DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

WOMEN AS ACTORS?

An analysis of the focus on women´s representation within Swedish development cooperation

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Abstract

Gender inequality is still a wide spread problem in the world today. One way of working for gender equality is via development cooperation. Nowadays gender equality advocacy is an accepted and important part of development cooperation and to target women is a common policy. According to several strands of research on women´s representation in political science, women´s inclusion as decision making actors matters for policy outcomes that address women's interests. Is this something acknowledged by development cooperation? In this thesis, I explore this by looking at the case of Sweden´s development cooperation. Sweden is a country with a history as active in gender equality policy both domestically and internationally. As such an exemplary case, one would therefore expect Sweden to be sensitive to this in policy strategy concerning development cooperation. The method used is qualitative content analysis and the materials analyzed are policy documents. The result is that there are several signs in the documents of that Sweden has adopted an aim for women´s representation under the notion of women as actors within development cooperation. The documents also gave examples of implementation in projects but further research could focus on how well the aim is implemented.

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Introduction

Gender inequality is still a wide spread problem in the world today. The problem is extensive and occurs on different levels. To portrait the problem´s magnitude one can look at it from three angles; the political, economic and social. To start with the political angle, according to the latest information from the Inter- Parliamentary Union, IPU, in the world on average just 22.6 % of the representatives in parliaments are women[1](IPU 2016:2). Looking from an economic perspective, among the people that live in poverty in the world a clear majority, about 60-70 percent are women (Chant 2010: 1, UNDP 2009). Women all over the world are also still denied equal pay for equal work (UN Women 2015:2).

The numbers on average tell us part of the problems in the world but there are also significant differences in conditions regarding gender equality in the world. For instance, regarding women´s representation in the parliaments, in the Pacific region, women constitute only 15,8 percent of the representatives which falls below the world average. In contrast, other world regions perform significantly better than the world average. In the Nordic countries, for instance, the average is 41,5 percent. (IPU 2016: 2)

In addition, looking at women's situations in the world, 35 percent of the women in the world today have experienced physical or sexual violence (WHO et al 2013). Another social parameter related to women's situation is the conditions during pregnancies. Even if the number has declined on average over the years, the number of women who die from causes related to child births is still 216 women per 100,000 live births. This is also something that varies a lot between countries. To compare if we for example look at the region of West Africa the maternity mortality rate is much worse than the world average. For example the number is 1360 per 100,000 live births in Sierra Leone. This is in contrast to Canada where the maternity mortality rate is 7 per 100,000 live births (The World Bank 2015).

A lot has been done over the years to acknowledge and curb gender inequalities and to improve the conditions for women. The UN proclaimed 1975 as the International year of women and the first World conference was held in Mexico. A decade for women followed. (United Nations 2016) Since the first UN conference in 1975 there have over the years been four big women UN conferences. The latest one occurred in Beijing in 1995 has been called a landmark and led to an important

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1 I use the terminology of the dichotomy women and men. I am aware that gender is a more multifold concept than this but this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

platform for action. (UN women 2015: 2, Pearson 2000:384-387)

Another important step was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, CEDAW. Since it was approved in 1979, 186 countries in the world have ratified the CEDAW (Baldez 2011:1). This is the most important international convention directly targeting discrimination against women (Unifem 2016). Additionally, both the Millennium development goals and their successors, the Sustainable development goals have addressed gender equality among their goals (UNDP Sweden 2016, UN-DESA 2016).

One way of working for gender equality is via the development cooperation. The area of the gender and development research field has grown a lot during the last 30 years (Cornwall et al 2007:1). Development cooperation has over the years gone through different phases due to different theories of development (Odén 2006:9). Older development polices has been described as in many ways done primarily by and for men. Women's voices were seldom heard (Plewes & Stuart 1991:1, Hannan-Andersson 1994:145). The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s had great impact on the development cooperation. (Plewes & Stuart 1991:4) Along with this, development cooperation has developed the notion that women should be both the key beneficiaries and participants in the policies and programs over the years (Pearson 2000: 384, Hannan-Andersson 1994: 146).

Big development organizations have adopted frameworks and monitoring of women's issues and considerations of gender. An example of this is that the World Bank has a committee to monitor women's rights in their work. (Pearson 2000:385) Another example is the EU Council Resolution on Integrating Gender Issues in Development Co-operation from 1995 where the importance of integrating gender issues, on all development cooperation at the levels of both policy and program but also project level, is stated (European Commission 2003:3). This resolution was a break through since gender concerns within development cooperation were brought up at this level in the European Union (Elgström 2000: 457). After this, several other more strategic documents on the topic have followed within the European Union (European Commission 2003). Today gender analysis in development cooperation and the focus on poor women is widely accepted (Pearson 2000: 383).

In the Swedish development cooperation context, the pattern has been similar with an increasing focus on women since the 1990s (Hannan-Andersson 1997: 135). Sweden had applied gender policies within the development cooperation strategies even before the EU-resolution (Elgström 2000: 467). In 2015, the Swedish government proclaimed to be a feminist government with a

feminist foreign policy (Government offices of Sweden 2016). In 1996, Sweden added gender equality to the official aims of the Swedish development cooperation (Guijt 1997:1). The Swedish International Development agency, SIDA, also emphasizes that gender equality is prioritized and, should be part of all their work. (SIDA 2014a) Thus, women and gender have been increasingly in focus both in the research and in the policy processes of development cooperation.

However, less is known regarding whether, thinking of the role of women in such policies, they are considered as *targets* of the development cooperation and/or as *actors* within the development cooperation process. In this thesis, I apply the theory of women´s representation developed and analyzed by women and politics scholars to the context of development cooperation. Under this perspective, I consider the extent to which there is importance attributed to women´s presence as decision makers in the process because of the benefits they potentially bring in terms of representing women´s interests. Women´s representation has been studied at length by women and politics scholars, often with a focus on parliaments (Weldon 2002:115, eg. Wängnerud 2008, Lovenduski & Norris 2003, Phillips 1995) But one can image expanding the notion of women as representatives, and incorporate this into approaches to development cooperation. Under this perspective one must ask whether women only are *targets* of the programs, or whether they are part of the configurations and decisions that represent interests and make policy in the development cooperation process? In short, are they included as *actors*?

With a *target* I here refer to the policy´s aim for example, "projects for girls education", "projects for maternal health", etc. In distinction, with the concept of an *actor,* the focus is women´s inclusion as decisions makers, present in all parts of the chain of development cooperation, included, for instance in discussions on boards, and among heads of implementation. The goal of my thesis is to explore whether the aim of increasing women´s role as actors is an incorporated within development cooperation.

First, I describe how gender policies within development cooperation have changed over the years and bring in the concept of women as actors. Secondly, I give an account for three strands of theory and research that motivate the importance of women as actors that represent interests and make policies within the development cooperation. Finally, I examine whether and how the idea of women as actors is incorporated in development cooperation strategies by one of the most gender equal countries in the world, Sweden (World economic forum 2015:3). I use qualitative content analysis of policy documents of Swedish development cooperation.

