euros in gross annual income. The high degree of dispersion in this dataset, and the wide spread of incomes, might be attributed to the intercountry nature of the data, and it is congruous with the cross-sector, multi-job characteristics of the sample. Generalisations cannot be drawn from this data, but it serves to contextualise the work that the trainers carry out and describe patterns within the political economy of gender expertise in Europe.

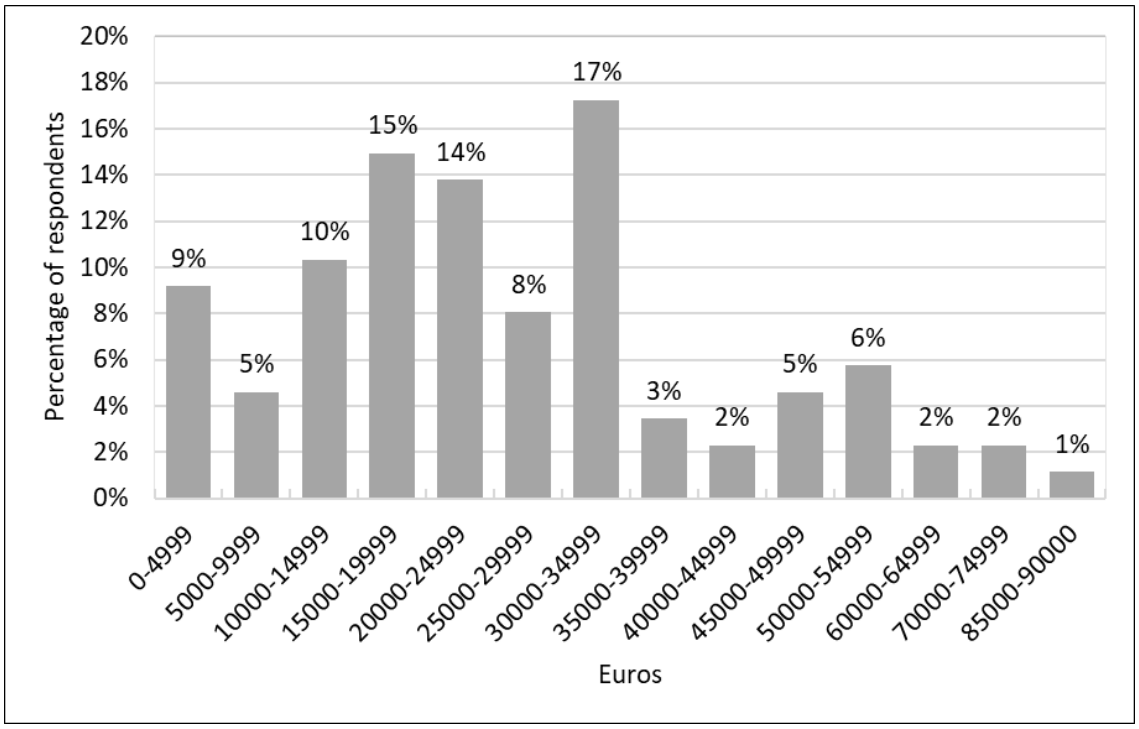

Figure 4.6 Gross annual income
This figure documents the gross annual income of respondents (n=99) in 5000 euro increments.

I interpret this diversity in training payment and income as the indication of gender training as loosely structured field that is still in the process of formation (Thompson & Prügl, 2015). This is mediated not only by how gender training is monetarily valued by commissioners, but also by the social value that training is perceived to hold as a tool for transformation. To consider remuneration, and the perceived monetary versus social value of gender expertise, more

90000), with an interquartile range of 17000, this means that half of the respondents report earning between 15000 (first quartile) and 32000 (third quartile). The mode (most common income value) is 30000, while the median (central value) is 23000. Here outliers were removed at lower and higher ends, 10 zero amounts were removed and one 250000 amount.

broadly, it is telling that a third of trainers deliver training without monetary compensation. Of the respondents[26] who deliver trainings for free (32%), roughly half (57%) deliver trainings exclusively for free which is almost a fifth (18%) of respondents overall. Those who deliver trainings for free do so for several reasons, linked by two common themes. Firstly, the understanding that gender training work is very important, on the level of social justice and equality promotion, even though there are not the resources to remunerate the trainers. Secondly, conducting trainings for free is part of a political commitment to equality work, in other words the transformative value of gender training attributed by trainers, and this is discussed in more detail in the section of this chapter on motivations. As one respondent GTQ198 (57, Hungary) summarises, "*it is important to deliver a training even if the clients can't pay, and the volunteer trainings in my own NGO*".

The features of paid and unpaid gender training discussed here point to the complexity of this practice because, while the perceived monetary value of gender expertise is low, the social value of equality is widely recognised (van Eerdewijk, 2014; Ferguson, 2015). There is a disjuncture between the common discursive acknowledgement of the importance of gender training, and the lack of congruence with the monetary value thereof. The trainers in this study speak about the challenges of finding funding for their work in terms of organisational resources and policy conditions, which echoes existing research (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016; Prügl, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018). This is not merely a neutral market value fluctuation; on a deeper level these priorities reflect the epistemic status and value of gender expertise. The questions of status and value are analysed further in Chapter 7 on resistances and opposition to gender training and it serves as an important feature of the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe.

Taken together, the findings on the demographic characteristics, locations, mobility, activities, sectors, and remuneration of the trainers are consistent with more general research on gender expertise (McBride & Mazur, 2010; Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Hoard, 2015). However, this is useful not only to deepen the understanding of who carries out equality work, but also to situate

[26] n=88

the trainers as knowledge workers within a knowledge-based economy. The challenges that gender trainers face, particularly relative to funding as explored in the seventh chapter, are linked to their operation within this system. They are within a polity-economy-episteme nexus which is characterised by ever-reducing welfare state provisions, intermittent and immaterial labour, high mobility, and the feminisation of labour where class and gender inequalities overlap (Casas-Cortés, 2014: 219). European knowledge workers are required to be increasingly mobile to obtain jobs and build careers (Ackers, 2005; Casas-Cortés, 2014; Fries-Tersch et al., 2018), while socially oriented work is feminised, characterised by traits associated with subordinated women, and increasingly precarious (Bolton & Muzio, 2008; Harcourt & Woestman, 2010).

By recognising gender training within these systems I complicate the transformative intent of this work. For example, while they build their skills in tackling inequality the trainers are also skilled mobile bearers of "of technological, managerial and cosmopolitan competences" (Kofman, 2007: 122) who are part of boundary drawing and the stratification of migration within the EU. The trainers also reflect the feminisation of labour, not only in the gender composition of the occupational group, but as participants in the knowledge economy where "the affective-relational component of those historically women's tasks is becoming a general tendency of labour in general" (Casas-Cortés, 2014: 220). This emotional labour and affective weight of gender training is further discussed in Chapter 6 on theory and practice. Although gender trainers are active within a European neoliberal knowledge economy their individual trajectories are also shaped by regimes of inequality and their participation in social justice projects to combat these. These threads of complicity and subversion are picked up and expanded upon throughout the following chapters, beginning with the trainers' processes of knowledge acquisition.

4.4 Knowledge acquisition

In this section, I explore how trainers acquire their knowledge and skills and the influential actors, communities, and experiences in these processes. The stories of the trainers are characterised by learning over time and through reflection, and the subsequent integration and reiteration of these reflections in practice. I argue that what emerges here is a picture of ongoing professional development which sees the integration and reformulation of knowledge and skills over time.

4.4.1 Formal education

The combined sample shows that trainers are a highly educated occupational group. In the combined sample[27] the majority (86%) hold postgraduate degrees, over half (60%) of the trainers hold a masters level degree, and a quarter (26%) hold a PhD degree, as can be seen in Figure 4.7. The vast majority of trainers hold tertiary level education. For reference, the tertiary education rate in the EU in 2018 among those aged 15-64 lies at around 30% (Eurostat, 2019). The fact that the trainers are highly educated is, again, consistent with more general research on gender expertise (McBride & Mazur, 2010; Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Hoard, 2015). However, my analysis highlights some intriguing aspects of the relationship between formal education and the practice of gender training. First, the fact that the trainers are highly educated indicates that by and large they come from a similar class background. Together with their high intra-European mobility, this identifies them as part of the group of high-skill knowledge workers in the EU (Ackers, 2005; Fries-Tersch et al., 2018). As I argued above, this means that trainers are participants and products in the very systems of inequality that they seek to tackle. I take up the implications of this belonging in the next chapter.

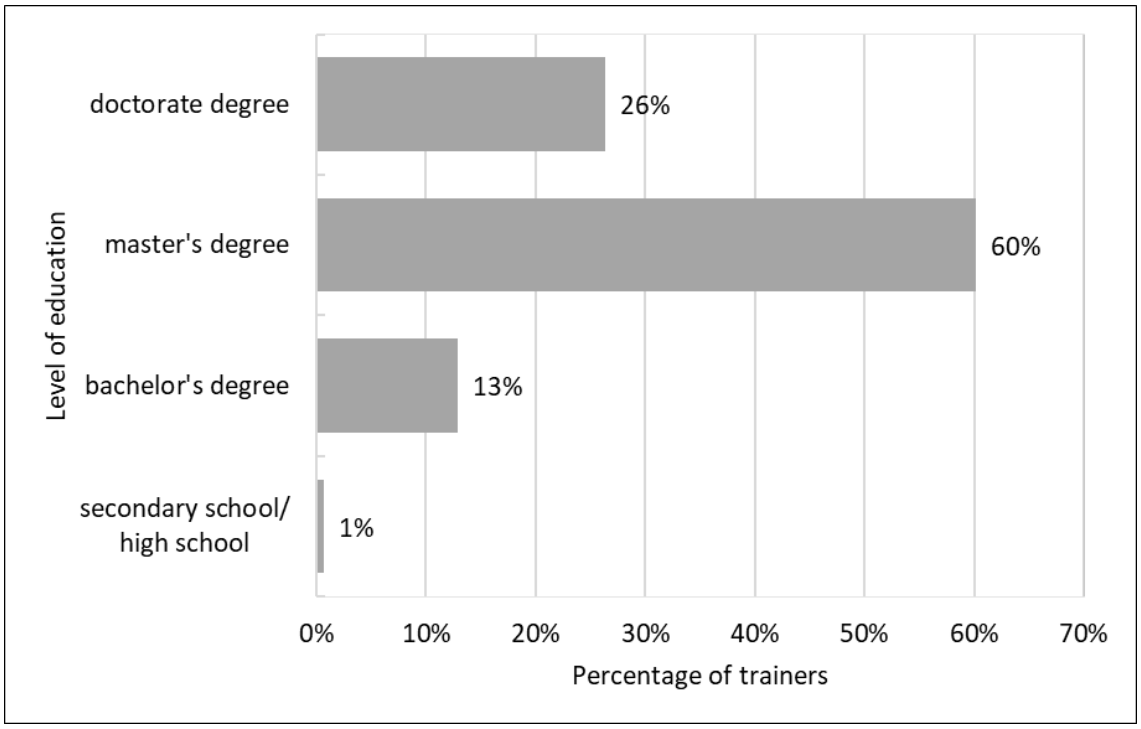

Figure 4.7 Level of education
This figure records the highest level of education held by trainers (n=147).

[27] n=147

Second, the fact that there is a strong relationship between gender expertise and institutions of the episteme is related to the formalisation of gender expertise in Europe through gender studies. In fact, roughly two thirds (68%) of the respondents say they gained gender knowledge through formal education. Through their participation in formal education, trainers are exposed to the truth and knowledge claims of the episteme, those of institutionalised feminism within academia (Mazey, 1998; Woodward, 2003), but there is variation in this relationship across contexts. This is due in part to the different geographic locations of the trainers, which I explore in the next chapter, and elucidated by the interviewed trainers. Emily (51, Netherlands) and Isabelle (33, France), who are both from France, talk about how gender studies as a discipline is only now beginning to appear in universities in their country of origin. However, for trainers from the UK, Austria, Sweden, and Germany, there was more exposure to gender studies in the form of stand-alone degree courses and electives in other fields in academic contexts, which allowed them to access to this knowledge. This reflects a well-established heterogeneity in the epistemic status of women, gender, and feminist studies (WFGS) in universities within Europe (see do Mar Pereira, 2017).

The varied epistemic status of gender and feminist knowledges suggests a more complex relationship between theory and practice in gender training than one of simple transposition of theoretical concepts into teachable formats. It depends on the objectives of commissioners and is often diluted and re-dimensioned for brevity and measurability (Kantola & Squires, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Ferguson, 2015). This holds significant consequences for the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges: it means that specific institutionally sanctioned forms of gender knowledge concepts, theories, and discourses are being translated into practice. Through this circulation, gender and feminist theorising crosses from the episteme into other domains. How are these applied? Most often they are integrated with other forms of knowledge acquired through self-directed learning and other experiences in individual trajectories of knowledge development.

4.4.2 Self-directed research and learning

Outside of traditional formal education, the trainers draw on a diversity of knowledge resources in an ongoing process of self-directed research. Emily (51, Netherlands) began her interest in

gender when she was doing research on communication networks and their impact on innovation. Emily talks about a revelation when she processed the correlations between demographic characteristics and communication networks. She found no correlation with national culture as she thought she would, but she exclaimed, *"It was the gender, and there was a big alarm when it was the gender. And I was like – wow I did not expect this!".* From that point onwards Emily began to seek out knowledge institutes and organisations working on gender issues, building her career as a gender trainer from there. Oksana (42, France) describes taking part as a young Ukrainian woman in a youth programme funded by the Swedish government, an experience which then pushed her to attend a semester in an international women's studies course in Germany, which she emphasises, "*opened up to me the whole universe of women's equality work which I didn't even know existed*". Thereafter, this exposure shaped her trajectory, *"basically, it determined everything I did because when I came back, I set up an international network for women's empowerment. Then I developed my international contacts within the feminist women's movement. I wrote my Ph.D. in feminist sociology*". Nina (42, Sweden) experienced sexual harassment while writing her PhD in education at, she recalls while laughing, a "*very ancient, old university with old traditions*". She states this drove her to "*read almost all literature I could get about gender issues, and gender issues in education, and gender issues and sexual harassment and all that kind. And through that, I got really active in the student's union as well*". In the subsequent years, Nina continued to advance this knowledge in her work within state institutions and state funded research in gender and education.

As these excerpts show, the trainers encounter and pursue knowledge acquisition in a variety of ways. The theme of mixed sources of knowledge and processes of knowledge acquisition is mirrored in the questionnaire responses. In terms of the acquisition of gender knowledge, the respondents[28] identify the activities through which they acquired their knowledge. Self-led research is the most common source of knowledge (80%), followed by a postgraduate degree (55%) and undergraduate degree (26.88%). Just over a third (42%) of respondents state that they acquired knowledge through independent training courses and just under a third (32%) through training as an employee. A third (34%) of respondents select a combination of at least three sources of knowledge overall, and about four fifths (79%) combine self-led study and formal education. As Thompson and Prügl (2015: 16) observe, "a lot of gender expertise is

[28] n=93

acquired in an informal manner and through individual, non-structured effort". According to the interviewed trainers, as seen in the following section, this non-structured effort entails self-directed study, which is then integrated with other sources of learning. The combination of formal education, self-led study, and supplementary courses points to evolving trajectories over time in which trainers continue to incorporate new learnings into their practice of gender training.

4.4.3 Knowledge trajectories

I understand the professional profiles of the trainers in terms of their location within a specific sociohistorical moment and in relation to a genealogy of gender and feminist concepts and work. In other words, they are not just acquiring neutral knowledge, they are acquiring concepts and buzzwords relative to the current practice of equality work, and contributing to the production and dissemination of this knowledge. This is significant because our own knowledge trajectories affect "what we can and cannot see about gender expertise and gender training" (Bustelo et al., 2016a: 172). I unpack this tension between situated knowledges and epistemic hierarchies, and the significance thereof for circulation, in the next chapter. Here I attend to the patterns of the trainers' processes of knowledge acquisition, which provide context for these dynamics.

For the majority of the trainers, the process of acquiring gender and feminist knowledges is one of revelation ignited by a desire to understand gendered inequalities and anchored in a theoretical point of reference. In the case of Alice (40, Italy) *"a fundamental part was definitely some teachers that I have had and that have made the difference for me*". A teacher at school who encouraged her to read feminist texts and pushed her to do an internship at the women's library in her city. For Julia (31, Italy), her experience of gender as a concept began in an academic setting. She talks about the moment from which her interest began to develop,

> *In the first year of university I had a class called anthropology and gender and I really didn't want to go* […] *but I had to do it. And then after half year I came out and I was like, "ok, I need to work on this".* [laughing] *I found my calling.*

Thus, for both Alice and Julia the exposure to feminist texts in their academic careers was a catalyst in their journeys.

The academic theoretical reference point can also act as an antagonist. For Erica (54, UK), it was during the final year of her English degree that she became frustrated by a curriculum dominated by male writers. She recalls, "*I chose to do women science fiction, writers of feminist science fiction, basically. So, I started kind of getting more into feminism".* This is one of two paths that emerged from the interviews, accounting for roughly half of trainers, where their acquisition of knowledge on gender issues was precipitated by encountering feminist texts, mostly in academic contexts. The second path might be described as less linked to formal education and more self-taught in terms of the themes and knowledge that would traditionally form part of gender studies curricula. For Ines (37, Italy) it has been a process of her seeking out her own learning, "*I have been developing it by myself through self-directed learning",* and developing this through interaction with a friend, "*she is an anthropology student and she was also doing some readings and we have the conversations, she is more a kind of academic".*

As Hemmings (2011) writes, we tell stories about women's and feminist movements and scholarship. These may be stories of progress from singularity to multiplicity, loss of a feminist political agenda, or suggested return to feminist visions of the past. These stories matter because "of the ways in which they intersect with wider institutionalisations of gendered meanings" (Hemmings, 2011: 1), they facilitate certain understandings of the origins, actors, subjects and temporality of feminism and gender equality projects. These stories frame the understanding of feminist theorising in service of a compelling and cohesive internal logic. They also establish professional regulation and authority in terms of drawing boundaries around what is the "knowledge of gender expertise", and what is not. As professionals who draw on this information, gender trainers' praxis references this genealogy and these stories. Karl (54, Netherlands), who is currently involved in the training of gender trainers, describes this in his interpretation of the influences in his career,

> *My early influences around gender and gender training was actually through that very specific way of approaching gender and development which comes out of IDS and University of Sussex social relations framework. And at the time I didn't really realise that or understand that but only through hindsight do I realise that my understanding of gender and gender training could have been quite different had I, for example, ended up working with someone from USA and the Harvard framework or something like that.*

As Karl details, the knowledge trajectories of trainers are significant because they prefigure the understandings of gender that the trainers may hold. These histories are interwoven with the claims about the legitimacy of gender and feminist knowledge and organise the practice of gender expertise. This gains further significance in the context of gender training because these stories do not only circulate in feminist and gender studies circles, but are then packaged for communication to general publics. In other words, these stories are not just told by feminists to other feminists, they are also told to everyone else. As these concepts circulate between actors in social systems they can be normativising, but they are also opened up to redefinition and opposition. I further explore these dynamics in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 on epistemic geographies and theory and practice respectively.

Although trainers and respondents emphasise different aspects of how they came to acquire their knowledge of gender, these thematisations are unified by the interlinking and integration of these different threads over time. Eleni (28, Hungary) says that it is an integration of three elements, "*the knowledge that I got from my education, from the work from the research that we were conducting, and as I said the local knowledge".* Trainers put knowledge and skills together in the practice of training because this involves the integration of the "nature of knowledge (epistemology), imparting knowledge (pedagogy) and knowing (cognition)" (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 11).

4.5 Development of skills and competencies

As with the acquisition of knowledge relevant to gender training, there are several interlinking aspects in the development of training skills. Training skills and competencies can be conceptualised as a fusion of ideological or epistemological positioning and practical techniques which are based on assumptions about how people learn, and the ultimate purpose of learning (Leistyna et al., 1996; Lather, 1998; Stake & Hoffmann, 2000; Van Merriënboer & de Bruin, 2014; Henderson, 2015; Cornwall, 2016; Ramos, 2017). There is no formal professionalisation process guided by a regulatory body. Currently in Europe there are no national certification processes for gender trainers (Ferguson, 2018: 11); although in Sweden there is a certification process for gender equality consultants (Olivius & Rönnblom, 2019). The KIT Professional Development Programme offers instruction on gender training to international participants in the Netherlands, although this is a recently established course. Like other gender experts, gender trainers collect

and integrate their knowledges and skills through a variety of sources and activities (McBride & Mazur, 2010; Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Ferguson, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015). In the case of gender trainers there are specific skills regarding pedagogy and non-formal educational methods which trainers employ to tackle deep-seated, and affectively charged, ideas around gender with their workshop participants (Pauly et al., 2009; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016). In this section, I focus on the development of pedagogical skills and competences in non-formal learning methodologies as recounted by the trainers. In the Chapter 6 on theory and practice I address the assumptions, forms, and content of these approaches more substantively.

For all of the trainers, training skills were built over time, honed through a consistent process of practice, reflection, and revision. The trainers describe these as non-formal methodologies or approaches, simultaneously referencing both the language used in EU adult learning policy and that of the liberatory education tradition associated with Freire (see Beckett, 2013). These skills are seen as the tool to best engage workshop participants. For Alice (40, Italy) feminist texts are important but not the thing that she likes the most, "*rather it was about the methodologies. It was important for me to come into contact with a series of contexts where non-formal education was being practiced*". Alice explains how she refined her skills over the following years through involvement with groups in her city working with interactive theatre techniques, experiential learning, and participatory activities. Tomas (32, Poland) describes a similar experience collecting and cultivating his training skills over several years. Describing his processes as an "*important kind of mission*" he explains, "w*ell I was trained, how to be a good educator and I was talking with many people and I was participating in many workshops conferences and so on reading many books, reading practice books".*

The process of building and refining skills over time, through purposeful selection of activities and experiences that Tomas and Alice detail, is common across the accounts of the trainers. Fiore (30, Italy) shares that this journey began with the moment in which they encountered non-formal methodologies in a workshop attended as a participant. Fiore describes it as a revelation, "*you know when you always knew something but you couldn't find the words, and then you do something and you say, 'Ok it's this!'*". Similarly, Alex (27, Romania) began by working on a project to develop a training for teachers to address LGBTQ+ issues and tackle bullying in schools. Thereafter they actively developed their training skills by attending courses and events on non-

formal approaches. In this process they say, "*A very important milestone was going on an international level and taking part in a lot of learning opportunities there and understanding a bit different ways to talk about gender*". Many other trainers described similar processes of exposure to non-formal methodologies through involvement with organisations in non-professional capacities, which they then actively cultivated into professional competencies. In several cases, this entailed attendance at Train the Trainer programmes, which focus specifically on building competence in non-formal methodologies. Others developed their training skills through their university studies and work as teachers, or more organically through different professional roles that required them to deliver trainings.

The diversity of ways in which trainers cultivate their skills is reflected in the respondents' stories of how they developed their skills as trainers. There are several key areas that the respondents[29] reference as sites for the development of their training skills, most often (in 46% of cases) these are mentioned together: learning training skills directly through gender studies (27%), through trainer programs (24%), through practice and self-directed learning (17%), through gender equality architecture (12%), and through volunteerism and activism (7%). Thompson & Prügl (2015) found a similar interplay of the variables of education, professional roles, and activism in their research on international gender experts. GTQ173 (42, Finland) summarises the integration of these different elements over time,

> *I have a Master in Women Studies and my trainings skills have developed from studies (theory), volunteering (women help line, girl groups, feminist self-defence) and through work as a trainee in* [a] *gender equality institution, part time in political women organisation with training in focus, work in a health organisation with the task to do training and* [as a] *freelancer before setting up my own business in gender and diversity.*

In addition to the sites for professional development discussed hitherto, the preceding excerpt mentions national equality architecture as one of these sites. Equality architecture can be broadly defined as "governmental or quasi-governmental agencies and departments that regulate or promote equality" (Walby et al., 2012: 447). Almost half (14) of the interviewed

[29] n=70

trainers talk about how their work within equality architecture settings informed their professional trajectories. There is a substantial body of research on the critique of gender mainstreaming, including specific analyses of how mainstreaming may occlude the erosion of positive action which challenges the distribution of power and resources (Rees, 2005; Stratigaki, 2005). However, it would seem that the equality architecture surrounding mainstreaming has facilitated some of the professional development of gender trainers directly and indirectly. Hoard (2015: 64) reports that many gender experts have at some point in their careers been employed in international organisations and national governments, several of which form part of the European equality architecture. Involvement in these structures has provided some gender trainers with capacity and skills building opportunities, which they then integrate into their training work. For example, GTQ155 (33, Malta) describes this dynamic in her response to the development of gender training skills, saying that the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in her country provides capacity building for staff, which includes trainings on gender. This trainer adds that this institution also provides materials and research on gender training, combined with "*conferences, seminars and workshops held at a European level with other institutions, including equality bodies, helps NCPE trainers keep up to date with current issues and take on board good practices from abroad".* This illustrates that although sets of institutions within domains can constrain equality work in a variety of ways, these same structures and systems can also support and legitimise this work. In fact, the development of equality architecture and the establishment of women, feminist and gender studies (WFGS) (see do Mar Pereira, 2017) are steps in positive feedback loops which have enabled the growth of feminist and gender expertise. To address this contrast the trainers, echoing existing research (Prügl, 2010; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b), call for active repoliticisation in institutional settings, a theme which I deepen in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.

In other words, the skills learnt within these institutional contexts are then applied in other settings, rendering change in both environments more likely. The mutually adaptive nature of systems provides opportunities for change, not only through normalisation, but also by providing learning opportunities that work through positive feedback loop dynamics. From these accounts it is clear that there is a dynamic of curation in the process of developing training skills, in other words, a process through which trainers select and organise opportunities to develop their practical skills. This involves a conscious choice to apply non-formal methods as a way to translate concepts by engaging workshop participants beyond the simple transfer or transmission of knowledge. The trainers themselves are undergoing a perpetual learning

process facilitated by a recognition of what the workshop participants bring to trainings and what can be learnt from them. Eleni (28, Hungary) explains,

> *I think that has really changed for me over the years, I think that when I first started it was more didactic* [...] *"You don't know, I know, and I know and I am telling you". That became more embarrassing for me, as I realised that people already mostly have this knowledge and it is a lot more complicated than that because things happen even though people know these things.*

Eleni's comment illustrates that interaction with workshop participants is a learning experience for trainers that enables an iterative refinement of skills and approaches over time. I see this as a fundamental feature of gender expertise: as trainers attempt to change society, the profession itself, and the knowledge on which it is premised, is also changing. The trainers' and respondents' accounts of professional trajectories involve the integration of different elements, and these are emblematic of the ongoing process of self-directed learning and reflection that characterise many of these journeys. Self-reflection involves an analysis of personal and professional positionality and actions leading to the final key theme in the trainers' professional trajectories: participation in activism.

4.6 Participation in activism

Many of the trainers are activists and they began their journeys as trainers through experiences as activists. The relationship between activism for equality and gender expertise that I elucidate here is supported by existing research that shows that many experts enhance their theoretical and practical skill set through involvement in activism (Thompson & Prügl, 2015: 16). Several respondents say that volunteerism and activism is the path through which they developed their skills as a trainer, and for many gender trainings are acts of activism as can be seen by the fact that close to a third (32%) of trainings are delivered for free. The narratives of the interviewed trainers provide insight into the relationship between activism and gender training specifically, with almost two thirds of the interviewed trainers referencing activism as a catalysing force in their stories. Fiore (30, Italy) states this relationship plainly,

> *The first thing that comes to mind is that I could not have not gone on this journey; it was part of me, part of my life. When I tell this story to other people as well, I was 14/15 years old and it is linked to my coming out and my sexual orientation* […] *So right from*

the beginning the type of activism that I chose was to work with young people in educational terms.

The rest of Fiore's professional journey unfolded from their activism, which then began to run parallel to their professional occupation as a trainer.

Activism is not only a starting point, but also a continuing project that is in interplay with trainers' training work. Alex (27, Romania) and Nova (43, Germany) began with, and continue to be involved in, LGBTQ+ activism. Germaine began at a young age with feminist and queer activism, and has built her professional career through her sexual and reproductive health and rights activism, which is also the nodal point of her work as a comedian, visual artist, and educator. Ines (37, Italy) uses her work as a "*facilitator of human development*" to empower her participants to become activists in their own local contexts. Other trainers began their activism as students and continue to be involved in various kinds of activism relating to gender equality and social justice. Tracy and Tomas see their work as an integral part of their activism. Tomas (32, Poland) stresses, "*It is a key issue you know my activism. It is so connected to everything, it is impossible, so when you really think globally about the social issues and social movements it is impossible to separate anything*".

I contend that this strong link between activism and the practice of gender training is because gender training is based on emancipatory and transformative intent (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 19), and thus is necessarily political (Prügl, 2010; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Gender equality work began as feminist and women's movement activism, which was then formalised in the institutions of the episteme, polity, and economy (Halsaa, 1998; Woodward, 2003; Holli, 2008; Lang, 2009). Over the last few decades a substantial body of scholarship has developed detailing the co-optation of feminism and the dissolution of feminist ethics into neoliberal priorities through depoliticisation (Rees, 1998; Perron, 2005; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Prügl & True, 2014; Prügl, 2016). However, a purely critical stance that posits the complete subordination of feminist professional activity fails to "grapple with the feminist politics involved in the daily practice of being a gender expert" (Ferguson, 2015: 382). Casting gender experts as system bound actors without individual agency cauterises them from larger social systems and sociohistorical contexts. In contrast, by highlighting trainers' subjectivities and their commitment to social justice activism I show that emancipatory ethics serve as counterweights

to the constraints of technocratic frameworks and "business case" models of gender equality. This is not only individual, but also collective.

4.7 The trainer community

The professional development trajectories of the trainers show that they are not operating in isolation, but as part of an extended network of gender experts and trainers. The actors of this network are instrumental in the development of the skills and knowledge of their colleagues. This process resonates with the idea of a community of practice which can be described as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something that they do and learn how they do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 1). Here I point to the significant role that established trainers play in the professional development and training of other trainers, which is consistent with Bustelo et al.'s (2016b: 11) observation that "building common standards from below, appears to be the most developed means of fostering professionalisation in the field of gender training".

The trainers recount both positive and negative experiences regarding the trainer community. These stories are about training design, delivery, and about negotiating different ideologies and perspectives. Trainers develop their skills through engagement with other gender experts and gender trainers. This interaction establishes the norms, in terms of knowledge and practice, that are shared and circulated, and draws boundaries around the kinds of knowledge and practices that are valued.

Out of the 31 trainers interviewed, 29 explicitly talked about the ways in which their professional development as trainers and gender experts evolved through their interactions with members of this community of practice. In confirmation of this point, EIGE's (2014a) research on mapping gender training policies and practices in the EU found that these trainer communities "foster, transfer and exchange knowledge between various groups of gender trainers and make it accessible and relevant to its audiences" (EIGE, 2014a: 4). In addition to the possibility for knowledge and skills exchange, this community is also surrounded and supported by a variety of actors who are not strictly delivering trainings. As I evidenced in the foregoing discussion on education, policy architecture, and activism, these actors can be found in different institutional

locations and sectors and together make up cooperative constellations through which gender and feminist knowledges are circulated.

The dynamics of a cooperative constellation can be seen in and around the community of gender trainers in Europe in the mix of influences and inputs that trainers incorporate into their work over time, and then feed back into with their own expertise. The relationships within the gender training community are significant for several reasons. For Fiore (30, Italy) it was the relationship with other trainers that allowed them to develop and integrate their practical training skills with their formal studies, and progress professionally as a trainer. Fiore describes moving back and forth between cities in Italy and developing contacts through other trainers who gave guidance and support. Fiore relates a conversation with their trainer colleague,

> *And I asked* [name of Polish trainer], *"so how do you do this?". And I was expecting this beautiful response, you know. And he, as a good Polish person* [laughing] *looked at me and he said, "Well, just do it!".*

Fiore confides that they were hesitant to begin with, but *"later I realised that that was the best advice he could have given me",* as this is what started them on their journey. Sirvat (35, Armenia) also refers to her experience of European events and engagement with the trainer community as formative for her application of educational activity within her own country, which "*is an ex-Soviet country with a lot of economic, social, political challenges"*. Oksana (42, France) is from Ukraine and she works in Europe and in Africa, she says that the training community has developed over the last 20 years by progressively and intentionally combining research and practical facilitation techniques. She explains, "*it's not only reading some books and then drawing some conclusions, but our conclusion is actually based on our own experiences, reflections, discussions with our colleagues, their own experiences".* I argue that these stories show an interaction between trainers within the community, which fosters a refinement of skills and creates channels for the circulation of knowledge relating to gender equality and non-formal methodologies.

Despite the positive stories above, the relations within the community of practice of gender trainers are not frictionless. Ines (37, Italy) provides an example, which was common to many of the other trainers, of how different perspectives among co-trainers can create friction. She feels

other members of the training team "*had their really strong opinions and their experiences, and they were not giving space to the participants to express different opinions".* To her perception this resulted in an alienation of the participants and sabotaged the transformative possibility of the intervention by preventing the participants from expressing their opinions, confronting these and opening up to change. Wenger (1998: 77) explains, as is evident in the stories of the trainers, that a community of practice is not necessarily defined by mutual support and agreement, *"peace, happiness, and harmony are therefore not necessary properties of a community of practice. Certainly, there are plenty of disagreements, tensions, conflicts"*. In fact, this discord or difference between trainers may even be productive. For Nova (43, Germany), working with her co-trainer, who comes from an anti-racism background, widens her own perspective and facilitates engagement with participants of the trainings in a way which she describes as valuable and "*kind of complimentary".*

Collaboration and community offer professional support and spur development, while disagreements and differences can create frustration or reduce possibilities for further development. These dynamics also speak to the potential for a continued communal negotiation and reconfiguration of the norms, knowledge, principles and assumptions which underpin the practice of gender training. However, beyond this there are deeper incongruences that may have consequences for the professionalisation of gender expertise and training. Marie (32, Spain) tells stories of working with colleagues in large international organisations who she felt actively opposed feminist politics in multiple, sometimes violent, ways. She concludes,

> *So that is absolutely terrifying to me, that someone got a job as a gender analyst and that they are producing gender trainings and they are spreading that message throughout hundreds of people working in the organisation. And where is the quality check on the values and the politics on who is working where?*

This rhetorical question by Marie highlights the prevalence of non-feminist work on gender. It speaks to a debate on the links between political ethics, epistemological positions, and the quality of gender equality work (Ferguson, 2015; Prügl, 2016). Indeed, the occupational group of gender trainers does not regulate the accreditation and practice of its members. Current research focusing on the range of "expert" or "knowledge based" occupations, of which gender expertise forms a part (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011), clusters around themes of expert knowledge, autonomy, community normativity, and authority (Ackers, 2005; Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2012;

Adams, 2015). The key feature here is the power to delimit professional activities and the authority to self-regulate, essentially the exercise of professional control. This brings up critical questions about who is allowed to do the work, as Marie asks, how they are prepared to do this work, and who gets to evaluate their performance (Volti, 2011). These questions revolve around social power and access, showing that professionalisation in gender training is a deeply political process. Professionalisation is treated with diffidence because of the risk of path dependency in which depoliticisation and technocratisation become intractable as equality work is increasingly institutionally regulated (Prügl, 2010; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Ferguson, 2015; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016; Mukhopadhyay, 2017; Ferguson, 2018). As Ferguson (2015: 386) notes, non-feminist or even antifeminist work on gender raises the "dilemma of hierarchies of gender knowledge" and who is allowed to claim gender expert status based on which knowledge. In Chapter 5, I explore this debate further, but in terms of professional trajectories, it signals the relevance of values and motivations in the practice of gender training.

4.8 Gender training as a calling

Thus far I have foregrounded the practical and professional features of gender training in the formalisation of expertise. In this section I centre the complementary side to the tasks and activities of a *job*, that is, the motivations and meanings that said job holds for practitioners. Alice (40, Italy) shares how her work is imbued with a strong purpose,

> *It is not that I wanted to teach something. It was that I wanted to transmit some kind of perspective. I wanted to share some knowledge that I had learnt but then I also wanted to translate a passion, a political positionality, a way of seeing things*.

This sense of conviction echoes phrases from other trainers: Tomas (32, Poland) talks about a "*mission*", Julia (31, Italy) talks about a "*calling*", and Oksana (42, France) says that exposure to a feminist perspective "*determined everything I did*". Here Wrzesniewski et al.'s (1997) categorisation of kinds of work according to aims is useful. In this framework "jobs" are exclusively about obtaining the material benefit of income; "careers" are characterised by a focus on advancement within the occupational structure, and "callings" are a type of work which the worker sees as "deeply meaningful and engaging, intrinsically motivating, and having a positive impact on the wider world" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2009: 115). In the case of the trainers in this research, the feeling with which they related their experiences—both the joys and the frustrations—is most consistent with the idea of a "calling". The interviewed trainers weave

together several themes, such as practical and logistical factors, with the desire to engage others and communicate important concepts, and more affectively phrased commitments to social justice and equality.

Trainers express that they enjoy the work that they do because it meets practical needs, while allowing them to contribute to something important. Alice (40, Italy) states she likes it because it affords her the possibility to design and implement projects and grants her "*invaluable*" freedom. Marie (32, Spain) says that this work allows her to "*manage the balance between my home life and my work*" because she can be flexible about how and when she works and this lets her to take care of her young children and still be paid for work that she finds intellectually and personally engaging. She describes her work as "*the best way to use my specific set of skills to contribute to some kind of change for gender equality in the world*". Meike (47, Austria) expresses a similar duality, admitting that one motivation is that it brings her money, but gender training also, "*gives me a feeling that I am contributing something important to society".*

The trainers also see their work as an opportunity to respond to the injustices that they have witnessed and experienced. Comments on the damaging and violent nature of gender stereotypes and norms are consistent across the stories of the trainers. Nina (42, Sweden) conveys a common belief when she says that working against gendered norms and expectations is important because it would mean that children "*could be more free. They could express themselves more. They'd have more support, less health problems. You could be more human if you're less in the gender norms".*

On a more personal level, the majority of the trainers report that they draw motivation from personal experiences of injustice and discrimination. Malak's (32, Netherlands) family are political refugees from Iran who settled in the Netherlands, Malak says that her family imbued her with a sense of social responsibility to "*being always socially and politically engaged, thinking that—ok this is something that I have to give back to society*". Paola (45, Germany) shares that her experiences as a child affected her deeply and continue to inform her work "*because I wanted to be more a boy, I suffered more the regulations and rules from the adults* […] *This is one of my unfair things now. Everyone should have the same choices*". Sam (57,

Netherlands) is motivated not only by his own experiences but by the wish to contribute to a more just society for his children and others, he relates this, "*injustice, it is the biggest thing that I have experienced from my childhood and that I want to fight. And if I only fight it purely at the individual level, I can't be happy*". Erica (54, England) confides that working for equality comes from a place of anger. She declares, "*Anger and injustice, I think is quite a lot of the motivation, and unfairness. I'm kind of experiencing that as a woman on a day-to-day basis and with my daughter*". Isabelle (33, France) shares Erica's outrage, "*because sometimes I'm really fed up. I really want to change".* Gender training gives, as Meike (47, Austria) describes it, "*a space to react and to change stuff".*

The dominance of the themes of equality, social justice, and freedom in these narratives reflect the understanding of a calling as "an inner urge to remain true to one's conscience and to do the right thing or make the world a better place or pursue a worthy cause through one's occupation" (Elangovan et al., 2010: 431). Interestingly, the personal and community focus of these motivations is in line with broader theoretical and empirical research on the meaning of work (Elangovan et al., 2010; Gorman & Sandefur, 2011; Volti, 2011), which has shown that individual perceptions and understandings are central to how individuals interpret the value of the work that they do. In other words, the self is a significant source of the meaning of work across occupational groups because "underlying values, motivations, and beliefs influence how individuals interpret the meaning and the meaningfulness of their work" (Rosso et al., 2010: 99). This elucidates the interaction and interlinking of the gendered and intersectional selves of the trainers with the work that they do and establishes the impact of individual subjectivities in the practice of gender training.

