

## GENDER AND DEMOCRATIZATION

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### Abstract

After World War II, democratization came into fashion as panacea for countries in transition. This trend continues to be an issue in the 21st century too. The implications of the transformation for public as well as private life are considerably different for women than for men. Studies have shown that even in democratic states gender inequality has been reinforced than effectively attenuated. Feminist theories take up the issue of female discrimination on a theoretical level and provide explanations and measures in order to erase these inequalities. Gender mainstreaming is an approach to address gender inequalities in practice. The European Union, as a community of values, promotes gender mainstreaming not only among its member states, but also for its candidate states in the context of external democracy promotion. This paper examines the current gender initiatives in Serbia which is currently an EU candidate country. In fact, there are many gender activities from different civil society actors and NGOs around Serbia. The positivist feminist theories are more apt to explain the current gender activities. The post-structuralist theories mainly deal with micro situations. Therefore, it is difficult to apply these perspectives in a study on the overall gender situation in a specific country. By contrast, these theories could be applied for studying micro situations within a particular country. Accordingly, the theory has implications on the research design for such a study. A study based on post-structuralist theory would be based on ethnography rather than statistical data and a literature review.

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**Keywords:** Gender, democratization, gender mainstream

### Introduction

«The veil of ignorance removes any basis for the distinction» (Rawls, 1971, p. 166)

Politics is about power and dealing with scarce resources in the public. It has an impact on structuring and organizing society. Political phenomena are particularly prone for gender-related discussions because the process, output and outcome of politics affect the role of women and men within society. Accordingly, any political issue has at the same time a gendered dimension.

The EU as an external actor plays a central role in the transformation processes of countries in its neighbourhood. As the EU is a community of values its aim is to promote democracy, rule of law, liberal market systems etc. In addition, the EU has declared a gender mainstreaming strategy not only for its member states but also for candidate states.

Accordingly, in this paper I reflect on gender and democratization. The key question of this paper is: How is gender integrated in the democratization process in the context of the EU enlargement? And which feminist theories can explain the current endeavours?

This paper proceeds in the following steps: In the first part there is a brief overview on the theoretical aspects on gender. In the problem outline there is a discussion on the overall problematic of gender, which consists mainly of the discrimination of women within society.

In addition, there is a brief overview on the main strands within the feminist theories because they address these inequalities.

The second part is devoted to gender and democratization. This part starts off with some thoughts on international organizations, external democratization and the EU strategy on gender promotion. This overview should allow reflecting about the impact and challenges of gender on democratization. For a practical analysis, there is a case study on the situation in Serbia.

The final section provides an analysis on the external democracy promotion activities in the field of gender. This analysis is supplemented by a critical reflection on the applicability of the feminist theories discussed in part two of the paper.

#### Theoretical Aspects on Gender

In this chapter we briefly look at some definitions of the term gender. This overview should provide a working definition for further elaborating the issue on gender and democratization. Afterwards there is an outline of the current problems regarding gender. This is followed by the main theories on gender.

#### **Definition of gender**

Before looking at gender in more detail it is important to think about the definition of this term that is mainly 'mushrooming' since the late 1970s; even though, within linguistics, the grammatical gender as a concept exists much longer. In the very beginning of gender studies within social sciences and humanities, the term used to be a static one describing static properties such as identity, social status, what is learned via socialization, a system of stratification, etc. (Martin, 2003, p. 342). One of the great contributions of gender scholars in the last decade is the re-framing of gender from a static, unchangeable concept to a dynamic accomplishment. Nowadays, gender is understood as a dynamic process which everyone is 'doing'. Gender is a cross-cutting issue, because it occurs in each and every aspect of life such as families, workplaces, sports, military, religion, politics, etc. (Jeanes, Knight & Martin, 2011, p. xv). Further more, one could also argue that gender is a cross-border issue neglecting artificially drawn borders such as state borders, and therefore, can be described as 'transareal' (c.f. Ette, 2008).

In order to differentiate sex and gender analytically, West and Zimmermann (1987) provide a helpful categorization: They distinguish between sex, sex category and gender. Sex is defined through socially agreed biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males. Sex category is based on the application of the sex criteria, in this case, sex and sex category of one person can vary independently. On the contrary, gender is the activity of managing situated conduct due to normative conceptions of attitudes and activities for one's sex category (p. 127). In fact, «any activity ... is to engage in behavior at the risk of gender assessment» (ibid., p. 136). In their view, gender is far more a social construction and the product of social interactions than inherent in a person.

