Women in democratic transitions: The case for including female empowerment in democracy assistance

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Introduction

Women empowerment – defined as a "process by which those [women] who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability" or, in other words, acquire *agency* to entail *change* in their lives and their communities – is widely considered to be a prerequisite for sustainable development and an inherent component of human society in the 21st century.[1] Despite the global effort to "mainstream" the task of achieving women empowerment into the social, economic and foreign policies of all states, the endeavor has not achieved the expected outcomes. One of the identified reasons why the efforts have failed to meet expectations is that there is still a lack of methods and instruments that would effectively support the political and economic empowerment of women. As economic empowerment cannot be disengaged from political empowerment, it is important to consider the issue not only in the realm of development and humanitarian support, but also in democracy assistance programs.

The aim of the following text is to provide a "toolkit" for the purposes of strengthening and rationalizing the focus on women empowerment in programs and projects devoted to assisting the development and consolidation of democratic institutions. Building on theoretical insights, best-practices of international donors and the specific context of Czech foreign assistance, the present toolkit is intended to serve as a guide for further developing the theme of women empowerment in the Czech Transition Promotion Program (TPP).

The notion of gender equality in Czech development support and democracy assistance

The development and foreign assistance policy of the Czech Republic has nominally adhered to the goal of aiding the achievement of equality between men and women in target countries. Since the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women gender equality has been incrementally mainstreamed into its strategic documents and (depending on the political representation heading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; MFA) into the ministers' and deputies' speeches in international fora and platforms. Nonetheless, positive developments in this area were accomplished mainly after the transformation of the structures of Czech development assistance in 2007 – 2010[2], as until then the country's development policy has been labeled by researchers as "gender-blind" and rather passive toward gender issues in the implementation phase.[3]

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[1] Kabeer, Naila, "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal", *Gender & Development* 13 (1), 2005: 13-4.

[2] Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, "Transformace systému zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce ČR", September 2007. Available at https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/rozvojova_spoluprace/dvoustranna_zrs_cr/transformace_syste mu_zahranicni.html (accessed 21 January 2019).

[3] See Horký, Ondřej, *Česká rozvojová spolupráce: Diskurzy, praktiky, rozpory* (Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství - SLON, 2010).

The highly participative drafting of the strategic document for Czech development cooperation in the years 2010 – 2017[4] was positively received as it included a twin-track approach to gender issues (i.e. focusing on gender both as a cross-cutting issue throughout all projects and also thematically, with specific projects geared primarily at alleviating the status of women), which is also the stated approach to gender in development by the EU.[5] To support the inclusion of gender analyses and gender perspectives in projects of development support, the non-governmental sector has been active in providing guidelines and recommendations to the Ministry, the Czech Development Agency (ČRA) and practitioners of development assistance.[6]

This explicit reference to the twin-track approach was dropped, however, out of the succeeding strategic document for the years 2018 – 2030.[7] It is yet to be seen to what extent this presents a deliberate change of policy or simply a linguistic omission that will not change practice, but it seems so far that the reason why the reference was not included in the current strategy is that the drafting of the document was not as inclusive as in the past and the non-governmental sector did not have sufficient entry points to monitor the process.[8] Still, given the general indifference and even rising hostility of some segments of the Czech population toward the mere notion of "gender", it is plausible that for political reasons the issue of supporting gender equality in Czech external relations may be further sidelined or even abandoned.

3   The aim of this policy paper is to reiterate the relevance of including gender perspectives in Czech external activities – as Horký and Lukášová claimed in 2009, it is not because "gender" is in vogue, but because it adds to the effectivity of development assistance. More specifically, the present paper is going to focus on one particular aspect of Czech

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[4] Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, *Koncepce zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce České republiky na období 2010 – 2017*, May 2010, p. 19. Available at
https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/rozvojova_spoluprace/koncepce_publikace/koncepce/koncepce_zrs_cr_2010_2017.html (accessed 21 January 2019).
[5] See European Commission, "Promoting gender equality beyond the EU". Available at
https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/promoting-gender-equality-beyond-eu_en (accessed 21 January 2019).
[6] Czech Forum for Development Co-operation (FoRS), "Jak zohlednit rozdílné role, potřeby a priority žen a mužů v rozvojových, humanitárních, vzdělávacích a osvětových projektech", April 2014. Available at
http://www.fors.cz/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/FoRS_CES_Metodika_gender_projektyZRS.pdf (accessed 21 January); Míla O´Sullivan, Blanka Šimůnková and Ondřej Horký, *Gender in Development Matters: Resource Books and Training Kit for Development Practitioners* (Prague: Open Society, 2011); Ondřej Horký, Míla Lukášová, *Strategie začlenění gender do české rozvojové spolupráce: Ne móda, ale nutná podmínka efektivity* (Prague: Institute of International Relations, 2009). Available at
http://www.otevrenaspolecnost.cz/knihovna/otevrenka/prosazovani-genderove-rovnosti/pp4-zaclenovani-genderu.pdf (accessed 21 January 2019).
[7] Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, *Strategie zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce České republiky 2018 – 2030*, August 2017. Available at
https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/rozvojova_spoluprace/koncepce_publikace/koncepce/strategie_zahranicni_rozvojove.html (accessed 21 January 2019).
[8] Interview with MFA employee, Prague, 18 January 2019.

development assistance – transformation assistance (i.e. democracy assistance).[9] The financial instrument for Czech democracy assistance is the Transition Promotion Program, which supports "democracy and human rights, using the Czech Republic's experience with the social transition and democratization of the country."[10] According to the law on international development assistance[11], transformation assistance is part of Czech development assistance, but has a separate budget line in the state budget.[12]
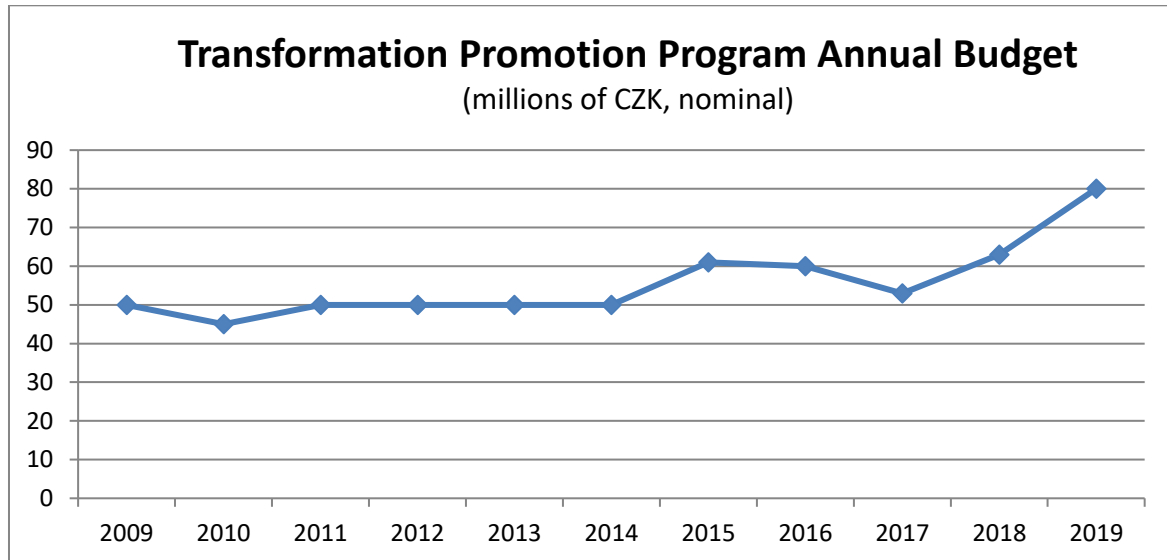
Transformation Promotion Program Annual Budget
(millions of CZK, nominal)

In the following sections, we are going to examine the nexus between democracy, equality and stability and demonstrate how and why it is desirable to include and sustain a twin-track approach (and extend it to a "three-pronged" approach) to gender issues in the Czech transition assistance policy. At the same time, the paper is going to discuss how to avoid unintended consequences of the promotion of gender equality in target countries.

International commitments of the Czech Republic

As a member of the international community and the European Union, the Czech Republic has commitments regarding the achievement of political empowerment of women and gender equality in politics – both on the domestic front and in its external relations.

Among the initial efforts at the global level to address discrimination against women was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and was ratified by Czechoslovakia in 1982 and the Czech Republic in 1993. CEDAW is often described as an international bill of rights for

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[9] The official term "transformation assistance" will be used interchangeably with democracy assistance and democracy promotion.
[10] https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/human_rights/transition_promotion_program/index_1.html
[11] Law no. 151/2010 Col. "Zákon o zahraniční rozvojové spolupráci a humanitární pomoci poskytované do zahraničí a o změně souvisejících zákonů", 21 April 2010, p. 1963.
[12] See Law no. 336/2018 Col. "Zákon o státním rozpočtu České republiky na rok 2019", 19 December 2018, p. 6.

women as it provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life. It also defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. More recently, in 2003 and 2011 the United Nations General Assembly has passed resolutions on women's political participation (A/RES/58/142 and A/RES/66/130) of which the latter "*Calls upon* States in situations of political transition to take effective steps to ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men in all phases of political reform, from decisions on whether to call for reforms in existing institutions to decisions regarding transitional governments, to the formulation of government policy, to the means of electing new democratic governments."[13]

In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015-2030, the international community has devoted itself to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (SDG 5) and "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life".