I argue that the trajectories and motivations presented here expose strong ethical meanings attached to gender training work as necessary anchors in terms of the numerous challenges and resistances that gender trainers face. On a wider scale work in general has shifted into an era of high precarity, mobility, job change rates, and long working hours (Bolton & Muzio, 2008; Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2012). Consultants and freelancers, as many of these trainers are, have to negotiate their work in terms of norms of neoliberal self-as-business models, whereby the worker is "a flexible bundle of skills that reflexively manages oneself as though the self was a business" (Gershon, 2011: 537). Thus, emphasis is increasingly placed on the "importance of

work as a source of fulfilment, meaning, and purpose" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2009). Indeed, my reading of the chorus of voices presented above is that the trainers' work holds both deep meaning (in individual, interpersonal, and social terms) and deep meaningfulness (a high degree of personal significance) for them (Rosso et al., 2010). The trainers are driven by battling injustice and inequality, bringing their passion but also their gendered selves, intersectional subjectivities, and personal histories to their work. Trainers, as all professionals, "view reality subjectively, filtering it through the lens of their own biases" (UNWTC, 2016a: 63). As Ferguson (2015: 388) notes, this raises a series of serious questions for gender experts and gender trainers. What does it mean to work from a place of conviction and passion, and does this mean that we should do it for free? How do we measure the value and the integrity of this work, and who should be involved in it? The following chapters will shed light on this negotiation between purpose and practice.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I offer an insight into the personal and professional journeys of the trainers by exploring their histories, experiences, and choices and how these come to impact and intersect through their professional trajectories. Together these findings show that gender training is currently a loosely organised field, with significant internal diversity, in the initial stages of stabilisation (see also Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015). Gender trainers have developed their knowledge and skills within the political economy of gender knowledge and gender expertise in Europe, which also shapes the work that they do (Rossili, 2000; Pascall & Lewis, 2004; Verloo & Lombardo, 2007; Lombardo & Meier, 2008; MacRae, 2012; Abels & Mushaben, 2012).

The trainers are professionals who are significantly more mobile than the average European worker (Ackers, 2005; Fries-Tersch et al., 2018), who are all at different ages and stages of their professional careers, and represent different moments in the genealogy of gender equality research and work in Europe. They share a variety of gender identifications and descriptions, with some choosing not to describe themselves in terms of gender. The majority of the trainers identify as women, which is consistent with the feminisation of socially oriented professions. However, the ways in which the trainers responded to the question of gender indicates a high level of awareness and critical interpretation of themselves as gendered beings. This is further reflected in the motivations that they share about their work, which come from their own

experience of gendered inequalities. The locations and remuneration of gender trainers indicate that they are engaged in many different activities and jobs, of which training is typically only one. These trainers are located predominantly in the public and civil society sectors, and they often work in more than one sector as freelancers and consultants. They carry out a combination of paid and unpaid gender training work that is related to a lack of funding and resources, and their political commitment to addressing inequalities. The distribution of payment for trainings and annual income of the trainers indicate that there is significant variation in the field, which may be due to sector and country location, as well as the perceived value of gender expertise in the working context (Krizsàn et al., 2012; Bustelo et al., 2016b). These features of gender training work identify the trainers as knowledge workers and mark how the political economy of knowledge in Europe shapes the practice of gender training.

I convert this demographic sketch into a more complete picture through the analysis of the professional trajectories of the trainers. They narrate similar paths in terms of the acquisition of their knowledge relating to gender issues and the development of their training skills, which emphasise individual cultivation and integration of skills and experiences. Collectively this data shows that self-directed learning is the principal method of acquiring knowledge around gender. The trainers combine this with the very high levels of formal education. In order to develop training skills, the trainers draw together experiences and influences from a variety of sources. They combine and integrate self-directed study and formal education with input from colleagues in the trainer community, with experiences at Train the Trainer events and in international organisations, with work within gender equality architecture and machinery, and participation in activism. This involves a consistent process of integration, practice, and reflection as the trainers seek curate their skills over time. This challenges the “transfer” model of gender training, where trainers transmit neatly packaged knowledge to workshop participants, which automatically changes their thinking and behaviour. Rather, the knowledge of the trainers is in formation even as they are practicing as professional gender trainers, and through their various roles, they participate in the production of said knowledge. Thus, I posit that the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges is bound up with the mobility, community interactions, and learning processes of the gender trainers themselves.

These elements are drawn together in the meaning and purpose that the trainers attribute to their work. The motivations that the trainers give for pursuing such a self-directed and precarious occupation share several key aspects, both professionally and personally. This work brings the trainers satisfaction in design and delivery and provides the possibility for both logistical flexibility and income. It is a channel through which to engage people and convey messages about equality. Most notably this work offers a means for the trainers to be directly involved in battling injustice and inequalities and contributing to social justice, which for many of them is a fundamental part of how they understand themselves. These motivations, the strong sense of calling that almost all of the trainers convey, is a distinguishing feature of gender training practice. It shows the intersectional and gendered subjectivities of the trainers and their professional trajectories in relation to an evolving political economy of gender knowledge and processes of social transformation. This is my departure point for the next chapter, in which I investigate the epistemic geographies of gender training in Europe.

Chapter 5 Epistemic geographies: gender knowledge and transnational (in)equalities

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Another really classical challenge is when people say, especially men, that it's god given. So like, "God has assigned us to be this and that and there is no way that you can argue with that". When people play that card it becomes a bit personal it becomes a bit like, "oh, you with your Western point of view you cannot tell us that, like how we are supposed to organise our societies", basically.

This is definitely, definitely challenging.

What we do mostly and what helps, I myself have an Iranian background and I was born in Iran and I grew up under Sharia law so when I work in the Middle East I'm quite aware of what the Quran says. So, I can use a lot of my own personal experiences and knowledge about it and say "Well, this is not all it says". I can counter it; I think I do have the authority because of my other background to counter that.

I wonder how it would be if I would not have this background, you know? So I always try to have a discussion even though we say we don't have to agree with each other but just hear me out.

Malak (32, Netherlands)

5.1 Introduction

Malak reflects on her identity and shifting positionalities and how this impacts her practice of gender training. I examine these very themes in this chapter. I explore the relationships, interactions, and tensions that characterise trainers' practice as they move between different locations and positionalities. I examine the interplay of these factors with systems of knowledge production. The context in which trainers work exerts a significant influence on how they carry out their work, both in material and discursive terms. This is consistent with research on gender training which identifies contextual factors as key to the successful implementation of gender

training (see EIGE, 2012), and it resonates with the understanding of systems as adapting configurations of interacting elements which are changing over time (Walby, 2004; Verloo, 2018b). Gender training seeks to address unequal gender regimes. Accordingly, this analysis looks at different elements in the episteme as these interact with domains of polity and economy, thus impacting on the European gender equality project. In this analysis I match mapping (from Chapter 4) with movement. I present the trainers' stories about their own positionalities and identities as "equality actors" in their communities and how these shift as they move through the European space. I explore the trainers' perceived influence of different cultures in the reception of equality concepts, and the epistemic hierarchies and imperialism in the European political economy of gender knowledge and in global systems of knowledge production. This reveals a strong, if disharmonious, relationship between individual practice of gender training and the centrality of equality as an EU value in institutional domains. I attend to the trainers' experiences of location and dislocation, and argue for a critical cartography in the investigation and production of feminist and gender knowledge because gender training is a practice of circulation, the content and effects of which are informed by local contexts.

5.2 Equality mapping in Europe

As evident in the professional and personal trajectories of trainers in the previous chapter, the trainers often work across sectors and across European and international borders. These narratives facilitate an interesting multi-level observation of positionality and location. Positionality as a concept refers to the understanding that "gender, race, class, and other aspects of our identities are markers of relational positions rather than essential qualities" (Maher & Tetreault, 1993: 118). However, these markers are not fixed subject positions; they shift as individuals move through different contexts and life-stages. Thus, here I follow a logic of "translocational positionality" (Anthias, 2002; 2008; 2013), that is how positionalities and identities shift in movement through dynamics of location and dislocation. I show how the trainers' stories, of themselves and their workshop participants, emphasise the dynamic and variable nature of positionalities that are experienced by those who are "at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in terms of gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialisation" (Anthias, 2002: 276). The sociohistorical and relational location impacts upon the production and translation of knowledge and concepts, and they are always situated within institutional domains and regimes of power which in turn influence these processes in dynamics of change.

The trainers have multiple locations, positions and belongings. Thus rather than focusing on fixed identities I focus on locations "which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions" (Anthias, 2008: 5). All of the 31 interviewed trainers work both in their countries of residence and across Europe and 12 also work internationally. Just under a third were born outside of Europe but now reside in this region. Among the questionnaire respondents the cross-country mobility rate, in terms of residence and labour, is slightly lower as a third (32%) of the respondents[30] report living in a different country from their country of birth, a fifth (20%) of respondents[31] are currently working in more than one country in Europe, and almost a tenth (7%) are working internationally. When the skills development trajectories of all the trainers are taken into account, rates of mobility over time increase. For reference, the share of active movers (those employed or looking for work) was around 4% of the total labour force in the EU-28 in 2016[32]. The percentage of cross-border workers (who reside in one country and are employed in another) is at 0.6% of the total employed (Fries-Tersch et al., 2018: 22). In each case, the rates of mobility of the trainers are higher. This professional mobility builds on individual histories of movement for personal or study reasons. Thus, the intercountry acquisition and development of knowledge and skills described in the previous chapter become key channels through which gender and feminist knowledges are circulated in the European region as trainers participate in diverse cooperative constellations and communities.

Collectively this data indicates that many of the trainers move through different national and cultural contexts, shifting between insider and outsider status and renegotiating the meanings of their positionalities in relation to others. These are variable, interacting, and at times contradictory as they move through different categories, spaces and networks of belonging (Anthias, 2002: 276). This transnationality influences the practice of professionals because it results in the rescaling of agents of regulation through the interaction between national and supra-national actors and governance structures (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2012: 109). In this

[30] n=122. Here just over half the respondents (52%) selected (in descending order) Germany, Netherlands, Austria and Spain as countries in which they are currently working.
[31] n=103
[32] EU-28 refers to the political and economic union of 28 member states in the European Union.

case, between local training initiatives and broader Adult Education policies and gender mainstreaming in the EU that I discuss in the next chapter. Furthermore, the details that describe trainers as workers are important because, as Adams (2015) cautions, in looking at the history and current state of occupational groups attention should be paid to the context in which work is taking place. In this case, the fact that the research is Europe focused means that specific contextual variables mediate training praxis. In the following discussion, I explore examples from the trainers that elucidate these dynamics.

The movement of the trainers across nation-state boundaries informs how they interpret the cultural contexts in which they are working, manifesting in a discussion of the reception of equality concepts that they present in trainings. In this sense, the reception of gender equality concepts becomes an indicator for comparison and the trainers mix their personal experience with a broader discourse of equality as a social value. The idea of equality as a social value is visible, for example, in intercountry comparative research by Inglehart and Norris (2003), which analyses 70 countries regarding attitudes to gender equality using World Values Survey 1981-2001 data. These authors argue that modernisation has worked as a catalyst for greater cultural acceptance of gender equality, asserting that gender equality values are the "most central component of value change in post-industrial societies" (Inglehart et al., 2002: 336). More specific to the regional focus of this study, Gerhards et al. (2009) categorise factors which hinder or support equality initiatives into endogenous (within a country) and exogenous (outside a country) factors. They argue that the endogenous factors of high degree of modernisation, institutionalisation of gender equality policies, and cultural secularity combined with the exogenous factors of the length of a country's exposure to the EU equality script, show a positive correlation with citizens' attitudes to gender equality. Other less diagnostic research details multiple variables which impact the reception of equality initiatives, such as gender training. These include factors such as cultural traditions and norms around private and public spheres and the division of reproductive and productive labour (e.g. Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Rees, 2005; Pfau-Effinger, 2005; Chiva, 2009); the institutionalisation of equality regimes (e.g. Krook & Mackay, 2011; Lombardo & Forest, 2011; Krizsàn et al., 2014); and the religious composition of different states (e.g. Gardiner, 1997; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Lombardo et al., 2009). Read together, this research, whether diagnostic or critical, reveals a powerful script of a "gender equal Europe" which is a fundamental part of claims for EU democratic and cultural legitimacy (Meyer, 2001; see MacRae, 2012; Enderstein, 2017). The trainers' "mapping" of equality within

Europe references this imagined value, but reveals diversity and difference instead of homogeneity.

The stories of the interviewed trainers provide a view into the relationship between cultural contexts and gender equality ideas as these play out in their practice of gender training. A clear example is religion and the impact of the religious cultural frameworks in the communities in which the trainers work. Germaine (41, England) explains how tropes of different religious traditions continue to permeate discourse around menstruation in the UK and internationally,

> *There are a lot of little hints all the time that women are other and inferior. Looking at a binary for a minute, looking at the patriarchal view of women in society, we still have the echoes of the old religious tropes.*

In Germaine's interpretation, religion and the cultural impact thereof continue to shape the reception of equality work even in presumably secular contexts. The factors of social context are co-occurring through the interaction between the institutional polity of the church, the regulation of sexuality and reproduction through the domain of cathexis, and the interwoven, unequal gender relations. From the perspective of Tomas (32, Poland), religion in Poland intersects with current politics of neo-conservativism to create an ever more hostile environment for equality initiatives. Tomas explains, "*In Poland it's quite difficult because we have these right-wing groups in government and they're really conservative, the Catholic Church is also in the power and they're cooperating together quite strongly*". The result is that "*it's very difficult to talk about things different* [from] *Christian values of the Christian family*". According to Tomas, anything that is deemed to be related to gender or gender equality, which is strongly coded as an EU imposition, is seen as "*something that is destroying the family*". Alice (40, Italy) speaks about the Catholic mould of Italian culture. In an expression of reflexivity, she calls herself an Italian with "*Italian culture, with a catholic background*". She says that although "*we are re-signifying the religious places that we have been in our whole lives, but in my interpretation, we are still carrying that with us*". Alice describes how, in the cultural context of Italy, the "*Catholic world has always wished to have the monopoly on biopolitical choices and on issues of life and sexuality*", and how feminist and gender equality projects such as training are seen as eroding this power.

According to many of the trainers, oppositional politics against equality initiatives have intensified in recent years due to the intersection of anti-gender movements, right-wing political conservativism, and long-standing catholic religiosity in countries such as Poland, France, and Italy. The impact of anti-gender movement politics and actions has been identified by practitioners and writers across different contexts who note that funding and institutional support is progressively reduced and programmes are stalled or shelved (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Ahrens, 2018; Strid, 2018; Holzleithner, 2018; Hofmann & Besson, 2019).

In addition to religion and belief the trainers hold varying perspectives on the effect of "cultures" on their work, some convergent, and some divergent. Narek (30, Austria) sees it not as a *"matter of national cultures, but* [a] *matter of financial and economic situation".* He goes on to explain,

> *In the same country, you can have two families: rich one and poor one, let's say so. And you can see some statistics that the ones who are financially more stable, they have a better attitude toward gender equality issues.* […] *At least in some countries, yes. For example, in Armenia, you can see quite a crucial difference between rural counties and urban counties.*

Narek then contrasts this intracountry diversity with "*Northern countries*", where he maintains there is less observable urban/rural, rich/poor, divide in terms of gender equality issues. In his perception, "*in countries like* [in] *East Europe, you can still notice the difference about this issue. I mean, like Poland, for example. At least, there I was, so I know about this a bit more*". This observation by Narek suggests a kind of European equality map, linked to national sociopolitical histories. Agata (39, Spain) makes reference to the same map. She states bluntly, "*I must say the Scandinavian issues for Eastern countries, people's issues were like a joke".* This imagined map is referenced by the other trainers, but in an opposite way.

Lea (40, Netherlands), who works on gender and public relations in the Netherlands, contrasts Narek's vision of a homogenously equal Northern Europe, stating that it is a question of stereotyped misperception that the Netherlands is considered pro-equality. In Lea's view the Netherlands is one of the most "*old-fashioned*" countries because they act like gender inequality is "*not there, but there are so much signs that it's there"*, she states that "*a female expert has to work twice as hard to be seen as an expert*". She contrasts this with Germany which is "*only a*

few kilometres away, but much more equal". Nina (42, Sweden) problematises the idea of equality in Nordic states, reflecting a common assertion by the other trainers working in Nordic countries. She challenges the perception of Nordic countries as homogenous in terms of acceptance and integration of gender knowledge and prioritisation of gender equality. Nina attests that in her experience of working across the region Nordic countries are quite similar, that in Sweden there is more widespread knowledge of gender and how it is constructed while

> *in Finland, for instance, and in Denmark and Norway which I know the best, I would say there are still ideological ideas about that women and men are different in brains or that the hormones would have consequences for people's social lives to that extent that they have different work opportunities and so on*.

Emily (51, Netherlands), who is originally from France, asserts that it is nationally specific cultural constructions of private and public spheres which influence the implementation of equality initiatives. She made comparisons to illustrate her point, explaining that in Austria and Germany there are laws guiding gender budgeting and in France citizens receive money for children, but the Netherlands is a different cultural context where the reaction to said policies would be one of indignation about government interference in the private sphere. Emily comically portrays the response, "*the government going behind my private door! Are you kidding me?*". In these excerpts, there is a consistent theme of comparison, whereby the trainers describe the cultural contexts of their work in relation to other experienced or imagined cultural contexts. For Carla (66, Italy) private and public spheres reciprocally interact to sustain gendered inequalities, in her perception there is very little separating the two: "*The Italian culture is the culture of the organisation, it is not something external*". In talking about the different private sector organisations that she works with, she states, *"as Italians these are sociocultural things that we are very attached to and things that we take very seriously. And this is a huge weight which is on women".* Thus, for Carla, Italian culture is homogenous in the oppressive norms that create a burden for women, and continues to reify a gendered division of labour such that these are naturalised. In her experience, this renders Italian participants incredibly resistant to equality initiatives. Julia (31) lives in Italy now but is from Austria originally. She echoes Carla's statement, explaining that, "*in general I think that the country plays into gender roles in a strong way*". She gives a somewhat playful example of how cultural norms prefigure a gendered meaning of certain actions,

Two years ago, I did a training in Austria on the border to Italy and it was a group of six teenagers from Italy and six people from Austria and all the boys from Italy had shaved legs, completely shaved legs and then in Austria men don't do it. So, the Austrian girls were sure that the guys were gay.

In contrast to these assertions of the impact of persistent cultural traditions, other trainers say that they have observed the impact of organisational culture and sectoral culture as mediating factors in the implementation of equality initiatives and the reception of advocates for change. Marie (32, Spain) has worked predominantly in international organisations and, in contrast to other trainers' focus on national and regional cultures, she states, "*the organisational culture is the strongest thing, rather than any national culture in an international organisation*". Meike (47, Austria) describes a similar dynamic, where she believes that the organisational culture, as this relates to sector, is clearer in its impact than the national culture. Meike specifies that she doesn't think of Austrian culture in these terms "*because what in the end is Austrian? There are other differences".* Meike says that the influence of organisational culture means that for her one of the first questions in the training cycle[33] is where her participants come from and what their background is.

Viewed together these excerpts sketch a complex multi-level map of different contexts and equality work. This is characterised by a consistent theme of comparison by the trainers between experienced or imagined cultural contexts. Rather than highlighting reductive national caricatures, to me the significance of this map lies in the trainers' emphasis on relationality. This is seen in the disruption of tropes of regions or states as homogenously or comparatively promoting gender equality, in the distinction between rural/urban, in socioeconomic strata, and the impact of different organisational cultures on the practice of gender training. The trainers reference the centrality of gender equality in EU discourse in terms of an implied objective in a process of harmonisation towards which individual states are progressing. The "equality

[33] A typical training cycle entails the following stages: analysis (assessing feasibility and needs of commissioners and participants), planning (recruitment, logistics, and technical content), design (establishing the outline and objectives of the training), development (training content and methods), implementation (practical considerations and management of group dynamics), and evaluation (monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up) (UNWTC, 2017c: 5).

identities" of individual states and regions are defined against one another, together with one another, and in reference to the supranational polity of the EU in terms of the ways that the trainers experience the reception of their work. This plots a positive feedback loop of incremental steps whereby equality initiatives such as gender mainstreaming then support gender training. In turn, the diffusion of equality ideals can also lead to backlash and opposition, as I show in Chapter 7. The translation and circulation of gender knowledge traces these dynamics, revealing the constructed nature of the EU equality oriented cultural identity and the discursive and material power thereof in the practice of gender training. As some of the statements in this section suggest, these dynamics also weave through the trainers' negotiations of their own positionalities.

5.3 Trainer positionalities and shifting identities

As the trainers move geographically for their professional development, work or personal trajectories, they engage in a renegotiation of positionality, a different understanding of their own identities within Europe and internationally. The significance of these locations and dislocations is illustrated in the relationship between local practice and the equality norm of cultural Europeanisation introduced previously (Shore, 2000; Sassatelli, 2002; Tsaliki, 2007; Sassatelli, 2009; Lähdesmäki, 2012; Enderstein, 2017). Sirvat (35, Armenia) shares how she sees this taking place in her national context,

> *For example, in our language we don't even have a word for gender. So even talking about it you need to explain what you mean. And because recently also the different political as well as kind of European integration related challenges have spoiled the people's perception of what is gender.*

Sirvat says, "*When you say gender, people say, 'Oh okay, that's about LGBT'",* she explains that this makes it difficult to carry out gender training work because often participants and organisations become very resistant when hearing the word gender because it is equated with sexuality, which is "*culturally quite a taboo topic in the country".* Trainers have to be attentive to the ways in which they frame and sell their trainings, which is part of the counterstrategies to opposition presented in Chapter 7. This excerpt from Sirvat brings into conversation two elements. First is the relationship between the EU and Armenia as one of dominance and subordination, whereby the EU exerts pressure through Partnership Agreements and member state relations. Second, an epistemic imperialism in terms of gender knowledge is demonstrated;

whereby local understandings are superseded by what Armenian people see as EU meanings for gender that, in turn, impact on how Sirvat sees her role as a trainer in Armenia and in Europe.

A similar pressure is palpable in Agata's (39, Spain) story. Agata is a writer in addition to being a trainer, and she relates her experiences of moving around Europe and her reflections about being a Polish person living in Spain. She wrote a book which she describes as a portrait of the young Polish people of her generation who were teenagers at the end of communism and adults at the "*the beginning of democracy when everything had to change".* She expands, "*we feel like searching because we grew up with some other values".* It was a process of becoming in which according to Agata these young people "*had to live our adult life trying to recognise the new values of this world"* and learn to negotiate "*capitalistic rights which were totally unknown for us".* This example describes the transitions of a changing political regime and the tensions of European accession and integration. These play out through individual narratives and impact upon individual senses of identity and belonging, which then become part of the "translation" work in which the trainers are involved. Indeed, research reveals that there is much complexity, conflict, and debate within the integration process of the EU (Rossili, 2000; Shore, 2000; Radaelli, 2004; Abels & Mushaben, 2012; Bego, 2015), specifically for Central and Eastern European member states (Ghodsee, 2004; Chiva, 2009; Popa & Krizsàn, 2018). The circulation of knowledge, in this case feminist and gender knowledges, should be grounded in the localities in which they take place. As Keim (2014: 91) observes of transnational exchange, *"*circulation always happens within given spaces and according to certain enabling mechanisms. However much it transforms them in the process, it depends on them in the first place and they are highly asymmetric*".*

Epistemic power dynamics relating to integration, and broader global politics, are vividly apparent in the theme of language. The process of skills development that trainers embark on, as described in the preceding chapter, involves participating in events and courses outside their country of residence. Their development of gender knowledge, vocabulary, and training skills most often happens in English. This reflects historical colonial legacies, the Anglophone dominance in institutional gender theory, and global and European dynamics of imperialism in the episteme. The reality that gender vocabulary and concepts are most often in English was mentioned explicitly also by six other trainers, who all described a similar feeling of limitation

and frustration provoked by not being able to transition seamlessly between languages. The translation of concepts in these conditions becomes jilted, and heavily power laden, because language mediates the boundaries of relation and belonging (Anthias, 2013). At the same time, a shared language does permit a circulation of concepts and practices between trainers, as demonstrated in the role that the trainer community and associated cooperative constellations play in professionalisation. This communicational language is crucial to a successful transnational co-construction of knowledge. These trainers are shifting between insider and outside status as they move through social groups, learning contexts, training settings and cultural frameworks. The trainers' movement and the question of the relationship between language and gender knowledges in professional and personal terms displays relations of power and global politics of knowledge production.

Tracy (Scotland), who is originally from South Africa, recounts that when she was looking for jobs when she first arrived in Scotland interviewers were often were impressed by her mastery of English (her native language), communicating to her an assumption of superiority on their part. Tracy talks about the discomfort and anger that this caused for her, "*I was complimented three times for my excellent English vocabulary and three times I had to explain that English is my home language and they couldn't wrap their heads around it, it was so patronising*". She narrates her process of job searching and the frustration of the pattern of being turned away from jobs because the interviewers could not figure out how she would fit into their team of "*old white Scottish born and bred guys*". Tracy found herself battling an "*African foreignness*" while being white, professionally adept, and in possession of the legal right to reside and work in the UK. In this narrative, the persistent presence of colonialism in language and whiteness is evident in the practice of racism by one white person through another and represent a troubling presupposed flow of knowledge from "North" to "South" (Nagar & Swarr, 2010). Interestingly, Tracy asserted that it is her South African identity and history that equips her with a deep understanding of intersectionality and the ability to effectively train others on how to understand gendered inequalities. Tracy's story draws attention to the processual, dynamic interaction of varying local and contextual factors in individual subject positions and the relation thereof to broader regimes of privilege and inequality.

In Tracy's case, a white person from the "South" is working in a Scottish equality organisation with a concept that stems from Black feminist writing in North America. The material possibility of her productive labour is linked to the fact that intersectionality is now a buzzword in the most recent European Union anti-discrimination policies, legislature, and funding requirements (Outshoorn & Kantola, 2007; Krizsàn et al., 2012; Agustín, 2013). There is an intricate dynamic in the movement of knowledge and capital across borders, and through institutional domains and regimes of inequality. As Connell et al. (2017: 2) write, "different epistemes, cultures and geopolitical regions are not silos sealed off from each other", scientific knowledge production occurs according to divisions of labour and patterns of trade on a global stage (Hountondji, 1997). The movement of gender knowledge is shaped by these patterns and influences the prevalence and reformulation of these over time.

Although shifting positionalities bring challenges, alterity is also used as a tool by some of the trainers. Emily (51, Netherlands) shares, somewhat playfully, that she uses the fact that she is French, working in the Netherlands in Dutch and English, to engage her workshop participants. She observes that her non-native accent makes her memorable and that she experiences her participants as more flexible and open, "*you know here I am not Dutch so if I do something crazy, I feel the freedom I do it anyway, with the people they say, 'ok, well, she speaks already with an accent'".* Malak (32, Netherlands) leverages the different facets of her identity as tools in her work. Looking back on her story, which I used to introduce this chapter, Malak uses her own history to counter claims about the imposition of a Western concept of gender. For her, this claim is a diversion tactic that workshop participants use to exculpate themselves from responsibility for inequalities in their own cultural contexts.

In addition to using sameness and difference in service of engagement in individual training sessions, the movements that the trainers have taken mean that they are positioned both as outsiders and insiders in the production and circulation of gender knowledge in Europe. Alex (27, Romania) talks about how vocabulary and concepts relating to gender are typically formulated and disseminated in English. Responding to this, Alex has committed to facilitating the development of local vocabulary around gender in Romania, saying, "*people have to rethink words and how we speak about these and how do we tackle it".* Although this is a challenge because of the genderedness of the Romanian language, Alex explains that they are trying to

create spaces, "*just literally, create spaces and conversations with people. I have my own initiative which is called Gender Talk, and it really is what it means* [laughter]*, as in getting people together to speak about gender"*. Alex, similarly to others involved in projects in their communities, contributes to European gender knowledge through their position between local and transnational equality projects. Thus, training is a practice through which existing knowledges are shared and exchanged, but it is also a space in which these same knowledges can be challenged and reformulated, as Alex's story illustrates. The trainers work in their local communities, they also work within broader European communities of practice, and they are also involved in cooperative constellations across sectors. As they move and engage with others, they travel across institutional domains and circulate and reformulate gender knowledge.

Based on this process of potential reformulation, I advocate for a circulationist understanding of gender knowledge. As research on scientific mobility in the European Union reveals, knowledge can flow in multiple directions, resulting in complex transnational situations of settlement and mobility among knowledge workers (Meyer et al., 2001; Ackers, 2005). It is at points of meeting and intersection between individuals that a circulation of knowledge can take place, where dominant discourses may be reiterated or challenged, and this happens, as the trainers' stories reveal, to different degrees. I prefer a circulatory understanding to that of "transmission" or "transfer" because the movement of knowledge can be halted or undermined, or expedited, it can involve reification of dominant understandings or it can involve reformulation. Furthermore, knowledge is never handed over as a whole; it is most often partial and incomplete. Indeed, this movement and circulation itself occurs within regimes of inequality, as the trainers are able to move within Europe and participate in these different communities because of the fact that they are skilled migrants.

Trainers are in possession of valuable capital within the knowledge based economy, and their movement is supported by European immigration policies which are based on an assumption that "managerial, scientific and technological knowledge is the driving force of globalisation, productivity and wealth creation, and must therefore be promoted" (Kofman, 2007: 122). As such, these trainers are involved in the stratification of migration even as they circulate transformative knowledge. I do not propose a kind of euphoric affirmation of circulation as a fluid and unhindered flow of knowledge from one to another; rather I theorise this as taking

place within interrelating social systems, and therefore subject to unequal relations of power, institutional truth claims, and regulatory processes. In evidence, I point to research on the depoliticisation and marketisation of feminist knowledge in gender expertise (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Prügl, 2010; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Ferguson, 2015). Importantly, this understanding of circulation is premised on the revision of knowledge and practice over time, which is central to the trainers' accounts and echoes throughout this research.

As the stories presented above illustrate, individual narratives and enactments of identity are interlaced with international power relations and hierarchies. The individual gendered and intersectional identities of trainers are part of European and global inequalities. However, the trainers are not passive participants in these processes, they convey an implicit undertone of continued self-reflexivity. This is consistent with the reflexive nature of feminist enquiry that underpins the development of gender training as a profession (see Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2016; Cornwall, 2016). As Ines (37, Italy) describes to me, this is the complexity and challenge of training work. She says,

> *And that is where I think that this work is quite complex, it is not only about knowledge, it is about being aware of yourself and how you work, it is about your dynamic, in order to create a certain setting to work on change and people's development.*

This complexity and challenge reveals the centrality of reflexive praxis in training, and I contend that this is not only applicable on an individual level, but also in understanding the circulation of gender knowledge through global knowledge production systems. The examples presented here elucidate a meta-geography in which the "Second World" is a non-place, somehow detached from European histories, absent from chronologies of transnational feminism on which gender training and gender mainstreaming are based (Suchland, 2011; Desai, 2015). Thus, it is necessary to engage directly with the political grammar of Western feminism (Hemmings, 2011) by disrupting a fixed geography where Western Europe, Russia and the United states are the central axes of comparative measurement (Suchland, 2011; Koobak & Marling, 2014). In order to deepen the understanding of the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges in Europe I advocate for a critical cartography regarding feminist and gender knowledges, one which is attuned to "historically specific relational processes across borders as opposed to the ahistorical and bounded notions of local, national, global" (Desai, 2015: 116). This requires attending to the

epistemic hierarchies and imperialism which take place even within transformative projects, as I do in this case of gender training.

5.4 Epistemic hierarchies and imperialism

The cultural mapping built by trainers, introduced in the beginning of this chapter, communicates both shared tropes and disruptive diversity, informed by their own shifting positionalities and relationships to gender knowledge. Through the stories that the trainers share about movement and relationality, an epistemic hierarchy of gender knowledge emerges, a shared understanding that the trainers reference either in disagreement or in affirmation. Alex (27, Romania) uses the example of different kinds of methods and describes recently exploring norm-critical approaches in their trainings. Alex says that the use of this methodology is "*still in the beginning",* and that it is "*a very Nordic kind of methodology".* However, on critical appraisal their judgement is that "*I think it's very useful. And we still need to understand it, how it could work also in this context, which are historically very different than the Nordic countries".* These norm-critical approaches gained popularity in Sweden in the early 2000s in discussions around gender and education (Kreitz-Sandberg, 2019: 175), and entail challenging norms instead of focusing on difference. There is a recognised perception of Nordic countries as being strongly equality oriented, as touched on in the preceding discussion. Alex simultaneously acknowledges this perception and resists the notion of Nordic equality concepts and methodologies as universally applicable or valuable. Existing research on public policy provides insight into these axes. In their work on the institutionalisation of intersectionality in Europe Kriszan, Skejei, & Squires (2012) cluster countries by regional gender equality legacies for relational analysis. Their proposed grouping is the following: the Nordic countries in one block because of their strong gender legacy; the Low countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) linked by a clear multiple-equalities legacy; South European (Italy, Spain, and Portugal) grouped by an anti-gender legacy; Central and Eastern European countries which have a socialist equality legacy; and lastly France, Germany and Britain, grouped for their political presence in Europe and diverse legacies (multiple, republican, and gender). In this framework, Nordic countries derive legitimacy through a history of gender equality strategies and this establishes a European hierarchy of gender knowledge and practice of expertise.

Eleni (28, Hungary), who is from Cyprus, explains how the trope of the dominance of Nordic gender expertise impacts her training work by undermining local initiatives and regionally specific work. She describes how, while doing work funded by a large European human rights organisation, she and three other Cypriots (two Greek, two Turkish) were assigned an external expert from Norway against their own requests for a Greek expert with a background in the topic area. Eleni explains that, although the assigned expert was knowledgeable and competent, the experience left her with a feeling that "*we were imposed this Nordic expertise, in a way".* After a brief thoughtful pause, she poses a rhetorical question,

> *What does that say about our position you know, that means that people will never reach that stage of being universal knower of gender issues. So, I think that says a lot about how politicised that is at international levels.*

In her words, this sheds light on assumptions about "*where knowledge belongs and where is the source of knowledge",* and the unspoken opposite–where this knowledge is lacking. I see this as an indication that only certain kinds of gender knowledge and expertise is deemed operable and valuable. This occurs in what Connell et al. (2017: 26) identifies as a "pattern of orientation to the metropole" that is supported by the overall discourse of gender mainstreaming which explicitly mentions the role of "experts" in the process. As Eleni's example elucidates this endows some subjects with this title while others are denied "universal expert" status. By tracing this sequence of knowledge circulation it becomes apparent that not all actors are equally located in the transnational movement of gender and feminist knowledges (Guilhot, 2011; Wöhrer, 2016). These power dynamics enable certain concepts and perspectives to circulate more easily, as I outline in the next chapter, and for some actors to be coded as more expert than others. These epistemic power relations show that circulation cannot be equated with unobstructed movement; the gender knowledge of gender expertise itself cannot be applied uncritically.

Following the analysis of a presumed origin of legitimate knowledge, but widening the scale of focus, the trainers communicate a perception of gender and feminist knowledges as "Western" or "European" constructs, moral products for export which promote Eurocentrism, and which workshop participants feel are being used to control their behaviour. Almost half of the trainers are explicitly critical of their own position within this system, and diffident of the assertion that gender equality, gender fluidity and feminism are ahistorical "Western" concepts that need to

be exported. Tracy (Scotland), talks about sexuality and gender in India and in Africa and asserts, "*The way that we see gender is very dependent on culture and time. The way we saw gender, the Well of Loneliness and inverts and all the rest of it in the 20s, very different idea than how we see gender today"*. Eleni (28, Hungary) takes the same stance, poking fun at the idea of Western queerness as something original,

> *Not at all, not at all it's been going on in different parts of the world for such a long time. Like how we are white washing in a way even gender queerness.* [laughing] *If you are shaving your head you have this all figured out.*

Germaine (41, England), who is from the United States, discusses what her own positionality means for her in terms of her involvement in sexual health and reproductive rights issues on an international scale. She says that buzzwords, such as empowerment and dignity, are used in ways that deepen global inequalities and reify ideas of equality as something brought from Europe to the rest of the world. She uses the example of the statement that, "*girls in Africa don't go to school on their periods",* saying that this *"is harmful and reductive and offensive at places".* She explains that international dialogue on these issues and sharing useful approaches and ideas from different communities can be productive, but that the idea of giving others dignity is deeply problematic,

> *You can't give someone dignity. You can create the circumstances for someone to conduct themselves with dignity, but you can't be some White lady taking donations so you can help a Black lady in Uganda have dignity. She's already got dignity without you, she's just in an unfortunate situation.*

This kind of epistemic imperialism is a point of tension for trainers who are trying to facilitate social transformation while respecting the situatedness of their participants. The trainers seek to resolve or work with this tension in different ways. At least half of the interviewed trainers mention recourse to human rights, like Isabelle (33, France) who works predominantly in France but also in Tunisia and Morocco, who claims it is important to counter resistance by sticking to the "*law and to stick to universality of human rights".* In Yara's (34, Canada) perspective, institutions and NGOs fail to make local communities feel equal and valued. Yara says that organisations state that *"No, it is the community who just doesn't listen. They just need to do it*

this way and they just don't understand". For Yara it is a fundamental flaw in development practice, "*a core problem is that we don't see the target groups that we are dealing with as partners".*

For others, a reflexive intersectional perspective guards against "White saviour" tendencies. For Tomas (32, Poland) it is non-negotiable, he states, "*when I speak about women's rights and I speak about anti-capitalism, I speak about animals' rights, I speak about LGBTQ+ rights. Everything is connected to me you know".* Sam (57, Netherlands) sees a lack of intersectional awareness as a product of what he calls "*white elitist*" gender equality movements and environmental movements. Sam frames it as an issue of inclusion, he says that as a trainer you need to:

> *invest in both genders and all diversities in between but in their different positioning, because otherwise you easily exclude lesbians, or gay men, or transgenders or you exclude black men or you exclude minorities or migrants. So, unless you bring them on board you are speaking to an elite of men and women and not the majority.*

Technocratic approaches which rely exclusively on the perceptions of experts within institutionalised gender equality architecture and the objectives of funding agencies mean that only these interests and experiences are represented, supplanting the needs of discriminated groups. This can be linked to mechanics of managerialist neoliberal governance, which means that organisations are bound in accountability not to the discriminated communities that they represent, but to the objectives of funders (Kantola & Squires, 2012: 383).

The trainers emphasise the tension that arises from the wish to deliver critical and transformative work on one hand, and, on the other, the material need to make a living. Firstly, for many of the trainers and respondents funding is a significant challenge in their work. This is reflected in the responses to the questionnaire where a third (31%) of respondents[34] report funding as a challenge in training work, half of whom report facing this challenge in every training situation. In the interviews, two underlying reasons are given for this persistent

[34] n=83

challenge: a general lack of funding for social development and scarce valorisation of gender expertise. This is the red thread of political economy worked through the different sectors in which the trainers are acting. Trainers mention that conservativism, populism, and the growing right-wing political orientation of many European states results in a further reduction to already depleted funding since the 2008 financial crisis. Emily (51, Netherlands) explains how over the last decades "*across Europe the means are less, the resources are less*". In her view experts are less engaged because "*there is not structural transition, I'm afraid of this. So, the democratic watchdog function, it's compromised, because you have much more grants-based projects so you're doing your project and that is it".* Emily's observation is corroborated by scholarship on gender equality policies in Europe that shows that formal gender infrastructure is progressively degrading, being dissolved, and de-funded (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016: 87).

Secondly, gender trainers find themselves trapped in a double bind, where their knowledge and skills are simultaneously asserted and denied (do Mar Pereira, 2017). The majority of the trainers report being asked to deliver trainings for free or at minimal cost. There is a tug between delegitimation and legitimation, where the importance of gender equality is recognised on a discursive level, but not in material terms. On the one side, gender expertise and training has low economic value (Ferguson, 2015). For instance, Marie (42, Spain) recounts that she has been asked on numerous occasions to deliver trainings, even to large generously funded organisations, free or at a reduced cost. She makes her point through a comparison,

> *What is the least that you would pay a water engineer per day? This is the comparison that I would like to put, and a water engineer might not have any specialist training. I think that is what I learnt there. One of the things is that this work is not being taken seriously*.