The dynamic characteristic of the notion gender is exemplified as follows: «'gender' is a social product that changes through the use that a society makes of it and the knowledge that it produces» (Gherardi, 2003, p. 212). Practising gender is also defined as «actions reflecting or constituting society's gender institution by invoking norms, stereotypes, empirical associations, meanings and/or interpretations ... that are culturally or socially associated with gender» (Martin, 2009, cit. in Jeanes, Knight, & Martin, 2011, p. xv-xvi).

#### **Problem outline**

Why is gender an issue? Despite far ranging social movements fighting for women's rights, there are still social inequalities between women and men in organizational contexts.

These inequalities occur in nearly every aspect of life. Thus, gender is a cross-cutting theme. This chapter highlights in a compact manner specific inequalities related to gender. It

starts with a historic overview. This is followed by contemporary discussions and initiatives for reducing gender inequality.

Social inequalities are not a new phenomenon. Even in ancient Greece, there was a distinct structure between men, women, metics and slaves which defined their social roles as well as their rights (Schmidt M., 2010, p. 28). Today's social structure is mainly influenced by the transition from agrarian to industrial modes of production that created the separation of workplace and home. The 'industrial turn' created a new variety of jobs outside the traditional oikos. Women and men occupied different jobs within different industries. This sex-based pattern of employment still persists today (Calas & Smircich, 2006, p. 304).

In the context of social movements in the aftermath of WWII, social differences have become the focal point for many activists. At the same time, modernization has had an impact on gender relations. For example, career opportunities have mainly improved for well-educated white women while at the same time, men have lost some privileges on the labour market.

Furthermore, legal basis have been implemented in order to improve women's position within society. Despite all these advancements, gender relations are characterized through socio-economic disproportions. For example, women have barely the same access to the production of power knowledge, socially relevant power positions, money and market, as well as jobs and professions. In a nutshell: women are rejected from an equal participation on economic and political power (Tomic, 2011, p. 17).

These inequalities are not static. In contrast, they are produced and reproduced over and over again. For example, when firms hire part-time workers, they tend to be more likely women. In general, part-time jobs are at the lower end of organization's hierarchies (Calas & Smircich, 2006, p. 306). At the same time, part-time jobs are the first to be eliminated in an economic recession which leads overall to a far higher unemployment rate among women (Leon, Diaz & Millns, 2003, p. 20).

The neo-liberal trend which favours a power shift from the state to the economy leads to further aggravation of the economic distribution and social inequalities. The neo-liberal principle is based on value creation through boosting the economy. This means that mainly the private sector should expand and create more jobs (i.e. paid work). This endeavour is nearly on the top of the political agenda, whereas (unpaid) education and housework do not count as an issue of the res publica (Tomic, 2011, p. 18-19). The working environment –as part of the liberal and political system– is assumed to be gender neutral, where all individuals have the same rights and access to positions. The central aim of this idea is the functioning of the meritocratic system where everyone, regardless of his/her gender, race, religion, etc. has equal opportunities (Calas & Smircich, 2006, p. 291). This idea is theoretically sound, however it fails in practice.

There are numerous obstacles for women effectively participating in politics and power positions in the working world. For example, financial impediments, lack of access to information, mobility and public safety, coercion, intimidation and violence. These aspects are only part of the reason why in fact less than 10% of the countries worldwide have a female head of state and fewer than 30 countries account for more than 30% women in parliament (Tommasoli, 2011).

In fact, the problem of inequality in pay, work and family due to gender are more marked in countries where democracy and capitalism reign supreme than in other regions. In general, the industrial world accounts for being a role model for developing countries in many regards, it wants to set an example for global development. However, the western system has not been able to eliminate gender inequality nor poverty at all. In contrary, it has even been fertile ground for further disparity between men and women (Calas & Smircich, 2006, p. 286).

To summarize: The issue on inequalities arising from gender are fairly well recognized and can be determined. These issues are even problematized and there are initiatives for changing the social order, particularly on the legal basis. However, a fundamental transformation of the society has so far not been recognisable. It is even acknowledged that western –in the sense of developed– societies produce far reaching inequalities despite the public awareness of the issue and the activities to fight disparities.

### **Theories on gender**

After having discussed the social implications of gender on a practical level, we now turn to the theoretical studies on gender. The main aim of gender studies is to analyze cause and effect of social differences resulting from gender and to develop theories to explain them.