The EU first articulated its policy commitment to gender equality in development cooperation in 1995, following the Beijing UN Women's Conference, and is continually redefining its policy. To mention a few of the key EU documents that inform and guide external policies of Member States, currently, the Czech Republic subscribes to The New European Consensus on Development titled "Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future" (2017/C 210/01), which stipulates that "Gender equality is at the core of the EU's values and is enshrined in its legal and political framework." It further mandates that "the EU and its Member States will promote women's and girls' rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their protection as a priority across all areas of action." The Consensus views gender equality as having a "multiplier effect in achieving poverty eradication", as a "key to unlock the development of democratic societies" and as being "positively correlated with increased prosperity and stability and better outcomes in areas such as health and education".[14]

In the Council conclusions on Gender in Development of 26 May 2015, the Council stressed "that women's and girls' rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remains a policy priority for EU's external action and development cooperation, and should be strengthened and coherent in all areas without exception." Furthermore the Council pointed to the importance of adopting a so-called *three-pronged approach* to gender issues in external relations, which combines "gender mainstreaming in all stages of EU development policies and programmes, as well as in joint programming processes, gender specific actions, and political and policy dialogue with all partner countries."[15] These

[13] For full text see https://undocs.org/A/RES/66/130 (accessed 25 January 2019).
[14] For full text see https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2017:210:FULL&from=EN (accessed 25 January 25, 2019).
[15] For full text see http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9242-2015-INIT/en/pdf (accessed 25 January 2019).

conclusions were further fed into the EU Gender Action Plan for 2016-2020 (GAP II).[16] Furthermore, the Commission's Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016 – 2019 reiterated that one of the five priorities regarding gender equality is "promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world." The priority goals shall be met by promoting "the integration of a gender equality perspective into every aspect of EU intervention (preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, legal measures and spending programmes)".[17]

As we can see from the above probe of primary guiding documents, the achievement of gender-related goals relies mostly on the policy technique of "mainstreaming". *Gender* mainstreaming emerged as a key strategy for attaining gender equality from the 1995 Beijing UN Women's Conference (The Beijing Platform for Action, respectively), but the policy has also been applied by the EU, in other fields, such as human rights and democracy.[18] The strategy has been formally defined by the UN Economic and Social Council as a comprehensive approach that applies a gender perspective in all spheres of public policy:

> *"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."*[19]

However, the policy approach has not been as successful as envisioned and "failed to bring the transformation it had promised".[20] While due to mainstreaming governmental strategies and statements are usually gender-rich, in the phase of policy implementation the focus on gender "evaporates".[21] Some scholars and practitioners argue that gender mainstreaming effectively means that "nobody is responsible for getting it done" (as the subject is bifurcated across all policy areas), and thus it "becomes merely a technical exercise without

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[16] GAP II is the successor of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development (Gender Action Plan 2010 – 2015).

[17] European Commission, *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016 – 2019*, SWD(2015) 278 final, Brussels 3 December 2015. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/strategic_engagement_for_gender_equality_en.pdf (accessed 25 January 2019).

[18] Council of the European Union, *EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy*, December 2015. Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30003/web_en__actionplanhumanrights.pdf (accessed 25 January 2019).

[19] United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997*, A/52/3. Available at https://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/52/plenary/a52-3.htm (accessed 26 April 2019).

[20] Eerdewijk, Anouka van, "Gender Mainstreaming: Views of a Post-Beijing Feminist" in Harcourt, *Handbook of Gender and Development*), 117.

[21] Eerdewijk, Anouka van, "The Micropolitics of Evaporation: Gender Mainstreaming Instruments in Practice", *Journal of International Development* 26 (3), 2014: 345-355.

political outcomes", a "tick-box mechanism" and "lip-service" with no tangible results.[22] Others see it as an "add women and stir" approach that has lead mostly only to a quantitative (token) increase in including women in development projects.[23] Moreover, from the perspective of state institutions and implementers of development assistance, gender mainstreaming has become a form of "policing" by civil society and advocates of gender equality and thus leads to creating "negative energy" regarding the issue, which hence even becomes an uncomfortable topic for civil service staff as they struggle with the "how" of implementing gender perspectives and programs in their policy areas.[24]

Having in mind that gender mainstreaming is "an essentially contested concept and practice" that can lead to unintended consequences – such as alienating or antagonizing state institutions and implementers toward the topic of gender equality – it is important to take care in formulating nuanced policy prescriptions and recommendations that will truly lead to tangible results.

The nexus of democracy and gender equality

The inclusion of gender-focused projects and gender perspectives in the external relations of donor states has been associated traditionally with development assistance and humanitarian aid – in this sense much less academic and practical focus has been aimed at including gender in democracy assistance, which constitutes a marginal (in terms of financing) part of every donor's official development assistance (ODA). The reason why gender issues in democracy assistance programs have not received much attention from practitioners is that they often see the issue as "irrelevant" or "not a topic at all" due to the very nature of democracy assistance programs and projects, which are considered to implicitly increase equality in a given society by strengthening awareness about political and civil rights.[25] The equalization of relations between men and women is therefore often taken for granted in the democratization process, but past experience demonstrates that gender equality is by no means epiphenomenal with transitions – neither in terms of causation nor correlation.

Indeed, one of the fundamental expectations of democracy (and thus of democracy promotors) is that it will serve as a "quick solution to the pervasive problem of gender inequality", but scholars warn that in this sense, "the expectations of democracy are

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[22] Mukhopadhyay, Maitrayee, "Mainstreaming Gender or 'Streaming' Gender Away: Feminists Marooned in the Development Business"; Sara de Jong, "Mainstream(ing) Has Never Run Clean, Perhaps Never Can: Gender in the Main/Stream of Development" both in Wendy Harcourt (ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[23] Debusscher, Petra and Anna van der Vleuten, "Mainstreaming gender in European Union development cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa: promising numbers, narrow contents, telling silences", *International Development Planning Review* 34 (3), 2012: 319-338.

[24] Eerdewijk, *The Micropolitics of Evaporation*, 351.

[25] Dopita, Tomáš, "Gender Equality and women's empowerment in Czech Official Development Assistance", *Gender Studies*, March 2012. Available at http://genderstudies.cz/download/case_study_CR_angola.pdf (accessed 21 January, 2019).

unrealistic and need to be more nuanced".[26] The assumption that gender equality is intrinsically caused by democracy thus needs to be problematized. If we want to make the case that gender should be present in the policies of democracy assistance, there is a number of questions and levels of analysis that need to be examined in order to authoritatively declare that (political) gender equality fosters positive social effects – both nationally and internationally. The following questions can help us in justifying the efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment:

1. Does increased gender equality strengthen democratic governance?
2. Does increased gender equality reduce the likelihood of violent civil conflict?
3. What effect does political gender equality have on inter-state relations?
4. Does presence of women in politics alter international affairs?

Examining the existing empirical literature, we find that the correlation between the strength of democracy and gender equality is robust, but not always straightforward.[27] Ted Piccone finds that *strong* democracies in general tend to have smaller gender gaps.[28] Less mature (or weaker) democracies tend to include women in politics and cabinet positions more in terms of "tokenism", as they seek to gain more legitimacy and status in international organizations (this applies mainly to post-communist democracies of Central and Eastern Europe).[29] However, some research finds that democracy has little significance for gender equality[30] and that the relationship between democracy and gender equality is sometimes even negative.[31] The answer to the first question is thus complex, but positive. Democracy does not increase gender equality, but as the two form a mutually reinforcing relationship, increasing political stability reinforces equality, which in turn strengthens democratic governance.[32] The link also works in other directions – for some scholars, the prime driver of both democratization and gender equality is *modernization* of the society (industrialization, urbanization), which fosters a cultural shift toward liberal values that encourages the rise of women in public life and the consolidation of democratic institutions.[33]

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[26] Bjarnegård, Elin and Erik Melander, "Disentagling gender, peace and democratization: the negative effects of militarized masculinity", *Journal of Gender Studies* 20 (2), 2011: 140.

[27] Piccone, Ted, "Democracy, gender equality, and security", *Brookings Institution Policy Brief*, September 2017. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/research/democracy-gender-equality-and-security/ (accessed 23 January 2019).

[28] Piccone, Ted, "Democracy, Gender Equality, and Women's Physical Security*", Democracy and Security Dialogue Working Paper Series*, 2017. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/fp_20170905_democracy_gender_working_paper.pdf (accessed 23 January 2019).

[29] Bego, Ingrid, "Accessing Power in New Democracies: The Appointment of Female Ministers in Postcommunist Europe", *Political Research Quarterly* 67 (2), 2014: 347–360.

[30] Paxton, Pamela, "Women in National Legislatures: A Cross-National Analysis", *Social Science Research* 26 (4), 1997: 442-464.