Marie says that what ends up happening in big organisations is that "*they have not paid for any expert or anything since 2011 or 2012".* Here the importance of gender equality is being acknowledged by the request for training (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016), but at the same time the necessary expertise is not economically valued. Discursive commitment to gender expertise is made but this is not materially matched. On the other side, the trainers report that there is an implied understanding from commissioners that that people who work on gender issues do so because they are passionate about equality and social justice, and therefore they should work for free. This "passion" framing obscures the skills, competencies, and expertise of the trainers. This delegitimises gender and feminist knowledges, which in turn endorses depoliticised

tokenistic policy applications (Longwe, 1997; Ahmed, 2012) and nullifies the experiences and professional specialisation of gender experts developed over time (see Hoard, 2015). Eleni (28, Hungary) tells me that this has powerful personal consequences for her,

> *At the end of the day this is a job, I don't have a lot of other options considering that I studied this from the beginning so it is not like I can decide one day, 'Ok am going to do something else'.*

Gender is what Eleni studied, and what she has experience in, and what she is currently doing. She states, with resignation, "*so I hope to continue on this path, but you need to balance a lot of factors on the way*".

The trainers recognise the effects of epistemic hierarchies and the European political economy of gender knowledge in their work, work that is a product of the conversion of feminist theory and methodologies into tools that are part of neoliberal governmentalities privileging the efficiency of operationality and market rationalities (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016: 83). In this framework the professional role of the gender trainer becomes that of parsing complex theories into simplified action points, to "govern the way people conduct themselves" (Prügl, 2010: 3). Indeed, as I illustrated with the trainers' reflections on their participation in epistemic hierarchies, it is misguided to imagine that feminism is "untouched by historical transformations" (Prügl, 2015: 620), and we should acknowledge that feminist ideas have been creatively integrated into neoliberal logics and rationales. However, as the trainers' stories I present here detail, they are not just blindly participating in neoliberal visions of gender equality (Ferguson, 2015: 392). In the next chapter on the relationship between theory and practice, I document how this balancing, negotiating, managing, and reflecting takes place.

5.5 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have examined epistemic geographies and how these impact gender training practice. This includes trainer positionalities, equality mapping, culture, epistemic power relations, and hierarchies. With this analysis, I illustrated how trainers interpret these factors, drawing into question the idea of gender knowledge itself, where it comes from and where it is going, cognizant of the continued dynamism of this process (see Verloo, 2018a). The exploration of trainer positionality shows that trainers shift between insider and outsider status

in the contexts in which they work. They move through different relational boundaries and contradictory positionalities as they work across epistemological contexts. As Raj (2006: 21) notes in his historical study of the movement of scientific knowledge, circulation brings to the fore the "mutable nature of the materials—themselves and of the knowledges and skills which they embodied—as also their transformations and reconfigurations in the course of their geographical and/or social displacements". These stories evince movement—between different communities, different European regions, and through political regime changes. The trainers recount both the difficulty of translating gender concepts from English and the native languages of the communities in which they are working, and the importance of developing local vocabularies and concepts. The trainers also spoke about the impetus that this has provided for questioning dominant gender knowledges and the initiation of projects for developing locally grounded meanings. Here I uncovered the challenges of the trainers own shifting identities, how language, race and nationality can take on alternate and contrasting meanings in different locations, or from different points of view in the same location. This revealed that outsider status might be productively deployed in training scenarios to engage participants and disrupt assumptions. Trainers apply self-reflexive learning to work through the challenges of shifting and moving identities, and this is identified by respondents as a key ethical principle in gender training.

The skills and knowledge that the trainers apply in their practice is mediated by cultural context. An analysis of trainers' references to culture draws into question national equality legacies and the normativising power of the EU equality script. The idea of "cultural context" is interpreted by the trainers to include different communities within the same state, different types of organisations, and rural and urban settings. From this discussion I shed light on epistemic hierarchies which operate in the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges in Europe and internationally. The nature of expert status was discussed, pointing to a value-laden communication of knowledge and the risk of epistemic imperialism in gender knowledge dissemination. In contrast, many of the trainers argued for an intersectional view of social inequalities. They are unified in their argument for reflexivity as a tool in order to counteract the depoliticisation that can accompany the distillation of information required in the current most common formats of gender training.

Through this analysis, I demonstrate that moving and working between locations is a consistent

feature of gender training work, and that trainers are constantly engaged in a process of negotiation of norms, knowledge, and practice. This work is saturated with paradoxes: between emancipatory principles and governmentalities; between economic utility and social justice; between feminist ethics and personal survival; between depoliticisation and structural transformation; between legitimacy and epistemic imperialism. However, as the trainers perceptions of their working environments elucidate, they are not simply co-opted or reduced to subordination within prevailing power relations (Ferguson, 2015). They hold contrasting visions about the equality map of Europe, but they also participate in self-reflexivity and seek to make sense of their own positionalities in relation to their work. As the trainers negotiate the tensions and challenges of equality work, they are involved in a reformulation and recontextualisation of gender and feminist knowledges relative to their own gendered and intersectional subjectivities. In the next chapter, I investigate how the trainers manage these challenges in the integration of theory and practice.

I remember once in Florence they called me because they had this girl with some learning and mobility disabilities, of African descent. And her father had just had a transition and he was an M to F person, and this girl was being picked on and laughed at by the class, more because of her father than because of her skin colour. And they asked me, "Please help us because we don't know what to do!".

I remember that I went inside that class and the course had already started because I wasn't running it. And slowly… what happened? I just started working with it, [with] *what was being said and how it was being said. This is the stereotype and the prejudice, discrimination, "What is coming from your belly that is making you tease someone?". That stuff, working on that stuff. That stuff that makes you uncomfortable and asking you why it makes you uncomfortable.*

Until we arrived, working on inclusion and exclusion, and self-perception. Again, this is not about that person and how they are seen by others, but in everyone. Because another important difference in the formal and non-formal is that all the people are on the same level. I mean, there is still an imbalance, but I am not behind a desk, I am also involved and everyone is putting themselves out there. So there is never you against others. Indeed, if we are doing an exercise we are doing it all together and if you don't feel ready to do an activity we can talk about it. So in this case this girl was able to speak and talk to the class and tell them that she was tired of being teased by her peers who had never heard her speak.

And the teachers were like, "What have you done!"

Simply I asked her, and I asked her peers. This is a difficult situation and we have resolved it by talking with one another.

Fiore (30, Italy)

6.1 Introduction

In this story, Fiore negotiates and integrates three threads, epistemology, knowledge, and methodology, to facilitate a change in this community of students. It is this intersection that makes gender training an interesting case through which to study the mechanics of equality building processes. Here I pay attention to the specialised gender and feminist knowledge of the occupational group of gender trainers. The focus on critiques and challenges in the evaluative gender mainstreaming literature tends to replicate a somewhat "fatalistic approach", but a focus on practice can transcend this and shed light on the "constant process of negotiation and renegotiation in which gender experts engage" (Ferguson, 2018: 30). I posit that the relationship and dialectic between theory and practice in gender training illuminates key dynamics in the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges. I flip the traditional theory-to-practice sequence to remain true to the narratives of the trainers, eschewing the adherence to a conceptually tidy but practically artificial thematisation of training. As I demonstrated in the mapping and movement of the trainers through the previous chapters, theory and knowledge are acquired from different sources and integrated with practice through the professional trajectories of trainers over time. My interpretation of this relationship provides an important benchmark for the thematisation of the principles of practice by trainers, which has limited empirical precedent. I highlight the incongruences between ideal forms and practical constraints and establish an iterative dynamic between learning and change.

I focus on the trainers' educational philosophies, their "comprehensive and consistent set of beliefs about the teaching-learning transaction" (Conti, 2007: 20), and how they translate these in action. In this I highlight epistemological positioning, methodologies, and key concepts. Gender training is an act of collation between theory, practice and experience. Sirvat (35, Armenia) explains, "*because we're working not only with people's brains meaning intellectual field or knowledge field but we're also changing attitudes, behaviours, value basis*". Alice describes this kind of collation as artisanal, "*about an art and also a skill set*". Echoing the other trainers' emphasis on reflexivity and iteration, she explains it is about combining this with the needs of participants to "*invent, through different attempts, the educational journeys. I think that my skill has been my ability to model these through going back and forth between theory and practice, and back again between practice and theory*".

This chapter consists of several sections, beginning with a framing section on epistemology and methodology, followed by themes and examples in training practice. In the first section, I return to the question of the relationship between gender expertise and feminism by describing the feminist epistemological positioning of the trainers. I then link this into non-formal education and learning, to reveal the sociopolitical history of non-formal learning as this has developed through an interrelation of domains to become both a political position and a methodological approach for trainers. To complete the framework I discuss threshold concepts in gender training as troublesome knowledge. Against this backdrop I explore the interweaving of theory and practice by the trainers. I discuss how trainers' manage their gender evangelism and respect participant autonomy, I show how their approaches resonate with transformative learning theory and experiential processes, and I reveal the significance of affective engagement and reflexivity in the practice of impactful gender training. The relationship between theory and practice in gender training locates it within an ongoing genealogy of theoretical and practical equality work, and reveals how trainers negotiate the tension of the power they hold as educators and their aims of cultivating critical awareness and gendered inequalities. Overall, I argue that the way in which epistemology, knowledge, and practice are interwoven shows multidimensionality in learning, revealing that trainers and participants take part in both the generation and circulation of knowledge, and that practice and theory are iterative and cyclical.

6.2 Epistemology, concepts, and methods

6.2.1 Feminist epistemologies

As I have noted, it is widely argued that the practice of gender expertise in gender training should be carried out by individuals "with feminist knowledge regarding the cause-and-effect relationship between policies, actions, and/or activities and gender inequalities" (Hoard, 2015: 12). This is reflected in the fact that principles and strategies of feminist pedagogies are prominent in writing on gender training (Rao et al., 1991; Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; EIGE, 2012; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; UNWTC, 2017a; Ferguson, 2018). Research on feminist pedagogy emerges mainly from the educational field, and although this literature is notably diverse, it is unified through some key features (Manicom, 1992; Hoffmann & Stake, 1998; Stake & Hoffmann, 2000; Crabtree & Sapp, 2003). These can be synthesised into four guiding principles: participatory learning, validation of personal experience, encouragement of social understanding and activism, and development of critical thinking and open mindedness (Hoffmann & Stake, 1998; 2000; UNWTC, 2017a).

These principles are deemed essential to the quality of gender trainings and the transformative potential thereof (Prügl, 2010; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018). Ferguson (2018: 67) states this clearly, "feminist pedagogical principles and practices offer the strongest possibilities for gender training to convert these 'moments' into opportunities for contributing to transformative change". Interestingly, in contrast to the literature, the trainers in this research do not explicitly describe their pedagogies as feminist, even though they actively apply these very principles. Although the trainers do not use the term "feminist pedagogies", the vast majority of trainers report conducting feminist gender training, training which is "reflexive, self-critical and focused on process" (Ferguson, 2018: 1). The trainers in this study generally employ feminist epistemologies that reflect a pattern of strong association between feminism and gender expertise, and the complexity of this relationship (Mazur, 2002; Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Prügl, 2013; Hoard, 2015; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016; Prügl, 2016; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016; Ferguson, 2018). So where is feminism in the practice of these trainers? Echoing the other trainers, Yara (32, Canada) shares, "*I see feminism as really the political ideology behind the gender mainstreaming. That's kind of how I see it".* Then, after a pause, she asks, *"but then* […] *what kind of feminism are we talking about?".*

The trainers talk about a strong, but complex, relationship between feminisms and gender training. When asked whether they identify themselves as feminist, three quarters (85%) of the respondents[35] respond in the affirmative. Only a tenth responds that they do not describe themselves as feminist, and just 6% say they do not know. Of the four respondents who report that they do not know, two write, "*it depends what you mean by being a feminist".* Among the small number of respondents who explicitly do not identify as feminist, the common reasoning is that feminism is too narrow a term, not adequately inclusive of gendered inequalities, and dominated by gynocentric focus that does not facilitate a "*gender balanced approach*". Common to these responses is the recognition of plurality in feminism.

[35] n=91

Identification as a feminist is, as the interviewed trainers explain, an affiliation to one "kind" of feminism among several, one that relates to their personal histories and informs their approaches in gender training. For example, Eleni (28, Hungary) recounts that historical research in her home country of Cyprus initiated an important shift for her, "*I think that the second thing that really changed for me was to change from liberal feminism to postcolonial feminism. So now I really cannot talk about gender without talking about colonialism*". Yara (32, Canada), describes herself as more inclined towards a poststructuralist feminism, a form of feminism which is patient and contextually responsive. For her it is essential that feminism "*is flexible enough to understand that there are racialised dimensions that are not covered in traditional feminism, that there are religions and there are social contexts that are not covered".* This recognition of the plurality of feminisms also implies a value judgement of one against another, and potentially a frustration with the inadequacy with some aspects of feminisms. Oksana (42, France) unpacks this tension: "*You get to the group of old feminists, and suddenly you get, 'Oh, that's not in feminism', or, 'That's the wrong concept'. Like in discussions between positivists and postmodernists, all those differences, liberals, and radicals, and environmentalists, and, wow".*

Despite these differences, a convergence is translated in the content and the methods of the trainers. The respondents who identify themselves as feminists provide two principal descriptions, intersectional perspectives and "gender focused" perspectives, but they share the idea of feminism as a critical view of power structures in society, a way of seeing—the classic metaphor of the feminist "lens". In short, the trainers employ the markers of the feminist practice of gender expertise outlined in the literature (Prügl, 2010; Bustelo et al., 2016b). I posit that, for these trainers, this constitutes the epistemological basis of their work. This involves an understanding that gender inequality is structural and systemic. It entails a recognition of the hierarchies and relational power dynamics within the production and reproduction of knowledge. The trainers see that knowledge exchange and creation is a collective process and feminist knowledge transfer is political, and that reflexivity is ineluctable in training processes. This epistemological base is not always communicated explicitly to participants in the form of a statement that "*this is feminism*", but it informs the content, design, and aims of the trainers' workshops. In terms of content, this takes the form of threshold concepts, linked to feminist and gender theory and activism, that the trainers communicate to their participants.

6.2.2 Threshold concepts

The conceptual base provided in gender trainings draws from these feminist epistemologies, and incorporates content from different sources in the knowledge acquisition journeys of the trainers. Within this body of knowledge, there are several key concepts that are indispensable to the transformative aims of the trainings. These threshold concepts are "conceptual gateways" or "portals" which are essential to the mastery of a subject (Meyer & Land, 2003; 2005; 2006), they result in "a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress" (Meyer & Land, 2006: 1). This is not simply new knowledge; it is potentially transformative "troublesome knowledge" (Perkins, 1999: 9), which feels counterintuitive and foreign to the learner. The term evokes a vision of opening a door into an unknown room, or "*seeing things differently*", as the trainers describe. In the process of learning to see differently the participants occupy a liminal space (Meyer & Land, 2006), where they may oscillate between new understandings and old views. Gender trainings are this kind of liminal space, and the metaphor of journeying over the threshold is a "powerful way of remembering that learning is both affective and cognitive and that it involves identity shifts which can entail troublesome, unsafe journeys" (Cousin, 2006: 4).

In the following sections of this chapter, I present examples of threshold concepts in gender training. These are the concepts that the trainers describe as conceptual gateways, both troublesome and revelatory: gender, sexuality, and intersectionality. It would be imprudent to argue that the trainers whose voices make up this research are all drawing on the same exact meanings, indeed most trainers did not explicitly share their theoretical position vis-à-vis these concepts. Nonetheless, the trainers' stories around these concepts share some unifying themes. First, the important foundational distinction between sex, gender, and sexuality as different but related concepts, translating roughly to biology, society, and sexual and/or romantic attraction respectively. Equally, an inclusive understanding of all individuals as gendered; a view of gender as multiple, fluid, and variable; and an anti-heteronormative view of sexuality and sexual orientation. In addition, a notion of gender as relational—interpersonal, institutional, and contextually bound; and gender as a basis for inequalities in diverse fields. The trainers share a strong conviction of intersectionality as a valuable concept, theoretically, analytically, and methodologically, and advocate for an understanding of participants and trainers as intersectional subjects. In this chapter I provide an analysis of how trainers apply intersectionality, which responds to the call for investigation on the application of

intersectionality emerging from the literature on gender training (Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Bustelo et al., 2016a; Ferguson, 2018).

How the trainers work with threshold concepts and integrate these within trainings is based on a constellation of influences and sources of material. In evidence of this, the respondents share an average of three different sources of ideas for trainings. Two thirds of respondents (67%) build on ideas from trainings attended as participants, over half use ideas from other trainers (55%), and almost half (47%) draw on online training manuals. Other than this, two thirds of respondents use general online resources (62%). Here the websites named most often are those of national and European gender equality institutions and projects, international organisations, news and media sites with content on gender issues, and local organisations working on gender. Together this indicates that the training community and online resources and materials are a significant source of ideas and content for trainings. This is in addition to the different forms and fields of knowledge that they access through their different professional roles as outlined in Chapter 4. On this basis, I suggest that trainers are integrating diverse inputs in their work and they are adapting concepts and ideas that are circulating in different fields and communities. The trainers seek to make their content intelligible and action oriented "without oversimplifying concepts to the point that they lose their analytical power" (Wong et al., 2016: 10). They do this by employing non-formal methodologies and methods.

6.2.3 Non-formal methodologies and methods

The trainers emphasise non-formal approaches as a bridge between the worlds of theory and practice. Ines (37, Italy) reflects the views of both the interviewed and surveyed trainers asserting, "*I see training and this kind of non-formal activities and non-formal learning as a mediator between the academic world and people's experiences".* All the trainers emphasise "*non-formal education*" methodologies and methods as a common pillar of their educational philosophies, which they see as distinct from formal education. It is in this that I make the link between feminist epistemology and training methodology is made. As Ladenson (2010: 105) argues, feminist critical pedagogy resists patriarchal models of traditional didactic teaching with collaborative and inquiry-based learning, as the trainers convey in their use of non-formal approaches. The basis of this is responsiveness to the workshop participants, as Alice (40, Italy) describes, "*What they are thinking, who they are, and how they feel*". Yara (32, Canada) clarifies

that this means refraining from imposing values and rather seeking to connect with participants. She explains,

> *We can live in an idealistic world where we say, "Oh well, everybody should be behind this." Of course, gender* [equality] *to me is a value. But it's not a value for everyone. And so, there it's about trying to use the value system of that particular individual, to use it as an entry point to convince them that this is the right way to do things. This is important.*

Many of the trainers emphasise that this is their rationale for applying these approaches, as Fiore (30, Italy) says, "*you know this is the thing that I like most about these methods; it is that you are staying with people. You are trying to know and you are trying to understand".* The application of non-formal approaches by trainers interweaves critical pedagogies and educational theory, and simultaneously reflects transnational histories and regimes of inequality in the episteme.

6.2.3.1 A brief geneaology of non-formal education and non-formal learning theory

The definition of non-formal education, or non-formal learning, as it is currently most often called, has historically been debated (Malcolm et al., 2003a; Rogers, 2004; Rogers, 2014). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definitions are those most widely cited—formal learning occurs within an institution, is intentional, and involves certification; informal learning is unstructured, non-intentional, and happens in everyday life. Non-formal learning "is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective" (UNESCO, 2009: 27). Here (in)formality is described in apolitical and ahistorical terms as a measure of degrees of institutional recognition and regulation (Straka, 2004). However, these kinds of discrete categories are problematic as they obscure the power relations which are present in all learning situations, not just in formal learning. Rather, formal and informal can be seen as attributes, present in all circumstances, and identifiable in different aspects of learning such as process, location/setting, purposes and content (Malcolm et al., 2003a; Malcolm et al., 2003b). The "non-formal" definitional issue is not only about power relations in present learning events, it also reflects a history of contestation around these terms. Here I present a brief genealogy of non-formal education and learning, to enact a critical cartography of gender and feminist and gender knowledges and acknowledge the politics of educational theory which are configured through the global episteme and interrelating domains (Hemmings, 2011; Desai, 2015). I render

visible and explicit the “Southern” provenance of non-formal education as a form of liberatory education, its relationship to critical pedagogies, and the different political and economic agendas through which non-formal learning has come to form part of current neoliberal governance in EU Adult Education policies.

Non-formal education has a long history as a politically charged concept, with five discernible pivotal moments. The term non-formal education first rose to prominence after the Second World War, following theories of “modernisation” based on social-democratic, reformist ideology, and Keynesian economic principles. Non-formal education initiatives were designed as a cost-effective and flexible way to compensate for the lack of educational provision, which was supposedly hindering economic growth in developing nations (Malcolm et al., 2003a; Straka, 2004). This international development discourse on deficit and endogenous under-development pathologised the people of the “South” (Youngman, 2000) and these initiatives were unsuccessful, amplifying existing inequalities (Youngman, 2000; Malcolm et al., 2003a; Rogers, 2004).

The second moment was a reaction against these (neo)colonialist tactics and occurred in the context of a theoretical turn to dependency theory in the 1970s (see Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). Catalysed by educators such as Fanon and Freire, non-formal education models became a tool for consciousness raising, political mobilisation, and emancipatory action (Youngman, 2000; Beckett, 2013; Yang, 2016). This was based on the learners' control over their learning and the power thereof for critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Radical social-democratic models of non-formal education from the “periphery” became popular in Europe and North America through radical educational projects by feminist, anti-racist, and working class movements (Malcolm et al., 2003a; Straka, 2004; Rogers, 2004). It is from awareness raising and consciousness building activities of the women’s movement at this time that the connection between gender training and feminist pedagogies took form (UNWTC, 2017a). Concurrently, “socio-cultural and situated theories of learning” (Malcolm et al., 2003b: 11) resulted in a rising prominence of the term non-formal *learning*, distinct from non-formal *education,* in a shift away from the idea of a deficit in learners to an interaction between different forms of learning (formal, non-formal, and informal).

Through the 1980s deep recessions in the global economy, debt in developing nations, and processes of globalisation led to an increasing neoliberal policy orientation and a huge drop in educational funding (see Edwards & Usher, 2007). In this third moment, socioculturally embedded emancipatory education was undermined by a "rhetoric of a neutral universe of learning" (Malcolm et al., 2003a: 22). The formalisation of non-formal learning was facilitated by privatisation, economic instrumentalism and increasing managerial rationalisation, which resulted in codification through assessment and certification (Malcolm et al., 2003b: 66). It was during this time that more "radical" disciplines, like Women's Studies, were institutionalised within the episteme in Europe and North America (see do Mar Pereira, 2017). Here the link between non-formal methodologies and the feminist epistemologies discussed above was concretised (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018).

In the 1990s a fourth moment feminist, environmentalist, and ethno-cultural movements resisted this formalisation. Through the work of NGOs (Youngman, 2000), these initiatives supported and promoted "'authentic' experiences of non-formal learning, localised knowledge grounded in communities, and sustainable practices rather than economic growth" (Malcolm et al., 2003a: 22). However, the impact of these initiatives was limited, quashed by dominant transnational political and economic interests guided by human capital theory.

In the fifth and current phase there is a revival of non-formal learning discourse in EU adult lifelong learning policies[36]. It is symptomatic of the intensified rationalisation and economic instrumentalism that characterise the efficiency management of learning (see Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004). Gender training, as a tool of gender mainstreaming, responds, in part, to this EC focus on non-formal learning as a strategy for social cohesion and economic competitiveness (Davies, 2001). This is transparent in the "business case" arguments for equality and instances of market feminism highlighted hitherto (Perron, 2005; Prügl, 2010; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Prügl, 2016; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016). Furthermore, non-formal education and non-

[36] Here see Commission of the European Communities policy documents (Commission of the European Communities, 2000; Commission of the European Communities, 2006; Commission of the European Communities, 2007).

formal learning are key terms in the EU life-long learning and adult-education policy apparatus which seeks to stimulate employment participation as a substitute for welfare policies (Mosesdottir, 2006: 17). The circulation of feminist and gender knowledges takes place in the environment of this transnational polity-economy-episteme configuration. I assert that the trainers' use of non-formal terminology should be seen within the sociohistorical context outlined here because this highlights regimes of inequality in the global episteme and illustrates the factors that play into paradoxes in equality work. Despite this complex history, the trainers use "non-formal education" or "non-formal methodologies" as terms to qualify the emancipatory ethos of their work, often through direct reference to Paulo Freire. In fact, for many of them the transformative potential of their work is contingent on the application of non-formal methodologies in the learning processes that they design for their participants. In the next section I outline the elements of this learning processes described by the trainers. I refer to perspectives in educational theory to clarify the links between these fields and to demonstrate how the trainers interweave feminist epistemologies, threshold concepts, and non-formal methodologies.

6.3 Participant autonomy

The learning process that the trainers describe echoes the elements of non-formal learning provided in the above definition of non-formal learning in the sense that it is predicated on intentionality. In such a process the learner engages in self-organisation and the renegotiation of assumptions and world views by encountering the correct amount of challenge provided by the educator, making learning an "interactive process between subjective construction and external structure" (Belanger, 2011: 31). One of the implications of this kind of learning is that choice and motivation remain in the hands of the workshop participants; they are active agents in their own processes of knowledge-building and self-regulate their learning. In the case of gender training, this results in an uneasy tension for the trainers. On one hand, they need workshop participants to recognise gendered inequalities in order to acquire knowledge and build skills and behaviour patterns to counter these inequalities; on the other hand, they recognise the agency of the participants in constructing their own meanings and knowledge. Isabelle (33, France) says that her main aim in trainings is to provide some key ideas about social inequalities and enable people to make their choices consciously. She states, "*It is very important in your position as a trainer. You're not here to give lessons of life to people. You're here to talk with them and to bring them to question themselves and maybe to change their*

practices". Isabelle sees her role as one of facilitation, not conversion. Although she admits that sometimes she would like to act as a "*feminist evangelist",* laughing, she jokes, "*I'm not a religious leader who wants to convince everybody to adopt his religion*". It is a fine balance, as educational research reveals (Howe, 2013), exploration is encouraged by providing the right amount of support in order to facilitate the learning process while simultaneously aiming for learner autonomy.

The trainers tread, as Isabelle exhibits, an uneasy balance. They envision their work to be transformative, but they are also committed to applying pedagogical and methodological approaches which are non-directive and participant-led. Meike (47, Austria), like Isabelle, explains that abstaining from trying to convert people is one of the key principles of her work, and that she does so by maintaining an unconditional positive regard for the participants, despite the fact that they sometimes share misogynist or racist views. She explains,

> *You have to stay in relationship and take it serious what they say, to enter in a discussion because the worst decision that you can make is to want to missionary them. It is necessary to exchange* […] *in the moment that you think, "I want to change them…I want to persuade them", you are lost because you need the appraisal of them as individuals.*

By taking this approach, Meike handles the tension between transformation and conversion, allowing the choice to be made by the workshop participants, she explains, "*you have to leave them, then they are also, if they feel themselves* [to be] *respected they are more open to change their minds".* This is a fine balance the gender trainer has to find, which requires "a dual process of respecting personal knowledge while finding tools to challenge the basis of such knowledge claims, and how these may come into tension with the experiences of other participants" (Ferguson, 2018: 75). This is a tension that characterises education in general, bound as it is to institutions within the episteme where knowledge and truth claims are shaped by unequal power relations. The trainers are negotiating the governing and emancipatory tension of knowledge work in each training through the methodologies, approaches, and concepts that they use. One way in which they mediate the tension between wishing to impart particular understandings and allowing participant self-regulation is by creating conducive training spaces.

6.4 Training spaces

Gender training is a holistic endeavour, as many of the trainers describe, it is not only about the communication of information or knowledge, but it is also about creating a space for exploring alternatives. Trainers endeavour to construct a setting and a training design that allows participants to feel that they can explore challenging issues and consider shifts in their paradigms and worldviews. Space holds important significance in critical pedagogy both as a material or physical structure and as a philosophical question (Luke & Gore, 1992; Tisdell, 1995; Lim et al., 2012; Henderson, 2015). Oblinger (2006: 1) refers to the impact of space on learning as built pedagogy, writing that space can have an impact on learning, "it can bring people together; it can encourage exploration, collaboration, and discussion. Or, space can carry an unspoken message of silence and disconnectedness". The trainers seek to set a training space that is conducive to learning, even if this is often out of their direct control. This idea of space and learning that the trainers report bears resemblance to hooks' (1994: 39) notion of a democratic classroom, "where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute", and is a key goal of transformative pedagogy.

Training sessions most often occur within the "times" and "spaces" of the organisations and institutions that have commissioned the trainings, this means trainers are afforded space and resources but these are often not in their control. These spaces may be limiting in various ways, but they also represent a kind of support within institutional domains that facilitates the practice of gender training. This tension is one that the trainers manage through different strategies and methodologies. The significance of space is evidenced by the fact that all the interviewed trainers, with the exception of Agata and Martina, and the vast majority (95%) of the respondents[37], deliver their trainings face-to-face (roughly, a fifth (21%) also use blended modalities (online and face-to-face)[38]). It also manifests in the duration of trainings, which is dependent on the commissioners and frequently shorter than trainers would like. The majority

[37] n=87

[38] Between these two groups, just less than a fifth (17%) of respondents use both, blended and face-to-face modalities. Other modalities such as online moderated (9%) and online self-paced (2%) represent much smaller portions of the respondents' selections. Tellingly, zero respondents deliver exclusively online training.

of respondents[39] (65%) say an average workshop lasts one day or less[40], typically with between 10-20 workshop participants[41].

Participant numbers and modalities are consequential because they set the parameters of the kinds of activities and learning situations that are possible for the trainers to construct. Narek (30, Austria) observes that the trainer is not able to control all the aspects of the training space that they would like to, "*some issues that is not under your control. For example, if the host organisation is not providing a room that you* [can use], *the conference room that you wanted to work. In that case, you have to be a bit creative*". This is consistent with existing research on gender training which shows that resources for delivering gender trainings and support for the application of acquired skills in organisations are generally poor (EIGE, 2012; EIGE, 2014b; Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Bustelo et al., 2016b). This means that the trainers have to carefully consider and adapt the spaces that are available to them in ways which are consistent with their principles and objectives. Weislander and Nordvall (2019: 9) note that conflict between pedagogical ideals and contextual factors means that "educators are forced to make choices regarding the methods and content of teaching. In such situations, dilemmas, or even paradoxes, might occur that must be managed by the educator/activist on the basis of existing restrictions. This is one of the "the dilemmas and contradictions involved in the daily politics" (Ferguson, 2015: 380) of working as a gender expert.

The majority of trainers also speak about space within workshops in terms of the interplay of physical space and interpersonal space. Alice (40, Italy) describes the importance of this in order to facilitate the engagement of the participants. She explains,

[39] n=88

[40] The most frequent duration, reported by just under half of the respondents (43%), is 1-4 hours. The next largest category – single day duration, accounts for just under a quarter (22%) of respondents.

[41] n=88. This is the number indicated by over half of the respondents (55%). The next most frequent number of participants is between 20 and 30 (23%).

> *The idea was to activate these courses that invite the girls and boys to reflect in freedom and in a calm environment. So working a lot on the setting and on the space and on the methodologies and the language that one is using*.

Having a conducive physical space can facilitate the learning process. Julia (31, Italy) explains how for training events she prefers to have a shared space for participants for an extended period of time. She recounts an experience where she had the same space for a whole week,

> *That made it very different and for that whole week I can say it's really important that people stay together, that they really spend the whole time together, so it is really like a space, a safe space is created.*

For Julia this shared space created an optimal environment for learning and exchange between participants. Sam (57, Netherlands) gives the example of creating space by removing community authorities from training settings in order to allow young people to openly discuss issues of sex, sexualities, and sexual orientations. He talks about how powerful this can be,

> *I usually give 10 minutes,* [but] *you have to stop after half an hour, because they continue to share experiences with one another. Because it is so hard, it is so deep in their hearts that* [some] *even come out in the session, I have had this*.

The creation of appropriate space also involves setting a specific frame for interaction. In the introductory story Fiore (30, Italy) makes a distinction between formal and non-formal approaches, saying that in the latter there is less emphasis on the authority of the educator. The trainers describe different ways of creating a collectively agreed upon space and social contract, by asking the participants to be involved in setting the rules and priorities. Alice (40, Italy) affirms that this is useful in two ways; it "*means that I have to follow these rules. And it means that we are working to deconstruct traditions and create a circle where each person is interacting with one another"*. I read this within a broader interpretation of regimes of inequality as a kind of practising of alternatives, an exploration of a different configuration of power made possible in by the enclosed space of the training. Martina (40, Slovakia) says, *"For me, I often like when they sit on the ground, not in chairs. But, I mean, just relax and sit the way they like so that people can see each other, that there is a circle".* This links back to creation of a space that facilitates sharing and developing knowledge together. As Sam (57, Netherlands) states, "*like my knowledge which I have generated is unique to me. I don't have the answer; we have to find the answer together"*. Trainers have to work with the spaces that they are given, but they are not completely without agency in establishing the boundaries of these spaces. Germaine (41,

England) gives examples of events where respectful spaces of exchange were created by changing the language on fliers and pursuing more actively inclusive formats with a positive result. In one example she says the effect was immediately visible, "*then the Red Tent went ahead with more cohesion* […] *It was a liberated Red Tent*"[42]. Here the trainer works as a catalyst, bringing gendered inequalities to the awareness of the workshop participants by providing the space to reflect on, and engage with, this new awareness. This role as catalyst points to a transformative learning perspective (Belanger, 2011; Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

6.5 Transformative learning

In transformative learning theory the purpose of "education" is to develop "new ways of perceiving existing knowledge and reality" (Belanger, 2011: 50) by transforming problematic frames of reference. The learning process involves interpersonal and social dialogue and distanciation—a process of critical defamiliarisation of one's own perspective—which then translates into reflection and action by participants in their own life contexts. The educator acts as a catalyst in this process. In adult education contexts such as gender training, this approach to learning can be seen in the emphasis on the transformation of perspectives, social participation, and reflective practice (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Belanger, 2011; Herod, 2012; Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

There is an almost evangelical ring to how the trainers describe the purpose of learning in their trainings, as the comment above from Isabelle implies. Trainings are opportunities for planting seeds, starting conversations, inspiring reflection and fostering paradigm shifts. Sam (57, Netherlands) describes this as a process of revelation where the participants become part of the process of encouraging each other to see things in a different way,

> *If you stimulate people and they begin to talk themselves about the different ways that they are blindfolded* [then] *you are helping them opening up their blindfolds. Allowing new views to come in, then you are contributing to other people's consciousness, you cannot empower others, you can only empower yourself. But I can help to open doors,*

[42] Red Tent refers to a tent at a feminist festival where there were workshops, events, and seminars about sexual and reproductive health and rights, specifically menstruation.

to open windows, and that is all that I can really do to bring things in. It is not a fixed thing, it is really very fluid.

Sam's metaphor of taking off a blindfold channels a similar sentiment in many of the trainers' stories who speak about training as a tool for widening vision and developing awareness of the gendered organisation of society. In broader terms of educational theory, this understanding of learning is akin to a social constructivist epistemological orientation (de Corte, 2010; Belanger, 2011). In this framework learning processes are internal to the participants, mediated through social interaction and context. It is the learner, not the educator, who holds the central role, and reacts to their context, learning takes place by identifying cognitive conflict[43] and contradictions, and tackling these dilemmas through reflective practice and abstraction (de Corte, 2010; Belanger, 2011; Rogers, 2014). Echoing Sam, Narek (30, Austria) states, "*my task as a trainer is to motivate them to know a bit more. And to understand and to be more open to gender equality and gender equality promotion*"; for Paola (45, Germany) her work aims to "*open their minds";* Alice's (40, Italy) work is driven by a wish to "*translate a passion, a political positionality, a way of seeing things*". Yara (32, Canada) says that she is not trying to impart her own values but to "*open their eyes to say, there is a whole new world here it is up to you to choose to believe that or not*".

6.5.1 Sex, gender, and sexuality

A key step in the transformative learning process of gender training is the understanding of the threshold concept of gender. The trainers focus on supporting participants to understand gender as a concept and distinguish sex, gender, and sexuality. They underscore the fact that gendered tropes, far from reflective of natural/biological/genetic predispositions that workshop participants commonly argue for, are learnt early on and perpetuated through the life course through social interaction. As Sam (57, Netherlands) argues about tropes of masculinity, "*you can change, you can take care, it is not in your DNA, anyone can learn that*". Many trainers observed that their participants have a lot of confusion around sex, gender, and sexuality. For Erica, Nina, and Emily a continued fixation on sex and "natural" aptitude differences among the

[43] Cognitive conflict refers to incongruence between cognitive structures (such as beliefs, values, and paradigms) and experience, or between different cognitive structures. Socio-cognitive conflict occurs within groups of partnerships of learners, it is argued that this dissent or dissonance can support cognitive development and knowledge acquisition (see Darnon et al., 2007).

groups that they work with continues to pose a challenge because it essentialises and de-contextualises gender differences in ways that erode the legitimacy of feminist and gender knowledges. The common confusion around sex, gender, and sexuality means that trainers have to work intensely with them to develop an understanding of the distinctions, and the implications thereof. The trainers aim to equip workshop participants with the language and concepts to work with ideas of sex, gender, and sexuality as distinct, but related and interlinked, concepts. According to Julia (31, Italy) it is necessary to do this from the very beginning of the workshop, "*there was such a big discussion about defining what goes in this umbrella, what do we have to talk about and what are the definitions of gender, sexuality, sex etcetera*". The importance of establishing clear definitions is encapsulated in Alex's (27, Romania) comment. They comment, while laughing, that the participants "*are always so amazed when they find out that there aren't only two sexes in this world*". The challenge in presenting these concepts is to not alienate participants but to work within their proximal development zone, where the learning situation "is beyond his or her actual level, but at the same time not too challenging so as to provoke failure" (Belanger, 2011: 29).

Working with definitions around sex, gender, and sexuality allows the workshop participants then to build their knowledge through the rest of the workshop or training course. Fiore (30, Italy) explains this to me through an example of an exercise that they like to use where they ask participants to locate themselves physically in shapes on the floor indicating different aspects of identity:

> *I would ask them, "Ok, if you identify as a man where would you put yourselves". First people would go on biological sex, and then ok, if I am saying lesbian where will you go? On sexual orientation? And if you are transsexual, absolute confusion. Where to go?*

Through this kind of exercise the trainer allows the participants to work with the concepts in an embodied way, and begin to question and transform problematic conflations. They push back against the common tendency among commissioners and workshop participants to see gender as a synonym for women, and aim instead to foster inclusive understandings of gender. In fact, 29 of the 31 interviewed trainers specifically refer to the need to understand men as gendered beings, and a third of the trainers speak about advocating for trans rights and their efforts to include trans and non-binary or fluid gender identification in their trainings.

As the examples presented above illustrate, the participant is involved in questioning their existing frame of reference in a concrete and tangible way. Transformative learning theory incorporates humanist and critical theory assumptions, together with social constructivist theoretical themes (Belanger, 2011: 50), resulting in an understanding of change through dialogue. In other words, learning is a collaborative process that is driven by social cognitive conflict and problem solving. In this understanding, learning is "a process of negotiation, involving the construction and exchange of personally relevant and viable meanings" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999: 262). Through dialogue and reflection, the learner modifies their knowledge in order to resolve this dilemma in a dialectical process between the person and the setting (Lave, 1993). The trainers speak about actively facilitating this process of collaboration, reflection, and the negotiation of meanings through their choice of methods and activities.

6.5.2 Collaboration and exchange

Overall, the trainers share an eclectic mix of methods that they use to facilitate learning through the negotiation of different perspectives. The list of the most common methods provided by respondents [44] illustrate this point: discussions (95%), followed in descending order by participant's personal experiences (78%), videos (74%), sideshow presentations (68%), pictures (59%), participant presentations (55%), role-plays (46%), tool kits (41%), realia (29%), theatre exercises (25%), other [45] (24%), posters (18%), and organisation visits (16%). Trainers are combining interpersonal strategies of group learning, such as discussions and participant experiences, with multimedia and visual tools. The interviewed trainers share a similar emphasis on collaborative learning. They provide specific examples, which can be thematically synthesised as follows: group exercises on definitions, concepts, and vocabulary; case studies and discussions; role-plays and applied theatre exercises; power, privilege, and intersectionality specific activities; storytelling and the use of audio-visual elements; collaborative timeline building; situated inquiry regarding social problems; organisation visits and community participation; and physical activity.

[44] n=87

[45] The one fifth who chose "other" then offer a range of examples. These respondents describe an emphasis on interactive, group and individual, exercises designed to collectively explore social problems and practice alternatives. This most commonly involves working with the dynamics of the group, using performance, storytelling, real life examples, and experiential techniques.