Furthermore it is about confronting the nature and consequences of gendered embodiment, exploring what it means to be a woman or man in terms of the material conditions of existence, and hence, raising the question of how a gendered world affects the nature of knowledge production (Calas & Smircich, 2009, p. 246). The forerunner of gender studies are feminist theories. Feminist theories focus rather on the suppressed femininity whereas gender studies deal far more with the social construction of gender (Schössler, 2008, pp. 9-10). We will now give a brief overview (without requirement on completeness) on the main strands within feminism (Calas & Smircich, 2006; Gherardi, 2003):

### **Positivist theories**

The liberal feminist theory follows the political development from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their main claim was equalisation in all spheres of life. Generally speaking, the social and political system was accepted, however, their aim was to achieve equal representation, fight sex discrimination and to deny sex differences. In this strand, gender differences can be corrected through human development, and or structural/legal interventions.

In contrast, the radical feminist theory criticises the prevalent social system fundamentally. It regards the social system as primarily a patriarchal society that constantly puts women in a subordinate position. Organizations are designed according to a patriarchal order maintaining gender segregation and discrimination in the public domain while sexual oppression occurs in the private sphere of life (i.e. household). They claim for a women-centred reconstruction of society, a matrarchy at best.

Psychoanalytic feminist theory follows Sigmund Freud's theories. It denies the biological determinism and considers gender inequality to be the product from early childhood. It is mainly the patriarchal family which defines the role of men and women within society. This leads to male domination. In this regard, psychosexual developments lead to different ways of knowledge. For example, there are different concepts on morality between women and men. It is argued that the articulation of both the feminine and masculine values would create a more balanced, androgynous organizational culture.

According to Karl Marx' historical materialism, marxist feminist theory regards gender as structural, historical and material at the same time. In analogy to the structuring of society by social classes, gender subordinates women to men. This theory analyzes how identities are created in social activities such as work. It particularly focuses on inequality, power, patriarchy and capitalism. From this point of view, men as a social group dominate as well as control women as a group. Subsequently, gender inequality persists unless structural changes are implemented through class struggle.

The socialist feminist theory turns away from the pure male-female cleavage and takes into account differences among women such as race, ideology, etc. One example is the oppression of black women by white women in the United States before the uprising of the

Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s/1970s. The main achievement of this theory is to gain deeper awareness about the various lines of differentiation. Symbols, images and ideologies are forms of gendering and racializing of organizations. They legitimize gender inequalities and differences. The 'good society' according to socialist feminist theory has stripped away all systems of private and public oppression based on sex, gender, race, class, etc. and hence leads to a transformation of the social relations.

### **Post-structuralist theories**

The term 'linguistic turn' marks the move from positivist to post-structuralist/postmodern theories within feminism (Poggio, 2006, p. 231). This reflects the overall move in the humanities and social sciences where language is considered to be a system of signification and not representation. Language no longer plays a mirror function for interpersonal cognitive processes. Human activity is not only embedded in social and cultural contexts, but also formed and performed through language (Steyaert, 2007, p. 462). It is mainly through language that researchers constitute their object of investigation. This perspective allows for a distinctive feminist politics of knowledge. From this point of view, the possibility of universal and generalizable knowledge based on fix and stable language was called into question. The 'good society' requires the continuous deconstruction and denaturalization of discourses constituting specific subjectivities through power, resistance and the materiality of human bodies.

The concept of gender becomes particularly vague if one considers for example First World women and Third World women. This perspective represents the Third World/Post-colonial feminist theory. There is an epistemological critique on Western feminists because they have a tendency of universalizing women's issue even though they focus mainly on white female in Western and industrialized societies. Furthermore, there is a postcolonial critique on Western epistemologies. For example, transnational corporations/organizations are primary actors in the perpetuation of race/gender/sex relations in modernities. This theory deconstructs modernization activities such as development and multinational corporations. In addition, it takes also into account that there exist different reactions to the dominant cultures; there is a 'beyond'. This phenomenon is aptly subsumed by the term 'hybridization' of Homi Bhabha (1988).

Summing up: feminism can be regarded as a discourse on gender. This brief overview shows that there exist various perspectives within feminism and it reveals crucial patterns. It is the feminists aim to locate the constitution of gender. The liberal, radical and psychoanalytic strand consider the body as constitutive for gender. In the Marxist, socialist and post-colonial theory it is culture and social relations that constitute gender. And in the post-structuralist's point of view it is through language that gender is constructed (Gherardi, 2003, p. 218).