[31] Yoon, Mi Yung, "Democratization and Women's Legislative Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Democratization* 8 (2), 2001: 169-190.

[32] Piccone, *Democracy, gender equality, and security*.

[33] Inglehart, Ronald, Pippa Norris and Christian Welzel, "Gender Equality and Democracy", *Comparative Sociology* 1 (3-4), 2002: 321-345.

Weak and immature political institutions tend to "allow a persistent masculinist influence", which can be measured by the dominance of men in parliament or by the role played by the military in forming political culture. Thus, where institutions are weak – and this applies also to weak *democratic* institutions – societies are significantly more influenced by "militarized masculinity" and as a consequence political violence and civil conflict is more common.[34] Following this logic, it is often expected that democracies reduce the likelihood of internal conflict. In this sense, research shows that democratic societies are more peaceful *only* when they enjoy some level of (political) gender equality.[35] But since democratization does not bring immediate gender equality, it is necessary to work on achieving equality prior to expecting peace. Especially in post-conflict societies, donors do focus on democracy-building and fostering good governance, but the aspect of gender equality is sidelined. In order to fulfill the expectations of democracy's effects on peace, democratization and gender equality should be promoted hand-in-hand.

The third question invites us to look into historical patterns. We know that states undergoing a democratic transition tend to be internally unstable and institutionally weak. New political elites are taking the place of old elites, which creates societal tensions, "rules of the political game" are unclear and in the making and any civil or economic internal problems are prone to overspill or culminate in conflicts with external actors. As a consequence, countries in the transformation process from authoritarianism to democracy are significantly more "war-prone" than mature democracies and stable autocracies and often struggle with violent internal conflicts.[36] While lone or *token* women in executive positions tend to be as hawkish as men (or even more, to prove their resoluteness), the larger the proportion of women in legislatures, aggressive measures such as use of force and defense expenditures actually decrease (regardless of their party affiliation) and at the same time moderate hawkish behavior of female executives.[37] In this sense, we can theoretically expect that the inclusion of women in legislative bodies of the transforming state can mitigate the negative externalities of the democratization process.

In terms of women politicians' overall effect on international relations, Regan and Paskeviciute find that *gender* peace – which is an analogy to the theory of *democratic* peace[38] – exists. They hold that as "the proportion of women who hold high political office increases, the state will be less likely to engage in militarized interstate conflict" and that in "a dyadic militarized dispute, as the proportions of women holding high political office in

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[34] Bjarnegård, *Disentagling gender*.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Mansfield, Edward D. and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War", *International Security* 20 (1), 1995: 5-38.

[37] Koch, Michael T. and Sarah A. Fulton, "In Defense of Women: Gender, Office Holding, and National Security Policy in Established Democracies", *The Journal of Politics* 73 (1), 2011: 1-16.

[38] Democratic peace presupposes that two democratic states will never enter ear with each other due to structural and ideological reasons. History proves this assumption correct so far, but the theory has its critics. See Gowa, Joanne, *Ballots and Bullets: The Elusive Democratic Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

both countries increase, the likelihood that the dispute will advance to the level of serious combat and/or high fatalities will decrease."[39] Effectively, supporting women's access to state legislatures, executive positions and politics in general is deemed to have positive outcomes in terms of internal social stability and decreasing use of force in the international system.

Nonetheless, we can see that before political gender equality generates the mentioned positive outcomes a number of caveats need to be overcome. Democratization does not outright cause gender equality. The transformation process weakens political institutions over a certain period of time, rendering the state vulnerable and conflict-prone. During this period, democracy can, in fact, lead to an *increase* in gender *inequality* when conservative or traditional parties gain in elections and thereby the expected pacifying and stabilizing effects of gender equality will not materialize. It is thus particularly this period, when gender should be a cross-cutting theme in institution-building in the nascent political system.

The instrumentality of women

When making a case for including a gender focus and perspectives in transition assistance, an analysis of its possible unintended consequences must be included. The first of these is the presumed *instrumentality* of women as the agenda for gender equality helps to justify particular policy choices; the second is the double-edged nature of gender policies in target societies.

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Critical scholars claim that development policies should be cautious of how they employ the issue of gender and the role of women in socio-economic development. A fundamental question concerns whether gender equality policies shall be developed as an *end* in itself, or whether they should be promoted as a *means* to more effective and sustainable development.[40] When the empowerment of women and girls is perceived as a means to development, the transformative nature of gender equality becomes somewhat depoliticized and submissive to wider socio-economic goals. For instance, gender equality is considered to be instrumentalized by advocates of neoliberal economic reforms and to help ease the impact of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) in developing countries.

Under SAPs states were advised and often pressured to adopt economic reforms that are deemed to be have particularly negative effects on women. Structural adjustment aims to above all create stable and predictable economic environments for investment and growth by reducing inflation and reducing the role of government in the economy. States thus cut back on spending, which affects the provision of social services, thereby increasing demand

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[39] Regan, Patrick M. and Aida Paskeviciute, "Women's Access to Politics and Peaceful States", *Journal of Peace Research* 40 (3), 2003: 287-302.

[40] Moser, Caroline and Annalise Moser, "Gender mainstreaming since Beijing: A review of success and limitations in international institutions", *Gender & Development* 13 (2), 2005: 14.

for (unpaid) care work that is mostly effectuated by women and girls.[41] Among the negative side-effects of SAPs in the developing world was rising male unemployment, underemployment and decreasing purchasing power. Under SAPs women were expected to substitute for the failure or lack of state institutions providing services such as health care and education. The increased efforts of empowered women to earn money, to substitute for male unemployment and intensify care-work "cushioned" households to a significant degree from the worst effects of neoliberal restructuring.[42] So, following the critics' reasoning, women were *instrumentally* emancipated and empowered to join the politico-economic sphere merely for the sake of mitigating the initial negative social effects of neoliberal reforms.

As a consequence, "women's empowerment is heralded in today's development circles as a means that can produce extraordinary ends" – women are vaunted as a "'weapon against poverty', their empowerment extolled as the solution to a host of entrenched social and economic problems."[43] As demonstrated by the Nike Foundation's *The Girl Effect* campaign[44], women and girl empowerment is also framed in "business case terms".[45] The simplified narrative presumes that a girl in a developing country that receives an education and applies for a loan, from which she buys a cow (and turns it into a herd) and supports her family and community, will hence gain respect from local men who will "invite her to the village council where she convinces everyone that all girls are valuable." The narrative builds on evidence that, for example, women spend more resources on their children's well-being than men and devote larger portions of income to the family budget.[46] Such instrumentalism attaches to girls and women a (problematic) notion of agency, whereby their empowerment will make the "whole world better off" by ending poverty and war and fostering growth and peace.[47] This, however, may involve unrealistic, "super-human sacrifices" in terms of time, labor and energy.[48]

The instrumental inclusion of gender into development programs is not only viewed as part of the promotion of the neoliberal agenda, but also as a justification for foreign

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[41] Jaquette, Jane, "Feminism and the Challenges of the 'Post-Cold War' World", *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5 (3), 2003: 335.

[42] Chant, Sylvia and Caroline Sweetman, "Fixing women or fixing the world? 'Smart economics', efficiency approaches, and gender equality in development", *Gender & Development* 20 (3), 2012: 519.

[43] Cornwall, Andrea and Jenny Edwards, "Introduction: Negotiating Empowerment", *IDS Bulletin* 41 (2), 2010: 1.

[44] The opening of the Nike clip stated the following: "The world is a mess. Poverty. AIDS. Hunger. War. So what else is new? What if there was an unexpected solution that could turn this sinking ship around? Would you even know it if you saw it? It's not the internet. It's not science. It's not the government. It's not money. It's a girl."

[45] Eerdewijk, Anouka van and Tine Davids, "Escaping the Mythical Beast: Gender Mainstreaming Reconceptualised", *Journal of International Development* 26 (3), 2014: 308.

[46] See Thomas, Duncan, "Intra-household Resource Allocation: An Inferential Approach", Journal of Human Resources 25 (4), 1990: 635-664.