The emphasis placed by the trainers on interpersonal learning through dialogue and exchange of views reflects the understanding of the social character of learning, where internal processes are socially mediated (de Corte, 2010: 52). Erica (54, England) describes the form that this typically takes in her workshops,

> *And in pairs,* [the participants] *think up their own questions in response to the stimulus. And then they choose which question they want to discuss, and you then facilitate their discussion and their thinking about it. So you're starting where they're at and going with their interests, but trying to push thinking around those issues.*

In Erica's example the interaction between workshop participants is key to the learning process. Ines finds that discussions provide an opportunity to present one's reflections and it is "*because all of these discussions, then you realise that other people have different experiences and different opinions and then it can be helping you to realise your own thing".* Paola (45, Germany) concurs, "*It's always methods where you're somehow…make something with the participants which brings conflict into the group, which somehow creates it. And then you can work on it".* Here a transformation in perspective is directly linked to peer interaction, a finding supported in educational research more broadly (Howe, 2013). It is the role of the trainer to facilitate these processes by fostering a relationship between participants. In Martina's (40, Slovakia) words, to "*connect people on a deeper level*", to build a common base of understanding, while holding in balance the degree of cognitive conflict that the participants need to experience in order to progress their learning. Yara (32, Canada) sees the success of these methods as a function of the interaction between peers. Yara explains that she comes in with an accent and an unfamiliar appearance, and because of this, she is often written off by participants as "*coming from a different world".* She asserts the shifts happen *"when you have someone that you consider a peer open up your mind to things, it hits home".* The interaction with peers creates social cognitive conflict, and drives self-reorganisation (Belanger, 2011). This is a form of collective knowledge generation rather than a purely didactic transmission of information. Emily (51, Netherlands) explains this distinction,

> *I want them to learn always in a respectful* [way] *not like, "It's like this and you are wrong, I'm going to tell you". Better is the facilitation approach, "We are going on a discovery, on a journey together, and I want this to be fun".*

For Oksana (42, France) training is an act of translation that takes into account the knowledge and capacity for understanding that participants hold. She explains,

> *I'm translating the concepts and the logical approaches we use in science into the common language, into the ordinary language* [laughter] *of people. And from that, we can get interesting inputs because then people can relate those concepts to their daily situations, and bring their life examples, and draw conclusions because everybody is a smart person.*

These examples highlight the exchange and reciprocity in learning processes within gender training, and depict how both trainers and participants take part in knowledge generation and circulation.

6.5.3 Intersectional thinking

The centrality of exchange in learning is particularly vivid in how trainers employ and present the threshold concept of intersectionality. They describe intersectionality as both a theoretical anchor and a methodological approach; most significantly, it links personal experiences to systemic inequalities. In fact, as Tisdell (1998: 99) argues, it is the purpose of this kind of adult education to "help participants explore the connection between who they are as individuals and the structural systems of privilege and oppression". By validating personal lived experience trainers seek to equip participants with the analytical skills to understand their stories in terms of broader sociopolitical and transnational histories and inequalities (Gajjala et al., 2010; Ferguson, 2018). The term intersectionality derives from writing produced predominantly by black feminist scholars, and has effected a "fundamental 'decentering' of mainstream feminism's 'normative subject'" (Pedwell, 2010: 34). It is a way to talk about the interaction of categories of identity and "difference", the interrelated nature of inequalities, and the results of power and privilege that unfold across individual, interactional, and institutional systems. As Hoffman and Besson (2019: 167) note from their research on gender training work with teachers, intersectional thinking is important because the participants themselves often "lack consciousness about the gendered nature of the discriminations they perceive and how these interact with other forms of domination that they experience". The trainers translate their feminist epistemologies into material form through the activities and content that they present.

The vast majority of respondents[46] (93%) say that they use an intersectional perspective that attends to multiple axes of identity in their work. Two-thirds (78%) of these also give descriptions of the ways in which they are applying this perspective. Among the interviewed trainers the response is similar. Emily (51, Netherlands) points out that, although she is a gender trainer, she treats *intersectionality* with equal importance to *gender* as a threshold concepts, "*I show them a lot of pictures and I say, 'here is someone in a veil, or there's someone in a wheelchair'".* GTQ132 (37, Portugal) explains how intersectionality is put into practice, "*giving intersectional examples, showing best practices on intersectionality, referring to international research/work/workshop/literature/advertising/books/comics*". In endeavouring to communicate the interconnectedness of axes of identity and belonging in intersectionality Sirvat (35, Armenia) advocates to "*go from cases to theory. To really take real situations, real-life situations from real people, bringing them in, discussing".* Sirvat says this allows the participants to explore questions such as,

> *What are the theories behind it, why things are happening the way they're happening, what are the different possibilities to actually counter that? What can be done, what can people do on their individual level, what can people do on their community level?*

These questions and issues are exposed in activities, and they are addressed through group interaction and discussion. GTQ54 (41, Croatia) explains that a diverse group of participants can help to open up this process. She states, "*it was proven that participants learn from each other's experience and tend to change their deep-rooted beliefs when faced with the 'otherness'. I find it most interesting and useful*". As I have argued elsewhere, responsiveness is key to the trainers' application of intersectionality, which involves "close attention to the composition and the interaction of the group itself and the understanding that it is necessary to respond to emergent categories of difference" (Enderstein, 2018: 15). The interviewed trainers speak frequently of meeting participants "*where they are at*" (Fiore, 30). This involves planning trainings according to predetermined categories of difference, but also in the moment of delivery being able to respond to emergent and situated identity categories which are linked to a certain time and place (Enderstein, 2018). Ferguson notes that there is "general agreement across the field that gender training has failed to adequately address the issue of intersectionality" (Ferguson, 2018:

[46] n= 86. In this question I used the phrasing "multiple categories of identity" together with an explanation in place of the term intersectionality, as the term is not necessarily familiar to non-native English speakers. Interestingly, many of the respondents then use the term intersectionality in their response, demonstrating that this is a familiar term to them.

36). The examples and applications of intersectional thinking and activities that I provide here offer insight into how trainers are applying intersectionality, and the explicit and implicit forms this can take. Consistent with Ferguson's (2018) observation, the collective conversations and exchange that the trainers advocate for, described in Chapter 8, include an increased focus on the application of intersectionality in the profession.

Generally, the methodologies and activities that the trainers describe focus on categories of social identity in relation to power through inquiry based methods and problem based learning. This entails posing questions and scenarios that are then analysed through discussion. Examples of these activities include group discussions, debates, forum theatre, audio-visual material analysis, interactive physical activities, questionnaires and quizzes, and context specific content. GTQ106 (36, Germany) comments that they develop specific exercises "*where people think about biographies of public persons and reflect on their assumptions on gender, age, race*". GTQ09 (31, Germany) gives two detailed examples, the first consists of the distributing of random identities, asking participants to move in comparison to one another depending on the characteristics of these identities and encouraging them to reflect on the ways in which this effects how powerful and agentic they feel. This respondent calls this the "*teach privilege (empathy)*" exercise. In the second activity they ask participants to consider how their institution "*may be considered safe, unsafe, helpful, or insufficient for especially vulnerable people*", they accomplish this by asking questions about structural and individual power and privilege.

In order to facilitate sharing and meaning making, it is necessary to remain cognisant of the knowledge that the participants do have. Alice (40, Italy) states that one of the main things that she has learnt in the process of building her training skills is "*never to think that the person in front of you doesn't know anything"*. Alice talks about how participants have demonstrated gendered awareness of their own identities and experiences, specifically young people who are negotiating the roles and expectations associated with gender in the Italian cultural context. For Julia (31, Italy) this means "*they take home so much more because they have to come up with this information themselves, there is not someone feeding this information to them".* This co-creation, or collective generation of knowledge, is the point where trainers bring subjective and collective gender knowledge into contact and, everyday, institutional and popular knowledges are debated. Trainers are not just transferring knowledge to participants, both actors are

involved in an interaction and an exchange, the products of which they may go on to apply, or oppose, in other contexts. I discuss this circulatory dynamic further in the next chapter, while I now focus on how the trainers create the opportunities for exchange through experiential methodologies and affective engagement.

6.6 Experiential methodologies

To scaffold transformative learning processes and collaborative exchange between participants trainers favour, as anticipated in the examples above, experiential methodologies as a means to encourage participants to interrogate their contexts and experiment with different perspectives. Sirvat (35, Armenia) explains that the "*main methodological base*" for her work in non-formal education are experiential learning methodologies and methods. She explains, "*In our courses we are using role-plays and simulation exercises which are modelling different situations through which people can go through participating in them".* Through this modelling, Sirvat observes that participants "*reflect on the experience. You generalise, make your insights out of it and then plan how would you actually act in a similar situation afterwards. And through this model situation get to insights around things"*. Alex (27, Romania) shares Sirvat's vision, stating that "*these kind of games and things in which people get a chance to recreate in a way parts of society*" are tools to play with different ideas, gain insight through embodied experience, question taken-for-granted stereotypes, and experiment with alternatives. Indeed, many of the trainers use applied theatre techniques in their work because these allow participants to rehearse a different way of being and inhabit a different social imaginary (Boal, 2009). These methods are a means to engage workshop participants in a way that is not achievable through traditional didactic methods of formal education. Alice (40, Italy) describes the objective "*to open up something that has never been opened up by anyone and begin to see this reality, this was the inception of the idea to create these experiential workshops*".

For Julia (31, Italy) experiential methodologies are a way to personalise and clarify concepts. She gives the example of her favourite activity on sexuality developed by The Pink Practice, an organisation that offers counselling and psychotherapy for LGBTQ+ communities. This activity is called the heterosexuality questionnaire. In this activity, workshop participants are in a role-play where a school counsellor calls a student into their office, claiming that their parents and teachers are worried about them because they are not acting "*normally*". The school counsellor

starts asking questions about the heterosexuality of the student, such as when the student found out they are heterosexual, and commenting that all they need is "*a good gay lover to get them back to normal*". Here the intention is to subvert the script, displacing heterosexuality as a norm. Julia (31, Italy) asserts that this experientially lived inversion makes the abstraction of an intellectual awareness of diverse sexualities into something tangible: "*It is not the theory or the story of someone else that you hear but it makes something clear to you. Something that is not theoretically clear, it makes something clear in your own experience* [and] *you remember this*".

By conveying the threshold concept of sexuality through the inversion of taken-for-granted norms, the trainers invite participants to engage in a critical denormalisation of heterosexuality. Alex (27, Romania) values these "norm-critical" approaches because they focus on critiquing established norms instead of "*the deviation from the norm".* Alex explains that designing activities which merely promote tolerance of difference does not offer "*opportunities for people to identify the norms and how it is that they relate to the norm".* Instead, it is fundamental to challenge heteronormativity by fostering the awareness among participants of themselves as "having a sexuality". Luca (48, Sweden) clarifies,

> *All of the categories apply to all of us* […] *If you're not part of the LGBTQ community, you usually don't think about your sex, or your gender, or your sexuality. When you're not part of the norm group then it starts to become obvious* [laughter] *for yourself but you don't think about all the other parts. So this is why I usually really try to make people aware of all the categories and that they are connected to each other.*

Paola (45, Germany) and Malak (32, Netherlands) encourage this self-awareness among participants through visits to organisations that work on a range of social inequalities. The concepts of gender, sexuality, and intersectionality serve as signifiers of a broader premise of social construction and are used by the trainers to challenge regimes of inequality. This disruption forms part of a cyclical experiential learning process in which a conscious experience is reflectively and critically observed, linked with abstract knowledge, and then subjected to testing in reality.

6.7 Affective engagement

The trainers state that affective engagement is imperative in order for participants to actively take part in the learning processes described above. This kind of interpersonal interaction is essential to support the depth of learning that results in "changed practices in the lives of individuals" (Rogers, 2014: 27). Meike (47, Austria) states this clearly, "*the main competence is that you need to enter into a relationship as well, you can be an expert in gender issues as much as you want, if you don't enter into a relationship you can't transfer".* This relationship develops from the positive regard and recognition of autonomy that the trainers pursue for the workshop participants. For Nina (42, Sweden) the relationship is clear-cut, "*so if you want things to happen and if you want people to really think and reflect, you will have to know something about the people that are listening*". Julia (31, Italy) reiterates this engagement as the most important part in designing the training programme, "*responsiveness to that, where they are, what they are thinking about*".

Engagement is essential to how cognition and knowing become oriented to social change (hooks, 1994), and it relies on the responsiveness of trainers to their participants. Fiore (30, Italy) echoes this point, insisting that the process requires flexibility, "*you know because the content that you have is being prepared on the basis of who is there, and you are modelling it and changing it as you work. It isn't fixed but it is structured*". Responsiveness to participants involves an acute awareness of group dynamics and interactions, as Martina (40, Slovakia) states,

> *Somebody who facilitates this kind of training really needs to understand these kind of group dynamics, and have quite a bit of flexibility not to follow always the pre-set program, to recognise when there is a moment to say "Hey, this is not okay". This requires some kind of different intervention. So the reading of the dynamics is very important*.

Managing group dynamics and being attentive to how discussions evolve is an important aspect of the affective engagement of participants, as discussions may not always unfold in desirable ways. Wieslander and Nordvall (2019: 18) documented shifting participant perspectives in a Swedish gender training workshop. They illustrate that discussions between participants do not always result in the planned pedagogical outcomes, such as support for gender equality. Popular and everyday forms of gender knowledge which trivialise and devalue the need for gender

equality can come to dominate. The forms that this polarisation can take and the responses of the trainers are discussed in the following chapter on resistances and counter strategies.

To manage the learning situation in terms of affective engagement, the trainers build relationships, respond to needs and questions, and design trainings which offer the correct level of challenge. This entails a constant vigilance on the part of the trainers. Tracy (Scotland) explains that she watches the reactions of the participants closely, "*if you start seeing them looking confused, stop and ask them what they are thinking, to see where they are at and the adjust what you are saying to the level that they are on".* The centrality that the trainers grant affect in their evaluation of training efficacy is supported by significant scholarship on the role of affect in mediating learning processes (Mandler, 1989; Kort et al., 2001; Craig et al., 2004; Wolfe, 2006; Pekrun, 2014). However, whereas these studies tend to focus on emotion as a personal internal event, in my appraisal the narratives of the trainers expand the understanding of affect in learning in an additional important way. The reactions of the participants communicate the emotions of individuals, but they also reflect structural, historical, and relational oppression and power (Boler, 1999; Callahan, 2004; Pons et al., 2005; Shuck et al., 2007). For example, a female participant who feels understood and respected for the first time about the effect of gendered oppression on her life may feel empowered. Meike relays her experience of this. She explains, "*they are treated as adults, they change, they feel themselves as more important, they have more* [conviction about] *their meanings and thoughts. And I can see it on their eyes after the workshop when they come to thank me".* This reaction represents the effects of systemic regimes of gender inequality on a collective level, as well as the individual experience of the workshop participant.

The multi-level nature of gender training is conveyed in this relationship between individual and system. It is the property of emergence through which the "dynamic relationship between the 'I' and 'me', in which the moment of performance of 'I' draws on the accumulated memory of the experience of the social in 'me'" (Walby, 2009: 72). In this way the individual moments of trainings constitute, and are constituted by, social systems, thus exposing the centrality of the dimension of affect in transformation oriented learning. This dimension is part of the "messy business" (Ferguson, 2015: 393) of equality work, although it is often absent from research on the application of gender expertise. I interpret this absence as a result of the necessity to

maintain the hard-won legitimacy and authority of gender experts. This is because expertise, especially that associated with the of science institutions of the episteme (Verloo, 2018a), is traditionally linked to claims of "objectivity" (Farrington-Darby & Wilson, 2006; Gorman & Sandefur, 2011; Saks, 2012). I highlight the affective dimension of learning in training for gender equality because, according to the trainers in this research, it is key to the transformative potential of their work. Furthermore, it is an important reflection in terms of developing appropriate responses to the highly emotively charged appeals of current anti-gender campaigns (Grzebalska, 2016; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; 2018). In the following two sections, I explore the shape that these responses might take, beginning with the implementation of reflexive practice.

6.8 Reflexive practice

Reflection is the strategy through which the physical, cognitive and affective domains discussed above are brought together and synthesised for future action. Fiore (30, Italy) affirms that planned moments of reflection, often called debriefing, are one of the distinguishing features of non-formal methodologies, "*if you are not used to it, it can be a bit strange because at the end of everything you are always asked–how are you? What happened? How is it for you? Was it useful or not?".* The process of reflection is not only about evaluation, but also about exploration and critical thinking. For Paola (45, Germany) these kinds of techniques catalyse self-reflection and change. She says that it is important that the participants in her sessions go through this experience "*and of course also that they have time for self-reflection and exchange with others so for the gender topic I think definitely it's important to reflect on your biography, your family, where you come from*".

One of the most challenging parts of a trainer's work is encouraging workshop participants to interrogate their contexts and recognise their social locations, especially when working with privileged individuals. As Luca (48, Sweden) describes, "*It's usually people who have privileges who don't see them and it's very, very hard to make them understand their own position in a society".* These trainers say that they tackle privilege and power through accurate contextualisation, by actively referencing the equality issues in the context in which the participants find themselves. Nina (42, Sweden), states that this needs to be done in a variety of ways across the training process, *"and do that in different ways, in small group discussions, in*

workshops, in linking it directly to the work that you're doing, not [just] *as a general issue in society".* Alex (27, Romania) echoes this statement, explaining that the content of workshops has to be "*relatable to them making it a bit less mystical and more close to their own realities and lives"*. This is achieved through self-reflection, because as Alex clarifies,

> *People don't really understand that they're also playing a part, they also have an ethnicity even though it's not Roma ethnicity but they still have it. And they also have a sexual orientation or a gender, a gender expression and everything. And I always try to use this kind of strong moment when people are able to look at themselves and understand that they are part of this conversation.*

Taken together with the other methods and techniques that the trainers use, it is clear that working with privilege is about developing strategies to engage with power and render this visible. Gender training needs to be transformative for both oppressed *and* oppressors. As Cornwall (2016) argues, it is necessary to develop a pedagogy for the powerful which renders gendered power dynamics in organisations visible and personal through anthropological and participatory methods. As the trainers here describe the feminist learning processes that they design centre around experiential and participatory learning, such as applied theatre exercises and activities specifically designed to discuss and visualise privilege such as the Privilege Walk[47]. As noted by Ferguson (2019: 119), these techniques allow for a degree of discomfort among participants as they come to recognise themselves, and allow them to productively engage with their privilege to bring about transformation.

Reflective practice not only applies to the participants of trainings, but equally to the trainers themselves. Kunz (2016) emphasises openness on the part of the trainer, described as vulnerability and willingness for critical reflexivity by the trainers in this study, as a means to resist the "coloniality of gender expertise"(Kunz et al., 2019: 23) in gender training which seeks to change the other. Reflexivity in this sense is not just an act of reflection, but one of critical reflection, which "calls into question the power relationships that allow, or promote, one set of practices considered to be technically effective" (Brookfield, 2009: 293). Indeed, claims about

[47] This is an activity mentioned by several trainers that involves statements read by the facilitator to participants who are standing in a line. According to the statements, the participants move steps forward or backwards creating a visual distribution of privilege in the room.

the intrinsic "liberatory" or "emancipatory" power of critical thinking and reflexivity should be interpreted carefully (Luke & Gore, 1992). Discourses of the "liberatory educator" can hide from view the gendered and intersectional identities of trainers. I insist that "who and how each participant in a pedagogical encounter "is" is in part a function of who and how the other is" (Sànchez-Pardo, 2017: 75). Sam (57, Netherlands) demonstrates how this plays out. He says that often he shares, "*I am a father of two kids. This breaks the ice quite often. This opens up the opportunity for people to share things because they see you as a person*". This helps him to connect with participants and to remain cognisant of his own subjectivity in the course of his work. Sam says that topics relating to gender are seldom spoken of explicitly in everyday life, and that by taking up the responsibility of being himself he is able to engage with participants. He muses, "*real life, it is about duty, and domination, and pleasure and we talk about all of these things, and everything that comes along with that*". The trainers also apply reflexivity in other, related, ways.

First, reflecting on trainings serves the purpose of skills development and critical engagement with knowledge. Narek (30, Austria) states that reflexivity is fundamental to good training practice and it helps trainers to continually improve, "*during the next training, you already have the mistakes of the previous one, and you are trying to override them*". Reflexivity is required in order to maintain a critical perspective in the application of knowledge and concepts. The use of intersectionality among the trainers provides an example. As mentioned, the trainers are strongly committed to intersectional thinking and practice. As Erica (54, England) says, her and her colleagues "*try and make it explicit as much as possible*". Julia (31, Italy) asserts, "*this is a concept which I believe very strongly in and in working with people has to be present all the time*", and Malak (32, Netherlands) declares, "*I don't think you can talk about gender without applying intersectionality, it's just really, it's just really…misguided*". However, reflecting on the use of intersectionality the trainers also raise some important points about the possible pitfalls of the ubiquity of intersectionality (Pedwell, 2010; Hancock, 2016).

Over time, intersectionality has become a buzzword with "spectacular success within contemporary feminist scholarship" (Davis, 2008: 68). Eleni (28, Hungary) says that the trendiness of the term has meant that it is often applied and understood in an ahistorical manner that invisibilises histories of oppression. Consequently, in her work she insists on asking

questions such as, "*What is race and how does racialisation* [work] *and where does this come from and a lot of stress that we are living in a present which draws from history*". Marie (32, Spain) adopts a similar strategy of "*trying to politicise intersectionality" and* using intersectionality to actively, "*play around with ideas of privilege and power*". Although intersectionality is important for any understanding of inequalities, if it is used as a blunt instrument it can reify existing categories. Meike (47, Austria) explains that she does not want to alienate her participants or commissioners with the complexity of intersectionality, but she also does not want to replicate problematic and essentialising categorisations. Meike says, "*I can't deny that I am part of that machinery that reduces complexity*", but that she seeks to remain aware and attentive through "*a lot of critical literature about gender trainings and opinions and how it is in neo-liberal contexts. And I confront also myself with the criticism of autonomous feminists".*

Second, reflection is necessary for trainers in terms of awareness and critical thinking around their own identities and gendered subjectivities. This has been outlined more generally in the preceding discussion of the social locations of trainers; here it refers specifically to the context of the training events. For Sam (57, Netherlands) this is essential to effective gender training, he says, "*that is a very important part of being a good gender trainer. Allow yourself to be vulnerable, allow yourself to be questioned, allow yourself to be open*". Reflexive praxis allows trainers to make sense of their own positionalities and to continually refine the work that they do, it allows them to negotiate and manage the paradoxes and tensions in their work and keep their motivations and values in focus. I pick this theme up again in Chapter 8 on gender training and change.

6.9 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have discussed the dynamics of the relationship between practice and theory in training for gender equality, illustrating how these are woven through epistemology, methodology, and concepts. As Nova (43, Germany) describes it, for her gender training, "*it's an intercept point because I can unify my experiences, my personal, my knowledges*". I drew these elements together to provide the frame for the chapter. I outlined the epistemological positions of the trainers, illustrating the acknowledgement of feminist plurality and the unifying themes that would evidence a feminist epistemological orientation through the rest of the chapter.

Namely, a structural understanding of inequalities; an emphasis on transformative learning; an awareness of relational power dynamics in training scenarios; the collaborative and collective nature of knowledge generation; and the importance of reflexivity. I introduced the threshold concepts of gender, sexuality, and intersectionality. I then located the trainers' current practice within the genealogy of non-formal education and learning, to show the political economy of gender expertise in relation to the polity-economy-episteme configuration of EU adult education. I noted that trainers seek to manage the paradox that this positioning brings about by the way in which they design and deliver trainings.

In the second section, I explored how theory and practice is brought together. I identified the multidimensionality in learning through gender training, a process which involves physical, cognitive, and affective dimensions. Key to these stories is the metaphor of helping workshop participants to see the world in a different way. Learning through discussion and confrontation with peers is pivotal to traversing the liminal space created by threshold concepts in this process. This is balanced with the recognition and conservation of the participants' autonomy and the "ethical implications of deliberately setting out to effect personal change in learners" (Rogers, 2014: 252). The transformative learning orientation of the trainers means that the focus of their non-formal methodologies and methods is on the exploration of alternative viewpoints (Merriam, 2001; Taylor & Cranton, 2012; Herod, 2012). These approaches involve the communication of complex concepts and the chance to practice alternatives; they also provide the potential to reconfigure power relations between "educators" and "learners" within workshop settings. This involves the creation of opportunities for interpersonal dialogue and knowledge exchange, collaborative construction and negotiation of meaning, and a careful integration the different dimensions of learning. This process is aided through experiential techniques and is grounded in an affective involvement of participants and of the trainers. The concepts and analytical tools that the trainers present are "troublesome knowledge" (Perkins, 1999; Meyer & Land, 2006; Cousin, 2006) which causes discomfort and disquiet. Thus, affective engagement is necessary to provide a safe space during an "uncomfortable, emotional repositioning" (Cousin, 2006: 4). Participants need to be coaxed through oscillation between the institutional, popular, and everyday gender knowledges to which they have referred throughout life, into a new understanding of gender and identity as socially constructed and power laden. This is the troublesome nature of threshold concepts. It is akin to what Bohler (1999: 176) calls a pedagogy of discomfort, a pedagogy that is both "an invitation to inquiry" and "a call to action". This is consistent with the feminist epistemological orientations of the trainers, where the

learning they seek to catalyse results in a change in skills, attitudes, and behaviour (Rogers, 2014: 27).

In each case, I provided examples of the conceptual and analytical content and tools presented to participants by the trainers focusing on gender, sexuality, and intersectionality. These threshold concepts hold epistemic currency and legacy and they are ideas, or "equality concepts", around which multiple meanings and applications cohere. Fluid, variable, and inclusive understandings of gender are prioritised. The trainers work to untangle conflation between sexuality and gender, and insist on the importance of disrupting heteronormativity, Intersectionality is used conceptually to address power, privilege and identity; and on a methodological level as an approach of active inclusion and critical thinking around social categories. Common here is the critique of social norms, frustration with the persistence of categories; the understanding of all individuals as gendered and intersectional subjects; and the relational, plural, variable and contextual nature of identities. As I documented the relationship between theory and practice in gender training, I also illustrated how the methodologies and techniques of trainers mirror perspectives in educational theory, although the trainers themselves did not explicitly make these links. These associations reveal a need for more research on the application of theories of learning and education in gender training. Furthermore, as the trainers' critiques of the empty application of buzzwords indicate, it is necessary to critically engage with the gender knowledge of gender expertise itself to expose how epistemic power relations influence circulation.

The learning processes that I have elucidated in this chapter point to the importance of integrating the different dimensions of learning, and an ongoing reciprocity between the trainers and participants in the learning process. Impactful training is created by engaging participants across these three dimensions, and providing the opportunity to enact learnings after the training. This dynamic observed by trainers echoes writing on the transformative potential of training which links impact to the provision of knowledge for change, facilitates motivation and desire for change, and equips participants with the abilities to engender change (UNWTC, 2017c). The training scenario offers a playground, a space within which to explore thinking and feeling about gender in different ways. The glue holding this process together is reflexive practice, which permits a constant and iterative process of knowledge building and

adaption to the uncertainties inherent in learning. Through this analysis, I have shown that practice and theory are in a reciprocal and dialectic relationship in gender training, and that gender and feminist knowledges are circulated through this ongoing dynamic. This is an original contribution to deepening the understanding of the praxis of gender expertise, as research on gender training is being established and insight into "some of the more intangible and complex aspects of gender training" (Ferguson, 2019: 117) is needed. Gender trainers and the participants are actors in this circulation, as they move between domains and participate in relations of power. The environment of actor and structure driven dynamics in which this movement occurs are the focus of the following chapter on resistances and counterstrategies.

Chapter 7 Resistances and counterstrategies in training for equality

The first type of group is the group which had to go through this training on gender, right? So they are civil servants or work for different international agencies. They deal or don't deal [with] *gender but they were sent by their bosses to attend the training on gender* [laughter]. *You get a group; some of them may be convinced on gender equality but not believing. You get one allies or two allies in that group of 25, 30, people and the rest is like, "Well, okay, we don't like conflicts, we don't like discrimination, we don't violence against women, children, and so on, but this has nothing to do with gender".*

And then you spend the whole training actually winning the whole batch of arguments, life stories, historical examples saying that, "Look, gender is the basis of everything" […] *And people will nod "Yes, yes!" through it all. And then, in the evaluation forms, at the end if you ask now that gender matters they will say "no!"* [laughter].

This is really the most fantastic thing because what I have to say about this is that we don't have to convince those who are already convinced, this is the minority. Our main task is to find arguments and convince those who are not convinced and this is nearly impossible, and this is the majority.

Oksana (42, France)

7.1 Introduction

As Oksana's story elucidates, resistance and opposition to gender training is common as the transnational feminist project and its counterparts across domains are ever more embattled (Szelewa, 2014; Grzebalska, 2016; Graff & Korolczuk, 2017; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). In this chapter, I narrow the focus to specific forms of opposition to explore how trainers respond to the challenges which constrain their practice, and the strategies they employ. As Weislander and Nordvall (2019: 2) assert, in this current moment, "when feminist truth claims are broadly challenged, it is important to analyse the dynamics of backlashes and resistance against feminist

discourses". Here I show how participants can respond to the techniques and concepts introduced in the preceding chapter. This is not simply a list of resistances; it is an account of what has taken place, what gains have been made, the effects that these changes have had, and how trainers respond to these effects. It is an account of how practice follows the multi-directionality of change mechanisms. The study of opposition and resistance to gender+ training is in its infancy (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014; Verloo, 2018b). I continue to address the question of how trainers negotiate the tensions and challenges that they face by providing a resistance analysis of gender trainings, *and* by presenting some of the interpretations and counterstrategies that the trainers outline to "highlight valuable routes for possible action against opposition" (Verloo, 2018c: 14). I propose a typology to think through different features of resistance—actors, causes, reasons, and forms (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016: 48). This typology consists of interpersonal, organisational, and structural resistances, both explicit and implicit. I detail examples and interconnections between these levels shared by the trainers, confirming that resistances are a key element of the practice of gender training (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Wong et al., 2016). In this section, I observe that resistances expose conflicts and tensions, rendering material and tangible many of the paradoxes of equality work, but I also argue that these reflect the kinds of changes that equality work has brought about thus far. The discussion of counterstrategies focuses on interpersonal and organisational levels, as gender training is a counterstrategy in of itself at a structural level and I explore this in more detail in the subsequent chapter on equality building. In conclusion, I advocate for a reciprocal understanding of counterstrategies and resistances that foregrounds past and present sequences of circulation, tracks the multi-directionality of social change, and opens up paths for response.

7.2 A typology of resistances and counterstrategies

As evidenced in the preceding chapters, gender training represents a point of intersection, where epistemology, knowledge and action are reciprocally constitutive (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2016). In fact, Bustelo et al. (2016a: 170) argue, "resistance and contestation must be present in order for such a scenario to be considered 'feminist' and 'transformative'". Furthermore, by identifying and analysing the practical constraints and challenges that trainers face as I do here, "we are better able to seek collective solutions and strategies for addressing those challenges" (Ferguson, 2018: 43). At this intersection different kinds of gender knowledge are in conversation, and different paradigms can conflict, giving rise

to resistance. Resistance occurs when desired change conflicts with prevailing values, in the case of gender training desired change is the attempt to communicate knowledge in such a way that it brings about fundamental change. In this sense, I see it as an inevitable part of social justice projects that seek to "create new meanings and social goals, drawing on a range of rhetorical and material resources" (Walby, 2011: 6). Strid (2018: 59) describes this as a continuum of opposition, a system of events and scenarios (including non-activity), which "takes multiple, shifting forms and can be found in every historical context, social domain, and political institution". Martina (40, Slovakia) interprets resistance as a natural human response, "*it's natural, in a way, to human beings that they are resistant to change* [laughter], *especially when they don't recognise something as an issue or as a problem*". Isabelle (33, France) echoes this sentiment, and with a touch of humour, "*so first it's to know that it's normal. So it's expected. As a trainer, it's important to be trained on this already. You know that whenever you talk about gender equality somebody will piss you off*". This sentiment is echoed by many of the trainers, and finds resonance with research on the application of critical pedagogies by activists and educators. This writing shows that often educators "are forced to respond to circumstances that are far from ideal. One could even state that encountering resistance and difficulties is inevitable for popular educators who challenge power structures" (Wieslander & Nordvall, 2019: 9). The way these trainers talk about resistances evidences a close interaction between equality projects, opposition, and relations of power (Verloo, 2018a); and shows that contextual variables pose both constraints and opportunities.

Resistance and the "power" that it opposes together create a nexus; they are conjoined and dynamic in their relationship. Lilja & Vinthagen (2014) link power and corresponding resistances in a Foucauldian understanding. In this framework gender training represents disciplinary power that requires subscription to the norm of gender equality, and "resistances are creative forms of counter-conduct to repression or (power) production, individually as well as collectively" (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014: 123). In this sense, the participants of trainings are resisters, as they push back against what they perceive as an oppressive disciplinary power. Thus, trainers are working against inequality, but they are also dominators in some way as they represent normativising social policy and the power of institutionalised gender knowledge in Europe. In the context of the training session, they are authorities of this knowledge. However, as Hollander and Einwohner (2004: 550) state, the dichotomisation of resisters and dominators "ignores the fact that there are multiple systems of hierarchy, and that individuals can be simultaneously powerful and powerless within different systems". In fact, the epistemic status of feminist and

gender knowledges is frequently undermined, and gender expertise is often delegitimised, undervalued, and dismissed. The forms of opposition that trainers face are most often expressed by those who hold a stake, individually and collectively, in the preservation of hegemonic gender regimes. Non-implementation of equality strategies and policies is not simply about inadequate knowledge or lack of resources, it is an "expression of resistance and opposition to gender+ equality" (Ahrens, 2018: 79). Lombardo and Mergaert (2016: 45) remind us of this complexity in their definition of resistance as "a phenomenon that emerges during processes of change—such as when gender equality policies are implemented—and that is aimed at maintaining the status quo and opposing change". Thus, I propose my parsing of resistances with this complexity in mind.

To systematise this analysis I adopt a typological approach, by identifying different forms of resistance and foregrounding the dynamics thereof. Agocs (1997: 918) describes institutionalised resistance as "a process of refusal by decision-makers to be influenced or affected by the views, concerns or evidence presented to them by those who advocate change in established practices". Agocs divides this into two levels, the level of organisational structure and the level of individual behaviour and experience. In their adaptation of this framework to gender training with civil servant training participants, Lombardo and Mergaert (2013; 2016) add four more resistances to change—implicit, explicit, gender-specific, or general. Pincus (2002) followed men in political and administrative leadership positions in three local Swedish authorities over 15 years to see the different methods/barriers used to prevent, inhibit and obstruct the institutionalisation of gender equality policy. Pincus found three methods of opposition: preventing (inactive opposition), inhibiting (indirect opposition) and obstructing (direct opposition). As this scholarship illustrates, resistance in the practice of gender expertise is well documented and the interaction of power and resistance is widely acknowledged (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). However, as resistance against feminist and gender equality initiatives in Europe is growing (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Strid, 2018), it is imperative to document not only the specific nature and forms of resistance, but also the responses to these.

I combine the conclusions of this scholarship with the findings from this study to provide the following typology. This is made up of an interpersonal level (resistances by specific individuals within training scenarios); an organisational level (institutionalised resistances); and a structural

level (consisting of overarching resistances that are not organisationally specific, but take place across institutional domains). Across these levels, resistances may take indirect/implicit, direct/explicit, or inactive forms. Within this configuration, the actors are participants of trainings, commissioners and organisations. I see these as simultaneously individual and collective in their action. The basis of my typology is the understanding of resistances as activities that are ubiquitous and occur across levels and contexts, and are reactions or responses to a request to promote gender equality. For interpersonal and organisational level resistances, I build on the methodologies and techniques outlined in the preceding chapter by documenting the counterstrategies that trainers employ. Through this analysis, I develop a theory of reciprocity between resistances and counterstrategies, and point to how this influences the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges. This chapter builds into the next, as I frame gender training itself as a response to structural level opposition to gender equality initiatives and outline how trainers perceive the transformative potential and contribution of gender training to social change.

7.2.1 Interpersonal resistances

Resistances at the interpersonal level come in a variety of forms, and the frequency with which trainers experience these forms signal the broad diffusion of gender equality concepts and display the specific moment in equality work that this research is taking place. Karl (54, Netherlands) notes that the kinds of resistances that trainers are facing now have changed, which he interprets as different, but not separate, from the more explicit refusals of a decade ago,

> *I mean, almost everybody has got exposed* [to] *some form of gender development, whether it's through criteria, or through donor priorities, obviously, you've done some training. And so in some ways, the starting place is quite different, but the form* [of] *resistances is not totally different* […] *so they've seen the policy, they've seen things happening, they are engenderised*.

Karl's observation that resistance is less explicit than before is corroborated by recent research on the varieties of opposition to gender expertise (Verloo, 2018a; Verloo, 2018b), and specifically on gender training (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016). Furthermore, the trainers who have been working in the field for the longest make this observation. Active and visible resistance is less common now, and they observe current resistances as much less explicit.

Passivity is particularly hard to counter as it presents with a veneer of compliance. This passivity shows that resistances are not merely unfortunate responses to transformative work, I assert that they are also are an indication that some change has occurred. Ahrens (2018: 77) argues, in fact, that direct opposition has become less prevalent precisely "because gender+ equality is a norm-loaded policy field in the EU system". Non-action or silent obstruction is a means to preserve systems of privilege by accommodating challenges to gender inequality, in the form of gender trainings, while obstructing change. This becomes particularly stark when individual interpersonal resistances turn into collective action, as I outline in the sections on organisational and structural level opposition.

The questionnaire responses provide insight into the frequency and nature of the resistances that trainers experience over a larger sample (see Figure 7.1)[48]. The respondents answer how frequently[49] they encounter six challenges in their training sessions. These challenges are: illusion of equality (the claim that equality already exists); gender fatigue (the idea that gender quality work is redundant and over-done/participants are tired of hearing about it); trainer credibility (challenges to the authority and expertise of the trainer); minimisation (of the importance of gender inequalities); refusal of responsibility/deflection (by the participants for inequalities); and gender means women (the idea that gender is synonymous with women and that non-women identified individuals do not therefore need to be concerned with gender issues and inequalities).

[48] n=85

[49] The frequency scale used is: never; sometimes; about half the time; usually; and always.

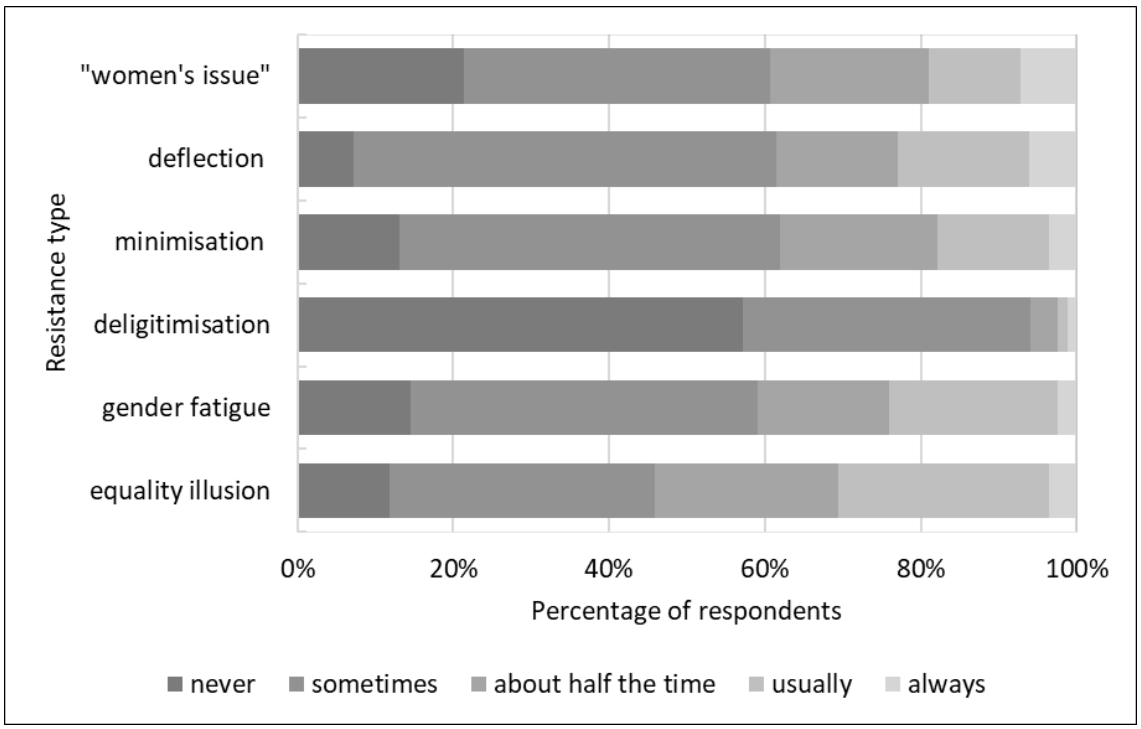

Figure 7.1 Interpersonal resistances
This figure shows the frequency of interpersonal resistances encountered by respondents (n=85).