Theoretical section

Previous research on the gender perspective in development cooperation

Previous research on gender in development cooperation has analyzed the goals and ideas on both broad and historical levels (eg. Odén 2006). Researchers have also looked at how gender policies of development cooperation emerged and which stake holders were important (eg. Elgström 2000, Engberg-Pedersen 2016). Researchers have also shown how gender policy is pursued in specific sectors (eg. Hannan 2000:part 2). There have also been evaluations of gender equality in Swedish development cooperation (eg. Byron et al 2010). Also, researchers have described how different approaches have characterized the promotion of gender equality in development cooperation over the years (eg. Hannan 2000: part 1, Moser 1993). In the following section, I review how the image has been over the years of women in development cooperation to give an overview of the gender´s focus in development policies over the years.

Previous approaches on gender equality within development cooperation

The main important shift within the approaches that has been described by several scholars of the field is the shift from the *Women in Development approach* (WID) to the *Gender and Development approach* (GAD) (Elgström 2000:465, Hannan 2000: part one: 175, Razavi &Miller 1995). The WID approach was formed in the 1970s to integrate a focus on women into development cooperation (Pearson 2000: 402). It was a movement where equality and social justice was demanded for women (Ravazi & Miller 1995: 3). The approach was that women were a vulnerable group that needed particular assistance. (Hannan 2000 part one: 175, Pearson 2000:402) Within this approach, the focus was on women and not on men or the relation between women and men. Also the institutional arrangement of gender in development cooperation had the focus on separate specialists that were supposed to work for equality issues or women in development. The focus was in many ways on areas of birth, child care, family planning etc. (Hannan 2000 part one: 175- 176)

In the 1980s the WID approach got criticized. Partly for focusing on only women's so called practical[2] gender needs and not having a broader approach and challenging gender roles. (Pearson 2000:402) It was also criticized for focusing on women as an isolated group (Razavi & Miller 1995:13). This led to a new approach called the GAD-approach where the focus is on a broader level with the idea that all policy interventions need a gender analysis. (Pearson 2000: 402)

2 This concept is distinguished from the strategical gender needs, see page 14 for more information on women´s interests.

Cornwall describes the difference between WID and GAD that one within WID tried to give women a place within existing structures and that one within GAD tried to change the structures. (Cornwall 2003:1326) Elgström describes the shift from women projects to a broader focus on the roles of women and men in development. (Elgström 2000: 464)

The WID and GAD are the main approaches that are discussed by the scholars within the field. (Eg. Razavi & Miller 1995, Elgström 2000, Cornwall 2000:3) However there have also been incremental approaches. For the most part these are related to the main frameworks of WID and GAD, but give us more nuanced insight into smaller, more incremental changes overtime before and under the two framworks. To give a more detailed description of these different approaches before and after the shift from WID to GAD, in the following section, I go through the different approaches and describe them with a focus on the purpose of the theory and the role of the women to give an overview on how gender equality promotion has changed within development cooperation over the years. The approaches are illustrated in the model below.

Model 1: Approaches to gender equality in development cooperation

The

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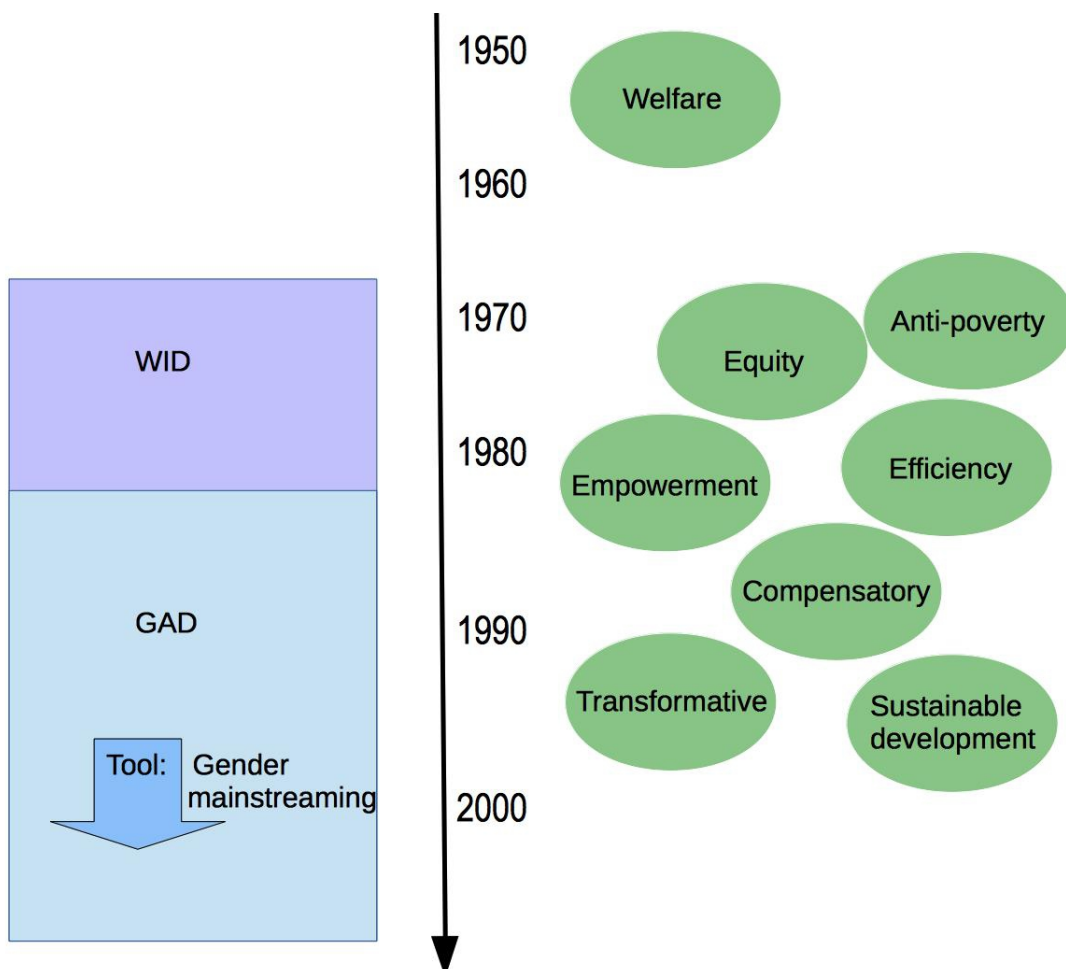
first view that came even before the WID-framework was the *Welfare policy approach.* In this approach women were viewed as passive receivers of aid and the focus was on the women´s reproductive roles. Mainly, this aid was in the form of for example family planning projects for women (Hannan Andersson 1994:148, Moser 1993:58). The approach was mainly used between 1950-1970 but is still used today by some development actors and the idea is to bring in the women in development as "better mothers" (Moser 1993:58)

During the end of the 1970s and beginning of 1980s a new view was developed that was called the *equity policy approach* which focused on the structural problem of gender inequality with the aim of gaining equity in the development process. (Hannan-Andersson 1994:148, Moser 1993:56,) Moser describes this as the first WID-approach and women were described as active participants in the development. (Moser 1993: 63) The focus was often on a top down level and on legislation, which is important but as Moser phrases it *"meets potential strategic gender needs, rather than actual needs"* (Moser 1993, 66). Hannan-Andersson describes how this approach did not succeed fully because it didn't reach the actual people in the context to affect implementation but instead often stayed at a top-level. (Hannan- Andersson 1994:149).