[47] Chant and Sweetman, *Fixing women or fixing the world?*

[48] Chant, Sylvia, "The Disappearing of 'Smart Economics'? The World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality: Some Concerns about the Preparatory Process and the Prospects for Paradigm Change", *Global Social Policy* 12 (2), 2012: 198–218.

interventions. Critical feminist scholars argue that the war on terror, for example, has been engendered in order to justify it.[49] In this sense, in 2001, first lady Laura Bush stated that "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women", creating a discursive link between US intervention against the Taliban and women's rights.[50] Such use of women's rights is labeled as *embedded feminism* – a strategy of *embedding* specific gender-related and feminist topics to publicly legitimize foreign missions, for example as humanitarian interventions.[51]

Nonetheless, with regards to the criticism related to instrumentalizing women and their empowerment to serve ulterior goals, this strategy may in fact be the only effective opportunity to ameliorate the status of women and girls around the globe. This form of instrumentality "may be inevitable, given the constraints of the contexts within which feminist advocates operate" and since "in the 'real' world of politics, compromises and strategic alliances are parts of reality."[52]

Gender equality as a double-edged policy

The inclusion of women empowerment targets in development programs and transition assistance can have unintended consequences that aggravate the position of women and gender equality due to male and structural backlash. A theoretical framework that helps us explain why men feel threatened by women's empowerment comes from social psychology and is identified as *precarious manhood*. This theoretical concept considers men to be *made*, not *born*. While "womanhood happens to girls, via a series of inevitable physical and biological changes, […] manhood is something that boys must make happen, by passing certain social milestones."[53] Manhood is thus considered to be defined more by social proof than biological markers. Traditional societies and cultures have commonly been preoccupied "with active, public demonstrations of manhood". As modern societies generally lack institutionalized rites of passage to manhood, the status of manhood is troublingly ambiguous, uncertain and problematic. Achieving manhood thus becomes a risky and failure-prone process. It is not a developmental certainty, it is tenuous and – most importantly – unlike womanhood, can be lost.[54] Manhood is thus measured, for example, in the contribution of men's labor to the well-being of the family, community or society:

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[49] Berry, Kim, "The Symbolic Use of Afghan Women in the War on Terror", *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 27 (2), 2003: 137-160.

[50] Allen, Mike, "Laura Bush Gives Radio Address", *The Washington Post*, November 18, 2001. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/11/18/laura-bush-gives-radio-address/670a30a8-7c47-4669-a888-b88735fe68dc/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f356939f7df6 (accessed 29 January, 2019).

[51] Hunt, Krista and Kim Rygiel (eds.), *(En)Gendering the War on Terror War Stories and Camouflaged Politics* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[52] Moser and Moser, *Gender mainstreaming since Beijing*, 14-15.

[53] Vandello, Joseph A. et al., "Precarious Manhood", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95 (6), 2008: 1325.

[54] See also Gilmore, David D., *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven CT: Yale Univeristy Press, 1990).

"Men who contribute heavily receive the rewards of manhood status, whereas men who contribute little (or are "good for nothing") do not even count as men. Women may contribute more or less, but the labor they provide in bearing and raising children means that they are rarely good for nothing. As a consequence, their very essence as a woman is rarely in doubt."[55]

This has two implications that need to be accounted for when designing gender equality policies – 1.) "challenges to men's manhood will provoke anxiety- and threat-related emotions among men" and 2.) "men will often feel compelled to demonstrate their manhood through action, particularly when it has been challenged".[56] Such reactions are, unfortunately, observed as a result of women empowerment (social, economic and political) in some target societies. According to field research, female economic empowerment may threaten the image of men as breadwinners and lead to increased violence against women;[57] when husbands lose signs of dominance over wives due to shifting gender norms – again – violence may become the means of reinstating their authority over wives;[58] the more economically dependent a husband is on his wife, the less housework he performs as he reasserts his masculinity.[59] In some societies poor men are more likely to wallow in self-pity over losing a job (due to an increase in female labor supply, for example) or living in poverty, while women (mothers) cope with such situations more effectively:

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"A poor man will say 'I do not have a job, I do not have some things', and usually most will resort to gambling or drinking...vices...to try and compensate them for what they don't have. Whereas a poor woman will carry her responsibilities. She will create something in order to have earnings. I have to have a sari-sari store (small grocery shop) to have earnings. I have to cook to eat, to sustain ourselves, different to a man."[60]

With regards to the above-mentioned possible double-edged effect of women empowerment, an understanding of gender dynamics and the effects of programs focused on women empowerment is a necessary prerequisite for avoiding unintended consequences that lead to backlash against women and gender equality in a target society.

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[55] Vandello et al., *Precarious Manhood*, 1327.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Angelucci, Manueal, "Love on the Rocks: Domestic Violence and Alcohol Abuse in Rural Mexico", *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy* 8 (1), 2008: 1-43.

[58] Macmillan, Ross, and Rosemary Gartner, "When She Brings Home the Bacon: Labor–Force Participation and the Risk of Spousal Violence against Women", *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61 (4), 1999: 947–958. However, increased violence caused partly by shifting gender norms is likely to be only transitory as – in general terms – the narrowing gender gap in pay explains to some extent the reduction in violence against women in developed countries. See Aizer, Anna, "The Gender Wage Gap and Domestic Violence", *American Economic Review* 100 (4), 2010: 1847–1859.

[59] Farré, Lídia, "The Role of Men in the Economic and Social Development of Women: Implications for Gender Equality", *The World Bank Research Observer* 28 (1), 2013: 38.

[60] Cited in Chant and Sweetman, *Fixing women or fixing the world?*, 521.

Key political institutions for achieving women empowerment during transitions

The transition to a democratic system is a complex process that involves the restructuring of power relations, elite settlements, redesigning of social and political institutions, reform of the economy and other aspects that set the normative and structural framework of the new regime – often entrenching this framework for years to come and predesting the developments of the given society. The transition period is thus perceived as a window of opportunity to – *inter alia* – reconstitute gender relations on more equitable terms. External funding aimed at empowering women is thus most likely to be needed (and have relevant impact) in the period when old institutions are disintegrating and new ones are emerging.

Still, as the inclusion of gender perspectives and gender analyses is relatively new in the practice of democracy assistance, "the effectiveness of funding empowerment remains highly contested".[61] Funding for women empowerment in the event of a transition is viewed by its advocates as positive in terms of providing financing that would otherwise not be available in local circumstances and also in providing moral support.[62] Others point to the possible negative impacts of international assistance to the goals of women empowerment, which can weaken or undermine local efforts to promote change.[63]

What follows is a list of institutions that are in flux during a transition and wherein the agenda of women empowerment shall be present in order to foster gender equality in the nascent socio-political system. In other words, the following institutions can serve as avenues for democracy assistance donors to reach the twin goal of fostering democratic governance and women empowerment.

Roundtable and inter-elite negotiations

The crucial question to ask is, under what circumstances do transitions generate positive gender outcomes and women empowerment? Also, what conditions should be met for gender to stay on the agenda of the transition?[64] Most democratic transitions are to a larger or lesser extent *negotiated* (or pacted) transitions – weakened regimes either reach out to opposition before caving in or control the transition process in order to maintain some hold over the final outcome.[65] Huntington refers to these transitions as transplacements (negotiated reforms; e.g. Polish transition in late 1980s) and transformations (elite-

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[61] Irvine, Jill A., "US Aid and gender equality: social movement vs civil society models of funding", *Democratization* 25 (4), 2018: 728.

[62] Jaquette, Jane, "Women and Democracy: Regional Differences and Contrasting Views", *Journal of Democracy* 12 (3), 2001: 111–125.

[63] Mendelson, Sarah, and John Glenn (eds.), *The Power and Limits of NGOs: A Critical Look at Building Democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[64] Waylen, Georgina, *Engendering Transitions: Women's Mobilization, Institutions, and Gender Outcomes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 38 and 68-69.

[65] O'Donnel, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

controlled transition; e.g. current transition in Burma).[66] The negotiations – often labeled as roundtable talks – that ensue between the out-coming or weakened governing elites and the in-coming governing aspirants are the very first step toward the reform of the political system. Even though women played a role during regime breakdown (i.e. organizing protests and the opposition), if they are not granted a seat at the table during the initial inter-elite discussions and if the men at the table are *gender-blind*, the institutions of the nascent system may deliberately inhibit the empowerment of women.

The role of women during transitions is mostly determined by the levels of pre-existing women's organization and the openness (and speed) of the transition process itself. Yet, there are no examples of women's direct involvement in the negotiations that formed part of the pacted transitions in Latin America and very little examples of their direct involvement in negotiations in east central European countries. In East Germany, women attempted to join the discussions in December 1989 by founding the Independent Women's Association (UFV). They were allegedly told that if the roundtable negotiations "allowed women in they might have to let in the pet breeding associations as well." UFV managed to receive seats at the table, but found it difficult to make itself heard.[67]

However, in the immediate post-transition period, women's movements in Latin America tended to be more involved in policy advocacy, than in Eastern Europe. Among the explanations for this is that, whereas women in Latin America were more active in opposing conservative authoritarian regimes, communist regimes formally *granted* gender equality and thus women did not have to organize and *struggle* for empowerment and were rendered passive.[68] One of the most effective attempts to place demands of female empowerment on the agenda of the transition was the creation of the Chilean *Concertación Nacional de Mujeres por la Democracia* (Women for Democracy[69]) as a reaction to the 1988 plebiscite, where voters determined that president Augusto Pinochet would not remain in office for another 8-year term. The motive for founding the women's *Concertación* was the perceived continued lack of influence in national politics and called for, *inter alia*, improving the legal position of women and incorporating women into the political system and labor market.[70]

Constitution

One of the first targets of a transition process is the state's constitution as all other institutions are based on it. The design of the new or amended constitution has significant consequences for gender equality and women's issues in general. Not only do constitutions