Taken together the most common response across different items[50] is *sometimes*, indicating that most respondents encounter these resistances at least some of the time. The exception is trainer credibility where over half (57%) of respondents report that they *never* experience this challenge. The fact that almost all (94%) of the responses to trainer credibility fall in the categories of *never* (57%) and *sometimes* (37%) indicates that this is the least often experienced resistance from respondents comparative to the other six kinds. Conversely, the illusion of equality is the item with the greatest percentage of respondents (31%) selecting *usually* and *always*. Taken together these two numbers indicate that participants do not generally openly challenge trainers, they have some familiarity with gender equality issues and believe that these have been adequately addressed. The resistances discussed by the interviewed trainers shed further light on how resistances play out, revealing both high prevalence and passivity.

7.2.1.1 Gender-based deflection

[50] n=84/85. The distribution of the items by respondents illustrates that delegitimisation (undermining training credibility) is the least frequently encountered resistance for respondents, because it is the only item where the mode is 1 ("never" is the most commonly reported experience of delegitimisation), which is selected by over half of the respondents (57%).

A key resistance that the trainers face is the deflection of responsibility because of the presupposition that gender is a synonym for women. Malak (32, Netherlands) relates this resistance as one of the most common that she encounters, the way she speaks about it indicates that it is a resistance that she feels most trainers will be aware of "*all that stuff you know like, 'oh we are going to talk about gender so I should leave the room'. All that kind of stuff, is a really cliché, it is really true in real life*". Anika (66, Netherlands) explains how the alienation that underpins this form of resistance results from a failure to conceptualise gender as relational,

> *Gender is that as dominant, or as dominant men without the relationship* […] *that's often the basis of the different meanings. Then women as victim* [and] *as long as women are looked at as victims up to a point, we can't sympathise with them.*

Conversely, there is also resistance against sex segregation in terms of women only spaces and workshops. Eleni (28, Hungary) describes an experience where she was running a women only workshop which was interrupted,

> *There was this guy from the neighbourhood who opened the door and he said "this is wrong! I just want to be here I don't know why I can't be here. This is not right, why can't I be here? This is not the way you're supposed to do this this is in Europe"*.

In this case, the resistance is rationalised by referring to the notion of a gender-equal Europe, illustrating the deployment of macro-level discourses in individual resistances. This reveals a complex relationship between gender, discourses of equality, and the material practicalities of gender work. Interestingly, although there is resistance based on the idea that gender issues are the domain of women, many of the trainers indicated that resistances come from all directions. Indeed, seven of the trainers share their surprise and frustration that workshop participants who identify as women are often those who are most visibly resistant. Erica (54, England) gives the example of a participant who complained about staff being inconsiderate by taking maternity leave, she says, "*I was really shocked because I just thought that everybody, and particularly a female head teacher, would kind of understand that that was a basic right. An employment right*". This statement reflects, in a wider perspective, gendered inequalities within the domain of economy based on male worker norms. It also demonstrates how the gender of participants can affect their experience of trainings. I see it as a demonstration of gendered knowledge, both subjective and collective, that participants bring into sessions, the effect this has on their learning processes, and how the trainers react to this from their own positionalities.

7.2.1.2 Denial and delegitimisation

As explored in the chapter on theory and practice, gender training is as much a work of emotional labour as one of information or knowledge transfer. Therefore, it not surprising that the trainers would take note of discomfort and denial coming from participants in their sessions, and perceive this as a resistance. One of the most common examples is the straightforward clear-cut denial of gender issues. Malak (32, Netherlands) describes encountering this resistance both in development projects and in trainings conducted in Europe, "*you have what I call gender deniers, like as you have the people who deny the Holocaust, you have also people denying gender*". Alex (27, Romania) uses examples from working with police officers in Romania to explain how denial and discomfort manifest as resistances, "*I found a lot of, how to say, rejection, or discomfort rather than rejection. I don't know how to put it. I think many time the way is rejection of what I'm saying. What I'm proposing is* [causing] *discomfort and denial*". As many practitioners have found, it is permissible to "talk about gender as long as nobody has to give anything up or be profoundly challenged about their assumptions, beliefs and behaviours" (Ferguson, 2018: 52). However, as Alex describes, the troublesome knowledge that trainers seek to convey is challenging and disquieting.

To deal with their discomfort participants will seek to delegitimise trainers, often manifesting in the denial of the factual information presented by trainers. This is one of several detailed accounts that Erica (54, England) provides of this dynamic,

> *I chose some statistic just to give the kind of like, "why is it a problem?". And I immediately had a reaction against the statistics. The two male teachers in the room immediately became defensive and said, "I'm not like that*".

This kind of reaction has the effect of delegitimising the trainer, and gender knowledge more generally, and allows participants to eschew responsibility for their own role in the perpetuation of inequalities. This is consistent with research in the academic sector which shows that interpersonal resistances manifest in the form of "the denial of the need for gender change, the trivialisation of gender equality and the refusal to accept responsibility" (Verge et al., 2018: 96).

Participants make recourse to deterministic claims about gendered behaviours, to uphold this delegitimisation. According to Ebba (63, Sweden) the fixation of different traits to one gender

(or sex) or another is a classic resistance strategy of deflection. Ebba uses the example of the trope or claim that "*women are the worst enemy of other women*", saying, "*This is a favourite thing to put forward".* In her interpretation this claim is not reflective of a documented phenomenon, but rather a resistance that,

> *is part of trying to blame the victim. It is about saying that is not us men, it is about you women. So it is a very classical way of putting it into the group that wants change as opposed to seeing that the problem is taking place.*

Ebba is arguing that is that this is a way to put blame on those who are being discriminated against, and thus also on the advocates for change who support them because those in power are unwilling to change. Many trainers attribute this resistance of denial and discomfort to, in Alex's words, a "*deep down unacceptance of oneself*". Denial and delegitimisation can also take more aggressive forms.

7.2.1.3 Violent resistance

Reactions from trainees are predominantly indirect and passive but occasionally resistance is expressed in violent or aggressive ways. For many trainers, the gendered violence that they have witnessed or experienced is one of the motivations for them to do this work, as seen in Chapter 4, but violence is also expressed in resistance against their work. Meike (47, Austria) describes it in this way, "*it is everywhere and there is violence, a lot of violence, and that is the most difficult part of the gender training*". Some talk about violence experienced in their workshops as a strong form of resistance. Alice (40, Italy) works in schools as part of a movement in Italy called *Educare alle differenze* (Education on differences), which is about challenging gender inequalities and building inclusion with young people. Alice relates that there are occasions in which young men in this context insist on representing figures who are perpetrating discrimination or aggression, "*I haven't found real walls, but I have had experiences of situations in which it has been quite difficult to deal with violent young men*". However, she elaborates that overall, training is redemptive because, "*this is really not usual, the most beautiful thing is being able to hold the complexity of these young people who are asking themselves loads of questions*". Alice seeks to work with this violence and contextualise it. This kind of counterstrategy and others will be discussed further later on in the chapter.

Fiore (30, Italy) describes how they experienced violence when they were asked to give a workshop about sexual orientation in a school in Italy. They shared their suspicion that something was behind the actions of the participants,

> *And when I got there they were shouting at me "lesbian!"…there were these absurd dynamics, but then we were like put a smile on and, "Ok…lets restart"* […] *so they were all boys and I was lesbian* [...] *So I started with them, and I also started with myself.*

How to interpret this violence? These trainers see violence as a part of their work, as something that they will necessarily encounter as they seek to engage participants with different perspectives. This is not surprising as gender training requests a revision of an individual's gender roles, identity and beliefs about the structure of society which can cause reactions of fear and self-protection, experienced as resistances by the gender trainers (Pauly et al., 2009; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016). This is fear of "losing power and privileges, of uncertainties, of painful truth, of upsetting the status quo and of self-examination" (UNWTC, 2015b). In the case of Fiore, they use reflexivity to talk through the aggression that had been directed at them. They continue the story, describing how they fostered a dialogue which created space for underlying issues to emerge. They explain,

> *In the end it came out that these were all kids who were being treated terribly by the teachers and that were discarded by everyone. So we did some work on the anger that they had and how they were feeling as young people about themselves. Until we created a connection, and once we had created this connection it was no longer important for them that I looked like a lesbian…we got there by leading from ourselves.*

Although the trainers express sadness and frustration about the reality of encountering violence, they are also committed to using this violence against itself, as a tool to facilitate discussion and engagement.

7.2.1.4 Gender fatigue and the equality illusion

The trainers share stories of vocal and explicit resistance, but they also talk about how the nature of resistances have shifted over time to more implicit and passive forms. It is a challenge to fight this veneer of compliance. One implicit form is that of the equality mirage (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016), or the illusion of equality. This is the idea that that gender equality has been achieved and that therefore equality work is unnecessary and a waste of time and resources.

This is a pervasive resistance: almost every trainer mentions the frustration of having to work against this underlying assumption, whether workshop participants make it obvious or not. Erica (54, England) explains, "*there's an assumption that we've got gender equality. It's kind of like everything else is fine* […] *it's a really big issue and that they're all – but children are still surprised if you show them pictures of women electricians* [laughter]". Isabelle (33, France) emphasises that combatting this resistance is the starting point for her trainings,

> *We call it the illusion of equality because most of the people in France, they believe that there's no gender issues. They believe that because there were—women rights have changed so much the last 100 year, in the last century, that there's no more inequalities. Most of the people are really convinced that there are no more inequalities*.

The phenomenon of the equality illusion is closely linked to a general expression of gender fatigue by participants, where workshop participants and organisations believe that they have heard enough about gender inequalities and they are reluctant to dedicate more time and resources to a problem that they feel has been "dealt" with. In part because of the mainstreaming of gender and what Eerdewijk (2016: 345) calls the "general acknowledgement of the importance of gender equality", the trainers agree that resistances are now less overt than they were previously. Nina (42, Sweden) comments that the participants and organisations that she works with know that they should be working against gender inequalities:

> *But there is still lack of action. The step from knowing to doing is sometimes challenging. And then quite seldom nowadays I get really, resistance, open resistance which sometimes is easier to discuss than the silent kind of resistance.*

These interpersonal resistances occur on an individual level, but as Nina describes here, they also collectively constitute organisational opposition and resistances to gender training interventions, even those which have been directly commissioned.

7.2.2 Organisational resistances

7.2.2.1 Organisational leadership and delegitimisation

According to the interviewed trainers the leadership of an organisation can support or undermine gender equality initiatives in different ways, which is consistent with research detailing the importance of key actors in the application of equality policies within the EU

(Mazey, 1995; Stratigaki, 2004; McBride & Mazur, 2010; Krook & Mackay, 2011). Once again this reflects the tension of institutional legitimisation whereby gender training is commissioned as an equality initiative, but simultaneously hollowed of its political and transformative potential. Resistances at an organisational level are part of institutionalised patterns of resistance, they are carried out through individual behaviour or at the level of organisational structures and processes. These manifest as "organisational behaviour that decision-makers in organisations employ to actively deny, reject, refuse to implement, repress or even dismantle change proposals and initiatives" (Agocs, 1997: 918). Verge et al. (2018: 86) conclude, from their research on gender mainstreaming in the Spanish higher education curriculum, that resistance to the integration of a gender perspective is "entrenched in a web of both gender-specific and apparently gender-neutral academic informal (non-written) rules". Organisational resistances, as the trainers describe, can be explicit, but are most often about the maintenance of unequal systems under the guise of benevolent, yet empty, support.

Collective organisational behaviour means that support from the leadership of an organisation needs to be sustained and well resourced; otherwise, the evaporation of equality initiatives like training is ineluctable (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016). Organisation leaders need to be actively supportive and visibly legitimising of gender equality issues, or they become tacitly complicit in inactive opposition which sustains current inequalities. In evidence of this Nina (42, Sweden), who works in the field of education, says that sustainable work on gender issues is very rare,

> *What I see is that there is hardly, no school, that is able to keep the long-term work goal like* [the] *sustainable development of work connected to gender issues, I think. So that's hard, it requires a leadership that is very dedicated and an organisation that* [can] *really see the possibilities.*

In agreement with Nina, the other trainers confirm that ongoing institutional or organisational support of equality initiatives is generally incredibly uncommon.

One of the reasons that collective institutionalised resistance occurs is that leadership prevents implementation through inactivity because inequality work is not prioritised. This inhibits change through indirect opposition (Pincus, 2002). Marie (32, Spain) expresses this with frustration,

> *I mean you get a lot of junior people who are interested and are enthused and they want to learn more and they want to implement this in their work but they don't have the resources or the management support to do it.* [...] *Senior management are like "it's stuff that our staff need to do, it's not really stuff that we need to be concerned with", and those kinds of micro-resistances are what prevents change.*

Here it is evident that there is a disjuncture between decision-makers in organisational leadership and the staff that carry out the operational activities. This echoes van Eerdewijk's (2014) finding, from research on gender mainstreaming instruments in Dutch development agencies, that weak implementation correlates with a disconnection between organisational and operational levels of the organisation. In other words, staff responsible for gender targets is not supported by strategic decision-making in order to achieve these goals. Gender mainstreaming becomes an individual, as opposed to institutional affair, which relies on volunteerism and overstates the capacity for individual change (Ferguson, 2018: 52). In the case of gender training the skills, knowledge, and behaviour changes achieved are not carried through into everyday work. In practical terms this translates as hollow commitment, when the participants of trainings know that the "support" of decision-makers is just "a rhetorical statement with no real political will behind [it], they will not implement the gender initiative or they will be more likely to resist the training" (Pauly et al., 2009). Furthermore, if junior members of staff are the only ones responsible for implementing a gender perspective, the "uneven distribution of responsibility for equality can become a mechanism for reproducing inequality" (Ahmed, 2012: 91). Ebba (63, Sweden), who speaks substantially about gender equality actions in professional contexts, interprets delegitimisation and lack of prioritisation as a result of wishing to maintain power,

> *Some hesitation has always been around, and some lack of knowledge also but also different interests. They don't want it because they don't want to work with it because it is about challenging* [a] *certain position of power in a certain time. The people who have power have a certain interest in losing it.*

Investment by decision-makers in the maintenance of the status quo and existing power relations influences the decisions that are made within the organisation regarding the material support for gender equality interventions, such as resources and funding.

7.2.2.2 Resource allocation and funding

If there is limited organisational support, or direct resistance to change initiatives such as gender training, this is visible in the distribution of resources within the organisation. This takes place through a second disconnect, between the conceptual formulation of work (including design of programmes, support mechanisms and resource allocation) and the administrative organisation thereof (van Eerdewijk, 2014: 353). One form of resource allocation is the funding available for training. The results from the questionnaire on the frequency of challenges encountered in training work provide insight into the widespread lack of funding.

Given the prevalence of resistances and opposition as a theme in existing research, in the interviews I asked respondents to comment on the frequency with which they experience four forms of resistance (see Figure 7.2): resistance from participants, resistance or restrictions from commissioners (those who request the training), institutional or organisational resistance or barriers, and inadequate funding for trainings. As I have visually represented in Figure 7.2, resistance from participants is something most trainers encounter at least some of the time, with only 4% of respondents reporting that they never encounter participant resistance. I see this high probability of encountering resistance from participants as consistent with the variety of interpersonal resistances that trainers face, detailed in Figure 7.1 and through the section on interpersonal resistances. Conversely, the respondents indicate that just under half (44%) never experience resistance from commissioners, and half (46%) sometimes do, cumulatively accounting for almost all (90%) of respondents. In light of the interviewed trainers' accounts, I do not see this as a definitive indication of a low frequency of commissioner resistance altogether, but rather as an indication of tacit inaction and tokenism by commissioners. The respondents also report that out of these four types of resistance, funding is the one resistance most often encountered, by two thirds (64%) of respondents, indicating that they experience funding issues at least half the time[51].

[51] n=83. Figure 7.2. shows that lack of funding has a bimodal asymmetrical distribution, with two peaks at sometimes 28% and usually 31%. In this question (n=83) the median is 3 and the mode is 4 meaning that “usually”, was the most commonly selected option by 31% of respondents. Here the mode is two units higher than in the three other items of this question on resistances, showing that this is the most common challenge for respondents.

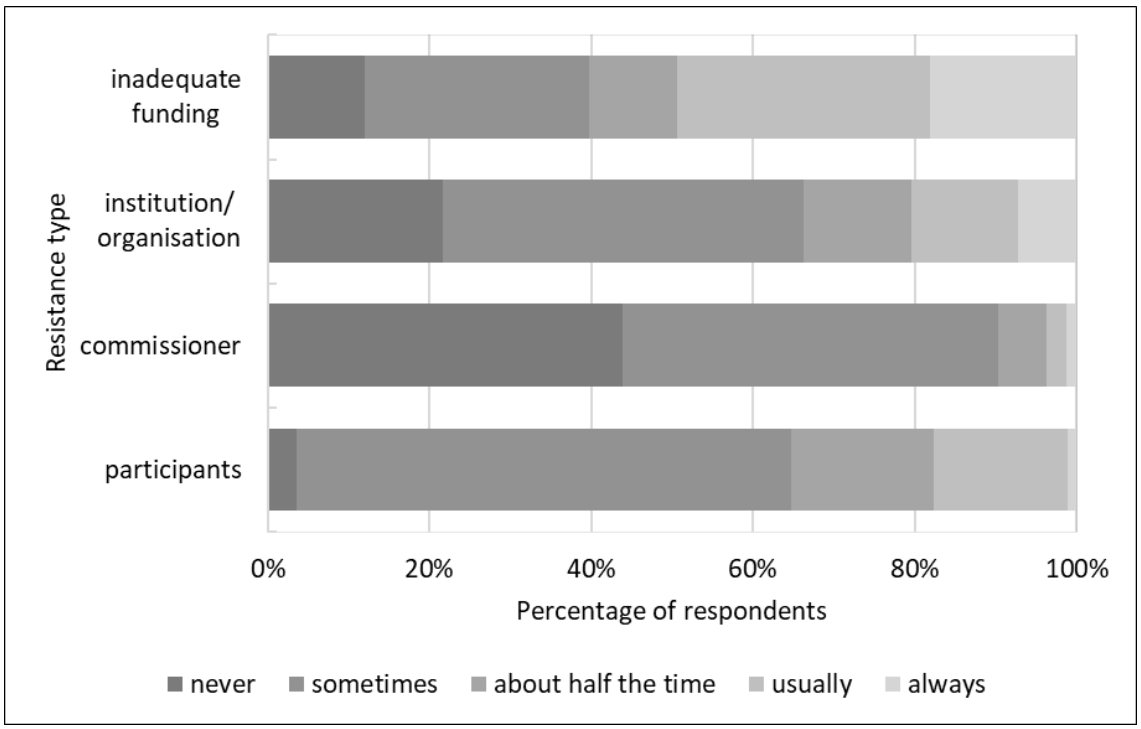

Figure 7.2 Types of resistances
This figure shows the frequency with with respondents (n=85) encounter different types of resistances.

A lack of resources, such as limited funding, may be classified as an inactive or indirect resistance (as there is absence of direct action) and forms of direct resistance can accompany it. Marie (32, Spain), talking about her work in a large international organisation, discloses with frustration, "*to say that the context there for gender expertise and equality was hostile, is putting it mildly really, because there is a serious antagonism to looking at gender issues, complete lack of budget, and complete lack of support*". Lack of resources to support equality work in general and gender training specifically can also be linked to a restructuring of funding following the financial crisis of 2008 and new public management approaches (Koenig-Archibugi & Zürn, 2006; Beveridge & Velluti, 2008; Kantola, 2010; Bego, 2015). This restructuring has resulted in generally reduced funding, non-equality priorities, and the imperative that gender experts, in this case gender trainers, deploy discourses of economic efficiency to justify their work (Perron, 2005; Kantola, 2010; Prügl, 2010). This creates a situation in which gender trainers are under significant pressure to pitch their trainings in the "right way" (Ferguson, 2015: 384), according to the priorities of commissioners, while competing for limited funding and striving to balance this with transformative strategies.

7.2.2.3 Tokenism, activity checking, and evaporation

Resistances follow the contours of the political economy of gender knowledge (Ghodsee, 2004; Perron, 2005; Prügl, 2015), in the sense that economic utility approaches to equality can result in tokenistic applications of gender equality initiatives in institutional and organisational settings whereby the fact of the initiative comes to symbolically equate change itself (Ahmed, 2012). In other words, gender trainings symbolically represent equality intent within an organisation, without concomitant practical change to power systems and priorities in professional activities. Feminist politics and demands are translated into "managerial solutions" which allow them to be operationalised within institutional settings (Desai, 2007: 108). The trainers are aware of this challenge, and the impact thereof on their work. Ebba (63, Sweden) describes her stance clearly,

> *I have said no, I will not come because you have no real interest. It is just because you have written a gender equality plan and there you say we will have a training and then, "check!". It is activity checking instead of content checking, what is the result? What is our way taking care of it, who is responsible?*

What Ebba outlines here is a common frustration among trainers and in the practice of gender expertise in general, which is well documented (Longwe, 1997; Ferguson, 2015; Prügl, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Mukhopadhyay, 2017). Tokenism and checkbox approaches give an illusion of commitment to gender equality, while nothing substantive within the organisation has changed (Jacquot, 2010; Ahmed, 2012; Clisby & Enderstein, 2017).

Many of the trainers mention checkbox approaches to equality and anti-discrimination policies or the use of certain vocabulary in organisations as hollow gestures that make people feel good but bring about no concrete change. In these cases "the point of the document can be to have a document you can point to" (Ahmed, 2012: 90). Acquiescing to gender equality initiatives may communicate receptiveness, but coupled with inaction, tokenistic application, and the absence of material support, it is dismissive. It is an action "through which feminist work is simultaneously replenished and contained" (do Mar Pereira, 2012: 296). The expectation from commissioners that gender trainers deliver trainings which make gender mainstreaming "easy" is congruous with the broader trend in which gender experts are employed as freelancers to "*genderise*" (as Karl calls it) existing programmes through a checklist approach. On a conceptual level, this results in over-simplification as trainers are "forced to pin down a single presentation and construction of gender and apply it to the relevant training or institutional context" (Ferguson, 2018: 31). In this way concepts are monetised as "tactical slogans" (Chant, 2012: 32).

As Mukhopadhyay (2014: 362) observes, the most commonly commissioned gender training is "a short, event-oriented and workshop bounded form of presenting 'gender' as a set of skills, which can be straightforwardly delivered and reproduced". Unfortunately, this means that trainings are commonly limited to one-off events, with reduced scope, with a focus on pure information delivery that often results in depoliticisation (Wong et al., 2016). Such brief sessions, of a couple of hours or half a day, are often inadequate to "develop or strengthen critical gender awareness among participants" (Wieslander & Nordvall, 2019: 23), and may even generate counterproductive results by bringing a taken-for-granted need for gender equality into debate without adequate time to discuss this. In this format, the normalising technology aspect of gender training is amplified, resulting from the imbrication of feminist knowledges and neoliberal mentalities. The resistances of participants and decision-makers against this governing of their conduct then distracts from the "embodied, structural, and tenacious" (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016: 91) nature of gendered inequalities which privilege some and disempower others.

Another form of tokenism is the implementation of inappropriate activities that appear oriented towards gender equality, but in reality perpetuate gendered inequalities. Martina, (40, Slovakia) for example, expresses her frustration with sex-stereotyped activities that are presented as the application of a gender perspective. She gives the example of a course she runs in which participants from different organisations have to design projects that incorporate a gender perspective. She recounts the example of a proposal to bring refugee women together to cook. She explains that the participants failed to inquire around the needs of the women, or to account for the fact that they speak different languages. Rather, in Martina's interpretation the participants were, "*just assuming* […] *about bringing women together needs to be around a stove".* She describes this kind of initiative which lacks critical planning as "*easy thinking"* on the part of the organisation. It is an application of gender mainstreaming which reinforces problematic stereotypes, without an appropriate needs analysis, for the sake of checking gender off the list. Individual and organisational resistances interplay as organisations commission trainings in order to appear "gender mainstreaming compliant" and individual workers are forced to attend. The trainers commonly link the motivation for attendance of participants with the training environment provided by the organisations, which significantly influences the impact of the workshops. Participants who attend workshops voluntarily are already engaged, as Paola (45, Germany) attests, these participants have "*a high motivation and they had this interest. We didn't have to convince them or so on, they didn't learn that much*". Non-voluntary

participants generally present greater resistance, as Emily (51, Netherlands) observes, "*they're not happy to be there*". As will become evident in the discussion of counterstrategies, trainers try to respond to the composition of the group in order to engage even the most reluctant.

Resources continue to be an important factor once workshops are complete. Once the workshops or training events are complete, the support that the participants receive from their organisations and institutions to implement what they have learnt is key to the ongoing success of trainings. Julia (31, Italy) states the importance of this support, "*this is probably the biggest part of this, to give room to the participants to do something with what they have learnt*". Indeed, in research commissioned by EIGE (2014a: 10) on successful gender training, accountability systems and organisational support rank highly as preconditions for success. As mentioned, factors such as resources provided for trainings, appropriate physical spaces for training to take place, and the support for trainings within organisations influence the experience of trainers and participants in multiple ways. I read this through the concept of emergence, introduced in the theoretical framing of this research (see Walby, 2009: 72), which sees individual actions coalesce in social systems. Through this collectivity, the individual is in relationship with structural level dynamics and individual instances of resistances cohere into this structural level opposition.

7.2.3 Structural resistances

The resistances detailed here speak to the contexts in which equality work is currently taking place in the European region and internationally (Szelewa, 2014; Grzebalska, 2016; Graff & Korolczuk, 2017), and how this plays out across interrelating domains. Gender training is not a stand-alone intervention; as outlined in the conceptual framework of this research, it forms part of multiple actions of gender mainstreaming in Europe, in "the long-term strategic approach to delivering gender equality" (Rees, 2005: 559). Simply put, this "involves decision making in all areas of society being marked by an active concern for gender equality" (Arribas & Carrasco, 2003: 25). In order to achieve this level of diffusion it is necessary that all actors involved in public policies and processes integrate a gender perspective in their work (see Council of Europe, 1998). As described in the review of the literature, gender training is envisaged as the tool for the transfer of gender knowledge necessary for this process. However, feminist and technical bureaucratic competencies are not necessarily easily compatible (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2016: 46). As evidenced in the section on organisational level resistances, the support for the

integration of gender is lacking. For example, although some organisations may provide differing levels of support, viewed together the structures of leadership in civil society organisations can also act as opposing structures. The trainers speak about the rigidity of organisations and a reticence to engage in collective learning as more general challenges linked to the structure of organisations in the equality sector. Alex (27, Romania) explains how representation acts as a barrier to inclusion in the Romanian context; they assert that in terms of intersectionality, *"I don't see the results as much as the conversations".* Alex explains how this takes form,

> *The people who work in these organisations who are in a leadership position are, let's say, they are white most of the people. Almost all of them, and in the feminist groups for example, only recently there is the habit of having more intersectionality like a Roma woman but I think that the women who are leadership positions or that are visible attract people who are similar to them*.

The collective institutionalisation of gender and equality discourses is complex, it involves a concert of actions and support, but it also raises questions about the driving concept of "equality". Research into the success of gender experts pushing gender equality agendas in public policy depends on high-level support, international importance (such as from the EU and the UN), combined with "supportive administrations, governments, and government actors (left governments and feminists in government); coalitions of support; and institutionalisation of gender equality" (Hoard, 2015: 120). Anika (66, Netherlands) describes how institutionalisation does not necessarily mean norm shifting at a societal level,

> *Gender equality or gender in translation into policy into government level it raises all these equality questions. What really is equality? And who is speaking for equality? And the fact is that that it is led by a bunch of bureaucrats who talk about equality* [laughter].

Anika states that although the discursive dimension is visible, for example in gender mainstreaming policy (Rees, 2005; Jacquot, 2010), this does not mean that change is necessarily taking place. She draws a parallel, "*just because you have elections doesn't mean that you have a democracy. Right?".* Resistances related to visibility versus action lead me to question what kind of equality is advocated for, who the envisioned subjects are (see Squires, 2008), and what the strategies for building this might be.

I argue that it is important to locate oppositions and resistances that emerge to gender training in the European context as part of an international geopolitical production and dissemination of gender and feminist knowledges. The notion of inequality elsewhere complements other deflective and indirect resistances, particularly that of the equality mirage. Anika (66, Netherlands) describes this kind of resistance as the idea that inequality does not reside in Europe, "*as long as we can point the finger at the developing countries* [laughter]. *And we have gender equality and they don't and that's part of their culture*". Yara (32, Canada), who works in development contexts and in European contexts as a trainer, emphasises that, contrary to expectation, resistances in European contexts are equally strong. Yara shares an instance where a European participant was telling her that women naturally want to be carers because they produce milk. She emphasises that she is invested in bringing this to light because people think resistance is only found in more "*conservative*" cultures, "*but I wanted to bring the European to say that in even in Europe you have this constant debate about what feminism actually is, about what women's rights are and what empowerment is"*. These accounts show that resistances and opposition to concepts of gender equality can be intertwined with Eurocentrism and colonial logics, and they are deployed in support of claims about European cultural supremacy, as I revealed in the analysis of epistemic hierarchies in Chapter 5. Therefore, it is necessary to critically interpret resistances in relation to the European political economy of gender expertise. I see this critical vision as necessary in order to expose the correspondence between equality claims and structural level oppositional politics, such as the anti-gender movement in Europe.

Gender training, as part of the gender mainstreaming project, might be seen as a tool with the implicit goal of achieving a tipping point, whereby incremental change through a set of events coalesces to give rise to a sudden fundamental change (Castellani & Hafferty, 2009; Verloo, 2018a). As Verloo (2018b) writes, the concept of tipping points brings to the fore questions about the resilience of feminist politics and responses to opposition. This may operate on a mechanism of a negative feedback loop whereby counterstrategies slow down change. The "transnationally circulating movement against gender ideology" (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017: 1) has mobilised in the last decade against gender equality and sexual citizenship in the European region. The trainers describe this as "anti-genderism" or movements against so-called "gender-ideology". This is relevant here because it reflects the experiences of the trainers where they have to contend with a backlash, or a reaction to the gains of gender equality initiatives and policies in the European region more broadly. This backlash illustrates the dynamic nature of processes of opposition, through an interrelation of material and discursive elements, whereby

concepts of equality are cyclically contested and re-affirmed. Seven trainers speak about anti-gender movement discourses and rhetoric that are present in public media and are emerging among participants of their workshops in the form of resistances to discussions of gender and equality. Julia (31, Italy), who works with mixed groups of young people from different European states, gave an example of from when she delivered a training in Sardegna, and encountered strong resistance from the young people she was working with. She began a discussion with the people sitting next to her, "*to try to push them a little bit and they started to explaining to me".* These participants said things to her such as, "*now in Italy there is this really big gender propaganda and that in the schools they are telling the kids that paedophilia is ok*". She observes that this vilification of equality LGBTIQ+ rights "*is a massive trope"* caused by anti-gender movement campaigns which work to convince parents and children that there is corruptive "*gender propaganda*" in Italian schools.

These anti-gender movement claims draw strongly on discourses of guardianship (see Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017) which make the workshop participants distrustful of participating in events that are in any way related to the topic of gender for fear of "moral corruption". For Tomas, who works in Poland with men and boys, anti-gender discourse has practical effects on his work that plays out on an institutional level. In Poland the last decade has seen rising conservativism and state sanctioned equality policy delegitimisation (see Szelewa, 2014). Tomas (32, Poland) explains, "*So if there is a message to the authorities that there is a gender workshop the information is that there is something wrong with the school because with gender they don't respect the concept of the holy family*". Tomas commented that these kinds of restrictions make his work "*impossible actually*", demonstrating that the neoconservative discourses and the anti-gender movement, understood broadly, is having clear material effects for the practice of gender expertise. For Tracy (Scotland), countering competing pejorative and discriminatory discourses, or "*the rise in the whole anti-foreigner, anti-migration, anti-refugee rhetoric*", has become an integral part of the practice of gender training. She argues that trainers need to respond directly to these discourses and integrate this into the work that they do, and not simply as an add-on, because it constitutes the context in which they work and the issues that the participants of their trainings have on their minds. She states, "*It necessitates that we deal with racism, and transphobia, and homophobia, and biphobia, and ableism, and ageism, and all the rest of it*".

7.3 Employing counterstrategies

Resistances are multiple, but according to the trainers in this research, these are an integral feature of gender training, and realising the transformative potential of gender training involves developing counterstrategies to tackle them. Although the resistances and opposition that the trainers described is ubiquitous, they also speak about the strategies that they use to counteract them. Many of the counterstrategies take the form of training methodologies, critical pedagogies, and foregrounding the sociality of learning, which have been discussed in the preceding chapters. Here I expand on responses to specific resistances by presenting examples relating to the preceding discussion of resistances. In the interpersonal resistances presented above, I see dis-investment, non-action, non-responsibility, and non-involvement. In synthesis, these are characterised by a creation of distance between a given participant or commissioner and the problem of gender inequality. In the case of organisational level resistances, the unifying feature is the lack of material, as opposed to discursive, support. Thus, here I focus on counterstrategies that centre on engagement and reduce distance in the case of the former, and secure support in the case of the latter. In terms of tackling structural level resistances, this is picked up in the next chapter where I discuss the contribution of gender training to social change.

7.3.1 Interpersonal counterstrategies

Trainers respond to the context and the participants of the workshops by being prepared with tailored methodologies, specific counterarguments, and relevant examples. Malak (32, Netherlands) talks about preparing specifically for the needs and the positions of different groups in the activities and content of the sessions. She outlines, "*so we have a different target group we will design differently. Depending on what they need we do a more complex analysis*—[what] *are their countries and their backgrounds*". This is related to the responsiveness principle that the trainers bring to their work (discussed in Chapter 6) and it extends into preparations specific to the anticipated resistances in a certain context that is mentioned by so many trainers. Ebba (63, Sweden) explains,

> *So it is depending on what kind of field you are in, if it is medicine and it is entrepreneurs, or social bureaus, or civil society organisations, or it is defence force. Whatever, I always try to find really concrete* [examples]*…to try to understand what has happened in their field.*

In their responsiveness to participants and in setting the space of the workshops, trainers directly discuss the question of opposition and resistance as a tool to engage participants and begin a collective conversation. Meike (47, Austria) uses the inevitability of resistance itself as a tool to create a rapport with the workshop participants. She starts her training sessions

> *with arguments why it would be better not to discuss gender issues. So just to tell them I understand you very well, like when you are sick of that and when you have resistance against those issues, and I understand you and I feel it myself and I know also some of the arguments.*

This acknowledgment is disarming and allows the participants to communicate their perspectives, rendering otherwise passive and implicit resistances more visible and thus easier to tackle.

Asking thought-provoking questions, and acknowledging the doubts of the participants, is a tool to tackle preconceptions that result in disengagement from equality building. Emily (51, Netherlands) concedes that each time she is both surprised and knows that she should not be surprised by what she calls the "*disruptive portraiture*" of feminism as "*a bomb or that it is dangerous".* Sirvat (35, Armenia) echoes the same schism, contrasting his own position of "*equality and equal opportunities for people regardless of their sex"* with the fact that the feminist movement is "*being perceived controversially in many places. I have a feeling that when you talk about women's rights,* [participants think] *you are talking about women's rights violating men's rights".* The counterstrategy is to ask what participants think, and tackle these preconceptions with concrete examples. For example, Sam (57, Netherlands) recounts that his participants often ask him whether he is a feminist or not, and he responds "*and I say yes but then I say please explain to me what you think a feminist is, because I question all of the power abuse systems".*

Counterstrategies are only effective if they respond directly to resistances. Tracy (Scotland) advocates for being as prepared as possible in order to deal with resistances appropriately,

> *We have to have concrete, solid answers to questions like, "Well, isn't this all going too fast?"* […] *and trainers are going to have to be able to answer these questions in a way*

that is in line with the ethics of equalities and human rights work which is not to just throw people into the gutter.

Tracy explains that by acknowledging the reality of resistance and the fact that people will be contrary, even incredulous, about some ideas, it is possible to respond appropriately to their concerns. For example, for participants who feel that gender is a new imposition, she provides examples of non-binary gender roles and diverse sexualities from across different cultures and moments in history. She points out that it is also useful to have numerous examples to share with the participants so that something in these may resonate with their lived experience. Meike and Tracy, along with many of the other trainers, insist on the need for increased work and research around resistances, in terms of diagnosing and responding to specific instances. For Sirvat (35, Armenia), which is something echoed by other trainers, resistances are also part of a learning process and a renegotiation of paradigms for the participants. She says, "*You have to find a way to have those conversations with people, to talk about the resistance that they may be feeling, or the frustration that they may be feeling, or the confusion that they may be feeling*". I see this as an acknowledgement of a complex relationship between gender training and change, where resistances are a generative part of this process.

Trainers use specific tools among the methodologies and methods outlined in the previous chapter to respond directly to resistances in certain groups. Ines (37, Italy) likes to use the space of the workshop itself to give participants a different understanding of themselves and disrupt traditional hierarchies that support opposition and resistances. She works outdoors, using activities such as hiking and moving through trees with ropes, because these settings allow her to flatten traditional hierarchies of identity and relations of power within groups. Unusual physical spaces and movement within these spaces can facilitate reflection and learning by providing a safe environment in which to play and imagine different way of being. Ines explains, "*working with gender it can be very interesting to put into a setting where the group is acting and then to reflect on the dynamics".* For Fiore (30, Italy) techniques of self-reflection and debriefing are useful counterstrategies to a large variety of resistances because "*each and every thing is a way to learn, to put oneself out there for remodelling or changing. You know this is the thing that I like most about these methods; it is that you are staying with people*". Debriefing and reflection on content and experience is important in the training process because participants often expect to be instructed with results and norms and they are not accustomed to "participate actively in setting their agenda" (Hofmann & Besson, 2019: 169). Debriefing tools

allow the trainer to encourage collective reflexivity, deeper learning, and they reduce dynamics of power between the trainer and the participants of the workshop.

The trainers leverage the interpersonal group experience, dynamics, and conversation to reduce the discomfort that accompanies working with issues of gender and discrimination. Fiore explains that this creates an environment where, "*you are trying to know and you are trying to understand*". Isabelle (33, France) and her colleagues brainstorm about resistances from participants together to share their knowledge and their approaches. One of their favoured techniques is to include the other participants in a discussion of a specific resistance that one participant brings. She elaborates,

> *What I do most of the time, I say, "Okay. You think that. What do the other people think?" And so other people will answer and there will be a challenge in the room and in the end the members of the group will convince the person. Or actually, they will answer at your place, which is good because you're not the only one defending the point of view. It means that you're not alone in the room*.

Indeed, the most common counterstrategy at the interpersonal level is the engagement of other workshop participants in challenging resistance. Five trainers describe using the same technique. For Narek (30, Austria), the conversation between participants is indispensable and the confrontation is necessary in order to begin to see things from a different perspective,

> *Yes, of course, people don't agree. People always can tell counterarguments and so on, but that's a good point. It means that at least they are open and they are honest. So, at the end, you will see the result if they change their mind.*

Interpersonal level resistances of denial and delegitimisation are a result of the strong emotions that can be provoked by asking people to think about their gendered experiences and identities (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Pauly et al., 2009; Ferguson, 2015). To counter this trainers attempt to affectively engage the participants in the learning process, as I discussed at length in the previous chapter. Trainers use humour as a technique of affective engagement to tackle interpersonal resistances. Trainers speak about using humour to "*break the ice*" and laugh together, with an understanding that behind the power relations and hierarchies of the context, a shared humanity is present. Emily (51, Netherlands) talks about working with politicians at

intergovernmental institutions, in her words very "*civilised people*", who are often unaware of their own privilege and the elite group to which they belong. She explains that humour creates a shared space, and breaks down the walls of formality, giving her the "*opportunities*" to explore difficult concepts with participants. Emily clarifies, "*I want them to be changed or to be challenged but in a nice way but in a way that has humour it's like something is blocked and then you just check it in a good way*". She shares that the best compliment that she has gotten from her use of affective engagement and humour is that from a participant who said, "*thank you for changing my mind*".