During the 1970s, also, *the anti-poverty approach* developed and women´s problems were seen as mainly poverty which should be solved by projects to give them their own income. (Hannan Andersson 1994-149, Moser 1993:66) Moser describes this as the second WID approach, where the equity was toned down and more focus was on growth and women's productivity. (Moser 1993:57) The projects got criticized for being both small and outside of the real development processes and because women were isolated into a separate category (Hannan-Andersson 1994:148, Moser 1993: 57, 67)

After the 1980s debt crisis[3] the *efficiency approach* came where women should be involved in projects not only as an aim in and of itself but also as a means for efficient development. (Hannan-Andersson 1994:149, Moser 1993:69) Moser describes this as the third WID-approach. (Moser 1993: 69) A problem with this approach was that the inclusion of women in the work force in some cases was not for the empowerment of the women´s position but rather to achieve results and to decrease costs, something that led to worse positions for women (Hannan-Andersson 1994:149, Moser 1993:70-71).

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3 For more information on the debt crisis see eg. Odén 2006:95

In the 1970s an approach emerged that did not get as much focus by donors but instead came from the global south. It was the *empowerment policy approach* were the focus was on women's own control over their lives and that the solutions were within information and networks. (Hannan Andersson 1994:149, Moser 57) The problem of women´s subordination was seen as problem of also neo-colonial and colonial oppression aside from the subordination of men. (Moser 1993: 57)

During the 1980s and 1990s emerged several other approaches. One was the *compensatory policy approach* where the idea was that women need compensation for the negative effects of the structural adjustment programs and the debt crisis. (Hannan-Andersson 1994:149) The main idea with the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) was to strengthen the markets and decrease the states control over trade and industry. (Beazly & Desai 2008:359) Especially wpmen have been defined as most vulnerable to these programmes, for example, due to declines in health and maternal status. (Brydon 2008:365) The policy was similar to the very first welfare policy approach with narrow targeted projects to mitigate the effects and women were not seen as actors. (Hannan-Andersson 1994: 150) An other approach during the 1990s were the *transformative policy approach* where one started to talk about mainstreaming of gender in the whole development process, which is a change from earlier integration of gender within the already set processes. Another approach that came was the *sustainable development approach* where women´s importance was not focused merely on economic development but also on environmental issues. (Hannan-Andersson 1994:150)

Thus, we see that there have been many different approaches within the development cooperation concerning strategies for putting gender in the focus within such cooperation. Within these approaches one can glimpse different degrees of the extent to which that women are seen as agents but not if they are made decision making actors within the development programmes.

Today more and more the focus is on the whole development cooperation process and that the gender perspective should be mainstreamed into the whole chain (Carolyn Hannan-Andersson 1994:150). This brings us into what has been called the main strategic tool for GAD, gender mainstreaming (Kumari 2013: 2).

Gender mainstreaming

The UN women conference in Beijing 1995 was a milestone for how gender equality within the UN-system changed from being only a women´s issue to a question for the whole society. (Hannan-Andersson 1997:135) After this conference gender mainstreaming was viewed to be the most viable tool to achieve gender equality (Moser & Moser 2005:11).

Gender mainstreaming was in 1997 by the UN defined in the following way and this definition is used by most of the international development actors. (Moser & Moser 2005:12)

> *"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."*
> (UN Economic and Social Council see Moser & Moser 2005:12)

Both on the EU-level as well as in the Swedish context we can see that gender mainstreaming has become important. In 2000 Gender mainstreaming became a guiding principle for the European community development policy with six different areas where gender should be mainstreamed. (European Commission 2003:3) In Sweden when promotion of gender equality was set as the sixth aim of development cooperation in 1996, it said specifically that the attention should be mainstreamed into all policy development, dialogue and support for both programmes and projects. (Guijt 1997:1) Sida today, uses a model of gender mainstreaming with targeted interventions, integrated actions as well as dialogue (Sida 2014a).

Moser writes that in some definitions used for gender mainstreaming, two more aspects are often added than the aspects in the UN definition. The first is about institutionalization of gender within the own organization. The second Moser calls *gender empowerment* and is about promotion of women´s participation in processes of decision making, having power to put issues on the agenda as well as having their voices heard. (Moser & Moser 2005:12) These, particularly the ladder, are closely related to what I am interested in in this thesis. In the following section I turn to the role for women in development cooperation processes and speak about the importance of women as actors.

Conceptualizing women as actors

How are women included as actors within development cooperation? The concept of women´s empowerment is closely related to what I am interested in in this thesis, namely inclusion of women in decision making processes by giving them the ability to be part of decision making. Empowerment is a concept pushed by a diverse set of development cooperation institutions all from the World Bank as well as smaller NGOs (Parpart 2008:355).

Often gender equality is put forward together with the term women´s empowerment. (eg. UNDP 2016). Women´s empowerment is a broad concept (Kabeer 1999:436) but several authors boil this down to the basic idea of empowerment as the process through which women experience increases

in their ability to determine choices. (Parpart 2008: 355) To have power is to be able to make choices and empowerment is when people who have been denied these choices are given such choices and the capabilities to develop this ability. (Kabeer 1999:437) Thus, empowerment is a process. One can compare this to Amartya Sen´s poverty analysis under which emphasis is placed on analyzing what capabilities a person has in order to be able to choose the life he or she wants (Gammage 2010:71). This "choices autonomy" derives from different empowering sources. Kabeer describes these in form of three interconnected parts; the preconditions which are both material and motivational and lead to the process, often operationalized as decision making opportunities which then lead to the third, the achievements, outcomes. (Kabeer 1999: 435)

In addition to Kabeer, we can also turn to Cornwall (2003) to illuminate the concept of women as actors. Cornwall analyses the efforts to promote participation, another important related concept, in development cooperation projects and programmes. Even in areas with claims of empowerment and full participation where all stake holders should be heard, the group that are often marginalized or excluded is women. The voices that are not heard are women's voices. Cornwall analyses and discusses gender aware projects from a participatory point of view and their contradictions and tensions. Cornwall writes that women are often only part of the implementation of projects. (Cornwall 2003: 1325-1329) She also gives several important examples of projects and programmes with gender intentions and discusses these from a participatory point of view. One example is a project in Sudan by Oxfam where they worked with women´s inclusion as part of their support. They supported both separate women´s committees as well as hired two female women´s coordinators. (Cornwall 2003: 1325, 1330)

In this thesis, I build on these concepts of empowerment and participation, to distinguish between being and *actor* and being a *target* of development cooperation. With a *target*, as mentioned above, I here refer to the aim for the policy for example projects for girls´ education or projects for maternal health etc. In distinction, with the concept of an *actor,* I mean that women are included as decisions makers and present in all parts of the chain of development cooperation, including for example their presence on discussions on boards and as heads of implementation.