These theoretical perspectives are important because they build the basis for approaching the issue of gender. Any gender practice is at the same time normatively motivated. The presented overview on the different strands of theories helps to locate the practices within the theoretical framework. Scrutinizing practical approaches can also help to testify the theories.

### **Gender and Democratization**

«Gender equality must be treated as an explicit goal of democracy building, not as an add-on» (Ban Ki-Moon, cit. in Tommasoli, 2011).

## **International organizations and gender**

«Much of today's social, cultural, political, and economic life is transacted in organizations» (Perrow, 1991, p. 725). Accordingly, in order to (partly) understand the world we live in, we must analyse the organizations and how they work in producing the world. The meaning of the term 'organization' is twofold: it is not only a thing in itself but also a process (Jeanes, Knight & Martin, 2011, p. xxiv). Our lives are shaped by organizations at multiple levels. In fact, all these organizations are gendered. They have internal gender regimes, function in a wider context of gender relations, and moreover, produce gender effects.

Organizations range from profit oriented transnational corporations (e.g. Coca Cola, IBM, Tata, etc.) to non-profit international organizations (IO) or non-governmental organizations (NGO). It is argued that analysis on gender focuses mainly on transnational corporations, though; the international organizations often escape the gendered lens (Connell, 2008, p. 238).

International organizations are of particular interest for an analysis on gender, because, as associations of countries, they act on a supra-state-level, shape norms and produce policies that constrain and form markets, define peace and security, and proclaim universal values of human rights, for example. In fact, almost every area of life is being monitored and/or regulated by one or another IO. These organizations shape the discussion on gender in many ways. Primarily, they have a unique position because they cajole governments and organizations to integrate the issue of gender in their operations and policies (Woodward, 2011, p. 355). Secondly, they act as role models and in some regard, are considered as better states. International organizations open up opportunities which are beyond the capacity of a state (Abbott & Snidal, 1998, p. 3; Putnam, 1988).

However, the role of IOs is ambiguous too. On the one hand, they are a target for protest against injustice, violence, and inequalities and for policy demands. On the other hand, they can be tools that work oppressively towards states or they may provide access for issues that are suppressed on the national political agenda. Furthermore, apart from rule setting, IOs have also an internal dimension where they are required to live up to their standards they set for others. Empirical studies have shown that progress on gender-friendly workplaces is very slow, even within these organizations. Accordingly, there is a dual challenge to reform internally while at the same time promoting gender externally on a global level (Woodward, 2011, pp. 356, 369).

We acknowledge that the dual challenge of international organizations is interdependent. However, in order to focus on democratization, we limit our further investigations on the external dimension of international organizations. In this regard, we concentrate on how IOs integrate gender-related issues in the context of external democracy promotion at the example of the European Union.

## **External Democracy Promotion**

External democracy promotion is a phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It started with the coercive transformation of the loser states after WWII such as Germany, Italy and Japan through the allies. In its core, external democratization is about influencing and reconstructing the domestic political process of a particular country according to democratic principles (Ratiu C. E., 2011b, p. 1). Since the end of WWII, the form of external democracy promotion has undergone major changes. In the beginning, democracy was imposed by the allies, nowadays, external actors support states in transformation with technical assistance or financial aid. External actors can either be nation states (e.g. the United States) or international organizations (e.g. European Union, EU; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD; etc.). For example, the EU applies the instrument of conditionality for external democracy promotion. This instrument is characterized by the use

of ex ante defined conditions attached to material/financial aid or a membership perspective in order to force a particular country to implement these (Schmitter, 2001, p. 30). Accordingly, the transformation takes place within a particular state, however, the whole process is supported (materially, financially, etc.) by an external actor. This is also considered to be soft power in contrast to hard power such as the military intervention in Iraq, for example.

The approach of the European Union to promote democracy is unique: it combines democratization with enlargement. The history of the EU has shown that peace, prosperity and stability can be achieved through economic and political integration (Smolnik, 2008, p. 15). The European idea started with six states and evolved to a supranational union of 27 member states, each with a democratic constitution. Since the mid 1990s, the union considers particularly the Balkans as a pool of future member states, despite their turbulent past. The next state joining the EU club will be Croatia in July 2013 (Fuster, 2011, June 24, p. 29). Yet it is unclear when the other states of the Western Balkans will join the EU. It is assumed that Serbia will join the Union as next state after Croatia, however the date of accession is not yet defined. In order to become a member country, a state has to give proof of having established democratic principles and institutions (Wunsch & Rappold, 2010, p. 2).