Humour and laughter can be useful tools in the pedagogy for the powerful (Cornwall, 2016) because they can help to momentarily suspend hierarchies and reduce the defensiveness that is an obstacle to participants reflexively engaging with their own positionalities and power. As Allen and Rossatto (2009: 175) state, a major cognitive and emotional experience is needed in order for privileged participants to recognise and confront their oppressor identity. Humour and affective engagement can encourage participants to critically analyse their own positionalities, it allows participants who hold power in their communities to cross the border between the "professional and the human being which is the hardest to cross" (Prentki, 2009: 252).

The trainers combine humour with distanciation or defamiliarisation through which norms and narratives of everyday life are questined by seeing them from a different perspective. Germaine (41, England) combines humour with applied theatre exercises in the form of "*joy and dance and singing"*. In one case, she was working with young people around the damaging and negative narratives of menstruation in advertisements, and they did a short play to reinterpret and change the advertisement. She says,

> *There was one or two kids that identified as non-binary and it was a fairly even split between boys and girls. And they all did it. They all wanted to be the person with the period, the person with the gift. It was really funny and they actually loved it.*

These methods are useful in gender training because they facilitate affective engagement and allow participants to experience things as Julia (31, Italy) says, "*on their own skin*". Indeed, Ferguson (2018: 95) argues that applied theatre methodologies can be used in gender training to "encourage creativity, empathy and action among training participants". Isabelle (33, France)

also employs popular media, and the absurdity of some advertisements, to provoke laughter and discussion in her sessions. She unpacks how this mechanism works by describing the example advertisements she uses,

> *She's reading a book at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so it doesn't at all correspond to the reality of French women now. So at this point, people are laughing a lot. They are laughing, first with the baby, then with the second* [advert] *one, and then the third; they are laughing. So it's nice because the fact that people is laughing means you have them with you*. *They have just realised that, actually, they live in a world of stereotypes.*

Humour allows the participants of the workshops to fix a memory and play with new concepts in a positive affective experience. Julia describes how she does an exercise of re-writing fairy tales to explore culturally relevant stereotypes, and how this allows humour into the learning process. She reveals that her favourite is "*the seven dwarves with the, three of them were male, three of them were female and one didn't check the gender box* [laughing]… *and then they remember that they laughed and that they had fun creating".* Trainers combine contextually relevant and familiar examples, humour, and facilitating creativity to support horizontal engagement and disrupt hierarchies. The trainers' use of humour uncovers the banal and quotidian to facilitate a critical view of taken-for-granted stereotypes and permits a playfulness in imagining alternatives in a way that can help to dissolve the tension of resistance. Furthermore, I interpret the emphasis on humour as a response to anti-gender discourses that are heavily emotively charged with tropes of violence and exclusion (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018).

7.3.2 Organisational counterstrategies

On an organisational level, counterstrategies involve pinpointing the kind of support that is needed, and the engagement and mobilisation of members of the organisations and the wider community in which they are situated. Marie (32, Spain) says to me that she has never worked in a truly conducive environment, but she knows what elements she would like to see. She explains that this kind of environment, in contrast to what she currently experiences, would include

> *a favourable political context within the organisation and demonstrated support from senior management shown through policy and also budgetary commitment. And that*

the project is assigned, or at least supervised, by a person who is senior enough to want to take forward the recommendations and make sure that they are taken seriously.

The first part of working against, and with, resistance is developing a clear idea of the obstacles and the envisioned alternatives, as Marie outlines. The second is the engagement of organisation members and the community. Trainers try to do this is different ways. One strategy is that of mobilising the support of organisational decision-makers from the beginning of the training cycle. Ebba (63, Sweden) describes her strategy of increasing legitimacy and impact by asserting that she will only deliver trainings and lectures if she is introduced by leaders within the organisation, "*I have never, never invited myself so I am invited. So I want the top politician, I want the top manager or whatever to explain why I am there and what are they going to do with my lecture*".

A second strategy is to fight for the valorisation of gender expertise. Meike (47, Austria) challenges the undervaluing of gender expertise and lack of funding by engaging in negotiations with the organisations where she delivers trainings, saying that most often they will find the money to pay her fee, conceding, "*ok we will go look and see if we can find that money, and then they try to find it*". Although this kind of negotiation is an ongoing challenge for freelance trainers and consultants, evident in the chapter on the professional trajectories, it pushes back against some implicit power relations in gender work. As Meike herself mentions, this is perhaps "*it is a bit too much a neoliberal speech for myself*", because of the way that it seems to echo tropes of the problematic "business case" for gender equality. However, demanding a fair rate of payment acknowledges the specialist knowledge that gender expertise requires and challenges the "it's your passion" justification for the underpayment of gender experts and trainers (Ferguson, 2015: 388). This illustrates the importance of relationships between commissioners, trainers, and participants in the training scenario, which facilitate the ongoing circulation of knowledge. The regulation of remuneration is part of the process of professionalisation that the occupational group of gender trainers is undergoing; this is explored in the next chapter.

Access to communities of people and organisations has to be combined with the engagement of key actors in order for training to be impactful. Tomas (32, Poland) talks about the strategic

or pragmatic framing of "*gender equality material*" in order to be commissioned to deliver trainings. Tomas is emphatic,

> *So if you represent an organisation that is running an anti-violence agenda workshop, no way. You have to say this is going to be a sports workshop for guys about how to be a good leader for example. So we have to cheat like this.*

Tomas's counterstrategy is finding ways in which to infiltrate spaces that would otherwise have been closed to him. Sam (57, Netherlands) also speaks about this idea of "*access*" and the strategies that he uses in order to make sure that his interventions do not dissipate in inefficacy. Sam advocates for full community engagement, where all the people related to the "target group" of the training are involved in the project. Sam shares numerous stories from his experience in different development contexts, summarising, "*yes it will cost more money but it is an integrated approach that will be more productive. Yes, it is a longer journey and it will take more time, that is why you work in the community*". For Sam the focus may be on young people, but the response has to be to their environment, "*if you focus on young people you have to focus on all those people who guide or block the young people in their development, which means their peers, their teachers their religious leaders*". Alice (40, Italy) employs this strategy of community engagement within the organisations in which she works, which are often Italian public school settings, by looking for allies and supportive teachers. She says these teachers are the best ones because they *"ask questions of themselves, and those who are also most receptive to ideas linked to gender and sexuality, who understand stereotypes and discriminations, who have developed their own point of view. They are most often the salvation*". Building links and relationships with decision-makers within communities and organisations is a key counterstrategy to inactivity and delegitimisation on the organisational level.

The counterstrategies that the trainers apply can also take the form of more subtle subversive acts within commissioner contexts; this is where elements of the feminist practice of gender expertise emerge. Eleni (28, Hungary) describes these moments as an exercise of agency despite the risks that this might entail. She explains how she integrates postcolonial perspectives into the work that she is doing despite commissioners viewing it as "*too controversial*":

> *Maybe I can't write it in the body of the report. They want me to say a couple of words when the seminar is finishing and they have no way of checking what I am going to say.*

And I will use that moment to make my case, just finding little, um...moments that are given to me.

As the example of Eleni illustrates, educational interventions are "involved in an ongoing ideological and discursive struggle in which feminist educators are forced to make strategic and tactical choices" (Wieslander & Nordvall, 2019: 2). These small moments of counter-action underpin my understanding of change through gender training as an incremental and non-linear process, a process that involves working with and against existing power relations and structures. These techniques "can be used to make visible some of the dynamics of gendered power in organisations" (Cornwall, 2016: 75), in a practice of pedagogy for the powerful that facilitates reflexivity around power, privilege, and positionality among decision-makers within organisations. In general, these trainers seem to see their counterstrategies as one of many steps towards the goal of social transformation. They continue to reflect and develop in response to their participants while attempting to plant the seeds for curiosity, empowerment, and change.

7.4 Conclusion

Through this chapter I have presented different forms of resistance and opposition that the trainers encounter in their work and the strategies that they use to counter these resistances. I contend that the identification and analysis of resistances provides insight into the gains and changes that have occurred. I have outlined how hegemonic gender regimes are preserved in the presence of equality work, and mapped the current challenges. Resistances such as gender fatigue and the illusion of equality indicate that tipping points have been reached in the mainstreaming of gender. In other words, a gradual and incremental change has built up into a substantial shift in gender awareness; consequently, everyone seems to already be in some way what Karl (54, Netherlands) calls "*genderised*". Although I presented resistances and counterstrategies independently here in service of clarity, in practice these are co-occurring, correspondent, and overlapping as they are within coexisting domains and regimes of inequality.

The focus of this chapter has been to explore the nexus of resistance and power within training scenarios, and how this impacts the transfer and translation of feminist and gender concepts. What has emerged is a complex picture, where resistances are carried out by individuals but coalesce in institutionalised resistance and structural opposition. This occurs in a dynamic

entanglement of discursive and material elements where “gender” and “equality” are deployed in diverse ways, which respond to local, national and international contexts and systems of knowledge production. The typology I presented here expands on the direct, indirect and inactive forms of resistance documented by other scholars (Agocs, 1997; Pincus, 2002; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Ahrens, 2018). These take place on the interpersonal level as denial, diffusion of responsibility, essentialising, gender fatigue, and equality mirages. On the organisational level, the trainers identify delegitimisation and lack of institutional support, poor resource allocation, tokenism and activity checking. On the structural level, opposition is found in rigid and non-representative organisational and sectorial hierarchies, superficial formalisation, and issues of European cultural identity. What this analysis has revealed is that these groupings are far from discrete, resistances are multifaceted and can be multivalent, they travel across contexts, and through regimes of inequalities.

The value of this diagnostic approach is that it acts as a foil to attempts at personal exculpation by individuals or organisations. It also challenges voluntaristic notions of change common in gender mainstreaming (Davids & van Eederwijk, 2016; Ferguson, 2018). This kind of approach also opens gender training up to analysis, it is a tool to discern the cases in which transformative action fails and what this means. The counterstrategies respond to the dynamic nature of resistance. They are brought into action through the emotional and intellectual acuity of the trainers and their willingness to engage in potentially professionally compromising subversions. The transformative potential of gender training is maintained through the methodologies and counterstrategies of the trainers who “work strategically within the constraints of gender training processes and scenarios” (Ferguson, 2018: 25). These resistances illustrate how many factors influence the extent of disruption of unequal relations and transformation of behaviour through gender training. The impact of gender training is consequently is most often partial, and imperfect, giving rise to evolving counterstrategies.

Overall, these findings offer a deeper understanding of the contrast between the general acknowledgement of the importance of gender equality and the lack of practical changes in structure and power. This is reflected in the fact that the most common resistances are those that are inactive or indirect (see Pincus, 2002; Ahrens, 2018). Thus, counterstrategies tend to be interpersonally focused, even on organisational levels, and strategically subversive. The general

acknowledgement indicates a significant discursive presence and, on some level, a diffusion of the norm of gender equality. This is consistent with EU polity emphasis on equality as a fundamental value. However, material commitment by individuals to change relations of power that they encounter is more complex to attain. My analysis of data from the questionnaire presented here indicates the relative frequency with which trainers experience specific resistances, and is reflective of the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe where gender expertise is discursively valued but financially undervalued (Ferguson, 2015; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016). The voices of the interviewed trainers qualify these findings, illustrating the affectively charged nature of resistances that are based in discomfort, fear of losing power, and self-protection. This affective nature informs the methodological choices that the trainers make, discussed hereto, and the processes of change that they envisage which are explored in the following chapter.

Both resistances and counterstrategies, as illustrated here, are not fixed but contextual and changing over time. They are a reflection of the current sociohistorical moment, as participants and trainers bring their own gendered knowledge into the workshop. In detailing the reciprocity of resistances and counterstrategies, I have exposed the fact that failure to effect change is also a part of processes of change, and is one of the multiple directions or effects that gender training can initiate. The different forms of resistances and counterstrategies show how these interplay with gains that have already been made, and the challenges and opportunities for equality building in the European sociohistorical present (Prügl, 2016). These inform the next steps that trainers envisage for their evolving profession and are thus part of the circulation of knowledge over time as it is altered and developed. Consequently, I argue that this recurrent process is illustrative of a cyclical process in which equality concepts are asserted, contested, and reformulated through negative and positive feedback loops. Collectively, these findings lead me to ask where and how moments of solidarity and more resilient cooperative constellations might be cultivated to support the efficacy of counterstrategies. As such, these resistances and strategies illuminate not only the state of gender training in Europe and the politic economy of gender knowledge, but also reveal mechanics and dynamics of social transformation in interrelating systems. I carry this analytical thread into the final empirical chapter on the reconciliation of the ideal and real and the transformative potential of gender training.

Chapter 8 Knowledge and praxis in circulation: gender training and social change

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We have helped make gender understandable to these governance institutions. And that has been a major project but in the process, there has also been a consequence.

And the reason why we were doing it…and in the language of policy and the language of development, you can never have the radical messages of development. You can never, because that's not what policy is supposed to do. Policies demand results in trying to manage or govern that radicalism, right?

That's what happens in a democracy and that's what institutions are trying to do. Yeah? You cannot transform them without a major…without some very major political change. And even then, this gets reformulated, reconstituted around governmentalities and technologies of power.

So unless we understand that, we can't know, we don't know, we cannot appreciate how to be subversive while being complicit. Okay?

[…]

Doing this whole project of gender within institutions transformed us and transformed our politics. But we also made use of the institutional power. So there's a trade-off here, and what happens in that trade-off, and how aware you are, that's what really counts. That's what really counts.

Anika (66, Netherlands)

8.1 Introduction

Anika states that it is the awareness by gender trainers' of their own complicity in normalising technologies that permits a continued transformative vision and guides subversive action. In this

final chapter of analysis, I conclude with this very paradox that lies at the centre of gender training practice. Throughout the preceding chapters I have presented an in-depth investigation of the dynamics and machinations of the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges in gender training. Bluntly stated, the enduring question is—so what? The response rests in the envisioned contribution of training for gender equality to mechanisms and processes of social change. As I stated in the introduction, gender training is predicated on the understanding that is it a valid tool for the promotion of gender equality, it is based on transformative intent and emancipatory ethics (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Existing research and writing on equality policies and strategies, including gender training, is generally evaluative (Walby, 2005; Moser & Moser, 2005; Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2007; Ahikire, 2007; Milward et al., 2015). It outlines mostly what has been lost, less what has been gained, and least what opportunities this may leave us with. However, currently, there is a "lack of a clearly articulated theory of the relationship between gender training and transformative change" (Ferguson, 2018: 49). In this chapter I recoup the intention set out in the introduction to focus on how trainers negotiate and manage the paradoxes that they face to maintain the "transformative potential" (Ferguson, 2018: 49) of gender training. Here I integrate the analyses from the previous chapters on the trajectories and subjectivities of the trainers and the epistemic hierarchies of equality work in Europe with the dynamism of praxis and counterstrategies. I draw on the notion of everyday utopias (Cooper, 2013) to elucidate the dynamic between complicity and subversion, or imagined and actualised in gender training, and to make sense of how trainers envision their contribution to social change. First, given my proposal on the reciprocity between resistances and counterstrategies in the previous chapter, I turn to the current priorities and next steps to complete the picture of gender training practice in Europe—from who trainers are, to what they do, into where they are going. I discuss the trainers' visions for their profession—collective conversations and common values, the need for supportive infrastructure and local contextualisation, and the call for repoliticisation. From this, I move into my analysis of the temporal and multidirectional effects of the practice of gender training, and the interplay therein of the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges.

8.2 Training as an everyday utopia: between the real and the ideal

Politics and ethics are defining features of gender equality and, as the findings presented show, these anchor the practice of the trainers. A commitment to social justice and contributing to change unifies the expressed motivations of the trainers, discussed in the first chapter of analysis.

This can be found in the trainers' understanding of their own positionalities and social locations, and those of their participants, and their awareness of power relations within epistemic hierarchies and the geopolitics of gender knowledge. In addition, this thread weaves throughout the pedagogical and methodological principles of the trainers as they commit to value personal experiences, foster dialogue and discussion, privilege collaborative and experiential learning and meaning making, foster affective engagement and facilitate reflexivity and critical thinking. Moreover, this emerges in the counterstrategies that they employ against individual and institutional resistances that thwart the impact of gender equality interventions. All this with the objective of change directed at addressing gendered inequalities. However, as the trainers' stories elucidate, this can be challenging to implement because of the different factors that intercede in the training cycle and in the environment. In this I see two interrelating aspects: the purpose and the form of gender training that trainers imagine, and what is actualised in practice. The true point of cohesion in the narratives of the trainers is less about a list of static shared values and more about the attempted reconciliation of the tension between real and ideal forms and objectives of gender training. As Ferguson (2018: 63) notes, evaluation of gender training and understanding of how it contributes to transformative change are currently not well researched or developed. What scholarship exists tends to focus on individual trainings and not on ongoing impact. This research contributes to growing this understanding by offering an account of how trainers interpret the significance and impact of their work. This provides insight into the mechanics of change processes that can act as a first step to building feminist theories, and empirical investigations, of transformative change relating to gender training.

It is widely agreed that in its ideal form gender training is a feminist project (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018). The significance of this assertion has been discussed throughout the preceding chapters in terms of the structural nature of equalities, the plurality of feminist and gendered knowledges, the political nature of knowledge transfer and production, the fraught relationship between knowledge and change, and the power relations bound up in this. Within this analysis, I have foregrounded the importance of critical thinking, collective and inclusive knowledge generation, and reflexive practice as conveyed by the trainers. These are all features of a "feminist practice of gender training"; however, it is often challenging to fully apply these intentions in the form that gender trainings typically take place. The way in which gender training has been "constructed, manualised and packaged" (Lazreg, 2002: 132) is as discrete skills which can be delivered and reproduced in a straightforward act of transfer (Milward et al., 2015). The paradoxes and

tensions of gender training are persistent themes throughout this research, pulling back and forth between the ideal and real of gender training. The trainers' wish for emancipation from gendered oppressions and violence, evident both in their motivations for their work and in their commitments to reflexive practice, is compelling. They paint a picture of a different world of almost utopic quality where freedom and open potentiality prevail, a world that they contribute to building through their work.

I see a resonance between this vision and Cooper's (2013: 3) notion of "everyday utopias". She writes of utopia as an "orientation, or form of attunement, a way of engaging with spaces, objects, and practices that is oriented to the hope, desire, and belief in the possibility of other, better worlds" (Cooper, 2013: 3). Cooper (2013: 2) explores six sites that "perform regular daily life in a radically different way": state equality governance, nudism, a feminist bathhouse, community trading networks, a democratic school, and a public discussion forum. She argues that the practices and processes of these sites allow a rethinking of mainstream concepts such as touch, equality, care, trading, property, and markets. These are stories of the movement of concepts as they are imagined and actualised, contributing in this way to transformative politics.

My purpose here is not additive, I am not invested in a definitive classification of gender training as an everyday utopia; rather I am intrigued by the consonance between the polarity of the paradoxes of gender training and the oscillation between imagined and actualised in everyday utopias. I draw on this concept because it brings the ideal into the practice of the real. In emphasis of this point I repeat Alice's words (40, Italy): "*This can seem utopic, but in this moment, it is also very much in these micro-practices of the everyday action*". I wish to explore what might be revealed about gender training as a tool for circulating knowledge as the movement between real/actualised practice and ideal/imagined transformative change shapes this.

I see echoes of the visions and dynamics of gender training in the theorisation of everyday utopias. For instance, the chapter on theory and practice emphasised the techniques and methodologies that the trainers use to allow participants to "*see differently*", to experience and interpret everyday situations and experiences in alternative ways. The imagined is a "dimension of fantasy, of contemplation and abstraction" (Cooper, 2013: 35). In training this is manifest in

the idea that knowledge will bring about change through learning grounded in feminist ethics. Actualisation is "presence or manifestation, as concepts inhere within systems, structures and other material arrangements" (Cooper, 2013: 35), in other words how training practically unfolds within the constraints and infrastructure of interrelating domains and regimes. This dynamic mirrors the dialogue between ideal and real that recurs across the narratives of the trainers as they seek to actualise counterhegemonic practices. As with Cooper's (2013) sites there is a critical proximity, both temporal and physical, between gender training and the mainstream, which facilitates the transformative potential of gender training (Ferguson, 2018). Similarly to other everyday utopias, gender trainings are sites in which people engage for discrete periods of time, and trainings occur with regularity and can be ongoing, there is an entanglement with other places and processes as participants move in and out of the space of trainings in the course of their lives in other domains. Furthermore, gender training holds in common with these sites that they "condition participants to think, feel, hope, imagine, and experience life differently" (Cooper, 2013: 12). Thus, there is also an ontological compatibility with the theoretical vocabulary of social complexity theory, given the understanding of each system as constitutive of the environment of other systems, and the interrelation thereof in a process of mutual adaption and change.

The ethics and values that the trainers hold help them to traverse the space, back and forth, between ideal and real forms of gender training. Yara (32, Canada) affirms this, acknowledging that a key professional ethic is that of striving to reach better standards through consistent evaluation. Within this however, she states that

> *if you are talking about the European context, or any other context, you have structures that you are dealing with. You have diplomatic structures, you have social and cultural structures that limit what you are able to do. And the gap between the ideal and the realistic is always something that we have to negotiate, but I am always into pushing the boundaries as much as possible.*

As Yara's explanation shows, these trainers are striving to push through the constraints of the real to come closer to what they envision as ideal gender training practice. Tracy (Scotland) explains that adhering to these principles and subscribing to an aim of social transformation does not mean that the ideal is immediately manifest; rather, it is a continuing process:

> *Yes, you just have to accept that you are going to make a ton of fuck-ups but you have to be strong enough and find the strength to say I am going to make mistakes when I do this work. People always make mistakes no matter what work they are doing, the important thing is that you learn from those mistakes and you keep on going.*

Tracy's comment encapsulates the fact that there are mistakes, revisions, individual, and collective processes of learning that both the participants in trainings *and* trainers are undergoing. Tracy notes, positioning herself as part of a community of trainers and equality advocates, that it is not a matter of "*waiting for things to be easier*", concluding that by working with things repeatedly, "*you learn from your mistakes and your successes and you build on that and you become more familiar with that. The issue will not become simpler, but the way you deal with it will become more effective and efficient".* I recognise a generative energy in this seeking to reconcile the ideal and the real, or at least more closely tie the two together. Gender and feminist knowledge is in formation as participants and trainers traverse the spaces of workshops and the broader social systems of the rest of their lives. As they move through these environments they circulate knowledge, these actors are engaged in collective exchange and potential reformulation of this knowledge over an extended temporality. This is what makes the everyday so intriguing to me. In the case of gender training the everyday is the minutiae of training, the procedures, challenges, frustrations, and enjoyments of designing and delivering trainings. These practicalities, guided as they are by the trainers' wishes to engender change, illuminate how the "everyday folds into the utopian" (Cooper, 2013: 7). It is in the dialectic between the ideal and the real elaborated by Yara and Tracy that the trainers manage the paradoxes of their practice.

8.3 Future directions and processes of change

The ideal/real tension elucidates reciprocity and interrelation in processes of change driven by equality projects, as highlighted in the previous chapter on resistances and counterstrategies, and shows how these are incremental and multidirectional. I use multidirectionality to indicate the possibility of going in different directions simultaneously, and progressing along unexpected paths. Consequently, I maintain that equality building is not achieved in discrete steps, but rather through a coagulation of actions, and oppositions, over time and space that form both positive and negative feedback loops. A focus on increments and dynamics of circulation changes the emphasis from "a primary concern with the 'quality of outcomes' to one which pays more attention to the 'quality of processes' in which gender experts engage" (Prügl, 2016: 16).

The future directions and next steps that the trainers envision for their occupational group illustrate this point. These are both future oriented improvements of their practice, and respond to the persistent constraints of routine actualisation. The trainers wish to build supportive infrastructures and enhance collective learning. They accompany this with contextual and local focus and relevance, particularly in the translation of gender and feminist theory across languages and the development of locally situated knowledges. Overall, there is a call for a repoliticisation of gender training, by engaging with questions of subversion and complicity and working with privilege, specifically including more work directed at the engagement of men and privileged groups. The future visions of the trainers' crystallise the key themes and factors in the practice of gender training. My insistence on a circulatory understanding of knowledge is supported as is the case of gender training for processes of equality building. These assertions emphasise the multi-directionality of change effects that arises from the co-evolution of mutually adaptive social systems, showing the practice of gender training to be in continuing formation over time. The knowledge and skills of gender trainers circulates through this process, subject to new input, contextual variance, fragmentation, reformulation, revision, opposition, plurality, and subversion.

8.3.1 Collective conversations and common values

Some of the trainers, who have been working in the field for several decades, have seen it grow and change over time. They talk about the development of a group of trainers who combine theory and practice in different ways. Oksana (42, France) paints a picture of this timeline recalling that when she started 20 years ago,

> *We had either researchers or people who were active in non-formal education. And then we have quite a group. It's a whole class, if I may say, of people who combine both. They have first-class degrees and they have experience in the fields of their interest.*

The trainers' ability to combine theory, research, and practice "*adds quality to everything that we are doing".* This is similar to the community of practice of gender trainers that Bustelo et al. (2016b) describe, one that is characterised by sharing of professional standards, ethics and resources and linked to international processes of gender mainstreaming. It is clear, and substantiated by other research on gender training, that trainers have much in common and much to exchange (see Pauly et al., 2009; Hoard, 2015). However, it is equally evident that formal opportunities for trainers to interact and exchange as an occupational group are scarce

for this field which is still loosely organised (Thompson & Prügl, 2015; Bustelo et al., 2016b). Eleni (28, Hungary) muses that fostering a collective conversation might be contingent on casting gender training as a profession, "*maybe we should accept it as a profession and we can try to come together to talk about these things because it doesn't have books written about it".* Eleni acknowledges that she knows relatively little about other trainers, their professional trajectories and profiles, and their beliefs, "*so maybe we need more discussion on what gender training is and who are we to train people, what do we see as a deficit in people and what are the political implications of this?".*

The majority of the interviewed trainers reiterate the need for a collective conversation, and this is also repeated throughout the scholarship around gender training (UNWTC, 2015a; Ferguson, 2018). The networks that do exist, as discussed in the section on trainer community, tend to be passive online lists or databases of trainers and their work in different thematic areas rather than active networks of exchange and knowledge sharing specifically focused on gender training. For example, although two thirds (60%) of respondents confirm that they are part of professional networks, those mentioned are mostly online email lists and databases and not interactive forums. Furthermore, only a tenth (13%) of the respondents explicitly name trainers networks. The UN Women Training Centre Community of Practice provides an example of a space for collaborative and collective theorisation of gender training which has been successful on an international level. It offers a forum for discussion and reflection and provides resources for gender training. Although Bustelo et al. (2016) reference this growing community of practice and Ferguson (2018) establishes the value and resources of the UN Women Training Centre virtual community, it would seem that within the European region this is still in the beginning stages.

The phrase *community of practice* is applicable because it involves active collective dialogue (Wenger, 1998). In the case of gender training this is, for many, more an ideal future form rather than a current reality, but the trainers consistently call for the development of this community. Nina (42, Sweden) broadens the scope of the conversation to collective goal-setting. She states that gender trainers need to "*become loud, to become more clear, and goal oriented"* beyond a simple statement of "*we need to talk about gender issues*". For Nina this involves asking questions:

> *What do we want? What do we really want with this? Not just that we have a plan for our interventions in this organisation but think bigger. What do we want? What kind of change do we want in society concerning gender issues? And what do we want to accomplish by doing this gender training that we have?*

These are pressing questions, they link into the centrality of motivation, purpose, and values of trainers in the practice of gender training.

The directions in which these collective conversations may go is open, and offers opportunities for collective exchange through circulation and a continued renegotiation of equality concepts as theorised and practiced. For Alex (27, Romania), this collective conversation is indispensable in the construction of a learning culture within gender training. They perceive this as currently lacking, stating that there is a predominant feeling within the human rights and social justice field that one should know "*the right thing to say*" and that "*we are not really taught that it is ok to make mistakes and that yes, you will make a mistake and then you will recover from this*". Alex thinks that this "*comes to maybe putting together gender and LGBT and training. I think that we kind of need to learn from gender and that gender needs to learn from training in a way".* They give examples from their work and from large European conferences, explaining that "*gender or feminist or LGBT organisations are not really learning organisations*" and that these should cultivate openness to learning and iteration in order to successfully contextually embed their interventions and develop innovative strategies for engaging the communities that they represent and work with. On the other hand, Alex states that, "*training can learn from gender because the training field is not too…can be very non-critical"*, in their appraisal the field of non-formal education in Europe needs to apply the critical reflexivity that guides feminist project actions. This theme of iterative refinement of praxis is common among the trainers, with many of them mentioning an ongoing process over a long duration. Eleni (28, Hungary) affirms, "*with a couple of years of trial and error you figure out what you are trying to say and you personalise it in a way that you can stand behind it, not to just repeat*". This revision and iteration is a fundamental part of the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges that trainers take part in.

Theorists and educators acknowledge the need for more critical learning in the field of adult education (Ostrouch-Kamińska & Vieira, 2016: 43). The kind of critical learning that Alex would

like to see from the coming together of gender and training reflects a negotiation between theory and practice. In this type of circulation there is a focus on collaborative problem solving fuelled by the "pragmatic need to get things done" (Manjapra, 2010: 1). In this, theorists are rendered responsible for relevance of their work (Keim, 2014: 100), and the validity and value of knowledge generated by non-academic equality projects is recognised (Nagar & Swarr, 2010; Desai, 2015). According to the trainers, more formalised collective conversations between gender trainers, and differently located actors in other institutional domains, will facilitate a critical learning culture and support the ongoing circulation of knowledge. This will allow for a process of peer review and continual revision in gender training, which functions as quality assurance (Marx Ferree, 2015; Ferguson, 2018). This reaffirms the findings from the OPERA study on advancing gender training in Europe, which identifies a strong need for dialogue and collaborative exchange between academics and practitioners (Pauly et al., 2009; Ferguson & Forest, 2011).

An ongoing collective conversation is not only about the exchange of information and best practices, is it a vehicle for establishing shared values and linking these to professional standards. Existing research and writing on gender training shows that this is a subject of discussion for the community, although there is currently no consensus on normative standards for quality assurance in gender training (UNWTC, 2017b; Ferguson, 2018). Marie (32, Spain) explains,

> *I think that there needs to be some kind of way of exploring a set of principles and commitments. I don't really know about a certification process but I think a more informal professionalisation and a professional ethics and professional standards to which we adhere would be* [a] *useful way forward for the field*.

For Marie, who works as a consultant for several international organisations, this kind of professionalisation is needed in order to ensure the quality of work and combat depoliticisation. Importantly for her, we should not assume that everyone in this occupational group holds shared values "*about progress and feminism and transformation".* She states, "*I think that there are really just a lot of opportunists".* There is frustration among the trainers that some gender experts are conducting their work in uncritical and expedient ways and they state that this has to be tackled as the occupational group formalises. Several trainers spoke explicitly about the kind of professionalisation to which Marie refers as a way to ensure quality of trainings and a way to safeguard the emancipatory ethics of gender training.

Given that professionalisation is a political process, shaped by relations of power and regimes of inequality, the positive valence that the trainers ascribe to this is surprising. However, the suggestions of the trainers for next steps contrast with traditional processes of professional development. Typically there are specific academic qualifications and regulatory bodies who grant status as a member of a profession (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011; Volti, 2011; Saks, 2012), in the case of these trainers this is seen a collective and collaborative process, as opposed to a hierarchically driven one. Such a collective process would allow for increased responsiveness and appropriate counterstrategies, it would also allow trainers to more closely control their engagement within different institutional domains and continue "*learning*" as Alex propounds. This emphasis on collective exchange highlights the dynamics of circulation whereby the "field is co-constructed in the course of exchange" (Keim, 2014: 97).

The ethics and professional values of the trainers are central to the praxis of gender training. I began discussion on these ethics in Chapter 4 in the analysis of the motivations of the trainers; and carried this into their interpretations of their own positionalities in Chapter 5. I expanded this analysis in the discussion of trainers' feminist epistemologies in Chapter 6 and described these ethics as an anchoring force in the development of counterstrategies in Chapter 7. The respondents' ranking of ethical principles provides insight into how they see the focus and purpose of gender trainings. Here I have collapsed the data on respondents'[52] rankings of seven professional ethics[53]. A third (33%) of respondents rank "addressing structural inequalities" as the most important ethical principle. This is followed by "cultivating reflexivity", which is the most common choice for second most important principle at just below a third (28%), and then "applying gender and feminist theories" is ranked a third by a fifth (18%)[54] of respondents. Here the ranking itself is perhaps less significant than the centring of these three focal points, which

[52] n=78

[53] These principles were drawn from existing research and the analysis of the interviews. Respondents were given the following seven ethical principles and asked to rank them in order from most important to least important: addressing structural inequalities; cultivating reflexivity; applying feminist and gender theories; using transformative methodologies; developing a community of practice; policy responsiveness; building transnational networks.

[54] Here it should be noted that "addressing structural inequalities" and "cultivating reflexivity" are each also positioned in third place by a fifth of respondents respectively, which further substantiates the centrality of these two principles for respondents.

should be seen in conjunction with the next steps outlined here by the trainers. These three focal points resonate with the ethical principles for gender trainers put forward by Prügl (2016: 27). Namely, collective exchange and "rational deliberation" (Prügl, 2016: 38); inclusion of diverse knowledges; collaborative and participatory working; and reflexivity around training processes and epistemic commitments. These values and ethics are what make a *feminist* gender trainer (Ferguson, 2018: 71) and, according to the trainers in this research, they are essential to the transformatory ethos of gender training. These ethics find resonance in examples of shared values and political commitments among actors in equality work cooperative constellations. The *Gender manifesto: a call for critical reflection on gender-oriented capacity building and consultancy* (Frey et al., 2006) is one such agreement, sent to me directly by a respondent, which was developed by gender experts working in Germany. This document outlines several principles for maintaining quality in training and consultancy based on a three-step strategy (construction-reconstruction-deconstruction) which applies a critical understanding of gender knowledge and gender expertise itself. Another example is the *Madrid declaration on advancing gender+ training in theory and practice* (Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Bustelo et al., 2016a), which emerges from the OPERA and TARGET projects outlined in the section on gender training in the theoretical framing (Chapter 2) of this thesis. This declaration from academics and practitioners centres the relationship between these two groups, and details the positioning of gender training, the content and methods thereof, and the further development of the field to produce high-quality trainings. In each case, as the trainers in this research state, critical reflexivity and commitment to ongoing exchange and revision in the practice of gender expertise is key to high-quality transformation oriented work.

8.3.2 Supportive communities, local contexts, and gender inclusivity

Supportive infrastructure and communities, as well as local, contextual, focus, are indispensable in order to support the collective conversation between trainers, and to accomplish work that is more impactful. These visions from the trainers build on previous discussions of space, context, and positionalities; they illustrate how circulation is grounded in the localities and environments in which it unfolds and the broader global political economy (Raj, 2006; Keim, 2014; Kunz, 2016; Connell et al., 2017). Going forward, trainers argue that training initiatives require more institutional and organisational support; strengthening connections between people working in different roles in these contexts can achieve this change. Erica (54, England), who is a global education specialist and works predominantly in schools, identifies different actors who are needed for the sustainable impact of gender training. Erica elaborates, "*Different actors within*

society and education coming together really and working on the same thing and pushing the same agenda. I think it's going to have an impact. And I think that from an education point of view, ideally what you want is a whole school approach". This is in fact an extension of my analysis of resistances in the previous chapter: the transformative potential of gender training can only be actualised with ongoing institutional support from decision-makers and the allocation of adequate resources. This is because gender training is taking place within institutions that are places of ongoing political contestation, where battles and alliances are in constant negotiation relative to the specific historical context (Kenny, 2007: 93, citing Thelen 2004).

Not only is greater institutional support and a wide network of allies essential to augmenting the impact of trainings, but it is equally important for increasing the accessibility and diffusion of gender trainings more widely. For Julia (31, Italy), gender trainings and similar initiatives "*should be something that should be more wide-spread".* For Martina (40, Slovakia), a way in which this wider reach can be achieved is by making conversations about equality more easily accessible to the general public, something which is echoed by many of the other trainers,

> *I think* [it would be positive] *if there were more public spaces where these kind of exchanges would happen. I mean…there are a couple of experiences that were very successful done by some NGOs and sometimes with support of local authorities of having... you know of a World Cafe? So they organised* [it] *in several municipalities, on public squares in the summer on some themes and people who just passed by could participate in it, right? And discuss issues.*

By widening the participation and input in gender training the knowledge that is circulated through these practices is opened up for revision. The resistances that the trainers face outlined in the previous chapter show that the critical proximity of gender training to the mainstream brings constraints and opposition. However, as more people are engaged this also opens up opportunities for political and social pressure that can lead to alternatives to dominant practices (Cooper, 2013: 2).

Critical proximity is also relevant in terms of trainers' calls for a local and more contextual focus in gender training. The need for relevant and contextualised examples is one of the key

principles that the trainers use to make concepts transparent and interpretable to the participants in their sessions. As Eleni (28, Hungary) explains,

> *We need to be conscious and really take the local into account when we are doing gender training because we kind of get lost sometimes in universal theories so I think to increase that we need to know the localities that we are working in and I would have to make the point of using research based training*.

Contextual focus is simultaneously an act that seeks to counter, in some way, the epistemic imperialism that, as Eleni mentions, can characterise gender training. Isabelle (33, France) describes a tool based on current French media and advertising that she uses in her sessions. She notes that the tool needs to be adapted "*with national examples that will strike the people"* in order to be valuable. She comments,

> *I've been working in West Africa for a while and we cannot come as white women, French, young, and talk about gender equality. It doesn't work at all. So what we need is to train a group of gender trainers that have the cultural reference which are needed to create change in those countries.*

This excerpt from Isabelle demonstrates the understanding that change is only possible if workshop participants are exposed to examples and ideas that make sense to them. In this framework, knowledge is open to constant reformation as it is circulated. According to Ines (37, Italy), rendering gender knowledge intelligible and relatable will help to tackle the general resistance against gender equality work. She admits, "*it is really the challenge that we need to address to work in a way that the people feel that this is something that they feel belongs to them and improves their lives".* An emphasis on contextual and local relevance is prominent in writing on gender training in the field of gender and development (Mackenzie, 1993; Wiliams, 1994; Bhasin, 1996; Sweetman, 1998; Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007). As the stories of these trainers reveal, a similar focus is needed in the practice of gender training in Europe, one that disrupts the false perception of homogeneity that accompanies Europeanisation in favour of recognition of the knowledge and needs of individual communities.

Contextual emphasis is not only a current best practice, but something that the trainers see as a continued work in progress where they endeavour to improve conceptual and linguistic accessibility. As Alex (27, Romania) complains, "*we have developed such a vocabulary that is*

really inaccessible to people and we have to find a way in which we become more useful for other people who might take advantage of the conversation". This is further evidenced by the trainers' commitment to producing knowledge around gender in different languages as I noted in Chapter 5. Julia (31, Italy) recounts that because she does most of her work in English, "*it is that normal practice that if you meet someone and you ask them what kind of pronoun they would like then you just ask, and since there is not this option in German people don't ask".* According to Julia, this underscores the need for more locally produced knowledge in different languages that is responsive to the needs of the communities in different contexts. This local knowledge is valuable to the communities that generate it, but it also contributes to a process of circulation in which the epistemic status of local knowledge is stated in subversion of anglophone theoretical hegemonies. This highlights how localities impact the circulation of knowledge, and how this is characterised by asymmetrical relations and structural hierarchies.

An additional focus of expansion for the trainers, which supplements greater contextual relevance, is a more purposeful inclusion of diverse gendered identities. Sam (57, Netherlands) explains that the tendency in the sector of gender equality work has, generally up until now, been to equate gender with women. He adds that it is urgent to tackle this "*white elitism*". Tomas (32, Poland) observes something similar, explaining that one of the major drawbacks of a tradition of "gender=women" is that young men are not able to find the necessary supportive community for the changes that they need to make. Tomas explains, "*there are hundreds* [of these] *wonderful, feminist and women's organisations so if you're a girl or women you can go there to go and find some support"*, but if you identify as a boy or a man and you want to change you are "*just different from the rest of the guys".* Tomas says that there are no spaces in which to share this feeling, "*there are no organisations, there are no people can give you the support you need, so it's really difficult".* The majority of interviewed trainers express a need to push for more active inclusion. They assert that envisioning change and working towards it is about attending to both sides of the binary and all non-binary gender identities. Anika (66, Netherlands) specifies, "*The whole project is about emancipation of women and men, because within unequal gender relationships, you cannot have emancipation".* Despite the wish to do so, putting this inclusivity into practice is not always easy. Erica (54, England) shares that her team tackles these challenges by including professionals who are very knowledgeable on the topic of diverse gender identities, and makes sure to "*include a range of voices who have their own personal experience of those intersections, to hear directly from those".*

Developing connections, infrastructure, and methodologies that are more gender inclusive is a continuing pursuit for gender trainers. Supportive infrastructure and local, contextual relevance hold several purposes: to facilitate comprehension and learning to support transformation through this learning by making the abstract tangible and applicable and to build bridges and links across interrelating systems and institutional domains in such a way that impact is amplified. It is in practice that the potential of everyday utopias appears. In the case of gender training praxis is in constant movement between imagined and actualised. This results in continued reflection, refinement, and adaption that I have evidenced through the preceding chapters. It is this process that drives new forms of future imagining while foregrounding materiality, in other words "concepts are not abstract generalities floating above the 'real' world" (Cooper, 2013: 35). In the act of seeking to reconcile the real and the ideal gender trainers manage the paradoxes in their everyday practice.