Why should women be actors: three theoretical approaches

But why should women be included as *actors* of development cooperation? Isn´t it enough that we aim for *targeting* women with such policies? In political science research there are three core theoretical approaches for arguing why women should be actors in development cooperation. These are the following:

1) The women and politics approach focusing on women´s representation

2) The female leadership / lower corruption link

3) Feminist transnational activism and international norms

In the following sections I go through these approaches to motivate the focus of the women as *actors*.

The women and politics approach focusing on women´s representation

Here I draw attention to the women and politics literature on women´s representation in parliaments. The area of women´s representation is broad and many concepts are debated. An often used distinction within the literature of women´s representation is between the two main strands that focus on descriptive representation and on substantive representation. (Wängnerud 2009:52, Bauer and Britton 2006: 3, Lovenduski &Norris 2003:86-87)

Descriptive representation is based on whether groups´ presence in governing bodies mirror their presence in larger population that is governed (Schwint-Bayer & Mishler 2005:1). Essentially representatives of the people should mirror the people (Phillips 1995:3). The research on this area is focused on the percentage of women elected to parliaments and why so few women get elected. (Wängnerud 2009:51, Lovenduski &Norris 2003: 86) Descriptive representation can be seen as valuable in and of itself particularly from the perspective that when women and other disadvantaged groups become representatives it gives legitimacy to the institutions as well as increases the quality of deliberations (Norris & Lovenduski 2003, Mansbridge 1999:268). The legitimacy of the institutions can be linked to the democratic ideals of fairness and equality described, for example by Bengtsson (2008). The idea is that no group of the society should be excluded from the possibility of making their voice heard. (Bengtsson 2008: 64)

Substantive representation, on the other hand, is the idea that women will make a difference in the

parliament, that their presence will have an effect. (Wängnerud 2009: 52) As Lovenduski and Norris phrase it *"women are not just 'standing as' women but also 'acting for' women as a group"* (Lovenduski & Norris 2003: 87) Bauer and Britton (2006) refer to Goetz and Hassim (2003:5) that argue that the distinction between descriptive and substantive representation shouldn't be overstated but instead that one can see descriptive representation as a first useful step towards a transformation that is needed to achieve for the substantive representation (Bauer and Britton 2006:3-4).

What is it then to be an actor that works in the interests of women? The whole concept of "women's interests" is debated. (Wägnerud 2009: 53, Baldez 2011: 420, Lovenduski &Norris 2003:87) Some scholars argue for a division of women's interests between practical issues and strategic issues while others are critical of this division (Pearson 2000:401). Some researcher mentions a solution to this problem of letting women active in politics define their own interests which are labeled subjective and distinguish these from interests on more common ground, that can be considered objective (Wängnerud 2009:53, Lovenduski & Norris 2003, Cornwall 2003: 1331). But as Wängnerud writes, all different approaches in practice come up with the same list of women´s interests. (Wängnerud 2009:53) Phillips summarized this list in the following way:

> *"Women have distinct interests in relation to child-bearing (for any foreseeable future, an exclusively female affair); and as society is currently constituted they also have particular interests arising from their exposure to sexual harassment and violence, their unequal position in the division of paid and unpaid labor and their exclusion from most arenas of economic or political power. "*(Phillips 1995, pp. 67–68)

Cornwall, also references that Phillips states that it is important to be cautious to move beyond this idea of clearly shared interests of women to not end up with a situation in which women of particular interests are said to be representatives for all women. (Cornwall 2003:1330)

Cornwall also refers to Mohanty (2002:1) who makes an important point when she writes that the mere presence of women can, if they are not given a voice, just be used to legitimize a decision taken by male members. There is a difference between voice and influence. (Cornwall 2003: 1329-1330) The substantive research often focuses on this, if women make a difference for women when they are elected (Lovenduski & Norris 2003).

So does it make a difference if women are present? Some scholars have argued that it is not easy to study this until the number of women in parliaments, or participatory projects are up to a certain level, a critical mass where there is a possible change. (Bauer and Britton 2006: 4, Cornwall 2003: 1329) However, a lot of research has been done regarding the connection between women in

parliaments and attention to women's issues. The research suggests a link between female representation in politics and a stronger positions for women´s interests. (Wägnerud 2009:62, Bauer and Britton 2006:4) Wängnerud also writes that there are empirical results of where more women are elected into parliament, the societies are also more gender equal. (Wägnerud 2009:53)

The female leadership /lower corruption link

A second strand of theory through which one can argue for the importance of women within the development cooperation focuses on the female leadership/ lower corruption link.

Corruption is a big problem in the world today. It affects development processes in developing countries and big donor organizations speak at length about this. (Kempe Ronald Hope et al 2000:2) SIDA describe fighting corruption as one of their top priorities (SIDA 2015). To connect women´s representation or women´s empowerment to other aims like lower corruption is controversial and not everyone finds this relevant (eg. Goetz 2007:87, Cornwall 2003:10. This is partly related to its instrumental view on women´s empowerment, to view the empowerment as an instrument rather than an aim in and of itself. Nevertheless, Kabeer describe in the following way why one despite the costs that come with it could argue for an instrumental view:

> *"Consequently, as long as women's empowerment was argued for as an end in itself, it tended to be heard as a `zero-sum' game with politically weak winners and powerful losers. By contrast, instrumentalist forms of advocacy which combine the argument for gender equality/women's empowerment with demonstrations of a broad set of desirable multiplier effects offer policy makers the possibility of achieving familiar and approved goals, albeit by unfamiliar means."*
> (Kabeer 1999:436)

One of these "familiar goals" highlighted by recent and growing research is lower corruption. This research shows that women´s empowerment has a tentative link to lower levels of corruption. Swamy et al (2001) show that on a micro level women are less likely to be involved in bribery and on a cross-country level corruption is less severe where women constitutes a bigger share of the work force and seats in parliament. (Swamy et al 2001:26) Dollar et al (2001) show the same connection between higher representation of women in parliaments and lower levels of corruption. (Dollar et al 2001:423) Even though this link exists, *how* women´s representation leads to lower corruption is still contested. (Alexander & Bågenholm 2016:2)

Feminist and transnational activism and international norms

The third strand of research that I bring up as an approach to why women should be included as actors in development cooperation is of the link to women's groups and transnational activism. Norris and Inglehart (2003) look at differences in gender equality across the globe with public opinion data and show that women are more likely to be involved in women's groups than men. (Norris and Inglehart 2003:113) Wängnerud also writes that female parliamentarians have more frequent contact with women´s organizations than their male colleagues in Nordic countries. (Wängnerud 2009: 63) Thus, we could expect that the more women that are included in development cooperation, the more linkages we will get to women's movements.

And women´s movements are profoundly important for the representation of women´s interests. Weldon in her article from 2002 lifts up the group perspective of representation and importance of women´s organizations. (Weldon 2002:1) Women's movements are important as an arena where women interact to define their priorities. According to Weldon, even if women´s groups don´t represent all women, they are more likely to reflect more of women´s perspective than an unorganized group of female parliamentarians (Weldon 2002:1161).