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[66] Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1991).
[67] Waylen, Georgina, "Gender and Transitions: What do we Know?", *Democratization* 10 (1), 2003: 157-178.
[68] Einhorn, Barbara, "Where Have All the Women Gone? Women and Women's Movement in East Central Europe", *Feminist Review* 39, 1991.
[69] The women's movement was part of a broader coalition of center-left parties called the Coalition of Parties for Democracy (*Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*).
[70] Waylen, *Engendering Transitions*, 75-76.

define structure of the government and the model of elections, but they also touch upon various categories of rights. All democracies have constitutions that ensure negative rights (civilian and political rights), but not all include positive rights (social and economic rights), for example. Generally, women are more likely to benefit from positive rights than men as some care-work is "outsourced" to the state. Women thus often feel the consequences of transitions, which weaken positive rights (as part of neoliberal reforms, for example) more immediately than men. This is illustrated by surveys conducted in East Central Europe, which found a significant gender gap in the perception of the outcomes of the transition. In Slovakia, for example, women were more likely to feel they had "lost" as a result of the transition (57.5% of women and 46.7% of men) and were less likely than men to see the actions of the Communist party prior to 1989 as very negative (22.4% of women compared to 34.1% of men).[71]

Gender-sensitive constitutions embed women empowerment in the legal framework and provide a "strategic device to challenge retrenchments under subsequent governments."[72] Scholars often proclaim the South African constitution, adopted after the transition in May 1996 with significant input from the Women's National Coalition (WNC), to be the most gender-sensitive in the world, as it enshrined gender equality and the possibility of affirmative action, setting up, for example the Commission for Gender Equality.[73]

Among the clearest steps to ensure women's political representation through the constitution are quotas or *reserved seats* for women. In most cases, reserved seats provide for low levels of female representation, usually between 1 – 10 % of all representatives, although some countries have instituted even 30 % quotas.[74]

Electoral system

Political scientists argue that one of the main factors contributing to the presence or absence of women in legislative bodies is the institutional design of the electoral system of that given country.[75] According to Norris, "electoral systems represent perhaps, the most powerful instrument available for institutional engineering, with far reaching-consequences

[71] Wolchik, Sharon L., "Gender and the Politics of Transition in the Czech Republic and Slovakia" in Jaquette, Jane S. and Sharon L. Wolchik (eds.), *Women and Democracy: Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 167.

[72] Waylen, *Engendering Transitions*, 11.

[73] Geisler, Gisela, "'Parliament is another Terrain of Struggle': Women, Men and Politics in South Africa", The *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38 (4), 2000: 614.

[74] Krook, Mona Lena, "Gender and Elections: Temporary Special Measures Beyond Quotas", CPPF Working Papers on Women in Politics No. 4, *Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum*, February 2015, 5. Available at http://webarchive.ssrc.org/working-papers/CPPF_WomenInPolitics_04_Krook.pdf (accessed February 7, 2019).

[75] Fodor, Eva, "Women and Political Engagement in East-Central Europe" in Anne Marie Goetz (ed.), *Governing Women: Women's Political Effectiveness in Contexts of Democratization and Governance Reform* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 122.

for party systems, the composition of legislatures, and the durability of democratic arrangements".[76]

In the absence of gender quotas that distort the picture, electoral systems organized as proportional representation (PR), with large voting districts, high electoral thresholds and closed party lists tend to facilitate higher levels of female representation in parliaments. First-past-the-post (FPTP) and single-member district (SMD) electoral systems, however, tend to play against women as parties will play safe in their choice and put up the "most broadly acceptable" candidate.[77] In contrast, where a large number of candidates is selected, parties will more likely engage in *ticket-balancing* in order to attract wider constituencies. High party fragmentation (in a system with low electoral thresholds) tends to favor men as these are more likely to be party heads and leaders and be in the upper positions on the ticket and thus be elected. Open party lists are also deemed not favorable to women as voters may exercise bias against female politicians.[78]

The negative effect of FPTP on female representation can be mitigated by reserved seats for women – for instance, in local elections in India, reserved seats apply to single-member districts, where only women may run for election.[79]

Intra-party democracy

The decisive moment determining whether women will become legislators or cabinet officials is, if the parties permit them to become candidates. While this may seem as a banal observation, intra-party politics may often systematically hinder women from accessing positions within the party that would enable them to be elected for office – parties thus become crucial gatekeepers. In a post-transition period, parties (or their coalitions) spring up quickly. As such, their (democratic) internal rules, procedures and overall levels of institutionalization are fairly weak and thus they tend to be volatile and unpredictable.[80] Moreover, as Goetz argues, in developing countries parties have "personalized patronage-based systems for distributing resources and making appointments to desirable positions. Unsurprisingly, one of the few routes open to women in such systems is to exploit kinship resources, drawing upon their relationships to prominent male politicians to secure leadership positions."[81] Goetz and Hassim further state that weak party systems may often be "insufficiently institutionalized for women to begin to start challenging rules which

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[76] Norris, Pippa, *Increasing women's representation in Iraq: What strategies would work best?*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2004. Available at https://sites.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/Iraq%20--%20Options%20for%20Women's%20Representation.pdf (accessed 30 January 2019).

[77] Johnson-Myers, Tracy-Ann, *The Mixed Member Proportional System: Providing Greater Representation for Women? A Case Study of the New Zealand Experience* (Cham: Springer, 2017), 16.

[78] Waylen, *Engendering Transitions*, 111.

[79] Krook, *Gender and Elections*, 5.

[80] Lipset, Seymour Martin, "The Indispensability of Political Parties", *Journal of Democracy* 11 (1), 2000: 48-55.

[81] Goetz, Anne Marie, "Governing Women: Will New Public Space for Some Women Make a Difference for All Women?" in Goetz (ed.), *Governing Women*, 13.

exclude women – simply because there are no firm rules and rights, only patronage systems and favours."[82] Of course, such conditions are obstacles to women empowerment.

Post-transition parties, under pressure to adopt more accountable and transparent internal rules and selection procedures employ various tools to achieve such goals. The nomination of candidates is often decentralized and democratized by the introduction of varying forms of primary elections, where party members vote to include candidates on the candidate lists (thereby the list is not composed solely by the party chiefs). Some parties deliberately introduce gender quotas, but as Waylen argues, these may be introduced when party leaders are reluctant to cede power and so prefer to defuse pressures for party democratization. Quotas permit them to maintain power over the nomination process, which is reduced when primary elections take place.[83] In this sense, an ideal scenario from the perspective of women empowerment within parties is to apply gender quotas along with primary elections. Still, permanent quotas may distort democratic choice and so their application should be temporary.[84]

Civil society

Democracy has often been portrayed as a three-legged stool, of which the first leg is accountable government, the second is a private sector that creates jobs and the third leg is robust civil society "that speaks up on behalf of those who may not be able to speak for themselves".[85] Authoritarian regimes keep civil society at bay and permit the existence of only those CSOs that do not pose a political threat to the regime (by e.g. publically opposing policies) or a threat in terms of substituting the role of the state in spheres that it claims for its own. In post-transition societies, CSOs, which have hitherto been unable to exist, emerge and exert pressure, advocate and lobby for various issues. As civil society is often deemed as a mediator between the state institutions and the society and an "amplifier" of the people's preferences that affects public policy, it is necessary that women take part in the organization and membership in CSOs.

Apart from providing finances to the civil society sector as a whole in emerging democracies, donors often focus on funding activities of women's CSOs which have specific feminist agendas. This approach, as observed in some case studies, may entail several caveats. Funding programs often lead to the *NGOization* of women's movements – women's organizations become beholden to the wishes of donors rather than their constituents. As Irvine points out, "Funding practices often overlook efforts already underway by local groups and exhaust local recipients who must spend a great deal of their time writing reports and

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[82] Goetz, Anne Marie and Shireen Hassim, "In and Against the Party: Women's Representation and Constituency-Building in Uganda and South Africa" in Maxine Molyneux and Shahra Razavi (eds.) *Gender Justice, Development, and Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 308.

[83] Waylen, *Engendering Transitions*, 119.

[84] Long discussion…

[85] Clinton, Hillary Rodham, *Remarks at the Summit of the Americas Civil Society Meeting*, Cartagena, Colombia April 13, 2012. Available at https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2012/04/187896.htm (accessed February 7, 2019).

preparing new proposals, leaving them with little time or energy to think strategically about women's empowerment".[86] Also, donors have a tendency to favor elite, urban women, who are often too detached from women in rural areas, thus lack grassroots support and advocate for limited versions of feminist agendas.[87]

Decentralization

Decentralization and the strengthening of local government is a key component of democratization and an aspect of good governance since it is expected that it will bring improvements in accountability, assessing local needs and in delivering services. Government shall arguably become more efficient and effective.[88] Women are deemed to be the primary beneficiaries of decentralization because direct political participation is easier for them on the local than on the national level and because they have an immediate stakes in the kinds of services that are managed at the local level, such as schooling, sanitation, health care provision.[89] Simply, service delivery is prone to become more gender-sensitive. Moreover, women in local councils have strong *role model* effects in encouraging other women to take part in local politics. Research shows that women in local councils aim to monitor more closely issues connected to local spending and management of tax collection.[90]

Still, women face obstacles in entering local politics as power structures, traditional authority and generally "the informal institutions in which local governments are often embedded are hostile to women".[91]

State women's machineries[92]

While CSOs operate outside state structures and are independent from them (if not financially then at least politically), the so-called state women's machineries (SWMs) are institutionalized women's rights advocacy offices and platforms that have been set up by the state as an integral part of its governance structure. According to the Beijing Platform of Action, "a national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas."[93] SWMs range from ministries preoccupied solely with women affairs (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs of

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[86] Irvine, *US Aid and gender equality*, 733.