8.3.3 Reflexivity and repoliticisation

When looking to the future of gender training, the trainers not only talk about adding and developing skills to be more inclusive and accessible, to expand their reach, but they also talk about how to re-centre and re-establish the transformatory ethos of gender training. In the case of gender training, the ideal is constantly brought back into the present through the endeavours of the trainers to actualise this same ideal. Here the relationship between feminism and gender expertise is relevant. The trainers explain that feminism is not only a movement or a theoretical position, but also serves as a tool for reflexivity. Eleni talks about this as an iterative process. Departing from a story about contestations about who can call themselves a feminist between the left and feminist movements in Cyprus, Eleni goes on to share what she believes is the greatest value in feminism,

> *For me it's always been a mirror. I mean, I don't know, this is how I apply it. It has always worked for me to check what I know. So for example, I learnt that families are patriarchal, until I learnt that black communities were prevented from forming families. Or like for example, I thought that becoming vegetarian would be a more feminist thing, then I got to know more about the relationship of indigenous people with hunting. I think this is the feminist in me—to just really problematise what I know and I just I depend on feminism for that. There is never an end knowledge person or moment.*

For Eleni, this perspective is less about an ideological category and more about a way of cultivating critical thinking. Feminist theory and activism become tools for understanding the world in a different way and continuing to develop knowledge and awareness over time. In this sense, feminisms are an important part of the movement between real and ideal because they encourage a constant questioning. This questioning and subsequent reformulation of knowledge and action is part of a transformation oriented circulation of gender and feminist knowledge. As I outlined in the discussion of counterstrategies, it is necessary to be responsive and critical because interventions may have become so routine that "we no longer question whether they are useful for our purpose, or if we are using them as well as we could" (Eyben et al., 2008: 201).

Nina (42, Sweden) points out that this reflexivity is especially important in the current European political climate. For her it is important to keep striving because of emerging neo-conservativism in Europe, even in countries like Sweden where there is established gender equality architecture. She observes, "*I also see the challenges coming from the political landscape where gender issues are under stress and are questioned from right-wing politics and going back to the understanding of genders from the '50s or '60s in Swedish society".* She interprets this as a regression which gender trainers need to work against. The current political landscape in Europe has been addressed in the preceding chapter in the discussion of resistances and in Chapter 5 on epistemic geographies, it is these dynamics and the need to respond to specific kinds of opposition that lends urgency to the call for repoliticisation stated by the trainers.

The diffusion of gender training over the last two decades, in large part linked with gender mainstreaming, has offered increased legitimacy and authority to practitioners (Squires, 2005; Jacquot, 2010; Prügl, 2011). However, this has been accompanied by disadvantages and drawbacks, such as instrumentalisation, tokenism, dilution, depoliticisation, commercialisation, and constriction (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Ferguson, 2015; Wong et al., 2016; Ferguson, 2018). This exemplifies, in Farris's (2017) terms, a convergence between nationalists, femocrats, and neoliberals. It is a symptom of where gender training is situated in the nexus of polity-episteme-economy domains. To counter this the trainers advocate for repoliticisation strategies which bring the imagined ideal of equality provoking gender knowledge transfer back into focus and interplay with real practice.

Repoliticisation involves the critical negotiation of subversion and complicity through reflexive praxis. Meike (47, Austria) emphasises that this begins with a recognition of the trainers' own involvement,

> *We cannot deny that we are part of the process and in some ways part of the problem. I can't deny that I am part of that machinery that reduces complexity, and especially intersectional ones with intersectionality and diversity more than others. I can't fulfil my own…I almost can't approach my own, what I demand from myself. And there is no way out of that, that is my quality management, that I continue to read criticism.*

Here Meike is talking about how reflexive praxis—which engages with motivations as seen in Chapter 4, with positionality as seen in Chapter 5, and with pedagogical principles as seen in Chapter 6—allows gender trainers to navigate the paradoxes and tensions of their work. The centrality that trainers afford critical reflexivity in their understanding of themselves and of their work leads me to argue that it allows them to harmonise the ideal and the real. This is not to say that all trainers carry out reflexivity in the same way, or to the same degree, but rather that it is a tool common to their explanations and interpretations of their work. Eleni (28, Hungary) talks about how receiving a diploma in gender studies does not mean that one should be uncritically granted authority. She explains that reading "*all these criticisms about gender studies in academia"* has made her aware of the way in which institutional forms of gender knowledge require reflexive engagement. She asks, and answers, "*What do you do with that? Do you keep yourself outside from it? No you cannot, and I think I learnt a lot from those criticisms about the scientific knowledge production and what it does"*. Indeed, there is often some nostalgia in calls for repoliticisation that alludes to an original purity of socialist feminism or radical movement feminism that are problematic because they tend to neglect the transnational nature of feminist knowledge production (Prügl, 2015: 615). An ongoing critical reflexive practice that recognises the trainers as experts, as learners on their own knowledge journeys, and as part of broader global systems of knowledge production is necessary to render transparent epistemic hierarchies in equality work.

Reflexive practice is indeed the apex of Anika's idea with which I introduced this chapter, and Karl (54, Netherlands) who continues the insistence on questions and reflexive practice echoes

this in his consideration of the future directions for this occupational group. Karl explains that trainers need to see this as an issue of positionality and reflexivity. He asks,

> *In particular, how does the gender trainer position themselves? This would be the industry and forms of knowledge and who's the knower. And how do you remain reflexive of that in terms of the compromises that one makes as a gender trainer and the conveyer of feminist knowledge and feminist knowledge-making? What is your role in that?*

This reflexivity allows the trainers to negotiate the tension between the transformative intent and aims of gender training, the reality of the complicity thereof in regimes of inequality, and the regulatory powers within institutional domains. The future directions that the trainers envisage not only complete the response to the questions around practice of gender training in Europe but also provide insight into how these impact non-linear processes of change over an extended temporality.

8.4 Equality building: process, temporality, and multidirectionality

Throughout the preceding chapters I have outlined the dynamics, mechanics, and practices of gender training in Europe. From inception, the crux has been the trainers' understanding of gender training as valid and actionable tool for catalysing change. In this final section I explore the trainers' interpretations of the relationship between actualised practice and imagined transformation, real and ideal. In this last analysis I recognise gender training as "both a political act and a political process" (Ferguson, 2018: 43), one which I interpret in relation to individual and systemic change. I illustrate how tracing the sequences of knowledge circulation associated with gender training reveals the temporality and multidirectionality of change effects, and I discuss the implications thereof for the practice of equality work.

The trainers describe a considerable disjuncture between what organisations believe to be possible through gender training (that the organisation and its work will be transformed at once) and what is in fact possible in the brevity of one or two gender training sessions. Training is both an opportunity and a political action, a present that is entangled with an envisioned future. Marie (32, Spain) notes that it is about getting participants to be advocates for change in their own organisations, helping them to see "*the injustices and the inequalities and the power*

dynamics then you hope that they go on to challenge those when they move on from the training". In this sense, trainings represent an opportunity to engage people, it is "*enabling people to have those conversations to challenge their assumptions and ideas and put into words their issues and ideas and discuss resistances themselves".* This is the potential impact that Marie conceptualises gender training to have, to whatever degree that might be. Eleni (28, Hungary) describes it in a similar way, "*I think it's such a great opportunity for gender trainers* [it is] *a luxury to have this group of people, um, for little while to sit with you or do things with you".* Yara (32, Canada) states that it is important for her to be transparent about the fact that she has to "*follow up with the training and advice and guidance"* in order to support the changes that she is aiming for with the workshop participants. However, she stresses that "*if the person leaves with the intention of doing something then that's what you need, you just need them to be willing to do something".*

Several trainers share stories about how the ongoing support and guidance they provided to participants helped those participants to successfully implement equality actions. Yara shares this story about a participant working in a European international organisation:

> *And that decision-maker walked into the training feeling a lack of confidence, feeling a lack of capacities, and walked out of the training feeling confident but also feeling like she needed to work on those capacities, and also that she needed some support. And then after the training I was able to help her and I follow up with her every six months and I send her an email just to see how she is doing. And she has said that things have fundamentally changed.*

As discussed in Chapter 6 on theory and practice, the participants of gender trainings have to have the opportunity to implement what they have learned and continue to build on this over time (Ferguson, 2018: 50). Translating this intention into action facilitates the transformative potential of gender training. Supporting future action, and providing required guidance, is part of developing abilities among participants to accompany the knowledge and desire to affect change that are key to impactful gender training (UNWTC, 2017c).

8.4.1 Degrees and forms of change

Gender training should be understood as one intervention in broader equality strategies with many moving parts and activities at personal, interpersonal and institutional levels. This is acknowledged in a UNWTC (2017c) working paper on theories of change that reads, "training itself cannot bring change. In order for training to be able to contribute to change, it must be embedded in a broader set of measures and actions to influence change". The actors carrying out these measures constitute the cooperative constellations and communities of practice that facilitate the circulation of gender and feminist knowledges. Nova (43, Germany) notes that gender trainings are only one tool for transformation *"I don't see, 'Oh, we have gender trainings all over the world. It gets so wonderful'. No, but it'd be one element and one step here and one little step there. One awareness raising, one person out of five"*. Echoing the location of gender training within a wider collection of equality initiatives, Eleni (28, Hungary) describes gender trainings as "*part of a broader push for change, but change is a very big word for me I think*". Gender training is not only one among a constellation of equality interventions, it is also an action within a complex system of interrelating elements. Through the analysis that I have presented thus far I have shed light on how dynamics and variables of domains and regimes impact gender training work. As Berliner (2000: 18) observes, it is the reciprocal action between these elements, the ubiquity and complexity of interactions, and the sociohistorical circumstances of learning environments that are the reasons why "educational science is unusually hard to do". This is also perhaps why empirical research on the evaluation of the impact of training is rare (see Ferguson, 2018: 51). Reflecting this complexity, the trainers describe the impact of gender training as one of degrees of change.

The degrees and forms of change that the trainers are able to catalyse offer insight into some of the dynamics that are occurring in movement between ideal and real. Carla (66, Italy) clarifies, "*in the businesses that we entered the things are not the same as they were before, sure they can be a little or a lot, the degree changes, but for sure they are not the same as before*". This degree of change is particularly hard to measure, because of the myriad of variables in the lives of the workshop participants. Emily (51, Netherlands) says that change through training for gender equality "*takes more long term thinking, it is difficult to measure, to have something and then measure before and after, it is more like a big process".* She argues that often the counting of participants at trainings is used as an indicator of impact, echoing Ahmed (2012) who writes that this kind of counting heads becomes a stand-in for change, whereby participation in the training is taken as a marker of change rather than the necessary reconfiguration of regimes of

inequality within the organisation. Emily comments that this obscures a far more complex reality of real change in attitudes and behaviours, which is much more difficult to track because it occurs in increments. In the current emphasis on individual and voluntaristic change in gender mainstreaming, the connection between individual and collective is lost and the "powerful forces at work which resist gender equality at the institutional level" (Ferguson, 2018: 52) are exculpated. Rather, as the trainers communicate, it is useful to attend to the coalescence of degrees and increments of transformation and locate these within broader processes of equality building. Most of all, the relationship between gender training and change should be seen as occurring over an extended temporality.

8.4.2 Temporality

The trainers' narratives illustrate the extended temporal arc of potential change and emphasise its unpredictable trajectory. Tomas (32, Poland) sees the change as certain, but indeed far off. He says of the effects of gender training,

> *I am sure it brings change, there is not discussion on this but of course it is not a process that you observe the fruits of this from one day to another. It is an intergenerational process really that you change a way of thinking that is one of equality then I am sure that the world will change for the better and I am sure about this.*

For Tomas, it is crucial to cultivate a long perspective in working for change, where the small inputs of the present are seen in relation to a broader process. As systems mutually adapt, new configurations and interactions take place, resulting in a shifting trajectory over time. As Nina (42, Sweden) poignantly asserts,

> *I think this is more of a process, an ongoing process, that is going on forever, and you can't really say that you're ready with this* [laughter]*. It's not a project that should be done for six months or a year, or something because this are gender equality, or lack of gender equality, how that emerges in a context. It changes. It's always there, but it changes from time to time because the organisation changes, people change, society changes, and there are aspects of gender equality that become more and less active in different times.*

Tomas and Nina assert that change occurs in increments over time and the process of equality building should be responsive to changes over time in order to continue to contribute to transformation.

The extended temporality is demonstrated in the relationship and histories of feminisms and gender training. Malak (32, Netherlands) mentions that working with young people has made her see feminism differently. She talks about what she calls the "*Beyoncé generation type of feminism",* she says laughing, that this is different from, "*an old type of feminism…um, now people are in their forties, in their fifties, how they have experienced feminism I think it's different from the current generation* […] *what I see as oppression they see as liberation".* For Malak, the key to continue to foster solidarity is to "*keep our minds open and go with that".* Alice (40, Italy) explains that the "*micro-practices of the everyday action"* that underpin current feminist practices are "*unfathomable*" to the "*feminists of the 1970s who were nurtured with these strong ideologies".* Here the current politics of the feminist movement are difficult to understand for the older generations who were pushing for revolutionary changes in perspective. Alice concludes, "*I mean now I look at the 70s as a really important reference point and I take a lot of inspiration from this but I also recognise that that is not the context in which I grew up".* She reiterates her respect for older generations of feminists while acknowledging her own situatedness and opens the possibility that this too may be different in the future.

Commitment to an extended temporality is needed because workshop participants are actors in their own social worlds. When they enter the space of the workshop, participants bring their own gendered knowledge and experience of their social location. This influences, in turn, the ways in which they interpret and potentially apply the knowledge from the workshops. As Anika (66, Netherlands) states, "*individuals are not islands. We live in society. We live in communities which also live in a world order, and much more so today in a globalised, neoliberal world than ever before".* In this way, the interrelating systems within which individuals operate, in singular or collective, are brought into the space and influence how, or whether, the participants then go on to circulate the knowledge that they have gained. For Ines (37, Italy), it is this very interconnectedness that builds up to change, explaining that in her understanding "*social change and political* [change]*, everything that is more systemic".* Ines believes that it begins on the individual level because individuals "*create systems, systems are relations between*

individuals and groups of people. What I really believe is that when you change yourself you can bring change. That is another level of change because you start [with] *yourself".* Ines's assertion echoes a feminist institutionalist view, in which individual and institutional change are in dialectic. As Ferguson (2018: 60, citing Mackay et al. 2010) states, individual and institutional processes are "closely interwoven, reinforcing and influencing one another". This relationship between individual and collective is outlined by Luca (48, Sweden) in reference to how they use policy documents and legal texts in trainings. They say that when presenting about anti-discrimination legislation in Sweden, they make a point in their workshops,

> *to say, ''Here's a text, it's on paper. It's there but it can be changed and it can be interpreted as well". So that they* [are aware of] *both, that there's something that is fixed and it gives us rights that are more or less fixed, but also that we can interpret the rights.*

For Luca, this opens the possibility for action and activism, they state, "*we're the society. No one else is the society if not us".* This communicates a vision of workshop participants as active in their learning and interpretation of the knowledge which is shared with them, knowledge which they may action in many different ways. The participants may even go on to build or adapt this knowledge. Some of them may go on to become actors within the cooperative constellations that circulate said knowledges, the case for many trainers as I discussed in the professional trajectories of Chapter 4. It is difficult to know in which direction the effects of a training will go because participants need time to process what they have encountered and find ways to integrate this new vision into their lives. On this point Sirvat (35, Armenia) states, "*it takes some time for people to digest things, internalise the different inputs that they have had".* This mechanism of digestion is a key part of circulation, where knowledge is built over time and grounded in the localities and environments where trainings take place (Raj, 2006; Manjapra, 2010; Keim, 2014).

8.4.3 Revision and reformulation

The potential for exchange, revision, and development is a key feature of the circulatory movement of knowledge that I have analysed in this research and integral to the transformative potential of gender training. This challenges the knowledge transfer=equality models frequently proposed in gender mainstreaming literature that the trainers explicitly dispute. Eleni (28, Hungary) warns against these very assumptions about knowledge transmission, cautioning against the typical assumption that

> *there is something that these people don't know about right? There is something there that we have seen and we assume that when the deficit is filled with knowledge, everything will be fine but as you also know, it is not like that*.

I outlined the trainers' vision of learners as knowers and trainings as potential moments of knowledge exchange and generation, from the trainers' ongoing professional development in Chapter 4, to their integration of practice and theory in Chapter 6 and their management of resistances in Chapter 7. The processes of exchange that take place in this dynamic of circulation, especially given the emphasis that the trainers put on collaborative learning and engagement, challenge the idea that filling a deficit in knowledge will automatically lead to transformation. Karl states this assumption in a humorous light. He gives the example of a training programme run for an international organisation, where the organisation then expected trained participants to immediately train other colleagues. He adds that this

> *raises interesting questions not only about the purpose of training and what makes for training, what makes for a trainer, but the issue of knowledge. Of how is gender knowledge treated in gender trainings and understood? Is it kind of a potato that I give to you and you* [laughter] *give to somebody else?*

The knowledge that is exchanged is not in a final, neatly packaged, and easily digestible form. Training is a communicative action of collective exchange, as outlined in the chapter on theory and practice, and this exchange is central to what the trainers consider impactful trainings. The trainers do not envisage the knowledge and ideas that they present as a complete set, but rather as current versions that are in formation, to be refined or revised.

Concepts are in the process of development as trainers are working with them, and these are shared with participants who may, or may not, apply them in a variety of ways. Half of the trainers talk about how trainings can evolve in unexpected ways. Yara (32, Canada) observes, "*I think every time I walk into a room it's always a surprise. It doesn't matter how much, and I try very hard, to do a training needs analysis*". Meike (47, Austria) confesses that she cannot know "*what will happen*" in a training despite her best efforts to prepare, "*No, never. I would go there to that workshop I go always there with a bit of, I am always a bit nervous, and I don't know what will happen"*. Plurality and opposition, "controversy and co-construction" (Keim, 2014: 97), all form part of the dynamics of circulation that are facilitated by gender training, which coalesce into positive and negative feedback loops and other dynamics of change that sustain or

compromise the practice of gender training and equality work. This brings "difficulty in shaping and directing the process of change" (Cooper, 2013: 219). The effects that gender training can have are complex and can follow multiple different paths of legitimation, contestation, and subversion. In this sense, there is an inherent possibility for multidirectionality in the effects of gender training.

8.4.4 Moments and multidirectionality

This complexity is amplified by the fact that gender training is a transformative tool with emancipatory ethics, and synchronously unable to guarantee the effects necessary to bring about this transformation. As Anika (66, Netherlands) states, "*You start from the premise that gender—doing gender is about emancipation, yeah? It's about transformation* […] *Unfortunately, there isn't a silver bullet. There isn't a way to engage people that will give us the guarantee that there will be some change".* The hope is, as Oksana (42, France) phrases it, that eventually "*everybody will understand"* gendered inequalities and choose to tackle these. Erica (56, England) declares, "*one of the key purposes of education is about social change, as opposed to maintaining the status quo".* For Erica, *"it's always about social change and changing things for the better, really, and achieving greater equality and social justice".* However, the way this happens is not linear. Thinking back on the motivations shared by the trainers, centred on their desires to promote social justice (see Chapter 4) and their wish to nurture revelations among their participants (see Chapter 6), I am struck by the poignancy of the moments that they describe. Emily (51, Netherlands) says simply, "*I enjoy it then, sometimes you see it in the eyes* [gestures widening eyes with hands] *and I enjoy this contact*". Meike (47, Austria) playfully calls these moments her "*sunbeams*",

> *I have a name for that. It is in German that I call it "mein Sonnenschein". Suddenly, there is a face bright as the sun. They are blooming, they got something and they are touched. They are deeply touched of knowledge and that does not happen so often. And I like this.*

Striving for sunbeam moments is accompanied by the acknowledgement that this kind of paradigmatic shift is often unattainable, or at least, incomplete. Trainings can be enlightening or revelatory but they can also cause resistance and regression, or they may have no impact at all. In other words, the effects of gender training can unfold in many directions. Thus, it might be useful to think of training less in terms of finite stages accomplished in the process of

mainstreaming gender with the end goal of gender equality, and more in terms of small bits or moments that coagulate over time or set in motion discovery processes among participants. Sam describes this through the metaphor of removing a blindfold, "*if you stimulate people and they begin to talk themselves about the different ways that they are blindfolded and you are helping them opening up their blindfolds".* According to Sam (57, Netherlands), this is a way of "*contributing to other people's consciousness"* by allowing new views to come in, he states, "*I can help to open doors, to help to open windows and that is all that I can really do to bring things in. It is not a fixed thing, it is really very fluid".* Eleni (28, Hungary) acknowledges this fluidity and prefers to use the word "challenge" rather than change because she thinks that the word change is an overstatement of the potential of gender training to affect structural shifts. She reflects, "*so I think at a personal level, it can create some sort of effect. I am not sure about the structural level whether gender training can change something".* Karl (54, Netherlands) considers his experience in the field of gender and development over the last three decades, and his thoughts about the impact of gender training echo those of Eleni, *"I think it has a potential of contributing, can have a quite a strong, direct, individual level. But the transformation or change is, I think, that's just really at an individual level".* Julia (31, Italy) states the importance of this kind of individual change as a necessary building block for structural change. She highlights this point by saying that by using non-formal approaches she is able

> *to make people understand what it is and to make people understand why to make a change and based on that you can make a social change. You cannot really do it from the top. So for me trainings and this kind of education is a very important tool for creating change in the world.*

Although trainers see gender training as a tool for transformation, either at individual or structural levels, there cannot be a guarantee of efficacy or impact. Ines (37, Italy) confides that this can be scary, because "*you want something to be different and you are acting something that is not supposed to be like that*". She concludes that "*in some contexts it requires a lot of courage and that is not easy".* The fact that often this change might be smaller than hoped or hold unexpected revelations, indicates the constancy of the movement between the imagined and the actualised, where the trainers draw their ideal into the present practice of gender training. This attempted reconciliation gives the work momentum despite the challenges and hostile environments that the trainers encounter.

The extended temporality, incremental, and possible multidirectional effects of gender training reveal a certain, but complicated, contribution of this practice to processes of social change. The trainers talk about trainings as potential fulcrums for participants to develop new visions of the world, analysed as part of trainers' educational philosophies in Chapter 6. However, simultaneously recalling the resistances and frustrations that the trainers encounter sketches a complex map of "change". Indeed, trainings are made up of a jumble of moments, moments and encounters that can individually and collectively progress, regress or contribute to the stagnation of equality building. As many of the trainers note, their trainings are just one step in a much longer process, a process in which they also continue to learn. Yara (32, Canada) sees training as a start,

> *So I would say that I think that that is the beginning, so I wouldn't say that the training results in change. It may result in challenge, I am not sure, but it definitely is the beginning of people searching for more and doing better and improving after that*.

As Yara states, a training can be the beginning or a step in a much longer journey, one which may go in a variety of directions. Wong et al. (2016: 11) see this as the key role of the trainer, "to create a process that critically challenges, generates interest and motivates learners to seek further knowledge and understanding". Therefore, I maintain that it is most fruitful to see equality building as an ongoing project, through which different initiatives and actions coagulate over time. In this project knowledge is circulated and developed, and strategies are responsive and evolving. Sunbeam moments lend energy to this project and to trainers to approach "gender training through honesty, compassion, and a commitment to groundlessness" (Ferguson, 2018: 95) of trainers. It is because of the interrelation between systems, and the dynamic of emergence between actor and structure, that this process takes place. Within this the tension between emancipatory ethics and achievable steps generates the energy to continue the work of equality building and pursue the new directions that coevolution brings about.

8.5 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have explored future directions envisaged by gender training and the relationship between training for gender equality and social change. I began with an interpretation of gender training as an everyday utopia, a space to explore alternatives and counterhegemonic practices. I discussed the next steps that gender trainers envisage for their

occupational group, reading these as the factors that trainers believe are necessary to render training more impactful. I explored the idea of collective conversations as integral to the development of a learning culture within gender training and the anchoring function of common values. Trainers argue for greater contextualisation and gender inclusivity in training, demonstrating that gender knowledge, and the practice of training, is continually in formation. Extending the anchoring nature of feminist ethics, the trainers call for the exercise of attentive critical reflexivity in terms of their positionalities and practices to negotiate their participation in the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe. In this process they advocate for repoliticisation to tackle the challenges of the paradox between subversion and complicity.

In the second section of the chapter, I used the base of these stated priorities of collaboration, reflexivity, and emancipatory ethics to illuminate the relationship between gender training and social change. Gender training is cast as the means to bring a possible equal future closer, but processes of change and the effects of gender training are far more complex and contested than traditional deficit models suggest. Here I outlined how gender trainers see the work that they do in terms of the transformation they would like to see, and the reality of what takes place. What emerges is a picture of movement—progress, regression, stagnancy, slow shifts, leaps forward, and revelations. This picture is needed in order to make sense of a non-linear and contested process of change that values the efforts of the gender trainers and appropriately locates their actions in a constellation of interventions and initiatives that are driven by the concept of gender equality. Here I considered the salience of the tension between the real and the ideal as a distinctive point of cohesion for gender trainers who endeavour, with varying degrees of success and failure, to effect change at different levels—interpersonal and relational, institutional or organisational, and structural. Gender training does not effect change in a singular, linear action, but in a process of degrees and increments, which coalesce to link individual action to collective systemic responses. These effects may develop along multiple possible directions or paths of change and take place over a long time.

Looking at gender training as it unfolds between imagination and actualisation highlights the processual nature equality work and the paradoxes and tensions that form part of this. I see a generative energy arising from the attempted reconciliation of ideal and real, which lends meaning and momentum to the practice of gender training. The definitions or strategies for

equality of 50 years ago may now be deemed inadequate, or reductive. These travelled and moved, were translated and circulated and implemented and redefined, in the movement between real paradoxes, challenges, and constraints; and ideal of feminist gender training. The transformative potential of training for gender equality lies in continuing to navigate this movement.

Chapter 9 Training for gender equality and transformative equality building

9.1 Introduction

Through these pages, I have investigated the praxis and the transformative potential of equality work in the case of training for gender equality. This research posed the question of how gender trainers circulate feminist and gender knowledges in Europe. Through this mixed methods study I have traced the trajectories and motivations of trainers; revealed epistemic hierarchies and geographies of feminist and gender knowledges; detailed relationships between theory and practice; highlighted resistances and counterstrategies; exposed dynamics of knowledge circulation; and traced dynamics of social change. In this analysis I have elucidated the interrelation and mutual adaption of social systems across individual and collective action, and the material and discursive dimensions of these dynamics. My overarching argument has been to expand the understanding of gender training as a tool for transferring gender and feminist knowledges by redefining it as a praxis of circulation. This revision locates the practice of gender training within the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe and interrelating and coevolving institutional domains; it illuminates how trainers negotiate the tensions between transformative aims and regimes of inequality; and traces ongoing processes of knowledge formation, equality building, and social change. Through this analysis, I have shed light on how the trainers' continued critical reflexive commitment to social justice and equality allows them to negotiate the paradoxes of their work and facilitate transformative encounters.

To synthesise, I began by constructing a history and political economy of gender expertise in Europe and a conceptual lexicon centred around circulation, against this background I built a topography of gender training. This outlined who the trainers are, where they are, the kind of work that they carry out, as well as the ethics that underpin this work. Together the trainers' professional trajectories, their intersectional and gendered subjectivities, their cooperative constellations, and their motivations map the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe. I traced the movements and shifting positionalities of the trainers that bring this map to life by illuminating the epistemic hierarchies and in the transnational practice of gender expertise. Following this I argued for a critical cartography in the understanding of gender knowledge, one which disrupts Eurocentric axes of analysis and challenges the re-inscription of existing regimes of inequality. I traced the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges through the narratives of the trainers, and proposed a view of trainings as moments of encounter wherein knowledge

is transmitted, but also exchanged and reformulated, opened up to revision. This is a view of gender and feminist knowledges in formation and under development, with space for non-dominant contributions. The pedagogies, methodologies, and techniques that trainers apply in their work, and the threshold concepts that they present to participants, show that theory and practice are closely intertwined. The praxis of gender training is characterised by contextual responsiveness, transformative and experiential learning, affective engagement, and critical reflexivity. Thus, I propose an understanding of learning as a process occurring across physical, cognitive, and affective dimensions; all dimensions are necessary in order to facilitate a change in thinking and behaviour amongst workshop participants. The responses of participants vary, and resistances are an integral feature thereof. I grouped these into a typology of individual, organisational, and structural resistances, to which trainers respond with specific counterstrategies. I interpreted the resistances as explicit reactions to what has been gained thus far through the work of feminist and equality projects, which in turn inform the trainers' counterstrategies. These resistances and counterstrategies illustrate the multi-directional nature of social change, and the tenuous predictability thereof, which derives from the mutual adaptivity and coevolution of complex systems. The practice of gender training is thus necessarily responsive to the different developments and directions in which changes may proceed, following negative and positive feedback loops, path dependency, and tipping points. The circulation of knowledge through these systems is fundamental to these mechanisms of change and to the adaptivity of equality building practices that respond to them. I presented the priorities of the trainers, highlighting the need for community conversations, local contextualisation, reflexivity, and repoliticisation. I demonstrated that the ethics and motivations of the trainers anchor their praxis. These also sustain a critical reflexivity of their positionalities and awareness of the environments in which they work. By tracing sequences of circulation I revealed the contribution that gender training makes to equality building—one of increments over an extended temporality with multiple possible directions that is given momentum and energy through its transformative potential.

In the following sections I present key insights arising from this research, I consider the chapters singularly and collectively in light of the observations, themes and the questions that have arisen from my analysis, to highlight the contributions of this study in terms of theory and practice in training for gender equality. I point to the significance of the findings and novel insights that these provide. Lastly, I provide recommendations for future research and equality building.

9.2 Knowledge, circulation, and systems: the conceptual lexicon

To begin I reviewed the literature pertaining to the practice of gender expertise. My point of departure was the genealogy of gender equality strategies and policies in the EU, from which I moved into the themes and questions dominating the practice of gender expertise in Europe. I presented my analysis as a conversation and inquiry around the development of gender expertise as a field and the practice thereof in Europe. I documented the activities and actions of gender experts, focusing on gender training and its position as a tool in gender mainstreaming. I identified different forms of specialised knowledge and the links between differently located experts. I outlined the contested relationships between knowledge, power, and feminism in the practice of gender expertise; and I presented the debate around the co-optation and depoliticisation of feminism. In building this picture, I elucidated a duality between the gains achieved over the last six decades equality building in Europe, and the evolving challenges that this developing field faces. My vision of the architecture and political economy of gender expertise in Europe, and its tensions, disrupts myths of "equal Europe" (MacRae, 2010; Enderstein, 2017) and associated claims of civilizational supremacy (Shore, 2000). Furthermore, it shows how gender knowledge itself should be subject to analysis if we are to understand the challenges and opportunities that praxis brings and visibilise power politics in transformative projects (Prügl, 2010: 3).

In response to these themes and questions, I identified a conceptual vocabulary that allowed me to explore the space between this duality that is taken up by the practice of gender expertise. I explored the multi-level nature of this work that has material and discursive dimensions, takes place at the intersection between the dynamics of numerous structures and actors, and occurs within specific contexts within Europe (see Verloo, 2018b). I conceptualised gender knowledge as an analytical concept (Cavaghan, 2010; Young & Scherrer, 2010b; Cavaghan, 2017), whereby each individual is in possession of gendered knowledge accrued in different ways and taking different forms. Thus, I interpret gender training as a moment of encounter where these different knowledges are put into dialogue. This approach acknowledges the nature of gender training as an envisioned educational event, and the diversity of institutional and individual claims around how gender relations should be perceived and on what grounds. I match the use of gender knowledge as a concept with a circulatory understanding of knowledge movement, one that is firmly located in the environments in which it is practiced, and foregrounds exchange

and plurality. This vision of gender knowledge and circulation builds into the understanding of gender training as a multilevel event of individual and collective dynamics, social relations, and institutional forces. To make sense of the interrelation of these elements I employed Walby's (2007; 2009; 2011) theorisation of social complexity theory and Verloo's (2018a; 2018c) expansion thereof. I argued for a vision of interrelating and mutually adaptive social systems that centres regimes of inequality—the focus of gender training—and allowed me to trace the relationship between gender training and social change through these dynamics. Throughout the subsequent chapters, I elucidated these dynamics and reflected on how gender knowledge moves through regimes of social relations and institutional domains. Working with concepts of change such as feedback loops and tipping points, in the frame of mutual adaptivity of systems, has brought me to insist on the multidirectionality of social change related to the feminist project and its counterparts, and the necessity that equality building praxis that respond to this.

9.3 A topography of gender training in Europe

To begin the analysis of gender training as a knowledge practice in Europe I mapped the demographic characteristics and the professional trajectories of the gender trainers. I aggregated the data that they shared on places of birth and residence, age, gender, and sites of professional activity. What emerges is a picture of highly mobile professionals who typically work across different sectors and engage in numerous activities together with their training roles. I focused this picture by outlining how the trainers acquired their knowledge on gender, which highlighted the prominence of formal education and self-directed learning, pointing to the variable epistemic status of gender knowledge in different contexts. I highlighted the processes of the trainers' skills development and how the trainers integrate skills and knowledge acquired from diverse roles and involvement in different sectors, such as positions in national equality bodies, participation in women's movement activism, and experiences as freelance trainers. Here I built on existing research describing gender experts (Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Hoard, 2015; Thompson & Prügl, 2015), but I further developed the understanding of who gender trainers are, how they develop their professional skills, and how they are located. These stories of learning and development show the circulation of knowledge within gender training, as they show how individuals adapt, reformulate, and add to knowledge accrued across different sites and then implement this within their work.

In building this map I situated the trainers relative to the genealogy of feminist and gender research and activism in Europe, in order to explicitly engage in a practice of Western feminist accountability regarding the stories which "we not only tell ourselves but also others" (Hemmings, 2011: 18). I developed this further in my call for a critical cartography of feminist knowledge and practice in Chapter 5. I interpreted this in terms of the interrelations of social systems, to define gender trainers not only as equality workers, but also as knowledge workers within the polity-economy-episteme nexus of Europe (Casas-Cortés, 2014: 219). It is an indication that we should not understand "equality work" outside of these systems simply because of its emancipatory ethos. I argue that it is erroneous to imagine that gender expertise and feminist practice is untouched by sociohistorical factors, and "it should not be a surprise to find feminist ideas creatively appropriated in such processes" (Prügl, 2015: 620)". I discussed how gender training is conducted within a neoliberal knowledge economy, among global episteme-polity-economy configurations. The trainers are working to change relations of inequality, while also leveraging the resources of the institutional domains through which these play out. I established a more complete view of the practice of gender expertise, one that goes beyond a binary of militant politicisation or complete co-optation, revealing how gender trainers negotiate the messy tensions of their work in practice. From here, I began to shape the picture of the subversion/complicity challenge (see Mukhopadhyay, 2017)in equality work that carries through the whole text.

The next element that I added to the map was the trainers' involvement in activism and their participation in trainer communities, which evidenced the political nature of equality work and how this work is embedded within and developed through the connections within the community. The role of activism in the skills and knowledge acquisition of the trainers are telling in terms of the anchoring role that this has for the feminist ethical practice in gender expertise. As is abundantly clear in existing research, a prevailing paradox within the practice of gender expertise is that those who practice gender expertise may not be feminist, or at the very least may not identify themselves as such (Prügl, 2010; Prügl, 2013; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). According to the trainers in this research, their participation in activism was how they became involved in feminist activities and thinking, informing their own understanding and value of equality work. Often, the extended collaborative constellations and training communities that the trainers are involved in are a driving force in their professional development. This shows the diversity of sites across which gender expertise is practiced, consistent with existing research (Rees, 1998; Beveridge et al., 2000; Booth & Bennett, 2002;

Moser & Moser, 2005; Stratigaki, 2005; Walby, 2005; Squires, 2005; Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2007; Prügl, 2011; Parpart, 2014; Milward et al., 2015; Clisby & Enderstein, 2017). This research contributes a more detailed account of how interconnections and relationships within cooperative constellations take place, and how these communities circulate knowledge and develop praxis. The map of this emerging occupational group and their professional trajectories, that I provide, sheds light on processes of institutionalisation, and the anchoring effect of social justice motivations therein. It shows how gender knowledge circulates through the links and interactions of cooperative constellations and through communities of practice, highlighting how gender training interlinks with other equality initiatives. In this sense it responds to the prevalent call for more empirical research on the practice of gender expertise (see Ferguson, 2015; Prügl, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016a), and advances a critical theorization thereof which is attentive to the knowledge politics of transformation oriented work.

The trainers' commitments to social transformation in their activism inform their professional activities and roles. My analysis responds to the need for more specific research on the educational and professional trajectories of trainers and their principles as identified in existing literature (Pauly et al., 2009; Prügl, 2016; Ferguson, 2018). I progressed this understanding by illustrating how feminist commitments and ethics act as anchors in equality work, and are integral to reflexive praxis. I expanded this point with an analysis of the motivations that the gender trainers provided for their work, thus revealing how practical and logistical factors interweave with passionate commitments to social justice and equality oriented transformation. Many of the trainers are motivated by the experience of gendered inequalities and violence, either directly or through their family members, to continue the work that they do despite the challenges and tensions that they have to negotiate. As we seek to respond to currently growing neoconservativism and populism in Europe (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; 2018), the strength and solidarity of these communities grows in importance. These details deepen the understanding of equality work in Europe, but they also show how the intersectional and gendered subjectivities of the trainers are embedded within this work. Taken together, the demographics, processes of knowledge acquisition and skills development, the activism, community connections, and the framing of gender training as a "calling" draw the contours of the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe. This map of gender training and gender training constitutes the backdrop against which I presented the subsequent chapter on epistemic hierarchies.

9.4 Epistemic geographies and hierarchies in the circulation of knowledge

In Chapter 5, I explored the relationships, interactions, and tensions that characterise trainers' experiences as they move between different locations and positionalities. The findings on the locations of the trainers highlighted some important dynamics in the interrelation of the domain of episteme and regimes of inequality, specifically in the form of epistemic hierarchies and power relations in processes of knowledge production. I looked more deeply into the dynamics that characterise the political economy of gender expertise and training in Europe, matching the mapping of the previous chapter with movement. The ways in which the trainers acquire their knowledge and skills and then how they use this knowledge in their trainings is impacted by their interpretations of the cultural contexts in which they work and their understandings of their own positionalities vis-à-vis their own cultural contexts, and within the relationships and engagement of the participants in their workshop. I outlined how the trainers interpret the cultural contexts in which they conduct their work, suggesting a perceived European equality map, linked to national sociopolitical histories. I interpret this map in terms of relationality, where contexts are defined together and against one another. As Connell et al. (2017: 2) state, "different epistemes, cultures and geopolitical regions are not silos sealed off from each other". Scientific knowledge production occurs according to divisions of labour and patterns of trade on a global stage (Hountondji, 1997). This relationality is fundamental to the circulation of knowledge as it transports dominant concepts and theories, but also potentially opens these up for reformulation in local contexts. It shows that in addition to pursuing a more feminist practice of gender training, which several authors posit will result in higher-quality more transformative work (Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Prügl, 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016a; Ferguson, 2019), it is necessary to cultivate accountability and adopt a critical understanding of that very same feminist knowledge and its narratives.