Another perspective that is relevant here touches on the relationship between gender equality and norms. Gender roles are socialized and therefore beliefs about gender equality is deeply part of the societies. (Norris and Inglehart 2003:8) A larger literature considers transnational movements important for driving changes in international norms. According to Finnemore and Sikkink(1998) many norm changing struggles have started off as domestic and spread internationally. Finnemore and Sikkink take as an example the movement for women´s suffrage. It began as a demand within a couple of countries and spread to be an international norm. In this process of changing the norm, so called norm entrepreneurs are important actors and they often organize in advocacy networks, like civil society organizations to change a norm (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:893, Elgström 2000:460). In a similar fashion, CEDAW was to a great extent advocated for by women activists. (UN women 2009) There is also recent evidence from Htun and Weldon (2012) showing that the strength of women´s movements in countries is a key driver of changes in policy regarding violence against women (Htun and Weldon 2012).

To conclude this section, the inclusion of women in decision making in development cooperation finds strong theoretical motivation in these three strands of research: given a shared experience as

women, women are more likely to represent women´s interests, women may lower corruption in the process through their inclusion, and women are likely to have stronger links to women´s movements, which are useful advocates of policy support development on behalf of women´s interests. Hence, I move on to the applications of this theory in the evaluation of gender development cooperation policy in Sweden.

Relevance of women´s representation/women as actors applied to development cooperation

Political representation in parliaments is important but the representation of women can also be applied to other contexts of decision making. I argue this for two reasons. First, as Callerstig (2014) writes that the decisions by bureaucrats in public sector organizations are also important to study regarding equality policies. This is the case since the public servants have the task to turning policies into concrete action. How they implement policies are important. (Callerstig 2014:15) Secondly, the parliament is not the only area where women are neglected a voice in decision making. Within the area of development cooperation representation is important since these policies are often decided in tradeoffs between many different interests. Rai describes scenarios within big development cooperation stakeholders where these policies have been formulated without women present (Rai 2008:373-374).

Summary of theoretical section, Aim and Research problem

To summarize the theoretical section, research has shown that the approach on women in development cooperation has changed over the years and has had different elements of women as actors within in it. Three strands of research points at the importance of women´s inclusion as actors. Research have also shown that within the today most dominant approach of is gender mainstreaming among big development actors where elements of women as actors sometimes are added to the definition. Yet, less is known regarding how state donors view and promote the idea of women´s representation and "actor-ship" within development cooperation. Is this something that is pushed for? I intend to fill this gap in the research by analyzing if women´s representation, inclusion or women as actors, are something pushed for within development cooperation in the case of Sweden.

My aim with the thesis is to examine if and how the theme of women´s inclusion as decision making actors is applied within the development cooperation context in the case of Sweden. It is

interesting to look whether the idea of representation and "actor-ship" is visible in the policy level of the Swedish development cooperation with organizations in partner countries. The result is relevant within research for understanding how representation is used in beyond the electoral arena in politics and on the policy level in the development cooperation arena.

Research problem: *Is there an aim of women as actors and not just as targets in the development cooperation policy?*

Method section

Sample

Why choose Sweden?

The analytical unit of the thesis is the Swedish Development cooperation. When choosing a case in a descriptive study, Teorell & Svensson (2007) emphasizes that it is important to choose in a way that makes it generalizable to a bigger set of cases. One way of choosing a case is that is relevant or particularly important in the area. (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 151) Sweden can, in this sense, be viewed as a key case to study. This is for three main reasons. First, Sweden has high levels of women representation´s and gender equality (World economic forum 2016, IPU 2016:2). Secondly, Sweden has a long history of development cooperation and has for a long time been over the average percentage to aid of GNI among the OECD countries. (Oden 2006:24) On top of that, as a third reason, Sweden has also been a driving country for important gender policies within the EU and high aims with a feminist foreign policy (Elgström 2000: 465,Government offices of Sweden). To choose the sector of development cooperation is also motivated since SIDA, as one of the 41 Swedish government authorities, have been given a special task for gender mainstreaming of all their activities between 2015 and 2018. (Plan for gender mainstreaming for Sida 2015-2018)

Because of these reasons one could expect that women should be involved and that Sweden should be at the horizon of the development of representation of women. One can say that the generalizability in this case could be formulated in the following negation - *If Sweden does not do this, then probably nobody does.*

Swedish development cooperation

In this analysis, I focus on the Swedish development cooperation which I describe briefly in the following section. To start with, what does Sweden want with development cooperation? This is best summarized with the following quote from SIDA: *"The objective of Swedish development*
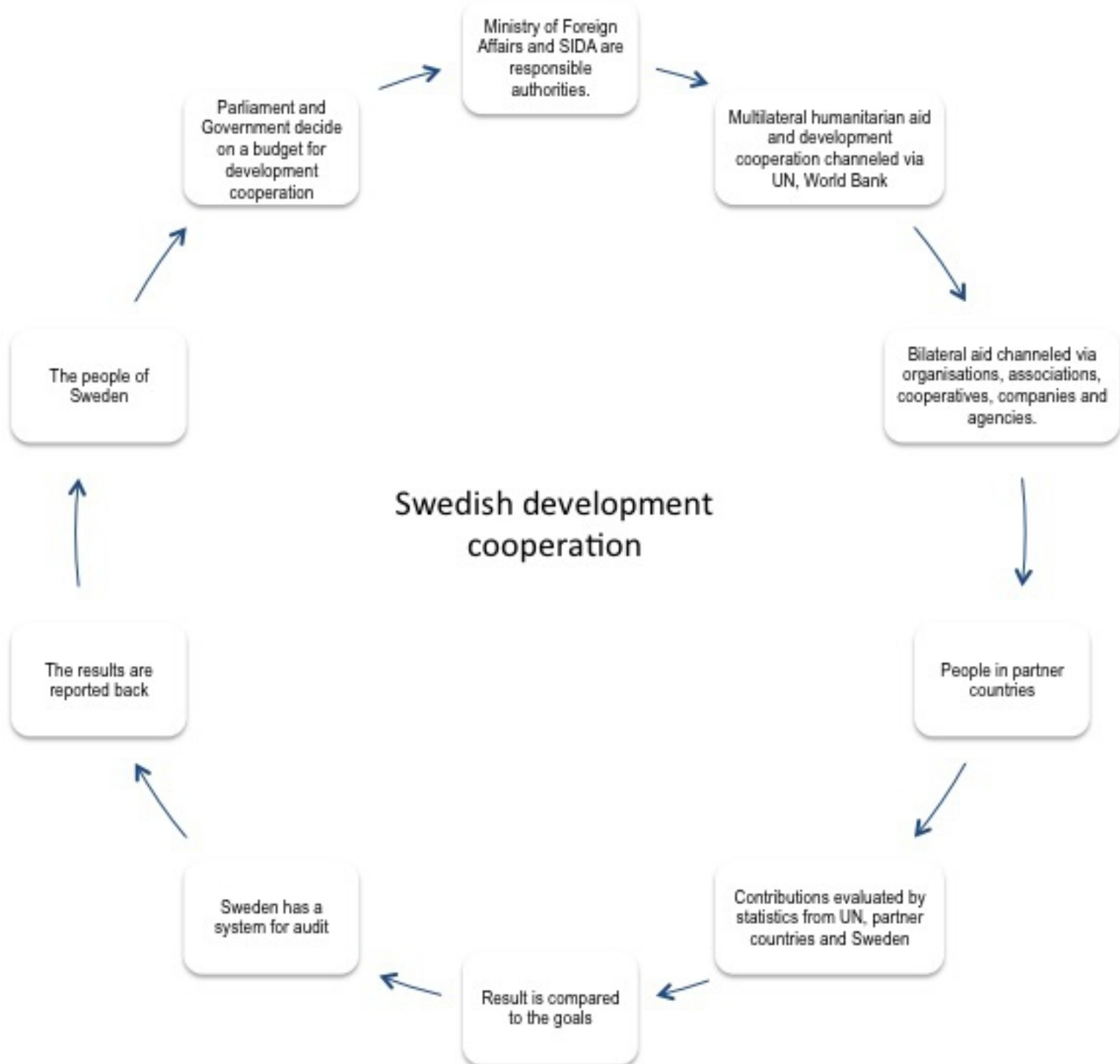
cooperation is to create opportunities for people living in poverty and under oppression to improve their living conditions." (SIDA 2014b)