In comparison to other external democracy promoters, the EU is furthermore characterized as a community of values («Wertegemeinschaft») such as democracy, human rights, rule of law and good governance, etc. These values have been established as a reference for internal as well as external affairs (Knodt & Jünemann, 2007, p. 12).

Furthermore, the EU, since its beginning, is a strong promoter of gender equality in member states and candidate countries. The EU supports gender equality as a fundamental value and demands that its member states embrace it.

Despite this strong commitment to the promotion of gender equality, the successful EU accession of a candidate state can lead to considerable disadvantages for women. Yet, political and economic changes are re-shaping the employment patterns intended to foster economic growth which address mainly full-time male workers and lead to deprivations for women (Gracia-Ramon & Monk, 1996; Roth, 2008, p. 1-2). Furthermore, from a value point of view, it is argued that enlargement leads also to new challenges because it draws together different gender regimes with contrasting histories and trajectories (Pascall & Lewis, 2004, p. 373).

After having looked at external democracy promotion and the role of the EU, we will now shed light on the overall EU strategy on gender promotion as well as specific activities with a particular focus on candidate states.

### **The EU strategy on gender promotion**

As every social change takes place within a time-space-continuum, we are not in an ideal and original situation behind the veil of ignorance proposed by John Rawls. Therefore we need to look at what has been done so far in regard to gender promotion in order to understand the current endeavours.

The first legislation concerning gender equality was rather a side effect of the European Economic Community (EEC) than an intention and it was initially limited to equal pay. Among the EU member countries, it was France that had an equal pay provision for its people, the country was concerned that this could lead to comparative disadvantage among the founding states of the European Community (EC). Accordingly, France demanded the inclusion of such a provision. It was article 119 of the Treaty of Rome (1957), guaranteeing equal salaries for equal work. This article provided a starting point for further sex equality campaigns. Interestingly, the EU provided an attractive venue for women's interests which was more open than many national legislations. Since, EU policies on women's rights

became far-reaching, eventually addressing the reconciliation of employment with family life and until recently, gender mainstreaming (Roth, 2008, pp. 2-3).

Generally speaking, gender mainstreaming as a strategy was launched after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It has been defined as «the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making» (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2009, p. 116). Governments and other actors are asked to promote an active policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes. Most IGOs developed their own programme for gender mainstreaming in the aftermath (Woodward, 2011, p. 367).

The EU was among the forerunners of implementing a gender mainstreaming approach. It is designed to transform the policy processes. In fact, the EU attempts to do this horizontally using persuasion and socialization (Börzel & Risse, 2000). In general, a gender-mainstreaming initiative should result in the diffusion of gender-informed processes and policy outputs to all units of an international organization. Furthermore, it should produce an eventual impact on women and men in their daily lives. Generally speaking, a gender-mainstreaming mandate should lead to developments of a political system at three different levels: processes, outputs, and outcomes. In fact, external democracy promotion is aimed at bringing about change in exactly the same aspects of a political system. This fact underpins the argument that gender and democratization are interdependent processes which cannot be tackled sequentially but must be addressed simultaneously. However, despite initial euphoria, the implementation of a gender perspective is far more complex and its results ambiguous (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2009, p. 114).

Introducing change rarely goes smoothly. Most difficulties arising with gender mainstreaming are due to an incorrect understanding of the concept. It is very often understood as a project replacing specific policies through gender equality policies. In contrast, gender mainstreaming goes much further, it requires not only equality *de jure* its goal is equality as a positive right, i.e. equality *de facto*. Therefore, it must be promoted by positive actions aiming at changing the understanding of gender mainstreaming. A further problem in implementing gender mainstreaming is related to the fact that gender is indeed a very fashionable aspect and therefore quickly put on the political agenda by the government to ensure re-election. However, in practice, gender mainstreaming is very often reduced to pure lip service. Implementing gender mainstreaming requires further financial as well as human resources not only to redress the existing imbalances, but also to tackle the reasons for these imbalances (Council of Europe, 2008, pp. 13-14). In addition, the implementation of gender mainstreaming depends on the wider political situation within a particular country. If there are strong proponents –within civil society as well as in the legislature– the implementation is more likely than if the gender issue is only advocated by a minority and opposed by a strong opposition (Avdeyeva, 2009, p. 170).

The limited success of gender mainstreaming in the EU is also asserted to the EU's soft power approach. Some authors argue that gender mainstreaming must be implemented by a carrot and sticks policy in order to create hard incentives for decision makers to fully implement the new policies (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2009, p. 130; Sephar, 2011).