Focusing on this relationality I analysed how the trainers presented shifts in their positionalities over time as they travel through European and international spaces. Here I highlighted examples of epistemic hierarchies and imperialism, such as Anglophone hegemony in the practice and vocabulary of gender training, explicit valuing of experts of one provenance over another, or "white saviour" tendencies. I also showed how trainers subvert these power relations, by developing local vocabularies or privileging postcolonial analyses of gender issues. These subversions and revisions illustrate that gender training is not merely an activity of transfer or

transmission. However, it is not only the movement that is important, but reflexivity regarding this movement. I posit that it is through this reflexivity that the trainers locate themselves within coexisting domains, and within local and global regimes of inequality, and they apply it as a tool for learning. This reflexivity allows for iterative refinement of skills and knowledge, and it also allows trainers to manage their participation in unequal systems. This critical self-positioning creates energy for the critique and challenge of epistemic hierarchies of gender knowledge, thus binding the circulation of knowledge to the responsiveness of practice.

9.5 Praxis: the relationship between theory and practice

The relationship between theory and practice is an enduring question in feminist practice in general and takes on special importance in gender training, which sits at the intersection of these two worlds. As I have mentioned throughout this work, the packaging of gender training has led to a knowledge transfer model in which theory is translated into small inoffensive chunks that are transmitted unidirectionally from trainer to participant (Lazreg, 2002; Ferguson, 2018). My analysis of theory and practice in gender training revealed a different dynamic. A simple presentation or transmission of information is not, in of itself, transformative. Trainers integrate feminist epistemologies, non-formal methodologies, and threshold concepts in collaborative, experiential, and transformative learning processes. This process is contested and multidimensional, and it involves exchange and opposition, where both trainers and participants are involved in circulation.

I found that trainers take up feminist epistemological positions in their work, emphasising a practice centred on participant responsiveness, reflexivity, collaboration, and critical thinking. This supports a strong relationship between gender training and feminism, but contrasts with existing research that focuses on the explicit application of feminist pedagogy in gender training (Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018). With this analysis I contributed to the ongoing debate around the relationship between feminism and gender expertise (Mazur, 2002; Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2007; Kantola & Squires, 2012; Prügl, 2016), by showing a case in which feminist perspectives on power, inequalities, and knowledge are used as basic principles and guiding ideals, but not necessarily introduced to participants in these exact terms.

Following the trainers' emphasis on non-formal education and learning, I situated gender training as a learning event and educational practice in Europe. I linked it into larger trends in EU policies on adult education and employment, traditional educational theory, and the history of non-formal education (Youngman, 2000; Rogers, 2004; Colley et al., 2006; Manninen, 2017). This contextualisation highlights gender training as one of a collective of different interventions as detailed in scholarship on gender mainstreaming (Mazey, 1998; Rossili, 2000; Lombardo & Forest, 2011; Abels & Mushaben, 2012). It also situates trainers as workers within the European neoliberal knowledge economy and governance infrastructure. I posit that gender training in Europe leverages the resources of institutionalisation, and it is imbricated in processes of Europeanisation, and global geopolitics while contemporaneously seeking to address the regimes of inequality in these domains.

I responded to the question of paradoxes in gender expertise by providing a detailed account of *how* the trainers juggle their transformative intent and the practical constraints of technocratic implementation as they try to engage participants. This focus on the integration of theory with methodologies provides valuable, and original, insight into how trainers negotiate marketisation, depoliticisation, delegitimisation, and co-optation by using techniques to engage participants. In this sense, I directly answered the call for research into the "methodological implications of working across epistemological contexts" (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007: 13), thus contributing to the formulation of future equality building strategies specific to the European region. The trainers emphasise the importance of refraining from evangelising, rather allowing participants to engage with training content from their own perspectives. This logic then carries into the trainers' utilisation of transformative learning frameworks and experiential methodologies that emphasise dialogue and exchange to tackle the highly affectively charged, troublesome knowledge of gender and equality.

I presented threshold concepts (gender, sexuality, and intersectionality) used as examples by trainers, illustrating how practice and theory are interwoven and how these evolve in reciprocity. The trainers acknowledge multiplicity within feminist and gender theoretical scholarship, and they subscribe to a wider ontological perspective of the social construction of intersectional identities. The emphasis on fluidity and variability in the conceptualisation of gender and sexuality, and on intersectional thinking as a fundamental part of their practice, locates the

trainers within the genealogy of the development of feminist and gender knowledges in Europe (Hemmings, 2011; do Mar Pereira, 2017). For example, intersectionality is currently a buzzword within the field, seen across sectors in different domains (Davis, 2008; Kantola & Nousiainen, 2009; Patil, 2013). This research provides one of the first accounts of how trainers apply intersectionality to tackle power and privilege, both in terms of concrete methodologies and methods and in terms of their interpretations of their own positionalities and participation in regimes of inequality. Far from a cut-and-paste application of feminist and gender theory, the trainers' trajectories and practices are dominated by accounts of iterative processes of refinement and reformulation as they incorporate new learnings and experiences. Both trainers and participants are involved in the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges.

Whereas the cognitive dimension of gender training is well documented (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Prügl, 2010; 2016; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b), this study reveals the multidimensionality of learning in gender training by shedding light on physical space and affective engagement. Impactful gender training involves the creation of conducive spaces that facilitate constructive discussion and allow participants to explore alternative ways of thinking. This reveals the material importance of micro-level localities in the circulation of knowledge in relation to broader structures. The imperative for affective engagement of participants is telling. It is a tool that trainers use to facilitate the acceptance of the troublesome, and often disorienting, concepts that they present to their participants. Affective engagement helps participants negotiate their discomfort in productive ways, and this research reveals the need for an ongoing documentation and investigation of how techniques that foster affective engagement can be used to facilitate transformative encounters. Indeed, affective engagement is one of the key counterstrategies against resistance.

9.6 Resistances and counterstrategies

In Chapter 7 I explored the specific resistances (individual, organisational, and structural) that the trainers face, and the counterstrategies that they use to deal with these. Drawing on existing research (Agocs, 1997; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Roggeband & Verloo, 2006; Ahmed, 2012; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Ahrens, 2018; Verloo, 2018a), I developed a typology of resistances based on the examples that trainers shared, in accordance with the multi-level nature of training and the interrelation of institutional domains. I expanded this with concrete

empirical examples and the analysis of counterstrategies. The findings support the assertion that resistances are a significant feature of gender training (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Ferguson & Moreno Alacròn, 2016), and advance the analysis of varieties of opposition to feminist politics in Europe by revealing the reciprocity between resistances and counterstrategies over an extended temporality.

The interpersonal resistances outlined (gender-based deflection, denial and delegitimation, violent resistance, gender fatigue, and the illusion of equality) illustrate how intimately issues of gender and equality are held by participants, and therefore how difficult it can be to encourage the exploration of other understandings. These resistances confirm a ubiquity of familiarity with gender inequality as a social problem (see Bacchi, 1999; Lombardo et al., 2009), which I argue results in more pernicious and passive forms of resistance. On an organisational level this ubiquity manifests in widespread discursive commitments to gender equality, as stated in the literature (Roth, 2008; Gerhards et al., 2009; Lombardo & Forest, 2011), and this research reveals how material support is circumvented. The trainers' stories narrate tokenism, delegitimation, and lack of support from decision-makers, substantiating calls for the repoliticisation of gender equality work in Europe (Lombardo & Meier, 2006; Lang, 2009; Kantola & Squires, 2012; van Eerdewijk & Davids, 2014). I linked interpersonal and organisational resistances to those on a structural level, offering the first analysis of how anti-gender movement politics influences gender training in Europe.

Trainers conceptualise resistances as a result of deresponsibilisation, a creation of artificial distance from gendered inequalities, and their counterstrategies attempt to directly address this distance. I progressed the existing focus on resistances into one of reciprocity with counterstrategies to investigate how trainers respond to opposition that seeks to maintain regimes of inequality. The value of these findings lies in the explicit examples of training practice that I provide. These centre on relating training to the contexts and lived experience of participants; and on the disruption of the affective weight of gender issues through humour and role-play. The strategies I identified challenge the idea of a complete co-optation of the feminist project (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; Stratigaki, 2004; Fraser, 2009; Kantola & Squires, 2012). Taken together with the findings on trainers' motivations, reflexivity, and methodologies, the

trainers' counterstrategies show a strong responsiveness to participants and attempts to challenge and circumnavigate constraints imposed by rationalisation and institutionalisation.

My analysis of resistances and counterstrategies illustrates the gains that have been achieved through equality work and how these forms part of mechanisms of change, such as negative or positive feedback loops and tipping points, that play out across coevolving systems. Processes of change tend to be incremental. They are characterised by advances and regressions at micro and macro levels, and dynamics of co-construction and contestation through mechanisms of circulation. By tracking resistances and counterstrategies, with this research I have exposed forms of conflicts and tensions in gender training relating to past and present sequences of circulation. This study documents the changes and milestones that have been reached, and sheds light on possibilities for future action.

9.7 Gender training and social transformation

In the final empirical chapter, I furthered the investigation of gender training practice in relation to social change, recouping the theme of the ethics and motivations of trainers. I returned to a guiding question of the research—how trainers negotiate transformative intent against complicity in unequal systems. I played with the idea of gender training as an "everyday utopia" (Cooper, 2013), a space in which counterhegemonic practices contribute to transformative politics, characterised by a movement between imagined or ideal forms and actualised or real practice. I analysed the future steps for the developing field of gender training in Europe (Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b). The trainers confirm the need for collective conversations and the development of communities of practice (Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Bustelo et al., 2016b), reiterating the anchoring and politicising function of values that I identified in the trajectories and motivations of the trainers. The trainers' emphasis on the need for local contextualisation, often referenced in gender and development research (Bhasin, 1996; Porter & Smyth, 1998; Sweetman, 1998), reiterates the impact of localities on circulation (Youngman, 2000; Raj, 2006; Keim, 2014). My investigation reveals that this is equally relevant in the European region as the recognition, production, and circulation of non-hegemonic knowledges enriches the writing and practice of the feminist project and leads to action that is more impactful.

I emphasised the red thread of reflexivity that ran throughout the chapters, which bolsters the idea of gender training as a feminist project (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018). Reflexivity appears in the application of feminist epistemologies and the trainers' social justice and equality motivations, I posit that it allows them to navigate their participation in institutionalisation, governmentalities, and the monetisation of difference. This reflexivity is key to the repoliticisation that the trainers call for, a reclamation of the transformative purpose of training. This is a way to continue to leverage the legitimation that the institutionalisation and formalisation of gender expertise provides, while resisting tokenism and evaporation. This reflexivity allows the trainers to engage with their own gendered and intersectional subjectivities and relate these to their work. These reflections are interlaced with the motivations of trainers, and their ethics, showing a strong relationship between individual experiences and collective action, illustrating the emergent property of interrelating social systems.

The driving aim of gender training is transformation, but as this research reveals, this is a contested process. Rather than seeing change as a process of linear progression towards an end point, the stories and practice of the trainers show a negotiation of challenges and possibilities. I outlined how the transfer model of gender training, in which information is transmitted to participants resulting in linear change, is reductive. Although existing scholarship acknowledges contestation in this process (Mukhopadhyay & Wong, 2007; Verloo et al., 2011; Ferguson & Forest, 2011; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018), my study provides a detailed account of this complexity. The trainers situate training within a collection of equality work interventions (Rossili, 2000; Arribas & Carrasco, 2003; Roth, 2008; Abels & Mushaben, 2012; Van der Vleuten, 2012). Together the effects of these interventions on interpersonal, organisational, and structural levels coalesce over time to effect transformation. Furthermore, the current practice of gender training is part of an extended genealogy of European and transnational gender equality work and subject to the politics of this project (Nagar & Swarr, 2010; Hemmings, 2011; Desai, 2015; Baksh & Harcourt, 2015; do Mar Pereira, 2017).

Training scenarios are opportunities to circulate knowledge and facilitate participants' involvement in equality building, but this can unfold in plural directions and dynamics—regression, progression, stagnation, and opposition. Hence, my conclusion that the change

effects of gender training are incremental, unpredictable and multidirectional, and take place over an extended temporality. The rationalisation and institutionalisation of gender training can eclipse the moments of transformation like Meike's *Sonnenschein* moments, the small realisations of the ideal in the real, which give momentum and energy to the practice. By acknowledging the significance of these moments for trainers, and combining this with knowledge about challenges and learning processes covered in this thesis, forms the basis for a much needed development of evaluation evidence in the field of gender training (Ferguson, 2019: 51). This thesis is a significant contribution to knowledge on the praxis of gender training as a tool for transformation and the circulation of feminist and gender knowledges, but many questions remain.

9.8 Remaining questions, recommendations, and future directions

What I have found is that the practice of gender training is full of paradoxes, but that through a thoughtful, and courageous (Ferguson, 2018: 49), negotiation of these challenges the trainers in this research seek to actualise the transformative potential of gender training. My research has limitations and shortcomings, and it leaves some questions unanswered, but overall it offers valuable insights for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers and opens up some intriguing questions and directions for future research.

As I discussed in Chapter 3 on the research process and methodology, I conducted this research in English and as such have unwillingly participated in the Anglophone hegemony of knowledge production. The recognition of this dynamic does not resolve this asymmetry, but I highlight it to at least render visible this power dynamic in the episteme and cultivate transparency in knowledge production. This language choice provided access to a wide range of trainers working in different contexts, but it also affected the fluidity with which they expressed themselves. I was able to identify broad patterns and key questions in training work in the European region, but I did not capture national and local specificities in their detail and difference. Additionally, the missing information on the ethnic and racial identification of respondents might have provided a richer understanding of how racialised dynamics affect trainers working in different European regions, as the interviewed trainers outlined in their narratives. Thus, further research on local or national training contexts and practices would be valuable, and potentially revelatory.

Future research can build on the findings illuminated here in a number of ways. Overall, I have provided a predominantly positive account of training for gender equality and trainers. However, I have also illuminated paradoxes, challenges, and power relations in equality work. Each of these features opens up directions for future investigation, particularly in terms of the knowledge circulation and social change. Whereas my research has focused on gender trainers and their narratives, little is currently known about workshop participants' reactions to, and interpretations of the work of trainers and how this relates to the aims of gender training. In this work I have sketched the political economy of gender knowledge in Europe, pointing to a relationship between equality projects and the nature of work within the knowledge society. This necessitates further investigation, specifically concerning the dynamics between feminisation, precarity, and adult learning in Europe. This is particularly relevant as professions such as gender training involve emotionally intensive labour, emblematic of the affective-relational aspects of women's traditional tasks that is coming to characterise labour in general. I illustrated how learning in gender training has to take place across affective, physical, and cognitive dimensions in order to be impactful, and future research might focus on deepening the understanding of appropriate methodologies to enhance the transformative effect of gender trainings. Based on the findings I have presented here, where I argue for the reciprocity between resistances and counterstrategies and their interaction over time, research on transformative and oppositional politics should be ongoing as this evolves, tracking changes and adaptions in order to continue to adequately respond within the sociopolitical environment of interrelating domains.

The analysis that I have provided here deepens the understanding of the praxis of gender training. As such, it provides insights and recommendations for practitioners on enhancing the impact of gender training, which cohere around several key points. My research provides practitioners with an overview of gender training in Europe—who is carrying out this work, how they are positioned, and what they do. As highlighted above, my analysis demonstrates that cooperative constellations across sectors are an integral aspect of gender training and equality work more broadly. Communities of practice and Train the Trainer programmes as suggested in this, and other (Wong et al., 2016; Bustelo et al., 2016b; Ferguson, 2018), research are essential to the establishment and implementation of impactful gender training. For practitioners this indicates that other trainers are interested in building interactive networks, and offers actionable points for policymakers to implement. Furthermore, collaboration and exchange

between gender trainers from different sites and contexts within Europe can contribute to tackling the asymmetry in knowledge production and epistemic status.

This research is, to the best of my knowledge, the first in-depth exploration of gender training as an act of knowledge circulation. I advance a theorisation of circulation—based on collective exchange, multidirectionality, asymmetry, plurality, opposition, contextual embeddedness and reformulation. Through my application of these parameters of analysis in the case of gender training I provide a complete case study of the negotiation between practice and theory in the configuration of circulation (Keim et al., 2014: 100). Following these findings, I second calls for closer collaboration and exchange between worlds of theory and practice, a practice of accountability in Western feminist storytelling (Hemmings, 2011), and continued work on critical feminist cartographies of knowledge which productively question traditional North-South, West-East theoretical axes of comparison (Desai, 2007; 2015). Furthermore, this research contributes to scholarship on social complexity theory concepts and feminist politics (Verloo, 2018a; Verloo, 2018b), specifically regarding the domain of episteme and the circulation of knowledge and truth claims therein. The sequences of circulation, and the interrelation and the coevolution of systems and mechanisms of change, that I have documented in this research offer points of departure and areas of focus for future theorising around (in)equalities.

The affective, cognitive, and physical dimensions of learning that I covered supplies practitioners with material that integrates feminist and gender concepts with instructional theory. I analysed the trainers' methods, techniques, and approaches with descriptions of activities and guiding principles applied in material form. By presenting the discussion of these methods here, I also participate in circulating this material and open it up to reformulation. I emphasise the importance of critical reflexivity as applied to individual positionalities; intersectional, and gendered subjectivities; and as applied to the knowledge that trainers acquire, generate, and circulate. The histories and examples that I have presented provide an outline of the key issues that characterise gender training and gender expertise more generally. These findings equip practitioners with important indications about effective methods for responding to current challenges and lay the ground for future collective development of counterstrategies to opposition. Finally, this study can provide trainers with a sense of the shape of the community that they are part of, and the priorities of this occupational group. On a larger scale, the future

directions and next steps that I have outlined may contribute to building the European gender trainer community of practice and provide points of reference for collective conversations around ethics, principles, and strategies for action.

In terms of gender equality policy, this study brings to the fore several key points for the implementation of impactful gender equality policies going forward, particularly on the European level. As trainers in this research reiterate support for gender training needs to move beyond discursive commitments and tokenism. Thus, as I highlighted in the chapter on resistances, policymakers need to prioritise material assistance and the allocation of resources for training, the valorisation of feminist and gender knowledges, and support for multiple interventions over time. This further confirms parameters for impactful gender training presented in other research (Pauly et al., 2009; Ferguson & Forest, 2011; EIGE, 2014a). Additionally, I maintain that European policy interventions should support the development of formal structures to facilitate interaction, the exchange of methodologies, and the sharing of resources and best practices among gender trainers, especially as local and national level hostility against gender equality initiatives increases.

9.9 Concluding statement

This study of the circulation of knowledge shows who gender trainers are and what it looks like to be an equality worker in the European region. By locating my analysis within a reconstruction of the genealogy, architecture, and political economy of gender expertise I have shed light on what has been achieved in equality building and the value of this work. I have also exposed tensions and paradoxes, different manifestations of opposition, and participated in debates on the relationship between the feminist project and gender expertise. This project has been a journey through the paths and narratives of gender trainers, illuminating not only the dynamics of their praxis, but their motivations and ethics. I have tackled the question of how gender trainers circulate feminist and gender knowledges, and in so doing I have also explored the transformative potential of this work and the political economy of gender expertise. As a member of this community and the cooperative constellations that surround it this research has informed my practice and deepened my understanding of what it means, and what it entails, to engage others in equality building. With this study I provide insight into the messy and complex nature of equality work, and different ways in which the paradoxes thereof may be navigated.

As such it contributes to a broader, ongoing, collective exchange around how to respond to oppositions and challenges in the current European and global sociopolitical environment. Most of all, this research provides insight into how to facilitate transformative equality moments, and why equality building strategies like gender training are so critical. As Tracy (Scotland) says, "*nobody has ever turned around and gone, 'Oh. You don't have enough equality. Here. Have some more'. No one has ever done that in the history of the world. There has always had to be a fight".* This research is a contribution to this fight.

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Appendix A Interview schedule

1) Can you tell me about your work as a gender trainer?

What have been the key moments in your professional trajectory to this point?

What have your main activities been in the last 6 months?

Which geographic and institutional contexts do you typically work in?

Who do you most frequently collaborate with?

Can you tell me about your process of designing and delivering trainings?

What are some of your preferred methodologies?

2) According to your experience what would the ideal gender training context look like?

3) Can you tell me about the resistances that you have encountered in your work as a gender trainer?

Which are the resistances that are most urgent to address?

How do you combat or work with these resistances?

4) Do you think gender training brings about change? If so, in what ways?

What impact, short-term and long-term, are you hoping to achieve in your sessions?

For you, what are the markers of this change?

How do these ideas about change influence your training cycle?

Do you see any relationship between gender training and broader projects such as gender mainstreaming?

How does gender training relate to social transformation more broadly?

5) What does intersectionality mean to you and how do you use it in your work?

6) What do you see as the next steps in the development of gender training as a field?

Appendix B Questionnaire

Training for gender equality GRACE questionnaire

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Your questionnaire responses will be anonymous and your information will be kept confidential, all data is stored in a password-protected format. The questions start with some general information about your work, followed by some more in-depth questions about gender training, and finish with some demographic questions.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

・you have read the above information

・you voluntarily agree to participate

・you are at least 18 years of age

◌ agree

1) Do you deliver trainings for gender equality?

◌ yes

◌ no

By gender training we mean a process of developing knowledge and practical skills around gender and gender related issues with the aim of social transformation.

◌ more information?

Training is an educational tool or event, such as a workshop or a series of workshops. This can include face-to- face training events and seminars; online courses; and the development of resource materials and networks for sharing expertise. The training process is facilitated by a trainer and attended by participants. The gender trainer conducts the analysis, planning, design, development and implementation for the sessions with input from the participants. The objectives of gender training can range from simple knowledge transfer or informational skills building to community mobilization and social transformation. The content of the training is structured according to the objective. Some examples: an awareness raising training for student organisation members on gender issues; a capacity building training on gender budgeting in an NGO, a knowledge based training for university

staff about sexual harassment, a mobilization directed training for youth on gender and HIV/AIDS in their community, a skills enhancement trainings for service providers on LGBTQ+ client service access.

2) What percentage of your work does gender training represent?

3) On which topics do you most often deliver gender trainings?

Multiple answers are possible; the order of topics is random

- [ ] gender equality
- [ ] gender based violence
- [ ] gender mainstreaming
- [ ] gender and peace
- [ ] gender and leadership
- [ ] gender and fundraising
- [ ] gender and HIV/AIDS
- [ ] gender and human rights
- [ ] LGBTQ+ rights
- [ ] gender and sexuality
- [ ] gender and science
- [ ] sexual harassment
- [ ] gender and diversity
- [ ] gender and sport
- [ ] gender and health
- [ ] gender and youth development
- [ ] race and gender
- [ ] other:

4) How did you develop your skills as a trainer? Please mention any events or experiences that have been important for you.

5) How did you acquire your knowledge on gender issues?

Please select all the boxes that apply to you.

- [ ] undergraduate degree
- [ ] postgraduate degree
- [ ] training as an employee
- [ ] independent training course
- [ ] self-led research and study
- [ ] other:

6) Do you describe yourself as a feminist?

- ◌ yes
- ◌ no
- ◌ I don't know

6.1) (yes) What does the description "feminist" mean to you?

6.2) (no) Please share why you do not use the term feminist to describe yourself:

6.3) (I don’t know) Please describe why you selected "I don't know":

7) On average, how long do your trainings last?

- ◌ 1-4 hours
- ◌ 1 day
- ◌ 2 days

◌ 2-3 days

◌ 1 week

◌ other:

8) How many participants do you typically have in one session?

◌ 1-10

◌ 10-20

◌ 20-30

◌ 30-40

◌ 40-50

◌ more than 50 participants

9) Do you get monetary compensation for delivering trainings?

Multiple answers are possible.

☐ Yes, it is part of my self-employed work

☐ Yes, it is part of my work as an employee in my organisation

☐ No, I deliver gender trainings for free because:

9.1) (Yes, it is part of my self-employed work) What is your average hourly rate for delivering gender trainings? Please give an approximate amount in euros.

10) How do you generate ideas for your trainings?

Multiple answers are possible.

☐ websites/online

☐ trainings attended as a participant

☐ other trainers

☐ train the trainer events

☐ online training manuals

☐ digital trainer platforms

☐ other:

10.1) (websites) Please name or describe the sites that you regularly access.

11) What kinds of methods do you use in your trainings?

Multiple answers are possible.

- [ ] discussions
- [ ] toolkits
- [ ] videos
- [ ] pictures
- [ ] realia (objects and material from everyday life)
- [ ] organisation visits
- [ ] posters
- [ ] role-plays
- [ ] participant presentations
- [ ] participant's personal experiences
- [ ] theatre exercises
- [ ] slideshow presentations
- [ ] other:

12) What kinds of training modalities do you use?

Multiple answers are possible.

- [ ] blended (online + face-to-face)
- [ ] online moderated
- [ ] online self-paced
- [ ] face-to-face workshops
- [ ] other:

13) When you are delivering gender training do you consider other "categories" of identity (such as age, job, sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability/disability, education, race, ethnicity, immigration status, nationality, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs/practices etc.) ?

◌ yes

◌ no

13.1) (yes) How do you apply this approach? Please give examples or details of how you do this in your training for gender equality work.

14) How often do you face the following challenges in your training work?

	never	some-times	about half the time	usually	always
resistance from participants	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
resistance or restrictions from commissioners (those who request the training)	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
institutional or organisational barriers	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
inadequate funding	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

15) How often do you encounter the following challenges in your training sessions with participants?

	never	some-times	about half the time	usually	always
claims that gender equality already exists	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
gender fatigue (people are tired of talking about gender)	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
debate about the credibility of the trainer	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
minimization of the importance of gender equality	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
refusal to accept responsibility	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

	never	some-times	about half the time	usually	always
claims that gender inequality is a "women's" issue	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

16) Please sort the following according to their importance as professional ethics in your field of work as a trainer for gender equality. From 1 - most important to 7 - least important.

policy responsiveness	
developing a community of practice	
building transnational networks	
addressing structural inequalities	
using transformative methodologies	
applying feminist and gender theories	
cultivating reflexivity	

17) Are you a member of any professional networks as a gender trainer? If yes, please give the names or details of these networks.

Demographic information

1) DOB - Please select your date of birth:

2) How do you describe your gender identity?

3) Where were you born?

- ◯ Afghanistan
- ◯ Albania
- ◯ Algeria
- ◯ Andorra
- ◯ Angola
- ◯ Antigua and Barbuda
- ◯ Argentina
- ◯ Armenia
- ◯ Australia
- ◯ Austria
- ◯ Azerbaijan
- ◯ Bahamas
- ◯ Bahrain
- ◯ Bangladesh
- ◯ Barbados
- ◯ Belarus
- ◯ Belgium
- ◯ Belize
- ◯ Benin
- ◯ Bhutan
- ◯ Bolivia
- ◯ Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ◯ Botswana
- ◯ Brazil
- ◯ Brunei
- ◯ Bulgaria
- ◯ Burkina Faso
- ◯ Burundi
- ◯ Cabo Verde
- ◯ Cambodia
- ◯ Cameroon
- ◯ Canada
- ◯ Central African Republic (CAR)
- ◯ Chad
- ◯ Chile
- ◯ China
- ◯ Colombia
- ◯ Comoros
- ◯ Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ◯ Republic of the Congo
- ◯ Costa Rica
- ◯ Cote d'Ivoire
- ◯ Croatia
- ◯ Cuba
- ◯ Cyprus
- ◯ Czech Republic
- ◯ Denmark
- ◯ Djibouti
- ◯ Dominica
- ◯ Dominican Republic
- ◯ Ecuador
- ◯ Egypt
- ◯ El Salvador
- ◯ Equatorial Guinea
- ◯ Eritrea
- ◯ Estonia
- ◯ Ethiopia
- ◯ Fiji
- ◯ Finland
- ◯ France
- ◯ Gabon
- ◯ Gambia
- ◯ Georgia
- ◯ Germany
- ◯ Ghana
- ◯ Greece
- ◯ Grenada
- ◯ Guatemala
- ◯ Guinea

- ◌ Guinea-Bissau
- ◌ Guyana
- ◌ Haiti
- ◌ Honduras
- ◌ Hungary
- ◌ Iceland
- ◌ India
- ◌ Indonesia
- ◌ Iran
- ◌ Iraq
- ◌ Ireland
- ◌ Israel
- ◌ Italy
- ◌ Jamaica
- ◌ Japan
- ◌ Jordan
- ◌ Kazakhstan
- ◌ Kenya
- ◌ Kiribati
- ◌ Kosovo
- ◌ Kuwait
- ◌ Kyrgyzstan
- ◌ Laos
- ◌ Latvia
- ◌ Lebanon
- ◌ Lesotho
- ◌ Liberia
- ◌ Libya
- ◌ Liechtenstein
- ◌ Lithuania
- ◌ Luxembourg
- ◌ Macedonia (FYROM)
- ◌ Madagascar
- ◌ Malawi
- ◌ Malaysia
- ◌ Maldives
- ◌ Mali
- ◌ Malta
- ◌ Marshall Islands
- ◌ Mauritania
- ◌ Mauritius
- ◌ Mexico
- ◌ Micronesia
- ◌ Moldova
- ◌ Monaco
- ◌ Mongolia
- ◌ Montenegro
- ◌ Morocco
- ◌ Mozambique
- ◌ Myanmar (Burma)
- ◌ Namibia
- ◌ Nauru
- ◌ Nepal
- ◌ Netherlands
- ◌ New Zealand
- ◌ Nicaragua
- ◌ Niger
- ◌ Nigeria
- ◌ North Korea
- ◌ Norway
- ◌ Oman
- ◌ Pakistan
- ◌ Palau
- ◌ Palestine
- ◌ Panama
- ◌ Papua New Guinea
- ◌ Paraguay
- ◌ Peru
- ◌ Philippines
- ◌ Poland
- ◌ Portugal
- ◌ Qatar
- ◌ Romania
- ◌ Russia
- ◌ Rwanda
- ◌ Saint Kitts and Nevis
- ◌ Saint Lucia
- ◌ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- ◌ Samoa
- ◌ San Marino
- ◌ Sao Tome and Principe
- ◌ Saudi Arabia
- ◌ Senegal
- ◌ Serbia
- ◌ Seychelles
- ◌ Sierra Leone
- ◌ Singapore
- ◌ Slovakia
- ◌ Slovenia
- ◌ Solomon Islands
- ◌ Somalia
- ◌ South Africa
- ◌ South Korea
- ◌ South Sudan
- ◌ Spain

- ◌ Sri Lanka
- ◌ Sudan
- ◌ Suriname
- ◌ Swaziland
- ◌ Sweden
- ◌ Switzerland
- ◌ Syria
- ◌ Taiwan
- ◌ Tajikistan
- ◌ Tanzania
- ◌ Thailand
- ◌ Timor-Leste
- ◌ Togo
- ◌ Tonga
- ◌ Trinidad and Tobago
- ◌ Tunisia
- ◌ Turkey
- ◌ Turkmenistan
- ◌ Tuvalu
- ◌ Uganda
- ◌ Ukraine
- ◌ United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- ◌ United Kingdom (UK)
- ◌ United States of America (USA)
- ◌ Uruguay
- ◌ Uzbekistan
- ◌ Vanuatu
- ◌ Vatican City (Holy See)
- ◌ Venezuela
- ◌ Vietnam
- ◌ Yemen
- ◌ Zambia
- ◌ Zimbabwe

4) What country do you currently live in?

- ◌ Afghanistan
- ◌ Albania
- ◌ Algeria
- ◌ Andorra
- ◌ Angola
- ◌ Antigua and Barbuda
- ◌ Argentina
- ◌ Armenia
- ◌ Australia
- ◌ Austria
- ◌ Azerbaijan
- ◌ Bahamas
- ◌ Bahrain
- ◌ Bangladesh
- ◌ Barbados
- ◌ Belarus
- ◌ Belgium
- ◌ Belize
- ◌ Benin
- ◌ Bhutan
- ◌ Bolivia
- ◌ Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ◌ Botswana
- ◌ Brazil
- ◌ Brunei
- ◌ Bulgaria
- ◌ Burkina Faso
- ◌ Burundi
- ◌ Cabo Verde
- ◌ Cambodia
- ◌ Cameroon
- ◌ Canada
- ◌ Central African Republic (CAR)
- ◌ Chad
- ◌ Chile
- ◌ China
- ◌ Colombia
- ◌ Comoros
- ◌ Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ◌ Republic of the Congo
- ◌ Costa Rica
- ◌ Cote d'Ivoire
- ◌ Croatia
- ◌ Cuba
- ◌ Cyprus
- ◌ Czech Republic
- ◌ Denmark
- ◌ Djibouti

- ◌ Dominica
- ◌ Dominican Republic
- ◌ Ecuador
- ◌ Egypt
- ◌ El Salvador
- ◌ Equatorial Guinea
- ◌ Eritrea
- ◌ Estonia
- ◌ Ethiopia
- ◌ Fiji
- ◌ Finland
- ◌ France
- ◌ Gabon
- ◌ Gambia
- ◌ Georgia
- ◌ Germany
- ◌ Ghana
- ◌ Greece
- ◌ Grenada
- ◌ Guatemala
- ◌ Guinea
- ◌ Guinea-Bissau
- ◌ Guyana
- ◌ Haiti
- ◌ Honduras
- ◌ Hungary
- ◌ Iceland
- ◌ India
- ◌ Indonesia
- ◌ Iran
- ◌ Iraq
- ◌ Ireland
- ◌ Israel
- ◌ Italy
- ◌ Jamaica
- ◌ Japan
- ◌ Jordan
- ◌ Kazakhstan
- ◌ Kenya
- ◌ Kiribati
- ◌ Kosovo
- ◌ Kuwait
- ◌ Kyrgyzstan
- ◌ Laos
- ◌ Latvia
- ◌ Lebanon
- ◌ Lesotho
- ◌ Liberia
- ◌ Libya
- ◌ Liechtenstein
- ◌ Lithuania
- ◌ Luxembourg
- ◌ Macedonia (FYROM)
- ◌ Madagascar
- ◌ Malawi
- ◌ Malaysia
- ◌ Maldives
- ◌ Mali
- ◌ Malta
- ◌ Marshall Islands
- ◌ Mauritania
- ◌ Mauritius
- ◌ Mexico
- ◌ Micronesia
- ◌ Moldova
- ◌ Monaco
- ◌ Mongolia
- ◌ Montenegro
- ◌ Morocco
- ◌ Mozambique
- ◌ Myanmar (Burma)
- ◌ Namibia
- ◌ Nauru
- ◌ Nepal
- ◌ Netherlands
- ◌ New Zealand
- ◌ Nicaragua
- ◌ Niger
- ◌ Nigeria
- ◌ North Korea
- ◌ Norway
- ◌ Oman
- ◌ Pakistan
- ◌ Palau
- ◌ Palestine
- ◌ Panama
- ◌ Papua New Guinea
- ◌ Paraguay
- ◌ Peru
- ◌ Philippines
- ◌ Poland
- ◌ Portugal
- ◌ Qatar
- ◌ Romania
- ◌ Russia
- ◌ Rwanda

- ◌ Saint Kitts and Nevis
- ◌ Saint Lucia
- ◌ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- ◌ Samoa
- ◌ San Marino
- ◌ Sao Tome and Principe
- ◌ Saudi Arabia
- ◌ Senegal
- ◌ Serbia
- ◌ Seychelles
- ◌ Sierra Leone
- ◌ Singapore
- ◌ Slovakia
- ◌ Slovenia
- ◌ Solomon Islands
- ◌ Somalia
- ◌ South Africa
- ◌ South Korea
- ◌ South Sudan
- ◌ Spain
- ◌ Sri Lanka
- ◌ Sudan
- ◌ Suriname
- ◌ Swaziland
- ◌ Sweden
- ◌ Switzerland
- ◌ Syria
- ◌ Taiwan
- ◌ Tajikistan
- ◌ Tanzania
- ◌ Thailand
- ◌ Timor-Leste
- ◌ Togo
- ◌ Tonga
- ◌ Trinidad and Tobago
- ◌ Tunisia
- ◌ Turkey
- ◌ Turkmenistan
- ◌ Tuvalu
- ◌ Uganda
- ◌ Ukraine
- ◌ United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- ◌ United Kingdom (UK)
- ◌ United States of America (USA)
- ◌ Uruguay
- ◌ Uzbekistan
- ◌ Vanuatu
- ◌ Vatican City (Holy See)
- ◌ Venezuela
- ◌ Vietnam
- ◌ Yemen
- ◌ Zambia
- ◌ Zimbabwe

5) What is your current occupation? If you have more than one job, or you work in more than one organisation, please give some details about the different things that you do.

6) What sector do you work in?

Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ public sector
- ☐ private sector
- ☐ civil society
- ☐ other:

7) What is your current employment status?

Multiple answers are possible, if more than one applies please check both or describe your situation in the box below.

- [ ] employed in an organisation
- [ ] self-employed
- [ ] other:

7.1) (employed in an organisation) How many employees are there in the organisation that you work in?

- ◌ 0-25
- ◌ 25-50
- ◌ 50-100
- ◌ 100-500
- ◌ 1000
- ◌ other:

8) What is your current primary region of work?

- [ ] Europe
- [ ] Africa
- [ ] East Asia and Pacific
- [ ] Central Asia
- [ ] South America and the Caribbean
- [ ] Middle East and North Africa
- [ ] South Asia
- [ ] North America
- [ ] other:

8.1) (Europe) Where in Europe are you currently working?

Multiple answers are possible, press CTRL and click on the desired answers.

- [ ] Albania
- [ ] Andorra
- [ ] Armenia
- [ ] Austria
- [ ] Azerbaijan
- [ ] Belarus
- [ ] Belgium
- [ ] Bosnia and Herzegovina
- [ ] Bulgaria
- [ ] Croatia
- [ ] Cyprus

- ☐ Czech Republic
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Georgia
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Iceland
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Kazakhstan
- ☐ Kosovo
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Liechtenstein
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Macedonia (FYROM)
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Moldova
- ☐ Monaco
- ☐ Montenegro
- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ Norway
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Russia
- ☐ San Marino
- ☐ Serbia
- ☐ Slovakia
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Switzerland
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Ukraine
- ☐ United Kingdom (UK)
- ☐ Vatican City (Holy See)

9) What is your highest level of education?

- ◌ secondary school/ high school
- ◌ Bachelor's degree
- ◌ Master's degree
- ◌ PhD/ doctorate degree
- ◌ other:

10) What is your gross annual income (€)?

11) Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix C Demographic characteristics of interviewed trainers

Name[55]	Age	Country of Birth	Country of residence	Gender identification	Ethnic identification and/or descriptors used
Agata	38	Poland	Spain	woman	white
Alex	27	Romania	Romania	non-binary	white Romanian
Alice	40	Italy	Italy	female (hmmm)	white European, a person of Italian nationality and cultural heritage
Anika	66	India	India/ Netherlands/ Germany	woman	Indian/world citizen
Carla	65	Italy	Italy	woman	white Italian
Ebba	63	Sweden	Sweden	woman	No, Swedish.
Eleni	28	Cyprus	Hungary	woman, not too attached	Asia and Europe so I don't know. It really depends, it's relational and contextual I think.
Emily	51	France	Netherlands	woman	white
Erica	54	England	England	woman	white British
Fiore	30	Italy	Italy	non-binary	white
Germaine	40	United States of America	England	woman	white
Ines	37	Portugal	Italy	woman	no, not really
Isabelle	33	France	France	cis-gendered woman	No, in France it is forbidden. So I am French.
Julia	31	Austria	Italy	cis-female, live in a heterosexual relationship	white
Karl	54	United States/Canada	Netherlands	male gender	Chinese Canadian, heterosexual
Lea	40	Netherlands	Netherlands	female	I feel white but I'm not comfortable feeling white.
Luca	48	Germany	Sweden	gender queer (neutral pronoun)	Different answers, dependent on the context, white, sometimes northern European, or South German.

[55] All names culturally appropriate pseudonyms, information as provided by the interviewed trainers in 2017.

Malak	32	Iran	Netherlands	woman	no
Marie	32	England	Spain	woman	white British
Martina	40	Slovakia	Slovakia	woman	human being, Jewish heritage, global citizen
Meike	46	Austria	Austria	woman	white
Narek	30	Armenia	Austria	man	Armenian
Nina	42	Finland	Sweden	woman	white, middle class, heterosexual
Nova	43	Italy	Germany	maybe queer female	white Caucasian
Oksana	42	Ukraine	France	woman	European white
Paola	44	Germany	Germany	woman - maybe	white
Sam	57	Netherlands	Netherlands	man	white
Sirvat	35	Armenia	Armenia	woman	Armenian, I'm not really wanting racial categorization.
Tomas	31	Poland	Poland	male is how I feel right now	Polish
Tracy	n/d	South Africa	Scotland	woman	white South African
Yara	32	Canada	Canada	woman	Arab