Key areas in Sweden's development cooperation are economic opportunities, knowledge health and social development, environmentally sustainable development, peace and security and democracy, human rights and gender equality. (SIDA 2016:1) What is then counted as development cooperation? Sweden defines its development aid along with the definition of official development assistance in accordance with the DAC/ OECD definition. (Openaid.se 2016c) The main points of this definition are that official development assistance should be provided by official agencies, promote economic development and welfare in developing countries and be concessional. (OECD 2016)

Swedish aid is divided into humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The Development cooperation has a more long term aim and is split into multilateral and bilateral cooperation. (SIDA 2014b) The bilateral half of the development cooperation is coordinated by SIDA, and the other multilateral is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (SIDA 2016:2.) Sweden within the development cooperation cooperates with different kinds of partners such as multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, Public sector institutions, public-private partnerships and networks etc. (SIDA 2016:3, open aid.se 2016a) Sweden stresses the importance of development cooperation on the recipients terms and the projects and programmes are designed in dialogue with the partner countries or partner organizations. (Sida 2014b)

To describe the chain of development cooperation, I show below a model based on information and idea from an original model made by SIDA. (SIDA 2016:7) The model shows how the chain of development cooperation goes from the people of Sweden to people in partner countries, gets evaluated and is reported back, see model 2.

As one can see, there are a myriad of possibilities in the chain of decision makers where women's presence could be advocated.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA are responsible authorities.

Parliament and Government decide on a budget for development cooperation

Multilateral humanitarian aid and development cooperation channeled via UN, World Bank

The people of Sweden

Bilateral aid channeled via organisations, associations, cooperatives, companies and agencies.

Swedish development cooperation

The results are reported back

People in partner countries

Sweden has a system for audit

Contributions evaluated by statistics from UN, partner countries and Sweden

Result is compared to the goals

Model 2: Swedish development cooperation

(Source of information and idea SIDA 2016:7)

Material

To analyze if there is an aim for women inclusion as actors in the Swedish development cooperation I have chosen to look at seven different documents important for Swedish development cooperation today. I view the documents as a combined material and my intention is therefore not to compare the documents but rather to get different examples as answers to the question I ask to the combined material.

There are many documents to choose from and I have had two strategies when choosing what material to analyze. The first is that it should be as recent as possible. There are a broad range of gender equality document from SIDA in a historical perspective but since I want to know how the strategy and aim is now I look at the most recent ones referred to at their website. So older plans for gender main streaming, have even if they are interesting, been excluded in favor of the most recent ones. Secondly, I have tried to look for different kinds of documents to get a broad spectra of documents. Instead of looking at for example ten different land strategies, I have chosen one, and instead also looked at for example, the plan for gender mainstreaming for Sida.

I have chosen to look at the English version of the documents in the first hand to make the quotes more accurate and to be more transparent to an English reader. In the cases where there is a lack of English versions I analyze the Swedish version and show both the original quote and my translation in the text to be transparent. The documents are described in the following section and then summarized in table 1.

The first five documents are different kinds of documents of that influence Swedish development cooperation. The first two are on a main level: *Appropriation for financial year 2016 for the Swedish Agency for Development Cooperation* (my translation) and *Aid Policy framework- the direction of Swedish aid*. Something to comment on is that the policy framework of aid from 2014 was developed and put in place by the former Swedish government. The current government have announced that this policy will be changed and a new document of this is coming during 2016 but have not yet been published (Schmidt 2015).

The third, fourth and fifth documents are related to gender in development cooperation. These are *Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016, Plan for gender mainstreaming for Sida 2015-2018* (my translation) and *the Gender Tool*

box containing five different tool documents for gender mainstreaming.

Here I follow an analytic strategy described by Teorell & Svensson as *the most likely design*, to choose a case that maximizes the probability of getting a certain result. (Teorell & Svensson 2007:155) The idea here is that the probability of finding the perspective of women as actors will be higher in the plans directed towards gender than in other documents and hence I include these in my analysis.

The two last documents are examples of cooperation strategies. The cooperation strategies are important documents in development cooperation and based on the partner country´s own strategy for poverty reduction. (Sida 2016:6) The strategies are important documents for governing of the development cooperation and exist for countries and regions, the cooperation with multilateral organizations and thematically directed development cooperation. (open aid 2016b) The sixth documents is an example of a thematic strategy, *Result strategy for specific actions on human rights and democratization, 2014-2017*. I choose this because the theme is related to human rights and democracy, where one could expect the gender equality should be pushed. The seventh and final document is a results strategy that is formed for each country. *Result Strategy for Sweden´s international aid in Afghanistan 2014-2019* (my translation). I choose the strategy focused on Afghanistan as the partner country because Afghanistan has one of the highest levels of gender inequality in the world. (Norris and Inglehart 2003:4) Therefore gender equality as a whole should be incorporated as an important aspect of strategy.