[87] Khalil, Andrea, "Tunisia's women: partners in revolution", *The Journal of North African Studies* 19 (2), 2014: 186-199.

[88] Although sceptics argue that decentralization as such does not bring more effectiveness and efficiency, but can turn to elite-capture and pork-barrel politics. For a discussion see Faguet, Jean-Paul, Fox, Ashley M. and Poeschl, Caroline, "Does decentralization strengthen or weaken the state? Authority and social learning in a supple state", Working Paper, *Department of International Development, London School of Economics and Political Science*, 2014. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/60631/ (accessed February 7, 2019).

[89] Goetz, *Governing Women*, 16.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Beall, Jo, "Decentralizing Government and De-centering Gender: Lessons from Local Government Reform in South Africa" in Goetz (ed.), *Governing Women*, 178.

[92] Often labeled also as *national* women's machineries.

[93] Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, par 201.

Bangladesh), departments within ministries (Department of Gender Equality in the Ministry of Labour – Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam) to commissions and advisory bodies within various governmental institutions (Office for Women in Australia's Cabinet or The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Czech Republic).

Of course the impact of such institutions on women empowerment and gender equality is dependent on whether the given institution was created only as a token to the Beijing Platform of Action, whether devoted individuals and staff within these institutions are politically strong enough to exert influence on policy and whether there is political will on the part of the political representation and the general populace.[94] Nonetheless, SWMs are a tool that can help institutionalize successes in achieving women empowerment and foster subsequent progress.

International experience and best-practices

With its proclaimed feminist foreign policy, Sweden is apt at integrating (mainstreaming) gender into all its external relations and most notably its development support and democracy assistance activities, which are organized and monitored by its aid agency, Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). Sida considers "women's political participation and influence" to be one of the top five priorities for achieving gender equality.[95] The Swedish government in its recent strategic document sees as its long-term policy objective the strengthening of "women's participation and influence in political processes" and believes that "democracy, human rights and gender equality can be promoted through support to cultural actors and to education."[96] Moreover, the strategic document claims that "Sweden will contribute to strengthen the representation of women and girls and their political participation and influence in all areas of society and at all levels."[97]

Given the stated goals and tasks issued to Sida by the Swedish government, the aid agency has developed (mandatory) tools to help implementers of aid apply gender analyses and perspectives to projects to achieve results that lead to greater empowerment of women. A simplified gender analysis prescribed by Sida is included in the following figure:

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[94] Waylen, *Engendering Transitions*, 158.

[95] Sida, "How Sida Works with Gender Equality", *Gender Tool Box*, May 2017. Available at https://www.sida.se/contentassets/4fd9964764a14e698634abfa9ebf9999/how_sida_works_with_gender_equalitydoes_may-2017.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

[96] Government of Sweden, "Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance", *Government Communication* 2016/17:60, December 2016, 18. Available at https://www.government.se/49a184/contentassets/43972c7f81c34d51a82e6a7502860895/skr-60-engelsk-version_web.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

[97] *Op. cit.*, 19.

Figure 1 Sida's mainstreaming strategy
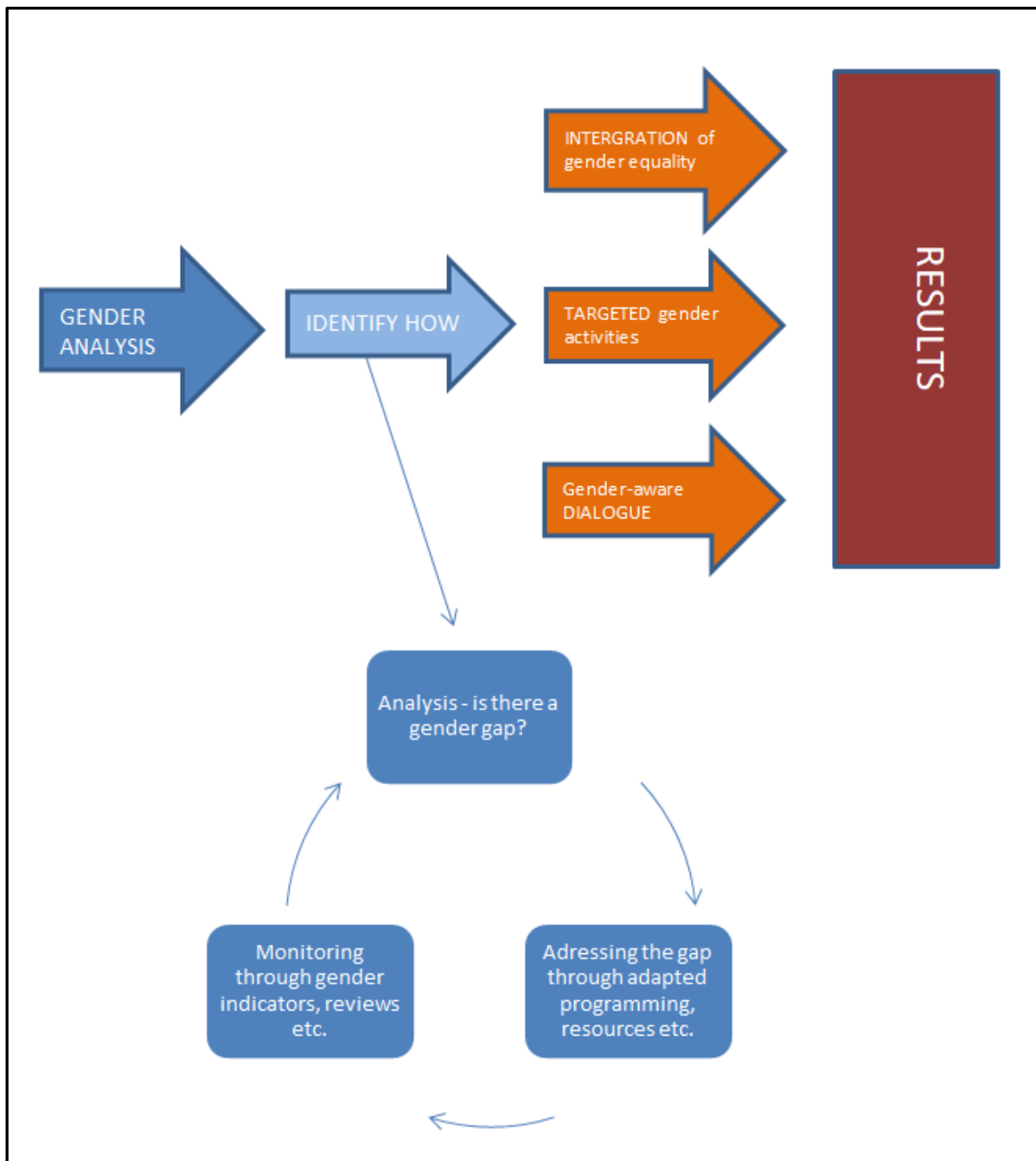
Sida states that before any cooperation process begins or any decisions and plans are outlined, the gender equality situation in a given context must be analyzed. Such gender analyses are mandatory. The agency's official definition is as follows:

Gender Analysis highlights the differences between and among women, men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context. Performing a gender analysis allows us to develop

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responses that are better suited to remedy gender-based inequalities and meet the needs of different population groups.[98]

While Sweden is generally viewed as a role model for advocates of gender equality in development, the United States and its approach to female political empowerment is also worthy of mentioning. Various issues in US development support are often politicized and as a consequence lose funding, which is appropriated by the US Congress. This is usually the case of US development activities engaged in funding projects related to reproductive rights, abortion and AIDS prevention (i.e. PEPFAR's distribution of preservatives) and is often referred to as the *global gag rule* (or Mexico City Policy).[99] Women empowerment and gender equality in development does not suffer from such fluctuation of funding caused by politicization and Donald Trump has even signed the *Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017*, which expanded the scope of activities aimed at furthering the cause of UNSC resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.[100] Of course, it is yet to be seen how the provision of the law will be implemented with regards to Trump administration's general posture towards gender issues.