Introducing gender mainstreaming is a far reaching as well as long-term project with many obstacles, not only for member states but also for candidate states in the EU accession process. In the next paragraph we shed light on Serbia in order to analyze the implementation of gender mainstreaming in a candidate country which is at the same time a country in transformation towards democracy.

Case study: gender initiatives in Serbia

Status quo of the situation of women in Serbia



In order to understand the situation of women in Serbia today it is necessary to look briefly at the recent history of this country. In socialist times, equality was the dominant ideology, which amongst other forms included gender equality. Despite the official ideology, patriarchal patterns were being reproduced (Babovic, 2008, p. 13). A key event for the Western Balkans was the death of the former ruler Josip Broz Tito of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). This event led to further ethnic tensions within this multi-ethnic state. In Serbia, it was Slobodan Milosevic who gained power. It was his idea of a «Greater Serbia» in which all Serbs (ethnically homogenous) would live together. These territorial demands led to violent conflicts with its neighbouring countries such as Croatia (1991-1992), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995) and Kosovo (1999). Moreover, these acts of war were accompanied by an increased militarization of society. Men were considered to be the heroic defenders of the fatherland, whereas the feminine gender became the self-sacrificing mothers of the nation («aufopferungsvolle Mütter der Nation»). Their duty was primarily to guarantee reproduction as «reproductive vehicles» in order to ensure the biological and cultural existence of the Serbian people. This social move went side by side with the edging out of women from public life. The private sphere was women's destiny. The whole process is described as return to tradition («Retraditionalisierung») of the gender roles (Friedrich, 2010, pp. 33-34).

The year 2000 marks a turning point in Serbia, since then, reform endeavours have been oriented towards establishing gender equality within society. Despite these efforts, the social position of women is still unfavourable in many respects. For example, political participation of women is still markedly low. Though, after national parliamentary elections in 2008 for the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, women increased their share of seats reamarkably from 11% to 22% (Stojanovic & Quesada, 2010, p. 40). Despite this trend in recent years, women's mandates stagnate after the 2012 election (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, 2012)

Interestingly, women's position on the labour market has markedly deteriorated since the collapse of the socialist system. Women's participation on the labour market was between 60-80%. Nowadays, women's share on the labour market is about 44% compared to a men's share of 63%. Unemployment rates used to be significantly higher among women than men (24% versus 16%), however, they have been equalized in recent years. In contrast, women's overall educational situation is improving. For example, there are significantly more women in higher education than men, however, there is still a patriarchal pattern of male and female professions. Women are the dominant group in education, social sciences and arts, and a minority in science. In the private sphere, women's position is characterized by a patriarchal division of roles. This leads to an unequal division of housework in which women share the larger burden of unpaid housework, and in addition, have limited access to financial resources (Babovic, 2008, pp. 14-15).

According to the European Commission, the most discriminated in Serbia are disabled women, single mothers, older women, particularly those living in rural areas. It is assumed that domestic violence is a problem too, even if there is a lack of consistent data (European Commission, 2010, p. 14).

#### Main activities

Serbia's multiple and complex gender activities have been closely linked to anti-war and reconciliation efforts since the 1990s. Social movements have extended their activities and gained profound expertise in a growing number of specific gender-related issues. For example, approximately 35 women's groups were involved in a process sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UN Women) to develop a National Plan of Action for the empowerment of women and the strengthening of gender equality. This collaboration is considered to be a valuable precondition for the development of a long-term

partnership between the state and its civil society (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2008, pp. 50-51).

During the same period, the legal body on aspects of the social position of women has increased. On an international level, Serbia has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in March 2001 and has taken steps to achieve the Convention's objectives (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2012).

A key event on the domestic level marks the passing of the Anti-Discrimination Law that is part of pro-Western reforms. The law bans any kind of discrimination on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, etc. The passing of this law was crucial in the context of aligning the national legal body with European Union policies («Serbian lawmakers pass anti-discrimination law», 2006). However, it needs to be critically stated that equality under the law does not compellingly mean that there is guarantee for equality in other social arenas (West & Zimmermann, 1987, p. 146).

Despite this progress in the legal body, reforms of the legal framework that are relevant for the position of women within society are uneven and occasionally uncoordinated or even contradictory. Generally speaking, there is a trend to improve the position of women *de jure* in various aspects of life. However, the introduction of new laws is hardly ever accompanied by efficient implementation mechanisms or are monitored in an apt manner.