Table 1: Material for analysis

Document nr:	Document title	Author institution	Year of production
1	Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2016 avseende Styrelsen för Internationellt utvecklingssamarbete (2015) *My translation: Appropriation for financial year 2016 for the Swedish Agency for Development Cooperation*	The Swedish Government	2015
2	Aid policy framework - the direction of Swedish aid (2014)	The Swedish Government	2014
3	Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016	The Swedish Government	2015
4	Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering på Sida 2015-2018 *My translation: Plan for gender mainstreaming for Sida 2015-2018*	SIDA	2015
5	Gender Tool box - Gender analysis – Principles & Elements (2015) - Gender Mainstreaming (2015) - Gender Equality in Humanitarian Assistance(2015) - Gender equality policy Marker (2016) - How SIDA works with Gender equality (2015)	SIDA	2015,2015,2015 2016,2015
6	Resultatstrategi för särskilda insatser för mänskliga rättigheter och demokratisering 2014-2017 *My translation: Result Strategy for specific actions on human rights and democratization, 2014-2017*	SIDA/Ministry for foreign affairs/ The Swedish Government	2014
7	Resultatstrategi för Sveriges Internationella bistånd I Afgahnistan 2014-2019 *My translation: Result Strategy for Sweden´s international aid in Afghanistan 2014-2019*	SIDA/ Ministry for foreign affairs/ The Swedish Government	2014

Design

To investigate the question of whether there is a focus on women as actors within the development cooperation, I choose a descriptive approach. Descriptive approaches are preferable when one is trying to understand how something is. (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 22) As a method I use a content analysis which is suitable when we want to see how often an expression of ideas for something are pushed (Bergström & Boreus 2012: 50). Since I intend to not only count the mentioning of words like for example representation but rather analyze if and how they describe this concept, my analytic strategy will fall closer to what Bergström and Boreus label a qualitative content analysis. (Bergström & Boreus 2012:50) Another possible method could have been to pursue informant interviews with people involved in development cooperation work. Why I instead choose analysis of documents is for two reasons. First, I am interested in the official version, and not peoples´ own views. Secondly, I am interested in the formal version and not the praxis since praxis is something that could change easily or be different in different parts of the development cooperation.

It is important before starting a textual analysis to formulate a clear question to ask to the text (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 100). To operationalize the problem and narrow down the question further, the following is what I look at:

Operationalized research question:

- Is women´s representation emphasized as a strategy within the policy documents of Swedish development cooperation?

When one as I do, search not only for specific words but for a concept described by different words the issue of interpretation comes in (Bergström & Boreus 2012:85). To minimize this problem as much as possible I aim for transparency of my analysis in two ways. First by here throughly describing what I am looking for with an analytical instrument and secondly, in the result section, by showing examples of what I find with quotes.

Analytical instrument

When pursuing descriptive research it is important to use a classification scheme to be able to investigate systematically (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 24). I use the ideas of ideal types. Ideal types should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive, meaning that an answer should fit into one of the two categories and could not fit into both categories (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 42). I use the ideal types of *actor* and *target* from the theoretical section and they constitute my analytical instrument, see table 2 below.

Table 2: Analytical instrument:

Target of Development cooperation	Actor of development cooperation
material that show an aim of that women should be the target of development cooperation ex. For women, project focused on women education, maternal health etc.	material that show an aim of that women should be actors of development cooperation ex. Women´s representation, women as decision makers, women´s presence, women´s involvement, women´s agency, women´s inclusion etc.

As mentioned earlier we know the notion of *targeting* women with development cooperation is widely accepted in development cooperation. (eg. Pearson 2000:385) I therefore focus the analysis on whether women are *actors*.

The analysis is done in the following three steps:

1. First, I read through all documents and collect quotes where the concept of women as actors is present, in accordance with the analytical instrument. If I find quotes related to the concept I move on to the next step.

2. Secondly, I read through all collected quotes and look for patterns of themes between the different quotes.

3. Finally, I summarize the main themes found in the material and make a selection among the relevant quotes to make a clear, concise but yet transparent description of the results.

Results and discussion

In this section I describe and discuss the result of the analysis. I have used the analytical instrument described in the method section to investigate whether there is an aim for women´s inclusion as *actors* within development cooperation.

To again be clear about what I am looking for I will give a short example of what I mean by *target* this time using quotes from the documents, before we move to the focus of the analysis, the aim for women´s inclusion as *actors.* Sweden clearly states that women and girls are among the main target for the aid. It can be found in several places, for example within the aid policy framework:

> *" However, the central target groups of Swedish aid are women and girls, and people living under oppression"* (Aid policy framework- the direction of Swedish aid:17)

That the aid should be directed towards issues that are in interest for women is also something that can be found in the documents:

> *" The foreign service will work to ensure that women´s land ownership rights are strengthen including through work of the UN"* (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:9)

But in none of these quotes we can be sure about how the women are included in the work of the development cooperation. Hence I now move on to my results of this thesis regarding an aim for women´s inclusion as *actors* within development cooperation.

The results of the analysis are that it in the material are several signs of that Sweden has included an aim women´s inclusion as actors in development cooperation. To explain and show the result I divide the result section in eight different themes to describe different aspects of this. I have created the themes from what I have found in the documents to be able to easily show different aspects of Sweden´s aim for women´s inclusion as actors within development cooperation.

The first theme relates to Sweden's aim of representation on a more general level. The second theme relates to the perspective or view on women as actors or agents. The third theme relates to how Sweden addresses women´s representation in the women´s own context in development cooperation. The fourth theme relates to how Sweden works to include women in big development organizations. The fifth theme relates to forming different kinds of networks for women. The sixth theme relates to how Sweden aims to choose partner organizations where women are included. The

seventh theme relates to the aim for women's participation in the development programmes/ projects. And the eighth and final theme describes one prime example of implementation of women´s representation that I found in the material.

1. General aim for representation

In the documents I find examples of how the issue of women´s representation is brought up as an important aim. In the feminist foreign policy we can see how representation is one of the three important goals.

> *" Sweden´s feminist foreign policy is also an approach, which requires that the activities of the Foreign service incorporate a gender equality perspective can be summarized under the three ´Rs´: (...) Representation: The foreign Service will promote women´s participation and influence in decision making processes at all levels and in all areas, and seek dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including civil society."*
> (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016 :13)

There is also mentioning of importance of the visibility of women as actors on a general level.

> *"But we will also provide instructions on how we will work, including how to enhance the visibility of women as actors and push for women´s rights and opportunities to organise"*
> (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016: foreword)
>
> *The foreign service will work actively to increase the agency of women and girls, including by promoting their rights and opportunities to form civil society organisations, enhancing their visibility as actors and providing forums where they can make their voices heard"*
> (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:8)

2. The perspective of women as actors and agents in development

The important role of women as agents as a perspective is also something that is present several occasions in the documents.

> *"Focus 2016: Promote the participation of women and girls as actors for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development"*
> (Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:4)
>
> *" The role of women as actors for a country´s development is important – improved living conditions for women and reinforced work on gender equality are powerful means of achieving other aid objectives"* (Aid policy framework- the direction of Swedish aid: 17)

" The foreign service will work actively to ensure that women´s ability and expertise as agents of change in low- carbon development and climate change adaptation are harnessed, and that considerations is given to their particular vulnerability to climate change impacts" (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 20168)

3. Strengthen women´s representation in their context

Within the context of the partner countries where development cooperation is implemented, the aim for political representation for women in their own parliaments is also in focus.