The primary US federal agency for development assistance is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and has a fairly long history of promoting gender equality through its programs – already in 1973 the Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act was passed and mandated that US foreign aid take women into specific consideration. Major developments have taken place during the Obama administration and particularly under Hillary Clinton's tenure as Secretary of State. Since 2010, changes to internal USAID operational policy (Automated Directive System) have introduced new senior positions for gender equality and female empowerment, new common indicators for measuring progress in the field, and new definitions of gender issues for the purposes of budget attribution.[101] Moreover, in March 2012, USAID issued its strategic paper on *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment*.[102] As in Sida, gender analysis in USAID "is one of only two mandatory analysis requirements that are to be integrated in strategic planning, project design and approval".[103]

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[98] Sida, "Gender Analysis – Principles & Elements", *Gender Tool Box*, March 2015. Available at https://www.sida.se/contentassets/a3f08692e731475db106fdf84f2fb9bd/gender-tool-analysis.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

[99] The Mexico City Policy is a US government policy that blocks U.S. federal funding for NGOs that provide abortion counselling or referrals or expand abortion services. The policy is advocated by various religious groups in the US and is traditionally implemented by Republican presidents.

[100] Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, Public Law 115–68—Oct. 6, 2017. Available at https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ68/PLAW-115publ68.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

[101] USAID, ADS Chapter 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle, *Operational Policy – The Automated Directives System*. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

[102] USAID, *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, March 2012. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/GenderEqualityPolicy_0.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

[103] *Op. cit.*, 4.

USAID defines female empowerment as "achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment."[104]

In 2013, USAID launched an exploratory project titled Women's Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment, also titled as Women in Power. Within the project, research teams conducted a global review of USAID programs that focused on women's political empowerment in order to assess their impact and search for best-practices and new measuring tools. The project highlighted the importance of providing support to women in all-phases of the electoral cycle and designing interventions accordingly (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 The Electoral Cycle
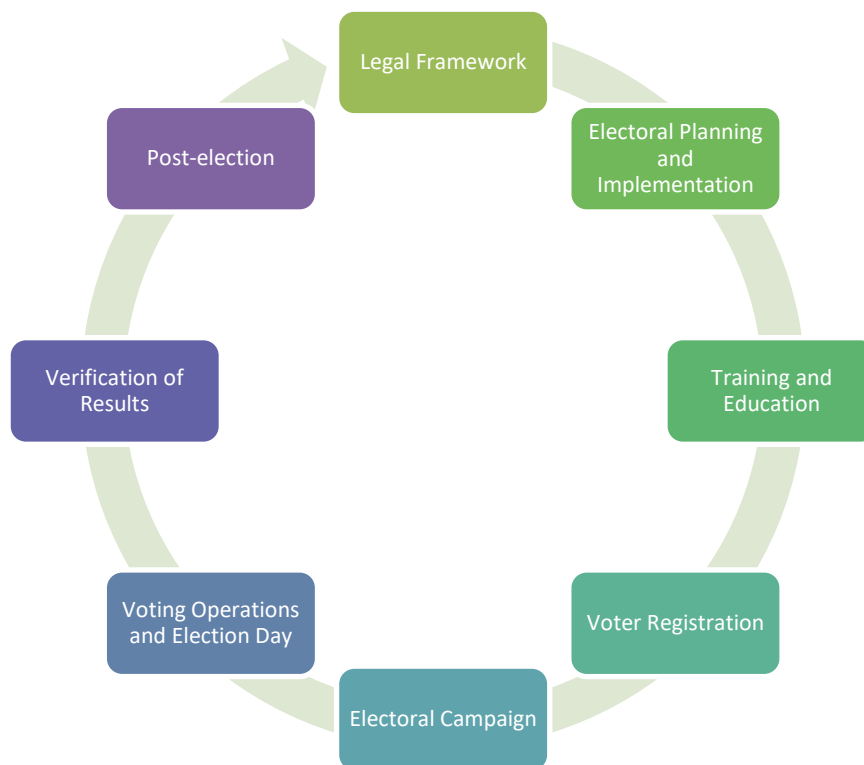
As the project's summary report described:

> "In countries transitioning to democracy or out of conflict, activities typically aimed to enhance women's roles in constitution development and the peace process. In the pre-election phase, activities primarily focused on empowering women as voters, increasing the number of women candidates, encouraging political parties to be more inclusive and educating the public about their civic and electoral rights. Closer to the

day of the election, the primary focus narrowed to voter education, mobilizing women voters and observers and getting women candidates elected. Post-election activities sought to establish and strengthen elected women's capacity and influence as policymakers and to advocate for gender quotas and related measures to improve women's rate of success in future elections."[105]

Importantly, the project focused on the qualitative measurement of women's political empowerment, which is often boiled down to only quantitative measurements of the numbers of women in parliament. However, it is clear that just by adding women to parliaments does not make for effective political empowerment. If women political leaders are *horizontally segregated* – i.e. present in only one or two government branches – their abilities to affect change may be hindered. For these purposes the USAID project has adopted the so-called Diamond Leadership Model to measure the *Women's Power Score*, which accounts for women's representation at various levels of government.[106] The scheme is represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 The Diamond Leadership Model

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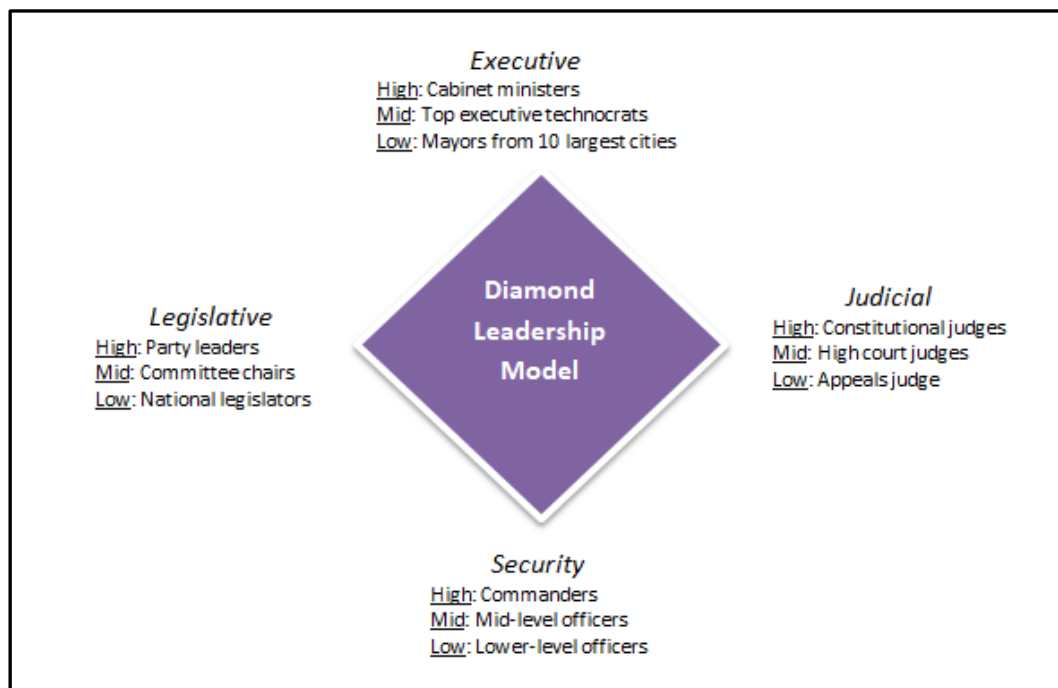
[105] USAID, *Women in Power Project Summary Report*, April 12, 2016. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID-WiP-summary-report_FINAL.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).
[106] The score is calculated in the following manner: "Women's share of positions in the top tier is weighted three times as much as women's share of positions in the bottom tier, and women's share of positions in the middle tier is weighted twice as much as the bottom tier. The weighted score for each sector ranges from 0 to 100. The sum of the weighted values for each sector yields a single country score: the WPS. A country with women in all positions (100 percent) would score 400; gender parity (women in 50 percent of all positions) would produce a total score of 200." For more information see the Annex of USAID, *Women in Power Project Summary Report* and USAID, *Women's Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment: Report on the Diamond Leadership Model*, December 8, 2014. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Diamond%20Model%20Report.pdf (accessed February 8, 2019).

Toolkit for Czech transition promotion

The Czech human rights and transition promotion policy (HRTP) currently has a positive stance toward global women empowerment. Nonetheless, adopting a more complex and methodological approach to including gender perspectives in individual projects is desirable in order to achieve more tangible results in the field. The Transition Promotion Program (TPP), which is explicitly designed to support democratization efforts around the globe (i.e. in priority countries), maintains six thematic priorities:

1. supporting civil society, including human rights defenders;
2. promoting the freedom of expression and information, including the freedom of the media;
3. promoting an equal and full political and public participation;
4. supporting institution-building in the area of the rule of law;
5. promoting equality and non-discrimination;
6. promoting human rights in employment and in the environmental context.

As these thematic priorities imply, women empowerment is a cross-cutting issue that can and should be promoted in all six themes through the EU-proposed *three-pronged approach* (1. mainstreaming gender in all activities; 2. continuing to support interventions targeted specifically at women and girls; and 3. introducing gender equality and women's empowerment into political dialogue with target countries).