Cases of discrimination are only just recorded by the relevant ministries or inspections. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the National Employment Service, the Serbian Business Registers Agency as well as some other institutions have only recently adapted their records to the needs of monitoring gender equality (Babovic, 2008, pp. 15-16).

The most important institutions aimed at improving the position of women are the following (Babovic, 2008; Stojanovic & Quesada, 2010):

The Gender Equality Council of the Republic of Serbia;

The Committee for Gender Equality of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia;

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia/Protector of citizens rights;

The Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality of Vojvodina;

The Committee for Gender Equality of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province (AP) of Vojvodina;

The Provincial Gender Equality Institute;

The Provincial Ombudsman;

Local commissions for gender equality.

The existence of institution mechanisms reflects an endeavour of creating specific organizational bodies in the state at various levels of administration (from local to national, including the autonomous province of Vojvodina) whose task is to create, promote, advocate, implement and even supervise gender equality in all areas of life.

Apart from the physical institutions, i.e. organizational structures, gender equality has also found its way to the most important documents on the national strategy. One of these documents is 'The National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Enhancing Gender Equality for 2009-2015'. This document identifies six areas of critical importance: improving of the economic position, health, representation in public life, equality in education, suppression of violence against women and elimination of gender stereotypes in media (European Commission, 2011a). In contrast to this strategic document, there are previously adopted state strategies (Poverty Reduction Strategy, National Employment

Strategy, etc.) envisaging specific measures for improving the various aspects of women's position in Serbian society. Most importantly, these strategies include monitoring indicators (Babovic, 2008, pp. 17-18). Regular reportings help to publish the results of the activities and to make specific recommendations (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2009, p. 130).

As mentioned above, it is of utmost importance for a sustainable implementation of a gender strategy that it is based on strategic, legal, institutional and practical endeavours. Besides, it is also important to initiate a public debate on gender issues in order to create broader public awareness that goes beyond a bureaucratic project.

## **Conclusion**

A research project devoted to democratization compellingly has to consider gender as an issue. Why? Democratization is a project of transforming political structures, processes, policies and values in order to enhance civic participation and increase transparency.

However, this transformation has far reaching impact on the whole of society. As we understand gender not as a static concept, but rather as a process with a cross-cutting dimension, any social change within society touches one or the other gender-related aspect.

Gender as an object of investigation is not a purely innerstate (domestic) issue, it has a transareal dimension. In this regard, international organizations have become a new locus for gender debates. These organizations play an important role insofar as they provide a supra-state level of value creation and promotion. Most IOs have strong commitment to democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance and gender equality. Within the discipline of International Relations, there is a great debate on how these values are propagated, for example, through diffusion or active promotion, or even coercion. The practice of external democracy promotion has shown that democracy needs to be promoted through various instruments, particularly in countries with a conflicting past. There is evidence that success of external democracy promotion is positively correlated with incentives. This finding accounts for the promotion of gender equality too.

The EU plays a crucial role among the external promoters of democracy. For some countries, the Union not only propagates democracy, it offers at the same time a membership perspective. However, the entry barriers are considerable. The candidate country has to give proof of having implemented the ex ante defined conditions. Among others, these include the implementation of gender mainstreaming too. The candidate states not only have to transform their political system, but at the same time, they have to implement reforms concerning the social order. Frequently, this leads to a clash of values between external conditions and domestically predominant values. The outcome of such a transformation can best be described as hybrid.

From a feminist's perspective, the transformation to democracy has to be scrutinized very carefully. In Western media, democracy is very often treated as panacea for any failing state or state in transition. However, this paper has shown that the effectuation of a liberal domestic state order leads to new inequalities between men and women. These inequalities need to be addressed on different levels parallel or in accordance to the whole process of democratization. It starts with the political priorities on the policy agenda. It is followed by a sound legal basis with non-discriminatory laws and the adequate resources in order to influence the policy outcome. In addition, this process needs to be accompanied by a strong civil society advocating gender-related issues. The example of Serbia has shown, that this process is currently ongoing. The case study has exemplified that the implementation of gender mainstreaming is a lengthy process and always subject to the inner-state political climate. The more politicians are in favour of reforming their state, especially in the context of EU accession, the more will they promote externally defined values. Moreover, the example of Serbia shows that there are footholds for different gender-related initiatives. The

result is not yet satisfactory, however, this keeps the debate and reflection on gender equality running.