"The foreign service will act to enable more women to access political office" (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:8)

*" Sweden is to help ensure that women as well as men have an opportunity and the freedom to affect their living conditions by exercising and influence in political processes and decision making, and that they are also to prepare for this through association with civil society organisations and political parties" (*Aid policy framework- the direction of Swedish aid:20)

4. Involving women in the big development organizations

As described above in the method section, Sweden in development cooperation cooperate with among others, big multilateral organizations. The aim of inclusion of women in these institutions, is also something mentioned in the material. Both on a general level:

"The foreign Service and its seconding agencies will use secondment programmes as an instrument for promoting gender equality. This will be done by actively nominating Swedish women to international positions and ensuring that the representatives and officials Sweden appoints and sends are equipped with gender knowledge and expertise. (…) The foreign service will also work to ensure that multilateral actors and international institutions pursue active organisational and human resources policies that create non-discriminatory organisational structures and promote gender equality, as well as more women in leadership positions." (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016 20)

And regarding a specific implementation of the 2030 agenda:

" In multilateral forums as well as in and through the EU, the foreign Service will actively promote the participation of women and girls in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 agenda" (Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:8)

5.Forming women´s networks in development cooperation and peace operations

There I also an aim within the documents of including women in peace building as mediators and plans of a special women´s mediations network. Also a high level meeting on women's participation in mediation and peace processes has been held.

> *"The foreign service will push for the political participation of women in the international dialogue on peace building and state building"* (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:8)

> *"Sweden has begun working with the other Nordic countries on a Nordic Women´s mediations network (2015)."*
> (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016 :23)

> *"In late 2015 Sweden will host a high-level meeting on women´s participation in mediation and peace processes"* (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:7)

6. Choosing partner organizations where women are included

In the documents it is also visible that there is an aim for choosing to work with organizations where women are included when choosing partner organizations.

First, by working with women´s organizations as we can see in the following quotes:

> *Women´s rights movements, gender equality organisations, and other types of human rights entities are often the most important partners in a dialogue, mostly because it is often their issues that Sida is endeavouring to advance. (Gender tool box – gender mainstreaming (2015 7)*

> *" Riktat stöd avseende kvinnors deltagande och inflytande är vidare tydligt prioriterat inom Sidas arbete med demokrati och mänskliga rättigheter samt mänsklig säkerhet. Detta sker bland annat genom stöd till kvinnoorganisationer, som är bevisat effektivt"* (Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering på Sida 2015-2018:8)

In my translation: *"Directed support regarding women's participation and Influence is also a clear priority within Sida's work on democracy and human rights and human security. This is done for example through support for women who are proven effective"*(Plan for gender mainstreaming for Sida 2015-2018:8)

> *" Local women´s organisations may possess crucial information on gender relations, cultural values and social norms which could influence the programme"* (Gender tool box – gender mainstreaming (2015 :8)

And secondly also with other partners where women are represented as we can see in this following quote:

> *" Each specific context will determine which actors are most important to interact with to achieve the feminist foreign policy objectives. In general, however, the foreign Service will also increase contact with women´s rights defenders, women elected representatives, trade unions, political movements and civil society organisations to enhance the visibility of women as political actors and support women´s rights and opportunities to organise and exercise political power and influence. The foreign service will also give more visibility to women and strengthen them as economiv actors by increasing its contact with women entrepreneurs and women´s business networks, and with legal actors working to strengthen women´s economic rights."* (Swedish Foreign Service action plan   for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016: 15)

> *"The foreign Service will promote the participation of women as actors in peace processes in countries in conflict, including by supporting women leaders, women´s rights activists and relevant civil society organisations"* (Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including focus areas for 2016:7)

7. Aim for that women should be participating and be included in projects

To involve women as participants within the programmes and projects is also something acknowledged in the material. This is visible within different sectors such as in the following quotes, resource management and reducing gender based violence.

> *" Sweden shall promote integrated water resources management that contributes to people in poverty and marginalised groups being able to participate and hold the authorities to account in planning, decision making and implementation. This applies in particular to women, who often play a central role in water supply at the local level and for house hold needs."* (Aid policy framework- the direction of Swedish aid:32)

> *" Swedish aid must also be focused on preventing and reducing gender-based violence, and on tackling the consequences of violence. Both women and men need to be involved in this work for it to have best impact. The knowledge, expertise and actions of women´s and LGBT organisations must also be taken into account. Societies in which women have autonomy and are active participants in politics, the economy and the life of society tend to be less prone to violence and conflict. Swedish aid must therefore promote equality between women and men."* (Aid policy framework- the direction of Swedish aid:39)

8. Examples of inclusion in development cooperation programmes

The following quote is a prime example of a concrete project where women´s inclusion as actors within Swedish development cooperation.

> *" Gender dialogue for results - The Swedish Embassy of Bogotá has combined diplomatic dialogue with development cooperation to support women's participation in the peace process. In addition to financial support to the UN (UN Women and UNDP) and women´s rights organisation, the Embassy conducts a high level policy dialogue on women as agents for peace in the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and the guerrilla (FARC). The message on women as peace agents has been highlighted by the Embassy on strategic occasions related to peacebuilding, political participation, reconciliation and victims rights and has been widely disseminated through social media and TV. The government delegation for peace negotiations was previously male- only, but does now include two women. Furthermore, Swedish support enables the realisation of a "Peace Meeting for Women" in October 2013, where 450 representatives from women´s organisations agreed on specific recommendations to the peace negotiations."* (Gender tool box – gender mainstreaming (2015:7)

To summarize the results show that there are clear signs of an aim for women´s inclusion as actors in Swedish development cooperation. The aim is present both on a general level, and specific sectors and also within in concrete projects.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate whether women´s inclusion as *actors* is emphasized as a strategy in development cooperation, looking at the case of Sweden. Gender equality and a focus on women have been approached within development cooperation over the years and to target and focus on women is today widely accepted within development cooperation. From the literature on women´s empowerment and participation it is apparent that the fullest consideration of women´s inclusion in development cooperation should include, the concept of women´s inclusion of decision making actors. There are also three main strands of theory from women and politics´s research that motivate why women´s inclusion potentially improves development cooperation processes. In short the arguments are that women´s presence matter for that their interest to be represented, that there is a tentative link between more women included and lower corruption and finally that there is link between women representatives and women´s movements. I used qualitative content analysis on a wide range of policy documents to investigate if Sweden incorporates women as *actors* as an aim in their policies.

The results of the study show that there are several signs of that this aim is being pushed by Swedish development cooperation. It is present on the general level in aims for the development cooperation. As well as in viewing women as actors for change and strengthen the women's representation in their own context. Within the development cooperation in itself Sweden is advocating for women networks in development and peace. Sweden is also aiming to choose partners where women are represented as well as point at the importance of women participants of the development programmes. The conclusion I draw from this is that the perspective of women´s representation and women as actors is present within Swedish development cooperation.

If the result instead would have been that Sweden didn't have the aim we could have drawn general conclusions for a broader set of actors. This since Sweden was chosen as a key case where if Sweden did not include the aim, then probably others would not either. But since the result show the opposite the implications for the general picture is that it opens the door to the possibility of other countries also are aiming for this, however more research have to be done to draw conclusions on a more general level.

To say something about the implementation of the strategies is not possible by looking at just aims and was beyond the scope of this thesis. However. the quote with an example from the Embassy of Bogotá in the results give a glimpse of that the aims have led to concrete implementation.

Further research should look at the implementation to make sure the aim of women as actors is implemented and look for if it is maybe better implemented in certain parts of the development cooperation chain, or among certain sectors.

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