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Step one: Gender analysis of target country

In an ideal scenario the initial step for implementing any democracy assistance project is mapping and understanding the gender dynamics within the society and in the past regime. Such a gender analysis will facilitate the tailoring of projects to fit the specific context and needs. A wide gender gap in all spheres of life, which is a social consequence of the former regime, will require more targeted interventions to support the status of women and girls, but may also spur social backlash as these interventions attempt to deconstruct *traditional* gender norms. Therefore, gender needs to be regarded as an *analytical* concept, rather than used as simply a *descriptive* term. Gender analysis examines how people's gender determines their opportunities, access to and control over resources and capacity to enjoy and exercise their rights – the generated data hence shapes policy, strategy, actions and outcomes.

If personal capacity permits, the Transition Promotion Programme should have at its disposal a gender analysis for every priority country. The gender analysis requires a thorough knowledge of the local political dynamics, legal and social culture and thus should be conducted and outsourced to local researchers. The analyses would provide recommendations for the TPP, which could then use this information to formulate specific demands for projects in its annual call for proposals. The other option is to include a mandatory gender analysis of local context within the project proposal form – this would place the burden of conducting a gender analysis prior to asking for TPP funding on potential

recipients. However, this option would likely lead to "token" gender analyses, i.e. just *pro forma*. Indicative gender analyses for target countries can be conducted based on probing indexes such as the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (GII), Social Watch's Gender Equity Index (GEI) and the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) and databanks of the International Labor Organization and the World Bank.

A gender analysis of a given priority country should answer the following questions:

- Do women feel a lack of political empowerment in given society? (subjective assessment)
- How are women politically represented? (objective criteria – quantitative and qualitative)
- Where (i.e. in which parts of the political process – see Fig. 2) do women need assistance to achieve political empowerment?
- What are the possible entry points for foreign assistance to support women?
- How did the former regime approach gender issues? To what extent are current gender dynamics a product of social norms fostered by former regime?
- What was the historical status of women in given society?
- Does the legal framework pose barriers to female empowerment?

The gender analyses could also serve as support for including gender equality into bilateral political dialogue with target countries and should be included in human rights reports produced by Czech embassies in priority countries. Including the notion of gender equality into political dialogue is the *third prong* of the EU's second Gender Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and if the Czech Republic intends to adhere to the approach of GAP II it needs to have informed input regarding gender dynamics in recipient countries.

Step two: Applying a gender perspective within every thematic priority

Project applications under every thematic priority of the TPP merit applying a gender perspective – both in order to ensure that project results contribute to women empowerment and also that project activities do not have adverse effects on the position of women in target society. What follows are possible avenues for addressing gender issues within every thematic priority of Czech transition support. Each target country has its own specific context and not all listed activities are applicable to all, but they illustrate the

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general framework within which the three-pronged approach (targeted activities, crosscutting activities and political dialogue) can be employed.

1. Supporting civil society, including human rights defenders	
Key questions:	• Which civil society actors can help increase gender equality and female empowerment? • What type of rights are women lacking in a given society? • Which women's rights need to be protected in order to achieve female empowerment?
Targeted:	• Financially supporting women's rights groups and advocates of female empowerment • Supporting female leaders in NGO sector • Providing training and consultations to CSOs and other groups that promote female political and economic empowerment
Crosscutting:	• Ensure that supported civil society groups maintain adequate female membership • Civil society groups and human rights defenders that receive support should be guided to adopt gender perspectives in their activities • Anti-gender equality CSOs should not receive support
2. Promoting the freedom of expression and information, including the freedom of the media	
Key questions:	• Are the media in a given society gender sensitive? Are they advocating gender stereotypes? • What needs to be done to support public discourse about female empowerment? • How can media contribute to a positive reception of female empowerment in target society?
Targeted:	• Tackling implicit gender biases and stereotypization in reporting and media discourse • Supporting publication of female empowerment-oriented newsletters, blogs and other platforms • Supporting journalists covering issues related to gender equality
Crosscutting:	• Ensure that supported media and journalists publish their work in gender sensitive language • Media and journalists perpetuating gender stereotypes and downgrading the status of women should not receive support
3. Promoting an equal and full political and public participation	
Key questions:	• What obstacles (legal or cultural) to political and public participation do women face? • Is the state or local level more open to female participation in the political life? • Does the voting system favor male candidates?
Targeted:	• Provide training and consultations to female candidates • Support reforms that are aimed at clearing obstacles for

		women to enter the political life
		• Support female political leaders and train them to fundraise
		• Fund grassroots organizations that build capacity of girls and women to participate in public life
Crosscutting:		• Programs supporting participation of the public and the youth in political life should ensure equal attendance by men and women
		• Ensure that reforms facilitating access to political life (e.g. campaign funding etc.) are not discriminatory against women
		• Capacity-building programs for political parties should include component of gender equality advocacy

4. Supporting institution-building in the area of the rule of law

Key questions:	• Do women have same access to the "rule of law" as men?
	• Does corruption affect women differently than men?
	• What institutions can ameliorate the position of women in terms of legal support?
Targeted:	• Support creation of ombudsman for the rights of women and girls
	• Finance watch-dog NGOs that monitor the state of women's rights and provide legal consultations to women
	• Providing women with equal access to the judicial system
	• Support legal education of women
Crosscutting:	• Ensuring that rights of political participation apply equally to men and women
	• Include women's perspectives in constitution writing and development
	• Enable women to take part in peacebuilding processes

5. Promoting equality and non-discrimination

Key questions:	• Can we identify (and overcome) the historical, cultural or ideological barriers to achieving increased female empowerment in target society?
	• How does a given society define gender equality?
	• Do employers discriminate against women?
Targeted:	• Employ strategic litigation to tackle injustices and gender inequality
	• Design temporary and effective gender quotas, support voluntary gender quotas within political parties
	• Build alliances with men to support gender equality
Crosscutting:	• Integrate gender issues and perspectives into all training programs
	• Assist in the mainstreaming of gender topics into civic education

6. Promoting human rights in employment and in the environmental context

Key questions:	• Are there structural obstacles within the economy (such as lack of land or resource ownership) that hinder the economic

	emancipation and hence political empowerment of women? • Did the transition increase or decrease female economic emancipation? • What is the position of women in the new socio-economic system as compared to that in the pre-transition period?
Targeted:	• Help establish women's caucuses in parliaments • Support the establishment of social services, such as childcare facilities • Organize training for women focused on managerial skills, IT, foreign languages etc. to make women more competitive for qualified jobs
Crosscutting:	• Monitor how economic and political reforms impact women • When providing ecology training in target countries, monitor the gender balance of participants

Step three: Monitor and evaluate

Mainstreaming gender into development support, transition promotion and other activities of central authorities is often only a token activity in which most institutions claim adherence to principles of gender equality but fail in fostering qualitative changes. Sustained monitoring of projects and their evaluation is said to help in keeping gender perspectives on the program agenda. Still, even evaluation of projects might simply turn into a *tick-box mechanism*, whereby the female participants affected by the project are quantified without a more thorough analysis of the actual effects on gender dynamics and the position of women within the society/community. In extreme cases, well-meaning projects focused on female economic emancipation have adverse effects – for example in increasing violence on women.

Unlike the larger development assistance programs, local transition promotion projects do not undergo evaluation by external agencies. Most monitoring and subsequent evaluation of projects is conducted by the Czech embassy in the respective country, namely by the embassy official in charge of the human rights agenda. In an ideal scenario, each of these human rights officials should undergo training focused on applying gender perspectives and during monitoring and evaluation, ought to apply the *Methodology for Evaluation of Crosscutting Themes in the Czech Development Cooperation* produced by INESAN and certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 2018. The methodology provides a swathe of indicators regarding gender equality that are applicable not just for development and humanitarian projects, but also for projects of democracy assistance.

Final reports provided by project implementers shall mandatorily include a section focused on the project's impact on gender equality or gender dynamics within the society (if applicable). For example, if a project supports training of young filmmakers, not only is it important to monitor how many women attended the training, but also how the potential of women attendees can be used to develop topics of gender equality (e.g. creating documentaries about the political and economic status of women in a given society).

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Thereby future projects can more effectively follow up on past projects in the realm of female empowerment. The following illustration places the three described steps in a graphic perspective.

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Evropská unie
Evropský sociální fond
Operační program Zaměstnanost

Step One

Gender analysis of target country

Locate obstacles to female political empowerment and identify possible interventions

Use gender analysis findings to formulate more targeted and specific activities in calls for proposals

Include gender analysis conclusions in political dialogue

Step Two

Integrate gender perspectives when choosing projects for funding in every thematic priority

Thematic priority	Example of gender perspective
1. **Civil society**	Which civil society actors can help increase gender equality and female empowerment?
2. **Freedom of expression**	Are the media in a given society gender sensitive? Are they advocating gender stereotypes?
3. **Political participation**	What obstacles (legal or cultural) to political and public participation do women face?
4. **Institution-building**	What institutions can ameliorate the position of women in terms of legal support?
5. **Non-discrimination**	Can we identify (and overcome) the historical, cultural or ideological barriers to achieving increased female empowerment in target society?
6. **Employment rights**	Did the transition increase or decrease female economic emancipation?

Step Three

Implementation

Targeted activities

Crosscutting activities

Final report by project implementer including gender analysis of project impact

Monitoring and evaluation by local embassy employing *Methodology for Evaluation*

Possibility of follow-up project