After having discussed the practical aspects of gender and democratization we now turn to the theoretical discussion. Having in mind the different strands of feminist theory, one has to acknowledge that there is no single theory that can simply explain the phenomenon of gender and democratization. However, the current mainstreaming activities follow mainly the normative impetus of correcting gender inequalities and opening up opportunities for the discriminated. Looking at the theories in more detail, the above described gender initiatives in the context of democratization have similarities with the liberal feminist theory because it is about to achieve equalisation through structural/legal interventions. However, this perspective neglects that reforming structures is insufficient for correcting gender equality completely. The radical feminist theory claims for an entire change of the social system in which patriarchal patterns are replaced by matriarchal. The current gender initiatives resemble far more a modification of the pre-existing system than a fundamental turnover. Accordingly, the implementation of gender equality does not follow a radical path. The psychoanalytic feminist theory might explain the introduction of more feminine values, e.g. soft power such as conditionality in contrast to coercion. The marxist feminist theory speaks of a class struggle between the dominant male group and the subordinate female group. In fact, the gender discussion –and its surrounding activities– reflects to some degree a class struggle. However, in a globalized and diversified world, the cleavages are not purely between women and men anymore. The socialist feminist theory takes fully account of this phenomenon. As the case study of Serbia has shown, the Anti-discrimination law not only covers discrimination on women but also on race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. The third world/postcolonial theory explains similar aspects as the socialist feminist theory, however, it includes variations between different cultural contexts. The gender initiative in Serbia shows that specific context-related aspects, that are either known such as poverty among elderly women or are assumed to be widespread such as domestic violence, are addressed with special consideration. All these theories have in common that the body or social/cultural aspects are constitutive for gender related inequalities. The above discussed gender initiatives are mainly designed to correct these inequalities.

In contrast, post-structuralist feminist theories address the social construction of gender through language. As this theory is mainly focused on the micro level, it is quite difficult to apply it on a macro level such as a state level. Accordingly, a research design based on the post-structuralist feminist theory would analyze the use and role of language in a social interaction on a micro level such as women in parliament, or even more precisely in a particular commission on gender aspects, for example. Subsequently, it is quite difficult to study the issue of gender and democratization from a post-structuralist perspective on an aggregate level as present here.

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## Appendix

Table 1: Country Profile of Serbia

		Serbia
Area		88,361 sq.km
Population		7,498,001 (Serbian Government Census 2002)
Capital City		Belgrade
Major Ethnic Communities		Serbian 82,86% Hungarian 3,91% Bosniak 1,82% Roma 1,44% Montenegrin 0,92% Croat 0,94% Others 8,1%
Major Religions and Denominations		Serbian Orthodox 85% Roman Catholicism 5,5% Muslim 3,2% Protestant 1,1%
Government		Parliamentary Republic
Major Political Parties		Democratic Party (DS) Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Serbian Radical Party (SRS) G17 Plus Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) New Serbia (NS) League of Vojvodina Social Democrats (LSDV) Sandzak Democratic Party (SDP) Coalition for Sandzak Vovodina Hungarians Alliance (SVM) Party of Democratic Action (PDD) Roma Party (RP) Union of Roma of Serbia (URS)
President and Head of State		Timoslav Nikolic (SNS)
Prime Minister		Ivica Dacic (SPS)
Proportion of Seats held by women in national parliament (%)		2002-2006: 11% 2007-2011: 22% 2012: 21%
GDP per capita		3'982 Euro (2010)
Participation on the labour market		Women: 44% (2004) Men: 63% (2004)
Unemployment rate		2004: Women: 24.1% Men: 15.9%
		2010 Women: 20.20% Men: 18:40%

Source: European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, 2012; Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO), 2012; Babovic, 2008; Index Mundi, no date

Table 2: Ratio of the number of employed women and men with respect to the level of education, 2007-2008

	2007		2008	
	Number of employed women in relation to 100 employed men	Average salaries of women in relation to average salaries of men	Number of employed women in relation to 100 employed men	Average salaries of women in relation to average salaries of men
<b>Total</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>95.2</b>
<b>University level</b>	<b>132.7</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>135.9</b>	<b>86.0</b>
<b>Higher education</b>	<b>146.2</b>	<b>88.9</b>	<b>147.8</b>	<b>89.0</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>117.7</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>117.2</b>	<b>91.1</b>
<b>Highly skilled worker</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>83.7</b>
<b>Skilled worker</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>70.5</b>
<b>Non-skilled worker</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>83.7</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>79.9</b>

Source: European Commission, 2011b, p. 5